

**Question for written answer E-000856/2015
to the Commission**
Rule 130
José Inácio Faria (ALDE)

Subject: By-catches of kitefin sharks off Madeira

In Câmara de Lobos, part of the Portuguese Autonomous Region of Madeira, it sometimes happens – because they also get trapped by the bait – that the non-industrial gear used to fish for swordfish accidentally catches kitefin sharks. (The kitefin shark is deep-water species which occurs abundantly in that area).

Regulation (EU) No 1367/2014 of 15 December 2014 stipulates that kitefin sharks caught must all be thrown back into the sea, but, since this is a deep-water species, that practice does not save their lives: it is, indeed, futile from the conservation point of view and has an unfortunate social impact within the local small-scale fishing community. Furthermore, according to a report produced for the Commission, (accidental) by-catches of kitefin sharks have been found to be very low (0.01% – page 122, table 36).

1. In the light of the foregoing, what does the Commission consider to be valid grounds for ruling out the use of by-catches?
2. Without going so far as to allow fishing for this species, how would it be possible, in the Commission's opinion, to remove the obstacles preventing by-catches from being put to use?
3. Would it make sense to suspend enforcement of the above regulation for kitefin shark by-catches resulting from non-industrial methods, as opposed to trawling?