

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003119/26
to the Commission
Sakis Arnaoutoglou (S&D)
(24 July 2026)**

Subject: Direct funding to address water scarcity and ensure safe drinking water in the outlying island of Ereikoussa

Ereikoussa, a small outlying island forming part of the Diapontian Islands, is facing a serious problem with the availability and quality of drinking water. Its water supply depends on private wells and boreholes, while the salinisation and overextraction of the underground aquifer compound the issue. The lack of a sewerage system increases the risks to public health and the environment.

Although a comprehensive study is in place and ready for implementation to provide a permanent solution to the problem, the local authority's repeated requests to the national authorities have not been met with a substantive response. The lack of safe water limits the prospects for permanent residence, increases the risk of depopulation and undermines territorial cohesion on an extremely remote and outlying island.

In the light of the European water resilience strategy and the new EU strategy for islands, can the Commission say:

1. Through which EU funding tools can the implementation of this turnkey project be directly supported?
2. Does it intend to request an update from the Greek authorities with regard to its funding path?
3. How will it ensure that access to safe water is a priority for small and outlying islands at risk of desertification?

Submitted: 24.7.2026

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

Ereikoussa ⁽¹⁾ may be eligible for support under the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 programmes 'Ionian Islands' ⁽²⁾ and 'Environment and Climate change (PEKA)' ⁽³⁾ for water and wastewater investments.

Under shared management, Greek authorities select, implement and monitor projects in line with programme priorities, EU and national rules.

The PEKA programme has launched a EUR 20 million call ⁽⁴⁾ for water investments on the 39 GR-eco islands ⁽⁵⁾, including Ereikoussa, with a deadline of 31 March 2027.

The Ionian Islands programme has launched a EUR 20 million call ⁽⁶⁾ for improving drinking water quality and conservation, with a deadline of 30 October 2026.

According to the Greek authorities, no proposal has yet been submitted by Ereikoussa for either of these calls. The Commission regularly discusses with the Greek authorities and encourages them to ensure that investments address the needs identified in their programmes, including water scarcity and administrative capacity issues.

⁽¹⁾ Ereikoussa is part of the Municipality of Central Corfu and Diapontian Islands in the Ionian Islands Region.

⁽²⁾ <https://pepionia.gr/>.

⁽³⁾ <https://peka-program.gr/>.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://peka-program.gr/prosklisis/ypodomes-ydreysis-sta-nisia-tis-protovoylias-greco-islands/>.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://peka-program.gr/protovoulia-gr-eco-islands/>.

⁽⁶⁾ <https://pepionia.gr/%cf%80%cf%81%cf%8c%cf%83%ce%ba%ce%bb%ce%b7%cf%83%ce%b7-%ce%b9%ce%bf%ce%bd74-%ce%bd%ce%ad%ce%b5%cf%82-%ce%b4%cf%81%ce%ac%cf%83%ce%b5%ce%b9%cf%82-%cf%83%cf%84%ce%bf%ce%bd-%cf%84%ce%bf%ce%bc%ce%ad/>.

The EU strategy for islands ⁽⁷⁾ calls for priority investments in water infrastructure on small and remote islands. The European Water Resilience Strategy ⁽⁸⁾ recognises access to clean, affordable water as a human right and supports leakage reduction and infrastructure modernisation.

Under the modernised cohesion policy ⁽⁹⁾, Greece has allocated an additional EUR 356 million ⁽¹⁰⁾ for 2021-2027 to water management and resilience, including EUR 12.2 million under the Ionian islands programme.

The proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework ⁽¹¹⁾ provides for at least 35% of the EU budget to support climate and environmental objectives, including water resilience. The European Competitiveness Fund ⁽¹²⁾ will also support water resilience and a transition to a water-smart economy.

⁽⁷⁾ European Commission, EU Strategy for islands, COM (2026) 520 final, 10 June 2026, p.9.
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52026DC0520>.

⁽⁸⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/environment/water-resilience-strategy_en.

⁽⁹⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/2021-2027_en.

⁽¹⁰⁾ For the 2021-2027 period, Greek Cohesion policy programmes initially allocated EUR 960 828 360 under Specific Objective RSO 2.5 ‘Promoting secure access to water, sustainable water management, including integrated water management, and water resilience’. This allocation was increased to EUR 1 315 429 668, following the mid-term review of 2021-2027 Cohesion Policy programmes. Similarly, the relevant allocation under the programme ‘Ionian islands’ increased from EUR 13.6 million to EUR 25.8 million following the mid-term review. All amounts concern EU contribution.

⁽¹¹⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/long-term-eu-budget/eu-budget-2028-2034_en.

⁽¹²⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/publications/european-competitiveness-fund_en.