

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000158/25
to the Commission
Sakis Arnaoutoglou (S&D)
(15 January 2025)**

Subject: Support for traditional fishing with boat seines in Greece

Boat seines are a traditional means of fishing in Greece, with deep roots in the cultural heritage. Despite its importance, fishers who use this method are in a state of uncertainty due to the Greek Government's failure to implement the approved 2021-2024 Management Plan. That has led to economic insecurity, as around 100 vessels remain inactive, while the government has been limited to inadequate scrappage schemes.

The decision of the Council of State (2133/2022) underlines the need to regulate the activity of permit holders, but the Greek Government has not taken the required actions. At the same time, scientific data shows that the use of boat seines can be continued without environmental impact.

In view of the importance of viable fisheries and the maintenance of traditional practices:

1. Is the Commission aware that the Management Plan has not been implemented, and how does it intend to ensure that it is?
2. What European instruments, such as the EMFF, can support fishers who use boat seines?
3. How can the Commission ensure that relevant decisions by the courts are abided by, and how can it protect fishers from the consequences of political inaction?

Submitted: 15.1.2025

**Answer given by Mr Kadis on behalf of the European Commission
(28 February 2025)**

1. The Commission recalls that the use of towed gears, including boat seines, is prohibited within 3 nautical miles of the coast or within the 50 m isobath where that depth is reached at a shorter distance from the coast ⁽¹⁾. Derogations can be granted under certain conditions by the Commission at the request of a Member State provided that the fisheries concerned are subject to a management plan.

In December 2021, Greece informed the Commission of its decision to withdraw a request for derogation and not adopt the related management plan. Such decision of a Member State only ends the derogation process and does not constitute a violation of EU law. If the derogation from the prohibition for the use of boat seines is not requested, the adoption of the related management plan is no longer necessary.

2. The European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) ⁽²⁾ is designed to offer support to the fisheries sector in many ways, notably to contribute to the sustainable use and management of aquatic and maritime resources. Competent authorities can consider mobilising financing from the Greek EMFAF Programme to provide support to the fisheries sector concerned. The activation of EMFAF financial support should be in line with the objectives of the Greek EMFAF Programme as agreed between the Commission and Greece. Member States may equally grant state aid to undertakings in the fisheries sector in line with the Fisheries state aid guidelines ⁽³⁾.

3. A Member State's choice to withdraw a request for a derogation and subsequently not adopt the related management plan does not breach EU law. Therefore, the Commission does not have any grounds to intervene.

⁽¹⁾ Article 13 of Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006, eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32006R1967

⁽²⁾ https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/funding/emfaf_en

⁽³⁾ Communication from the Commission, Guidelines for state aid in the fishery and aquaculture sector, OJ C 107, 23.3.2023, p. 1.