(English version)

Question for written answer E-001290/25
to the Commission
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(27 March 2025)

Subject: Mobility poverty in the EU's outermost regions

A recent study commissioned by Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism, entitled 'Transport and tourism in outermost regions: assessing mobility poverty and the effects of new climate policies', confirms that mobility poverty remains a major and persistent structural challenge in the EU's outermost regions. This is aggravated by geographic isolation, underdeveloped transport infrastructure and additional burdens stemming from the implementation of new EU climate legislation.

The study concludes that, in the absence of appropriate structural investment, the implementation of the 'Fit for 55' package risks deepening mobility poverty and undermining territorial cohesion, especially in archipelagic regions. Specifically, this would threaten the affordability and availability of essential transport services for residents and tourists alike.

In the light of the above, can the Commission clarify whether it is considering:

1. the establishment of a permanent support programme for transport specific to the outermost regions?

2. making current derogations in transport-related climate legislation for outermost regions permanent, or introducing further flexibility in the application of these instruments?

3. taking into account the additional costs incurred by the EU's outermost regions for necessary infrastructure investment within the context of the future multiannual financial framework?

Submitted: 27.3.2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(16 June 2025)

The Commission announced, in the Mid-term Review Communication ([1]), the launch of consultations for an updated strategy for the outermost regions to address their permanent constraints. Several EU instruments already include favourable conditions for their transport needs.

The European Regional Development Fund ([2]) supports airport infrastructure only in these regions and compensates for airports' higher operating costs.

The Connecting Europe Facility ([3]) supports transport infrastructure with higher co-financing rates. Several Public Service Obligations ensure connectivity with outermost regions ([4]), and social aid schemes support air transport for their residents ([5]).

Outermost regions benefit from specific provisions under transport-related climate legislation. Domestic flights and sea journeys between an outermost region and its Member State are exempted from the Emissions Trading System ([6]) until end 2030 and can be exempted under the FuelEU Maritime Regulation ([7]) until end 2029.

Around EUR 1.6 billion was set aside from the Emissions Trading System revenues to cover price difference between the use of eligible sustainable aviation fuels and fossil kerosene, covering exceptionally the full difference at outermost regions' airports.

The Social Climate Fund regulation ([8]) requires that relevant Member States consider outermost regions' specificities in their national plans.

([1]) A modernised cohesion policy: the mid-term review, COM(2025) 163 final.
([2]) Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02021R1058-20241224.
([3]) Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02021R1153-20240718.
([4]) Regulation (EC) No 1008/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 September 2008 on common rules for the operation of air services in the Community. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02008R1008-20201218.
([5]) Based on Article 107(2)(a) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.
([6]) Directive (EU) 2023/959 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 amending Directive 2003/87/EC establishing a system for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the European Union and Decision (EU) 2015/1814 concerning the establishment and operation of a market stability reserve for the European Union greenhouse gas emission trading system. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02023L0959-20230516.
([7]) Article 2(4) of Regulation (EU) 2023/1805 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 September 2023 on the use of renewable and low-carbon fuels in maritime transport, and amending Directive 2009/16/EC.
([8]) Regulation (EU) 2023/955 establishing a Social Climate Fund and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1060. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02023R0955-20240630.

As set out in the communication COM(2025) 46 final The road to the next multiannual financial framework ([9]), the future budget will include a strengthened, modernised cohesion and growth policy, in partnership with national, regional and local authorities, including outermost regions.

([9]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0046.