*(English version)*

**Question for written answer E-002804/24**
**to the Commission**
**Sakis Arnaoutoglou (S&D)**
*(6 December 2024)*

*Subject:* Implementation of forest maps and protection of private property in Greece

The establishment and ratification of forest maps in Greece has created significant problems. A large proportion of citizens' private land is at risk of being classified as public, leading to serious consequences for citizens and local communities. The issue of land ownership has remained unresolved since the establishment of the Greek State. Recent developments have exacerbated confusion and uncertainty.

In particular, Law 4685/2020, which was declared constitutional by the Greek Council of State, provides that land subject to administrative acts of the State — such as land declared and subsidised as agricultural land through IACS, approved urban plans and agricultural plots included in funded programmes — must be excluded from the forest maps. However, this rule is not fully implemented, resulting in continual property disputes and human rights violations.

Given that resolving this issue is vital for social justice, the sustainability of the rural economy and public confidence in the institutions, can the Commission say:

1. How can it help with ensuring the correct application of Law 4685/2020 in order to safeguard citizens' rights and guarantee the protection of private property?

2. Has the Commission envisaged mechanisms or guidelines to resolve such instances where environmental protection conflicts with property rights in Member States?

3. Are there any EU programmes or funding tools that can be used to document and regulate property rights, taking into account the need for sustainable management of natural resources?

Submitted: 6.12.2024

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission**
*(11 February 2025)*

The Commission ensures, within the remit of its competence, the respect of fundamental rights enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (the Charter), including the right to property ([1]).

According to its Article 51(1) the provisions of the Charter are addressed to Member States only when they are implementing EU law.

In this case, it is for Member States, including their judicial authorities, to ensure that fundamental rights are effectively respected and protected in accordance with their national law and international human rights obligations.

The Commission is not responsible for monitoring the application of national laws for matters, such as property rights, which do not fall within EU competence.

Therefore, the Commission has not issued and does not plan to issue any guidelines to resolve environmental protection conflicts with property rights.

It is up to the Member States to identify and use EU co-financing, provided that the eligibility and selection criteria of any relevant EU programmes or funding tools are fulfilled. Cohesion Policy ([2]), through projects co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund ([3]), provides tools that can contribute to addressing challenges related to forest maps and property management in Greece ([4]).

([1]) Article17 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
([2]) https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/what/investment-policy_en
([3]) https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/erdf_en
([4]) For instance, the project Development of an Integrated Information System for the Central Geospatial Infrastructure (ERDF co-financing: EUR 0.6 million) focuses on creating a comprehensive geospatial information system to manage grazing lands, immovable property, and agricultural registers, supporting improved land and forest management. Similarly, the project Digitization of the Historic Archive of Aerial Photographs (ERDF co-financing: EUR 3.3 million) involves preserving and digitizing aerial photographs to create a Geographic Information System (GIS), which will contribute to documenting forest and land boundaries, improving transparency, and supporting sustainable land management efforts.

In line with this, Greece's Recovery and Resilience Plan ([5]) includes a reform to finalise the national cadastre, establishing an efficient land registry system and providing legal certainty for property rights (measure 16986). By mid-2025, the cadastral mapping is expected to be completed, with all property rights available for public display.

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([5]) https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility/country-pages/greeces-recovery-and-resilience-plan_en