

Question for written answer E-006910/2016
to the Commission
Rule 130
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Subject: Combating wildlife trafficking

Over the past few years we have seen an increase in illegal activity involving wildlife. Shocking pictures have become an everyday occurrence: rhinos bleeding to death, sharks being caught for their fins, birds and reptiles being smuggled across borders and kept in inhumane conditions.

What is more, wildlife trafficking has become one of the most profitable activities for organised criminal gangs, with an estimated annual turnover of between 8 and 20 billion euros.

In recent years we have also seen a steep increase in global demand for these products, and the scale of trafficking is now so large that some of the world's most recognisable animals are in danger of extinction.

Unfortunately, the sanctions imposed in individual countries are inconsistent, which encourages international criminal organisations to move to countries with less severe penalties or where the relevant authorities are less effective.

I believe the fight against this practice requires a closer partnership between the source and transit countries and the destination countries, as well as cooperation among regional stakeholders. If this condition is not met, then unfortunately we will soon see the extinction of a great many precious plants and animals in countries all over the world.

In the light of the foregoing, what steps is the Commission planning to take to increase the EU's influence over the international situation in this area?