

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000199/25
to the Commission
Yannis Maniatis (S&D)
(17 January 2025)**

Subject: Funding the construction of a new Greek research vessel

Greece, a country with enormous maritime wealth and importance for European maritime policy, is being confronted with the need to renew its basic infrastructure, such as research vessels. Oceanographic vessels are a key tool for studying climate change, implementing the European maritime policy strategy and fulfilling obligations under European directives.

Greece's two existing research vessels ('AEGAEON' and 'PHILIA') were built in 1985. The oceanographic vessel 'AEGAEON', which has been in service for 40 years and supported European programmes worth hundreds of millions of euro, will soon be decommissioned. Despite the fact that 75% funding was secured from the European Investment Bank (EIB) in 2018 for the construction of a new modern research vessel, the national contribution (25% of the total budget) has still not been made available, causing delays that are jeopardising the continuation of Greek maritime research.

Can the Commission say whether additional European instruments or programmes could be used to help complete the construction of the new Greek research vessel, in order to ensure the continuation of maritime research and the fulfilment of Greece's European obligations?

Submitted: 17.1.2025

**Answer given by Mr Kadis on behalf of the European Commission
(11 March 2025)**

The Commission acknowledges the importance of oceanographic research vessels, as key marine science research infrastructure contributing to a better understanding of the ocean and its ecosystems, particularly in the context of climate change, food and water security, and fisheries science ⁽¹⁾, where surveys at sea, particularly in the Mediterranean, play a crucial role in supporting the scientific process.

Research vessels play multiple roles for biodiversity and ecosystem studies, climate change research, marine geology and seafloor mapping and are essential for surveys, including acoustic surveys.

The competent Greek authorities may explore funding under the EU's European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) Programme, and Horizon Europe.

The EMFAF may support the collection, management, use and processing of data in the fisheries sector, and research and innovation programmes.

The ERDF may support part of the investments needed and research and innovation programmes, while Horizon Europe does not fund the construction of research infrastructure but may fund some development phases in line with the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures.

Under shared management principles governing Cohesion Policy funds, the selection of such a project would fall under the responsibility of the relevant national and regional authorities.

Any activation of EMFAF or ERDF funding must therefore align with the objectives of the respective Greek programmes as agreed between the Commission and Greece.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy, L 157/1, 20.06.2017.