

Question for written answer E-008953/2016
to the Commission
Rule 130
Notis Marias (ECR)

Subject: Measures to tackle dangerous toxic fish *Lagocephalus sceleratus* (*sceleratus*)

The presence in the Mediterranean of the dangerous and poisonous *Lagocephalus sceleratus* (silver-cheeked toadfish), listed as invasive alien species (IAS), is the result of lessepsian migration.

The arrival of the silver-cheeked toadfish in large numbers presents a particular danger to Greece, since it has become the dominant species in certain parts of the Aegean and in the waters off Crete, rapidly reducing other fish and mollusc populations, which is directly harmful to fisheries, while the environmental impact remains uncertain.

The greatest risk from the silver-cheeked toadfish is that of lethal poisoning if ingested.

Its presence is now making itself felt in the waters around at least three EU Member States (Cyprus, Malta, Greece), a situation that may well be exacerbated by the imminent opening of the new Suez Canal. Measures must therefore be taken at both national and EU level.

In view of this:

1. Can the Commission identify EU programmes currently under way, from which funding may be earmarked for timely countermeasures to contain the growing threat?
2. Is it willing, as part of the neighbourhood policy, to raise the issue with the Egyptian authorities with a view to finding possible solutions and limiting the migration of this species?