

**Question for written answer E-003476/2023  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Petros Kokkalis** (The Left)

**Subject:** National Observatory of Athens and the freedom and protection of scientific research

The National Observatory of Athens (NOA) is a public research centre and a legal person governed by public law. As such, it enjoys special protection under Article 16(1) of the Greek Constitution, which enshrines the freedom of science and research. It follows that, in order for NOA to carry out its main mission, it requires academic freedom as defined in Greek law and the Union *acquis*.

Bearing in mind that the Greek Government decided out of the blue to propose a draft law with a view to placing NOA under the authority of the Ministry for Climate Crisis and Civil Protection, with no prior consultation and after expressing its doubts regarding the scientific data published by NOA, sourced from the Copernicus programme, and given that NOA works in other scientific fields that are not within the Ministry's remit, including cosmology, astrophysics, astronomy, planetary physics, solar physics, the magnetosphere, the ionosphere, remote sensing, atmospheric physics and chemistry, geophysics and energy, can the Commission answer the following:

Does it consider the placement of NOA under the responsibility of central government to be compatible with the Commission's strategy to strengthen the European Research Area (ERA), as well as with the priority of safeguarding the freedom of scientific research, in line also with the Bonn Declaration<sup>1</sup>?

Submitted: 28.11.2023

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<sup>1</sup> European Research Area Policy Agenda – 2022/2024, published by the European Commission ([https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2021-11/ec\\_rtd\\_era-policy-agenda-2021.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2021-11/ec_rtd_era-policy-agenda-2021.pdf)).