

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001709/26
to the Commission
Emmanouil Fragkos (ECR)
(27 April 2026)**

Subject: Competition law and transportation to the islands

The connectivity of island regions by sea is a key condition for the Union's economic, social and territorial cohesion, as is also enshrined in Article 174 TFEU. Despite this, Greek ferry services are seeing repeated complaints about excessive price increases, frequent service cancellations due to weather conditions, which are being questioned by passengers, and limited competition on specific routes where a small number of companies operate. In some cases, the market resembles an oligopoly or even a de facto monopoly. This is having a direct impact on the cost of living, tourism and the viability of local economies. The lack of transparency over the criteria used for service cancellations and pricing is increasing concerns about adequate market surveillance.

Given that maritime cabotage is governed by Regulation (EEC) No 3577/92 on cabotage and that unfair business agreements and abuse of a dominant position are prohibited under Articles 101 and 102 TFEU, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Does it systematically monitor the conditions of competition among Greek ferry lines and has it assessed whether there are indications of market distortion or excessive pricing?
2. How is it ensured that public service obligations and related state aid do not lead to the consolidation of monopolistic situations to the detriment of the islands' permanent residents?
3. Does it intend to consider further measures or guidelines to enhance competition, transparency and consumer protection in the island cabotage sector?

Submitted: 27.4.2026

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Ribera on behalf of the European Commission
(6 July 2026)**

The Commission monitors market developments in the maritime sector, as well as other economic sectors, to ensure compliance with EU competition rules.

The Commission shares the tasks of enforcing EU competition rules with the national competition authorities of Member States, which are generally well placed to intervene when most of the effects take place within their territory.

The Hellenic Competition Authority is currently investigating potential anticompetitive horizontal agreements between operators of maritime passenger transport services in Greece ⁽¹⁾.

State aid rules support competition to the benefit of passengers. First, they impose compliance with EU public procurement rules (for sizeable services), which guarantee a competitive pressure for the award of public service contracts.

Second, they allow Member States to grant public service compensation only to address observed market failures, such as excessive prices for island residents or lack of regular commercial services.

To support a more efficient and well-functioning EU cabotage sector, the Commission services are currently revising the interpretative guidance on Council Regulation (EEC) No 3577/92 (maritime cabotage) ⁽²⁾.

In this context, the guidance aims to clarify how island ferry services can be promoted through public service obligations and public service contracts, while safeguarding competition, transparency and consumer protection, and ensuring that conditions for participation in tenders do not become barriers to market access.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.epant.gr/en/information/press-releases/item/3117-press-release-unannounced-inspections-of-the-hellenic-competition-commission-in-the-maritime-transport-sector.html>.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/1992/3577/oj/eng>.