Question for written answer E-006861/2016
to the Commission
Rule 130
Merja Kyllönen (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Open-loop and closed-loop sulphur scrubbers

The sulphur scrubbers which have to be installed on ships in order to reduce sulphur emissions exist in three forms: closed-loop scrubbers (exhaust gases are washed and harmful substances collected in a tank which is emptied in port for appropriate further treatment), open-loop scrubbers (exhaust gases are washed and the washing water, together with the harmful substances that it contains, are discharged into the sea) and hybrid scrubbers (which can be set for either open-loop or closed-loop operation).

Viewed as a whole, the only one of these types of scrubber that is genuinely environmentally sound is the closed-loop type, as such scrubbers do not result in emissions either into the atmosphere or into the water provided that the waste is treated after collection in ports. While open-loop scrubbers comply with the requirements of the Sulphur Directive and reduce emissions into the atmosphere from shipping, their use results in heavy metals and sulphur, etc., ending up in the sea together with washing water. The IMO regulates all these matters extensively (IMO resolution MEPC.184 (59)), but the existing regulations do not prevent pollution from entering the sea. Hybrid scrubbers are likewise problematic if they are used on an open-loop basis.

What will the Commission do to promote reductions in total emissions from maritime transport and to ensure that the regulation of emissions into the atmosphere does not cause emissions into the sea, thus damaging our seas?