

**Question for written answer E-007093/2015
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Protection and conservation measures for natural habitats and hydrocarbon exploitation authorisations - conflicting principles, aims and legislation

Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 contains measures 'designed to protect and conserve living aquatic resources and marine ecosystems' (recital 5), as well as 'the strict protection of certain marine species' and the 'conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora' (recital 9).

Those provisions have far reaching consequences, not least with respect to its banning the fishing of juvenile European sardines (*Sardina pilchardus*) and transparent goby (*Aphia minuta*) – species of fish that have historical roots in cultures in the southern regions of Italy, above all the Ionic coast.

Italy has granted a number of authorisations in the Ionian Sea itself for the exploitation of liquid and gaseous hydrocarbons in accordance with an agreement referred to as 'D.R74.AP' – thereby undermining the provisions of Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006.

The dangers inherent in drilling operations are clear to see from Directive 2013/30/EU, which makes reference to the 'devastating and irreversible consequences on the marine environment' (recitals 4, 6 and 9), and the protocol for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea (OJ L 4 9.1.2013) which recognises 'that the pollution which may result therefrom represents a serious danger to the environment and to human beings'.

- With regard to authorisations such as D.R74.AP, does the Commission believe that the intended aims of Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 are compatible with the risks substantiated by Directive 2013/30/EU and the abovementioned protocol?
- What measures does it plan to adopt to resolve these undeniable conflicts?