

**Question for written answer E-005784/2017
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Carolina Punset (ALDE)

Subject: Greenhouse gas emissions from abandoned oil facilities in the North Sea

Combating climate change is a top priority for the EU. This was formalised in the commitment to the Paris agreement and is the basis of the winter energy package. The impact of methane is up to 25 times greater than that of carbon dioxide over a 100-year period¹, and various studies have shown that, over 20 years, its impact could be 125 times greater than that of CO₂².

In the North Sea there are around 11 000 spent oil wells, of which about 4 000 are thought to be leaking methane from shallow pockets. It is estimated that such pockets emit between 3 000 and 17 000 metric tons of methane per year^{3 4}.

The oil facilities in question are located within the exclusive economic zones of Norway, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, in line with the 1958 Convention on the Continental Shelf, and are therefore the responsibility of those countries.

1. Will the Commission be urging the Member States to take action to seal the leaks in the oil wells concerned?
2. Will the Commission also be urging Norway to do something about the oil wells located in its exclusive economic zone?
3. Will the Commission inform Parliament about any action it takes on this matter?

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/overview-greenhouse-gases#methane>.

² <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-bad-of-a-greenhouse-gas-is-methane>.

³ <http://noticiasdelaciencia.com/not/25560/emisiones-colaterales-de-gas-con-efecto-invernadero-a-traves-de-pozos-de-petroleo-y-gas>.

⁴ <http://pubs.acs.org/doi/pdf/10.1021/acs.est.7b02732>.