

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002679/25
to the Commission**

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(1 July 2025)

Subject: Use of EU funds for aquaculture in the Algarve, Portugal

EU funds have been supporting aquaculture projects in Portugal, namely through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and, more recently, the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund. However, most of the aquaculture infrastructure in the Algarve is abandoned, causing environmental damage and navigation hazards, and is drawing criticism from all local fishing communities.

In May 2025, an official delegation of MEPs from Patriots for Europe, focusing on fisheries, visited the area and confirmed this situation on-site. The MEPs raised concerns about the mismanagement of EU funds and called for a revision of the support, planning and monitoring models.

Given this context, local authorities, such as the municipal councils of Lagos and Vila do Bispo, have expressed opposition to the expansion of aquaculture, citing negative impacts on traditional fishing, tourism and the marine ecosystem.

In the light of this, can the Commission answer the following:

1. What specific audits or evaluation mechanisms has the Commission carried out to ensure the proper implementation of EU-funded aquaculture projects in Portugal, particularly in the Algarve region?
2. What measures are being considered to recover EU funds in cases of abandonment, bankruptcy or fraud involving EU-funded infrastructure?

Supporter ⁽¹⁾

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Answer given by Mr Kadis on behalf of the European Commission
(5 September 2025)

Under the principle of subsidiarity and shared management, the Commission has a supervisory role to monitor the implementation of the European funds in support of fisheries and aquaculture ⁽¹⁾, and the national authorities of Member States manage them.

Member States, including Portugal, have set up a management and control system (MCS) that must comply with EU rules and regulations.

Member States must ensure that their MCS functions effectively for the implementation of programmes. The selection and control of supported projects also fall under the responsibility of the national authorities, which decide on the selection criteria and specific conditions for support in line with their national programmes under the EU funds.

For specific information on the implementation of aquaculture projects in Algarve, the Portuguese Managing Authority should be contacted ⁽²⁾.

The performance of the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture fund in Member States is assessed based on indicators. Member States report on progress towards established milestones and targets in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 ⁽³⁾. The Commission established a monitoring and evaluation framework for this purpose.

The Commission carries out audits of Member States' management and control systems in accordance with its audit strategy and audit plan based on a risk-assessment ⁽⁴⁾.

¹ This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Jean-Paul Garraud (Pfe)

⁽¹⁾ European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (2014-2020) and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (2021-2027).

⁽²⁾ <https://mar2030.pt/#contacts>.

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1060/oj/eng>.

⁽⁴⁾ Article 70 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.

If an irregularity, including bankruptcy, leads to the misuse or loss of EU funds, Member States are required to take corrective action, recover the funds, and adjust their accounts accordingly.

If the Member States fail to take corrective actions, the Commission may apply financial corrections by reducing support from the Funds ⁽⁵⁾.

⁽⁵⁾ Article 104 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.