

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000686/26
to the Commission
Konstantinos Arvanitis (The Left)
(18 February 2026)**

Subject: Mediterranean fisheries invaded by non-native species

Small-scale coastal fisheries in the Mediterranean are facing intense pressure from invasive non-native species, such as the silver-cheeked toadfish (*Lagocephalus sceleratus*), the common lionfish (*Pterois miles*), the spinefoot (*Siganus spp.*) and the blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus*).

There is evidence that their presence results in the following: declining endemic populations, changes in benthic ecosystems, increasing damage to fishing gear and economic pressure on coastal fishers.

With this in mind, can the Commission say:

1. Does it intend to promote the use of biodiversity indicators and fisheries data (e.g. CPUE, abundance indices) to quantify the impact of invasive species at national and regional level?
2. Are there any Member State coordination plans to implement management strategies, such as fisheries control, targeted removal and biosecurity measures, in line with Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 on invasive species?
3. Are there plans to scientifically assess the sustainability of the safe commercial exploitation of certain invasive species in order to reduce the economic burden on coastal fishers, without negatively impacting endemic ecosystems?

Submitted: 18.2.2026

**Answer given by Mr Kadis on behalf of the European Commission
(31 March 2026)**

Non-Indigenous Species (NIS) are of increasing concern, particularly in the Mediterranean Sea, a hotspot for invasions. The Commission collaborates with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) on these challenges. Several pilot projects and research programmes were launched for data collection and mitigation.

The EU-funded GFCM pilot on NIS in the Eastern Mediterranean is gathering fisheries-dependent and -independent data, for example on species' abundance, helping close the knowledge gap. Establishing a NIS observatory will enhance data, knowledge and best practices, addressing the spread of these species in the region.

The species referenced in the question are not on the list of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) of EU concern under the IAS Regulation ⁽¹⁾ and therefore do not fit within its scope.

Under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Member States must address NIS to ensure good environmental status of the 11 descriptors.

The commercial exploitation of NIS is a solution. If listed under the IAS Regulation, commercialisation could also be authorised, under certain conditions.

In the Black Sea, managing Rapa Whelk's spread and exploitation has controlled the species' expansion, benefitting the fisheries-based economy. The GFCM adopted measures for sustainable fishing of this species ⁽²⁾.

The European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) national programmes may support the monitoring, surveillance and mitigation of NIS.

The EU encourages the use of EMFAF, which may be of benefit when species have less commercial value (e.g. Cyprus compensates fishers to target pufferfish intensively, aiming to regulate the population).

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species, OJ L 317, 4.11.2014, p. 35-55.

⁽²⁾ Recommendation GFCM/47/2024/9 on management measures for the sustainable exploitation of rapa whelk in the Black Sea (geographical subarea 29).