

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001763/26
to the Commission
Giuseppe Antoci (The Left)
(29 April 2026)**

Subject: Rising energy costs and effects on regional cohesion and freight transport in Sicily

Recent protests by road hauliers in Sicily have highlighted serious problems in the island's logistics system, with blockades in the main ports and real risks to continuity of supply.

Operators in the sector are unhappy about the rise in energy costs and sea freight rates and the shift, under the European Green Deal, of ETS ⁽¹⁾ burdens along the supply chain.

Those effects disproportionately affect island regions, such as Sicily and Sardinia, which are structurally dependent on maritime transport.

Given the EU's principles on regional cohesion, if its climate policies are not equipped with proper compensatory measures, they may have regressive effects and exacerbate regional disparities.

Can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. How will it ensure that Article 174 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) ⁽²⁾ is upheld in the implementation of the European Green Deal, preventing disproportionate effects for island regions?
2. Does it take the view that instruments such as the Cohesion Fund and the Just Transition Fund should be made available or stepped up to support islands' freight transport sectors?
3. Will it take measures to prevent ETS costs being passed on to road hauliers and other more vulnerable operators in the sector?

Submitted: 29.4.2026

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

Islands have always benefitted from cohesion policy in line with the article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, which calls for 'particular attention' to these territories. On this basis, the EU strategy for islands ⁽¹⁾ was adopted on 10 June 2026.

In 2021-2027 period, at least EUR 14.7 billion from cohesion policy funds ⁽²⁾ ⁽³⁾ is allocated to investments supporting island development, competitiveness, green transition and improved connectivity.

Rising energy costs, which affect islands connectivity, underline the need to accelerate transport decarbonisation and reduce dependencies on fossil fuels. Cohesion policy funds support smart and sustainable mobility, with focus on transport decarbonisation, making it more resilient to volatile energy costs.

For example, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) regional programme for Sicily has indicative allocations of around EUR 37.2 million for the reconstruction or modernisation of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) railways and around EUR 462 million for other railways (for example, acquisition of zero-emission electric rail assets), regional roads and ports.

The ERDF regional programme for Sardinia 2021-2027 provides around EUR 31 million (EU contribution) to sustainable urban transport, including clean rolling stock, digitalisation and alternative fuels.

The EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) recognises the challenges faced by islands and includes targeted derogations to preserve their connectivity.

¹ The EU ETS (European Union Emissions Trading Scheme) is one of the EU's main tools to cut greenhouse gas emissions in industrial sectors with the heaviest impact on climate change.

² Article 174 TFEU establishes that one of the purposes of the EU is to strengthen its economic, social and territorial cohesion, paying particular attention to island regions.

⁽¹⁾ COM(2026) 520 final: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52026DC0520>.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund, OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 60, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1058/oj>.

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/1056 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 establishing the Just Transition Fund, OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1056/oj>.

The Commission also assesses regularly the ETS social and economic impacts on their maritime sectors. While the ETS Directive ⁽⁴⁾ allows for the transfer of the ETS costs from the shipping company to another entity operating the ship, it does not regulate the pass-through of costs to shippers.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2003/87/oj/eng>.