

Question for written answer E-003747/2022
to the Commission
Rule 138
Ignazio Corrao (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Right to mobility denied to residents of smaller Sicilian islands

On 30 June 2019, the current operator of ferry services between Sicily and its smaller islands, within the meaning of the agreement in force with the Ministry, reported a financial deficit, caused by structural problems, in the management of its first two years of service.

For that reason, corrective actions such as reductions to navigation length, have been taken. If the deficit is to be corrected in the period 2022-2028, EUR 2 500 000 per year will be needed. The region has allocated EUR 18 million to compensate for the cuts to the state agreement¹, which is still being monitored by the European Commission to ensure that it complies with the EU rules on aid for maritime cabotage.

As a result of the drastic cuts to services, people living on the smaller Sicilian islands are currently being denied the right to mobility, health, education, work and care.

In the light of the above, can the Commission:

1. establish whether serious errors of assessment have been made in the public service contract;
2. explain how the Ministry or Region can ensure that the deficit is tackled and that full services are restored in an effort to protect peripheral areas and at the same time comply with EU competition rules;
3. provide information on good European practices with regard to economically and environmentally sustainable connections with smaller islands?

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¹ Decision No 64 of 12 February 2022.