

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003507/25
to the Commission
Konstantinos Arvanitis (The Left), Nikos Pappas (The Left)
(10 September 2025)

Subject: Epicurean Cultural Centre of Samos — change of use in a funded project

The Greek Public Real Estate Company granted use of the old tobacco factory in Samos — indefinitely and free of charge — to the current Regional Unit of Samos, so that it could be renovated and used exclusively for cultural purposes as the ‘Epicurean Cultural Centre of Samos’.

Following the completion of a study, the project was included in the ‘Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship’ Operational Programme with specific intended uses defined from the time of inclusion in the European funding programme ⁽¹⁾, including: a theatre and events hall; theatre, music, dance, painting, photography and other cultural workshops; spaces for temporary exhibitions, a library, a conference room, support offices for cultural clubs and their activities, a canteen and a darkroom.

On 13 December 2024, the North Aegean Regional Council adopted Decision 153/2024 on making part of the building available ‘to accommodate the Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education of the Regional Unit of Samos in the Epicurean’, while on 4 September 2025 the Governor of the North Aegean decided ⁽²⁾ to transfer office equipment, archival material, etc. as part of the relocation of the services in question.

In light of the above, can the Commission say:

1. Is changing the use of a building away from the specific purposes for which EU funding was received lawful under EU law?
2. What action does it intend to take in light of the decision of the North Aegean Region to grant use of part of the Epicurean Cultural Centre of Samos for purposes unrelated to the centre’s inclusion in the aforementioned Operational Programme?

Submitted: 10.9.2025

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

For the projects funded under 2014-2020 programming period, Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 ⁽¹⁾ of the European Parliament and of the Council includes provisions for the durability of investments.

Specifically, Article 71(1) provides amongst others for the repayment of the contribution from the Cohesion policy funds of operation comprising investment in infrastructure within five years of the final payment to the beneficiary, in case of ‘(c) a substantial change affecting its nature, objectives or implementation conditions which would result in undermining its original objectives’.

The assessment of whether a change is substantial should be carried out at national level ⁽²⁾. This must be checked against the conditions set out in the approval decision setting out the conditions for support to the operation.

The responsibility for the correct implementation of the projects lies primarily with the national authorities, based on the shared management principle that applies to the Cohesion policy funds.

In the case that a project is not completed under the programming period 2014-2020 or it is not implemented according to its approving requirements, and the corresponding expenditure is not corrected by national authorities, the Commission may be under the obligation to proceed with a financial correction pursuant to Article 144 of the said Regulation. This will be checked at the latest at closure of the relevant programme in 2026.

¹ See European Commission Decision E(2007)5338/26.10.2007 approving the ‘Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship’ Operational Programme for EU assistance from the European Regional Development Fund under the objective of convergence in the regions of Greece — CCI2007GR161PO001, ref. 3441/948/A2/27.6.2012, Decision incorporating the act entitled ‘EPICUREAN CULTURAL CENTRE OF SAMOS’ MIS 374456, with GNT0 as the beneficiary in the ‘Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship’ Operational Programme.

² Decision Ref No 108554.

⁽¹⁾ Article 71 of the regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1303/oj/eng>.

⁽²⁾ Judgment of the Court of 14 November 2013 in Case C-388/12.