

**Question for written answer E-002986/2018
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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and Ernest Urtasun (Verts/ALE)**

Subject: Licences to harvest red coral off the Catalan coast

The Spanish Government has granted 12 licences for the harvesting of red coral off the Catalan coast in breach of the 10-year moratorium that was imposed by the Catalan authorities (Order ARP/59/2017). The moratorium was based on the scientific findings of a group of leading experts warning that 90% of the red coral was in a dangerously poor state of preservation^{1 2}.

The granting of these licences has sparked a wave of public protest led by the scientific and environmental community, as well as certain elected local representatives. As a result, a letter to the minister responsible has gathered over 9 000 signatures in just five days and has garnered the support of over 65 research centres and environmental groups³.

1. Bearing in mind the objectives of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, of which Spain is a member, does the Commission consider that this country is in compliance with the provisions of Regulation (EU) No 1343/2011⁴, Directive 92/43/EEC, Directive 2008/56/EC and Regulation (EU) No 2015/2102?
2. What measures will the Commission take to halt the issuing of the harvesting licences, which are seriously endangering the preservation of red coral off the Catalan coast?

¹ <http://www.lavanguardia.com/natural/20180424/442911673052/coral-garabou.html>.

² http://agricultura.gencat.cat/ca/detalls/Publicacio/2017_Informe-estat-poblacions-corall-costa-catalana.

³ <https://protegerelcoralrojo.wordpress.com/carta-abierta/>.

⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52015AP0005>.