

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001036/25  
to the Commission**

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(11 March 2025)

**Subject:** Northern Adriatic as a strategic European interest: Commission security and financial support for Italian, Slovenian and Croatian ports

Since the brutal attacks on merchant vessels in the Red Sea, navigation in the Suez Canal has been less secure. In the first five months of 2024, the average daily number of vessels transiting through the Mediterranean Sea was half that of the same period in 2023, as companies redirected vessels towards the Cape of Good Hope.

Use of that African route lead to exponential growth of sea freight via the Mediterranean — from USD 2 000 to USD 7 000 per container — and an estimated 42% increase in pollutant emissions per ship. The impact on the Italian ports of Ravenna, Trieste and Venice, the Slovenian port Koper and the Croatian port Rijeka is enormous.

This state of affairs is damaging for the automotive, chemical, construction and energy supply chains on the Asia-Europe route.

Taking into account the strategic importance of the Adriatic for Italy, Slovenia and Croatia and given that, should the dangerous conditions in the Suez Canal continue, transport for goods for Asia will be forcibly shifted from the Adriatic to the Atlantic Ocean, with a dramatic impact on European supply chains and jobs:

1. How will the Commission protect the interests of the northern Adriatic ports and jobs there?
2. What financial support measures could be taken to help the ports of Ravenna, Trieste, Venice, Koper and Rijeka to withstand the huge losses of economic activity to date?

Submitted: 11.3.2025

**Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission**  
(8 May 2025)

The Commission is monitoring the impact of the Red Sea situation on maritime traffic <sup>(1)</sup>, and is aware of the changes in traffic patterns from deep sea routes and larger container vessels in East Mediterranean and in some Central Mediterranean ports, which may impact ports in different ways.

1. As announced in the Competitiveness Compass (COM/2025/30 final) the Commission will present an EU Ports Strategy, addressing competitiveness of EU ports.

The Commission supports employment and protects workers through various instruments, such as the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) <sup>(2)</sup>. Under the relevant ESF+ national and regional programmes, workers may receive support for upskilling and reskilling as well as for reintegration into the labour market. More information is available via the programmes' Managing Authorities <sup>(3)</sup>.

2. The ports referred to by the Honourable Members are part of the trans-European transport (TEN-T) core network. While EU funds are not designed to directly compensate for economic losses, several instruments can help mitigate long-term impacts of disruptions. The Connecting Europe Facility <sup>(4)</sup> can support infrastructure projects that strengthen port accessibility, intermodality and digitalisation. The Just Transition Mechanism <sup>(5)</sup>, Recovery and Resilience Facility <sup>(6)</sup>, and European Regional Development Fund <sup>(7)</sup> can support projects related to infrastructure, sustainability, and workforce training. The Cohesion Fund <sup>(8)</sup>, particularly relevant for Slovenia's port of Koper, and used to improve rail transport connections for the port of Rijeka in Croatia, can assist with infrastructure improvements and regional development projects.

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<sup>(1)</sup> See in particular the report from the Commission Monitoring of the implementation of Directive 2003/87/EC in relation to maritime transport COM(2025)110 final.

<sup>(2)</sup> See <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=62&langId=en>

<sup>(3)</sup> For Italy: ESF+ Programme Veneto Region; ESF+ Programme Emilia-Romagna region; ESF+ Programme Friuli Venezia Giulia and ESF+ National Programme Youth, Women and jobs.

<sup>(4)</sup> [https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-themes/infrastructure-and-investment/connecting-europe-facility\\_en](https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-themes/infrastructure-and-investment/connecting-europe-facility_en)

<sup>(5)</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/finance-and-green-deal/just-transition-mechanism\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/finance-and-green-deal/just-transition-mechanism_en)

<sup>(6)</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en)

<sup>(7)</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/european-regional-development-fund-erdf\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/european-regional-development-fund-erdf_en)

<sup>(8)</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/cohesion-fund-cf\\_en#:~:text=Fund%20features-,About%20the%20Fund,dedicated%20national%20or%20regional%20programmes](https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/cohesion-fund-cf_en#:~:text=Fund%20features-,About%20the%20Fund,dedicated%20national%20or%20regional%20programmes)