

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001977/25
to the Commission
Emmanouil Kefalogiannis (PPE)
(16 May 2025)**

Subject: Community funds for financing and strengthening the Transport Equivalent measure

Supporting island life — with particular emphasis on small islands — should be a priority. Using every means and financial tool, regional development should be promoted, local micro-economies stimulated, services and opportunities provided to the island world upgraded and inequalities between island and mainland Greece eliminated.

A valuable measure to this end (especially nowadays, when the cost of living on the islands is very high) is the Transport Equivalent (TE). This measure, which has to date been financed exclusively from national resources, aims to contribute substantially to reducing the high transport costs borne by islanders. However, it has become clear that meeting needs exceeds national budgetary capabilities, with significant delays in the payment of aid. The Transport Equivalent measure remains outside the European framework for supporting island life, although it is fully aligned with European cohesion policies. In this context, manufacturing bodies have proposed its inclusion in European programmes, such as the Just Transition Programme 2021-2027, the Cohesion Fund and the European Regional Development Fund, etc.

In view of this:

1. What measures does the Commission intend to put in place to support island life?
2. Which Community funds can finance the Transport Equivalent measure?

Submitted: 16.5.2025

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

In the 2021-2027 period, at least EUR 14.8 billion is allocated from cohesion policy (including the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund and the Just Transition Fund) to investments supporting islands.

This funding aims to support all aspects of island development, notably competitiveness, green transition, improved connectivity, housing, sustainable tourism and inclusive growth.

In the ongoing transport programme for Greece, the Commission has allocated approximately EUR 144 million from the ERDF to support the development of small island port infrastructure and to improve island accessibility through the establishment of a marine public transport system.

The transport equivalent is one of the measures that Member States can finance from their national budgets to mitigate the transport operating costs associated with island insularity.

Under the current ERDF and Cohesion Fund Regulation (2021/1058), transport equivalent payments relate to covering the running costs of companies and do not qualify as a productive investment. Therefore, they cannot be directly supported by the cohesion policy funds, except for a limited derogation applicable to the outermost regions ⁽¹⁾.

As discussions on the post-2027 cohesion policy framework are still ongoing, it is premature to provide definitive comments on its content or any potential provisions concerning the post-2027 period. The final outcome will depend on the results of negotiations of the co-legislators.

⁽¹⁾ As per Article 14(2)(b) of the ERDF and Cohesion Fund Regulation (2021/1058).