

**Question for written answer E-001728/2015  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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**Subject:** Creation of a European sub-network of whale and dolphin 'sanctuaries' - Representative example of Lanzarote and Fuerteventura

The sea waters to the east of the islands of Lanzarote and Fuerteventura are a unique host to marine wildlife, since they provide Europe's largest protected area for whales and dolphins. Scientists have established that over one-third of the known species of cetaceans are present in the area. They are particularly notable for sheltering rare, deep-feeding ocean species which are very difficult to observe, but may be enjoyed in these waters with relative ease, such as beaked whales, pilot whales and sperm whales.

These species, highly sensitive environmentally and vulnerable to the noise impact of shipping, need more protective measures than those currently laid down. Indeed, the Spanish Government has proposed to include part of the area referred to in Natura 2000, by means of the Site of Community Importance 'Marine Area to the East and South of Fuerteventura and Lanzarote', but this proposal may not be sufficient to protect these populations.

Would the Commission be prepared to set up a sub-network of protected areas within Natura 2000 to accommodate these 'sanctuaries' for whales, dolphins, etc., with specific funding and additional safeguards adapted to these species?

What action can the EU take as a matter of urgency to protect the sea area to the east of Lanzarote and Fuerteventura where these populations live?