

(English version)

Question for written answer E-001669/25
to the Commission
Sakis Arnaoutoglou (S&D)
(24 April 2025)

Subject: Implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive in Greece and tackling marine pollution in the Thermaic and Corinthian Gulfs

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/EC is the European Union's main instrument for protecting the marine environment. In Greece, although relevant monitoring programmes have been established, questions remain regarding their effective implementation and financing, especially in areas under intense environmental pressure, such as the Thermaic and Corinthian Gulfs. These areas face significant challenges due to pollution from microplastics, agricultural waste and sewage, while concerns are also registered about the impacts on fishing and marine ecosystems.

At the same time, national and private initiatives are being undertaken for monitoring and pollution management, but without a clear coordination and evaluation framework.

In view of the above:

1. What is the Commission's assessment of Greece's progress on implementing the Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/EC and Directive (EU) 2019/904 on single-use plastics, especially in areas facing intense environmental pressure, such as the Thermaic and Corinthian Gulfs?
2. What forms of financial or technical support are provided by the Commission to local communities affected by marine pollution and activity restrictions, with a focus on fishing communities?
3. What measures has the Commission put in place to strengthen cooperation between the public and private sectors in monitoring and remediating marine pollution?

Submitted: 24.4.2025

Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(30 July 2025)

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) ⁽¹⁾ requires Greece to develop a marine strategy to achieve good environmental status in its marine waters.

The strategy must cover eleven MSFD descriptors, including pressures related to marine pollution. The strategy must include a monitoring programme and a programme of measures.

It is a Member State's primary responsibility to implement EU legislation and thus take measures to reduce levels of contaminants. The latest MSFD Greek programme of measures was submitted in March 2024, two years after its due date. The Commission therefore could not assess it in time for its report ⁽²⁾, which included the assessment of 17 Member States ⁽³⁾.

The Commission is committed to ensure a coordinated and consistent transposition of the Single-Use Plastics Directive (SUPD) ⁽⁴⁾. The Commission has evaluated the Greek transposition of the SUPD ⁽⁵⁾ and decided to contact national authorities to clarify some aspects of the Greek legislation.

The Commission provides financial incentives for public-private joint projects through its various funding programmes. The European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund ⁽⁶⁾ can be used for compensation for temporary or permanent cessation upon the fulfilment of certain requirements.

Funding can also support diversification of activities and actions contributing to a good environmental status, including restoration, conservation and protection of ecosystems and biodiversity. The EU programme for the environment and climate action ⁽⁷⁾ can complement funding related to pollution.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive), OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19-40.

⁽²⁾ So as to comply with the Commission requirements under Article 16 of the MSFD.

⁽³⁾ COM(2025) 3 final, February 2025. The assessment for Greece is expected later in 2025.

⁽⁴⁾ Directive (EU) 2019/904 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment, OJ L 155, 12.6.2019, p. 1-19.

⁽⁵⁾ Including via the Technical Regulation Information System database: <https://technical-regulation-information-system.ec.europa.eu/en/search>.

⁽⁶⁾ https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/funding/emfaf_en.

⁽⁷⁾ LIFE: https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en.

The Commission support to Member States through the MSFD common implementation strategy ⁽⁸⁾ may be revamped following the MSFD review announced in the Ocean Pact ⁽⁹⁾ and Water Resilience Initiative ⁽¹⁰⁾.

⁽⁸⁾ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/marine-environment/implementation-marine-strategy-framework-directive_en#common-implementation-strategy.

⁽⁹⁾ https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/european-ocean-pact_en.

⁽¹⁰⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/environment/water-resilience-strategy_en.