

(English version)

Question for written answer E-001674/25
to the Commission
Fredis Beleris (PPE)
(25 April 2025)

Subject: The need to protect entrepreneurship in the European countryside and islands in the face of the tariff war

The new reality of the tariff war that has broken out is changing the way businesses operate, since it creates major challenges, especially for the developing peripheries of Europe. The industries and crafts that were active in the countryside and on islands constituted the 'lungs' of local economies and allowed residents to remain in situ.

The complexity of European rules and deficiencies in infrastructure remain significant difficulties, which prevent entrepreneurship in remote and island areas, leading to the closure of industries in many of them. This has led to the transfer of a large part of the production of many companies to non-EU countries, whether bordering the EU or not, which are naturally outside the regulatory framework. It is telling that many everyday products reach the European market with a 'European stamp', without however being produced in the EU, making our continent dependent on non-EU countries and affected by possible trade tariffs.

In view of the above:

1. Does the Commission intend to carry out an assessment of the impact of de-industrialisation on the local economy of remote and island regions?
2. Does the Commission intend to provide financial incentives for the development of the primary and secondary sectors in areas on the verge of economic and productive decline, and in particular in remote and island regions?
3. Does the Commission intend to introduce into European industrial policy the management of the challenges of de-industrialisation of remote and island regions?

Submitted: 25.4.2025

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

Deindustrialisation of remote and island regions poses significant challenges, affecting employment and economic stability, while undermining their economic resilience.

The Competitiveness Compass and the Clean Industrial Deal provide a roadmap for nurturing sustainable and resilient production in Europe and boosting the global competitiveness of EU businesses.

They lay out concrete initiatives to close the innovation gap, foster decarbonisation and competitiveness of businesses and enhance the EU security, actions which provide important benefits for remote and island regions as well.

In the 2021-2027 period, at least EUR 14.8 billion is allocated from cohesion policy ⁽¹⁾ to investments supporting islands, which aim to support all aspects of island development, notably competitiveness, green transition, improved connectivity, housing, sustainable tourism and inclusive growth.

The European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund allocates EUR 5.3 billion to fishing sector modernisation and the economic vitality of coastal communities.

Under shared management, Member States can adjust their programmes to ensure that local businesses ⁽²⁾ can adapt to new challenges.

Under the common agricultural policy, the POSEI scheme ⁽³⁾ contributes to food autonomy, accessibility and economic diversification in the outermost regions with over EUR 4.5 billion between 2021 and 2027. About EUR 1.3 billion was devoted to crop diversification. A similar programme exists for the smaller Aegean islands.

The next European multi-annual financial framework will continue to support these objectives, considering the specific needs and challenges of remote and island regions, in terms of economic development and resilience to external shocks.

⁽¹⁾ EU contribution, including the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the Just Transition Fund.

⁽²⁾ Notably small and medium-sized enterprises.

⁽³⁾ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/market-measures/outermost-regions-and-small-aegean-islands/posei_en.