

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001879/25
to the Commission
Maria Zacharia (NI)
(12 May 2025)**

Subject: The wreck of the ‘Sea Diamond’ on the seabed of Santorini for 18 years as toxic waste

The recent seismic sequence in Santorini coincides with the sad 18-year anniversary of inactivity on the wreck of the ‘Sea Diamond’, which is hanging on a steep slope of the seabed at a depth of 120 metres and at risk of sliding and reaching a depth of 280 metres, with dramatic consequences for the island’s exceptionally beautiful natural environment.

The Commission has been aware of the situation since 2007⁽¹⁾ with colleagues’ oral and written questions nos E-2185/07, ⁽¹⁾ E-2274/07, ⁽²⁾ H-0509/07, ⁽³⁾ E-5789/07, ⁽⁴⁾ E-1944/08, ⁽⁵⁾ H-0748/08, ⁽⁶⁾ E-5439/08, ⁽⁷⁾ E-6685/08, ⁽⁸⁾ E-4818/09, ⁽⁹⁾ H-0037/10, ⁽¹⁰⁾ E-002071/2011, ⁽¹¹⁾ E-005420/2011, ⁽¹²⁾ E-003198/2012 ⁽¹³⁾ and E-003650/2012. ⁽¹⁴⁾ It is also aware of the case law of the Court of Justice, according to which fuel on board a tanker becomes waste from the moment it leaks into the sea and, therefore, there is a breach of Directive 2006/12/EC on waste and in particular of Article 4 of the directive, according to which Member States must take the necessary measures to prohibit the abandonment, dumping and uncontrolled disposal of waste.

The Commission, however, disputes the spillage of oil or other toxic waste into the sea, ignoring a study by the Department of Environmental Engineering of the Technical University of Crete from 2011, which has been communicated to it, as have the judicial expert opinions from 2019 and 2020.

Could the Commission justify its services’ decision not to take current scientific data into account?

Submitted: 12.5.2025

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

The Commission carried out an informal dialogue with Greek authorities and assessed the study of the Technical University of Crete and the report of the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research of 2012 ⁽¹⁾ in order to verify compliance with the Waste Framework Directive ⁽²⁾ as interpreted by the Court of Justice of the EU in Case C-135/05 ⁽³⁾.

The Commission concluded that based on the available evidence ⁽⁴⁾ regarding the reports and actions already taken by the Greek authorities after the accident (impact study on pollution, continuous monitoring of the zone affected, etc.), no breach of EU law could be established.

However, the Commission also informed the Greek authorities that they should remain vigilant as the adverse effects of the shipwreck could be revealed after a prolonged period of time.

The Commission is not aware of any judicial expert opinions from 2019 and 2020 quoted by the Honourable Member.

Member States have a primary responsibility to monitor the application of the relevant legal provisions and to take the necessary steps for enforcement. In its role as guardian of the Treaties, the Commission will continue monitoring the situation and may decide to take appropriate action.

The Commission aims to swiftly follow up on systemic issues involving the application of EU law in EU countries. However, one-off instances are better dealt with at national level, as long as there are available remedies, including judicial ones. In these cases, it is up to the national courts to apply and enforce citizens’ rights under EU law.

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-6-2007-2185_EN.html

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-6-2007-2274_EN.html

³ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/H-6-2007-0509_EN.html

⁴ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-6-2007-5789_EN.html

⁵ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-6-2008-1944_EN.html

⁶ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/H-6-2008-0748_EN.html

⁷ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-6-2008-5439_EN.html

⁸ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-6-2008-6685_EN.html

⁹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-7-2009-4818_EN.html

¹⁰ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/H-7-2010-0037_EN.html

¹¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-7-2011-002071_EN.html

¹² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-7-2011-005420_EN.html

¹³ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-7-2012-003198_EN.html

¹⁴ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-7-2012-003650_EN.html

⁽¹⁾ Report entitled ‘Μελέτη των επιπτώσεων της ρύπανσης που προκλήθηκε από το ατύχημα του κρουαζιερόπλοιου “Sea Diamond” στον όρμο Αθηνίος της Νήσου Θήρας» transmitted to the Commission by the Greek authorities.

⁽²⁾ Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives, OJ L 312, 22.11.2008, p. 3-30, as amended by Directive (EU) 2018/851 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May, OJ L 150, 14.6.2018, p. 109-140.

⁽³⁾ <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/liste.jsf?language=en&num=c-135/05>.

⁽⁴⁾ i.e. absence of clear-cut evidence of the deterioration of the marine environment.

Should new elements arise, including pollution of the area, national courts are competent to verify the adequacy of the measures implemented by the Greek authorities with national and EU legislation.
