

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002404/25
to the Commission
Nikolaos Anadiotis (NI)
(14 June 2025)

Subject: Illegal landfills and other environmental infringements in Greece

In recent years, there have been repeated and serious reports of environmental degradation in Greece, mainly due to the continued operation of illegal landfills and the uncontrolled dumping of waste. A typical example is that of Mount Aigaleo in Western Athens ⁽¹⁾, an area of natural beauty, which is gradually becoming an uncontrolled landfill site, which entails underlying risks of fires, soil and air pollution, as well as risks to public health.

Despite the clear obligations of Member States ⁽²⁾ set out in EU environmental legislation ⁽³⁾, their implementation remains fragmented and insufficient. Greece has already been asked by the CJEU ⁽⁴⁾ to pay significant fines for failing to rehabilitate illegal landfills, with there now being more than 127 active or semi-inactive such landfills, according to recent reports.

In light of the above, can the Commission say:

How does it ensure the full and consistent application of EU environmental law in cases of systematic inaction by national authorities, within the meaning of Article 17 of Directive 2008/98/EC and Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 respectively, which concern the protection of the environment and human health and the enforcement of EU legislation, harmonisation and compliance?

Submitted: 14.6.2025

Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(27 August 2025)

While Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 ⁽¹⁾ mentions environmental protection, it does not address issues related to illegal landfilling. This aspect is covered by the Waste Framework (WFD) ⁽²⁾ and Landfill ⁽³⁾ Directives.

The primary responsibility for tackling illegal landfilling lies with national environmental authorities, rather than market surveillance authorities.

The WFD lays down the principles of the waste hierarchy. Waste that cannot be prevented should be prepared for reuse or recycled and only as a last resort sent to landfills or incineration ⁽⁴⁾.

The Commission monitors Member State compliance with applicable targets. The Early Warning Reports concluded that Greece relies heavily on landfilling and significant illegal dumping rates and insufficient biowaste treatment capacity ⁽⁵⁾.

The Commission supports Greece in tackling these issues: by providing technical support and advice; and where this fails, by taking enforcement actions.

On 2 December 2014 ⁽⁶⁾ the Court of Justice of the EU imposed financial sanctions that Greece is paying until it can demonstrate that all illegal landfills covered by the ruling are closed and rehabilitated.

The Commission also urged Greece ⁽⁷⁾ to take urgent actions and investments in waste management and the circular economy in order to move away from its reliance on landfilling.

The Commission envisages to continue applying this compliance strategy in order to minimise illegal landfilling and its negative impacts on human health and the environment.

¹ <https://www.myota.gr/2025/06/10/>

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2008/98/oj/?locale=en>

³ https://energy.ec.europa.eu/news/november-infringement-package-key-decisions-energy-2024-11-14_en

⁴ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b01a0fff-acb7-11e7-837e-01aa75ed71a1/language-el>

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 on market surveillance and compliance of products, OJ L 169, 25.6.2019, p. 1-44.

⁽²⁾ Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste, OJ L 312, 22.11.2008, p. 3-30.

⁽³⁾ Council Directive 1999/31/EC of 26 April 1999 on the landfill of waste, OJ L 182, 16.7.1999, p. 1-19, amended by Directive (EU) 2018/850 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018, OJ L 150, 14.6.2018, p. 100-108.

⁽⁴⁾ Article 4 of Directive 2008/98/EC.

⁽⁵⁾ The reports published in 2023 can be found at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b7434520-0350-11ee-87ec-01aa75ed71a1/language-el>.

⁽⁶⁾ C-378/13, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=157398&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=38646>.

⁽⁷⁾ Environmental Implementation Report published on 7 July 2025: SWD(2025) 311 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025SC0311>.

In parallel, Greece has allocated under the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 EUR 911 million ⁽⁸⁾ to improve waste management practices and reduce landfill dependency, with a particular focus on waste prevention, recycling and the circular economy.

⁽⁸⁾ https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/2021-2027-Categorisation/2021-2027-Planned-finances-detailed-categorisation/hgyj-gyin/about_data.