

**Question for written answer E-014344/2015  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Discharge of waste in international waters

In the interest of protecting the Baltic Sea, the treatment of waste by coastal settlements is strictly regulated and monitored, particularly in EU Member States. The treatment of waste from ships in these countries' territorial waters is regulated and there have been major investments in waste reception capacity at ports. On the other hand, there is no legislation on the recovery of waste from ships in international waters, and they are able to discharge their waste and sewage in the Baltic Sea.

Some four million tourists go on cruises in the Baltic every year, and they produce on average some 170 litres of waste water per person per day. The vast majority of cruise ships still pump their waste water legally into the Baltic, even though all the Baltic ports are equipped to receive waste water.

Finland, numerous other countries with Baltic coastlines, and the WWF, have been trying for decades, via the IMO and the Baltic Protection Commission (HELCOM), to bring into force a ban to halt the discharge of waste water. However, the implementation of such a ban has repeatedly been blocked in the IMO, and now the dates being pencilled in for its entry into force are 2019 (new ships) and 2021 (all ships). Initially the ban was due to come into force as early as 2013. Furthermore, owing to opposition from Russia, there is a risk that waste water may continue to be discharged in the Gulf of Finland even after a ban.

What does the Commission propose to do to protect the Baltic Sea and to bring about the rapid implementation of rules on the treatment of waste in international waters or to ensure that progress is achieved in this area on a voluntary basis?