

**Question for written answer E-005646/2017
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Code of conduct for NGOs in the Mediterranean

In July 2017, the Italian government presented a code of conduct to regulate the activity of NGOs in the Mediterranean. Under that code, NGOs are banned from entering Libyan waters to rescue migrants, are obliged to accept the deployment of Italian vessels with armed police on board to investigate people trafficking in Libyan waters in cooperation with the Libyan authorities, and are not permitted to transfer people who have been rescued to other vessels at sea, with rescue crews being required to return to port for disembarkation.

This initiative received immediate political support from the Commission. On the other hand, NGOs such as Doctors Without Borders and the German organisation Jugend Rettet, among others, say that the code will make maritime rescue work less effective. The mortality rate for people attempting to reach our shores has increased this year, rising from 1.2% drownings in 2016 to 2.1% in 2017.

- Does the Commission believe that this code of conduct can genuinely serve a useful purpose in terms of reducing the increase in the number of people drowning?
- Is the Commission considering drawing up a European code of conduct approved under a Community procedure?