(English version)

Question for written answer E-001193/25
to the Commission
Nikolaos Anadiotis (NI)
(20 March 2025)

Subject: Violation of the international Law of the Sea by obstructing cable laying between Greece and Cyprus

Articles 87 and 112 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos) ([1]) stipulate that the laying and maintenance of submarine cables in the high seas is an inalienable right of all states. Furthermore, Article 79 stipulates that states are also entitled to lay submarine cables on the continental shelf of another country (coastal state) and that this coastal state can regulate the procedure but not impede it.

However, according to recent reports, the Italian vessel Ievoli Relume, which had been conducting surveys for the Greece-Cyprus electricity interconnection (Great Sea Interconnector) project, was pressured into leaving the area despite the fact that it was operating in international waters and within the Greek continental shelf. This raises serious questions about what essentially amounts to the non-implementation of international law and the lack of freedom of Member States to develop strategic infrastructure projects without the interference of non-EU countries.

In view of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. What precise measures does it intend to take to ensure that Member States can freely exercise their rights within their continental shelf and in international waters, in accordance with international law?

2. Will there be an official EU response towards Türkiye given its threatening behaviour, with a view to protecting the interests of EU Member States?

Submitted: 20.3.2025

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(12 May 2025)

The EU has stated repeatedly its deep concern about such actions and statements, expressing its expectation for Türkiye to de-escalate tensions in the interest of regional stability in the Eastern Mediterranean ([2]).

In particular, the Commission has underlined in the 2024 enlargement report on Türkiye ([3]) that, as stemming from obligations under the Negotiating Framework, Türkiye is expected to make an unequivocal commitment to good neighbourly relations, international agreements and the peaceful settlement of disputes, including through the International Court of Justice. Türkiye must avoid threats and actions that damage good neighbourly relations and respect the sovereignty of all Member States over their territorial sea and airspace as well as all their sovereign rights, including *inter alia* the right to explore and exploit natural resources in accordance with EU and international law, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

This is essential to ensure a stable and secure environment in the Eastern Mediterranean and the development of a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship between the EU and Türkiye ([4]).

([1]) https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf.
([2]) https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/57442/2022-06-2324-euco-conclusions-en.pdf.
([3]) https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/8010c4db-6ef8-4c85-aa06-814408921c89_en?filename=T%C3%BCrkiye%20Report%202024.pdf.
([4]) https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/16679fa1-cb73-4481-bc02-e3620b8c6dd3_en?filename=Joint%20Communication%20to%20the%20European%20Council%20-%20State%20of%20play%20of%20EU-Turkiye%20political%2C%20economic%20and%20trade%20relations.pdf.