

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-002641/26
to the Commission
Afroditi Latinopoulou (Pfe)
(25 June 2026)**

Subject: Repercussions of spread of silver-cheeked toadfish for Greek fisheries

The rapid spread of the silver-cheeked toadfish (*Lagocephalus sceleratus*) in the Eastern Mediterranean is causing serious economic damage to Greek fishers, particularly in Crete, the Dodecanese and the Eastern Aegean. The species destroys fishing gear, causes catch losses, disrupts marine ecosystems and poses public health risks due to its high toxicity. What is more, silver-cheeked toadfish have increasingly been attacking and injuring bathers, the latest example being in the Varkiza beach area, in Attica. This is also causing concerns about the economic success of the all-important tourist season.

Given that the EU is already funding actions for biodiversity, the management of invasive alien species and the protection of marine ecosystems, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Has it assessed the economic damage the silver-cheeked toadfish has caused to fishers in Greece and the Mediterranean Member States affected by the spread of the species?
2. Does it intend to allocate or allow the use of European funds to compensate affected fishers and finance targeted fishing and population reduction actions to combat the species?
3. Is it considering the possibility of funding economic reward programmes for each silver-cheeked toadfish caught in the most heavily affected areas, as a measure to protect fisheries and local marine ecosystems?

Submitted: 25.6.2026

**Answer given by Mr Kadis on behalf of the European Commission
(30 July 2026)**

The Commission is aware of the economic and operational impacts of *Lagocephalus sceleratus* on fisheries in the Eastern Mediterranean and supports the collection of impact data through national EMFAF ⁽¹⁾ programmes and scientific projects.

In Greece, studies financed under the EMFF ⁽²⁾ programme (e.g. LIONHARE, LagoMeal) have examined the consequences of the species' presence and provided scientific data on abundance and seasonal variation.

The Commission has not produced a single harmonised quantitative estimate of the total economic damage caused by this species across affected Member States; detailed impact assessments are carried out primarily at national and project level.

The Commission shares the concern about the impacts of this species. Member States can use EMFAF to finance management actions and support for fishers affected by non-indigenous species (NIS).

EMFAF can support broader mitigation measures, scientific monitoring and innovation projects linked to NIS provided such actions are included in the national EMFAF programme.

Member States have to design and implement such actions in line with the applicable EU and national legal frameworks. EMFAF programmes of several Mediterranean Member States, including Greece, explicitly address NIS.

Greece recently launched a dedicated call related to *Lagocephalus*, aiming to protect marine biodiversity through targeted fisheries management measures, scientific monitoring and remuneration of coastal fishers catching and landing *Lagocephalus*.

The Commission is working closely with the GFCM ⁽³⁾, funding a pilot project on NIS in the Eastern Mediterranean. It includes creating an observatory to push forward data collection and information sharing and seek long-term solutions.

⁽¹⁾ European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, 2021-2027.

⁽²⁾ European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, 2014-2020.

⁽³⁾ General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean.