

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002838/26
to the Commission
Maria Zacharia (NI)
(8 July 2026)**

Subject: Protecting people living in the immediate vicinity of regional airport runways

Many regional airports in the European Union operate in the immediate vicinity of residential areas, schools and tourist facilities. In Greece, a typical example is Rhodes International Airport, where a significant number of locals live below the flight paths of approaching and departing planes.

While EU law does not provide for a single minimum distance between aerodromes and residential areas, Regulation (EU) 2018/1139, the implementing acts adopted pursuant to it and the international standards of ICAO, in particular Annex 14 (Aerodromes), require the systematic assessment of the risks associated with the operation of aerodromes as well as safety management.

In view of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. What are the obligations under EU law to assess and manage the risks faced by residents living in the immediate vicinity of regional airport runways?
2. Does the certification and oversight framework for aerodromes, in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 and the relevant EASA requirements, include a third-party/ground risk assessment, in particular when there are residential areas or other sensitive uses below flight paths?
3. Does it intend to examine whether additional EU guidelines or legislative initiatives are needed to better protect residents living in the immediate vicinity of regional airports, particularly in island and tourist regions with high levels of seasonal air traffic?

Submitted: 8.7.2026

**Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission
(22 September 2026)**

Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 ⁽¹⁾ and Commission Regulation (EU) No 139/2014 ⁽²⁾ regulate aerodrome safety. The application of Article 2, paragraph 1 (f) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1139, as it applies to aerodromes within its scope, is ‘without prejudice to Union and national law on environment and land-use planning, the safeguarding of surroundings’.

The aviation safety requirements related to the aerodrome surroundings therefore do not override or replace existing Union or national laws on environmental protection or land-use planning.

The aerodromes’ safety certification and oversight framework does not include an explicit requirement for a third-party or ground risk assessment, including assessments of residential areas or other sensitive land uses beneath flight paths.

Responsibility for assessing and managing risk to people on the ground remains with Member States in line with applicable Union and national planning, environmental, and public safety legislation.

Based on safety data available, analysis and follow-up of occurrences in civil aviation, there is not sufficient evidence that such an initiative would be warranted.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2018 on common rules in the field of civil aviation and establishing a European Union Aviation Safety Agency, (Text with EEA relevance), OJ L 212, 22.8.2018, pp. 1-122.

⁽²⁾ Commission Regulation (EU) No 139/2014 of 12 February 2014 laying down requirements and administrative procedures related to aerodromes pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 216/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Text with EEA relevance), OJ L 44, 14.2.2014, pp. 1-34.