

**Question for written answer E-002235/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Gaston Franco (PPE)

Subject: Pollution of seas and oceans by chemical weapons

The Arte channel broadcast a documentary on Tuesday 25 February entitled "Chemical weapons at sea" which revealed that "there are real time bombs sleeping at the bottom of the seas and oceans of the whole planet". Between 1917 and 1970, over a million tonnes of chemical weapons may have been tipped into the ocean. According to the programme makers, 'the content of these weapons – lethal poisons which are still active – are gradually escaping into the sea, threatening fishermen, bathers, fish and the whole ecosystem'.

There was a headlong rush to acquire chemical weapons during the Second World War and the victorious allies chose to tip this arsenal into the sea following the Potsdam conference. Chemical weapons were sunk in the Sea of Japan, the Indian Ocean, the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, the North Atlantic, off the Côte d'Azur in France and off the coasts of the United States and Canada.

1. Does the European Commission have an estimate of the volume, nature and danger of chemical weapons at sea, particularly in the Mediterranean?
2. Could it report on its cooperation with Great Britain and the United States regarding data collation, as these two countries will be lifting state secrecy on dumping at sea in 2017?
3. Is it making the question of chemical weapons at sea a priority in implementing the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, which entered into force on 29 April 1997?
4. What measures does it plan to take under the 7th Environment Action Programme of the European Union (2014-2020) in order to address the problem of chemical weapons at sea?