

**Question for written answer E-003238/2019
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Manuel Bompard (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Creation of more protected areas in the Mediterranean Sea and regulation of maritime traffic around them

The Mediterranean may account for only 0.7% of the world's ocean surface, but it contains 7-10% of marine biodiversity, with more than 10 000 species living there¹. Over 20 species of cetaceans have been found there, more than half of which are resident to the area. Of those species, 18 are classified as threatened or endangered.

One-third of the world's maritime traffic is concentrated in the Mediterranean, with 200 000 vessels passing through each year. For cetaceans, this maritime traffic poses a number of threats: they are at risk of collision with vessels, the noise of ships disturbs their lifestyle and eating habits, and sewage and oil waste pollutes their natural habitat.

Protected marine areas are the best way to safeguard biodiversity. Only 7.14% of the Mediterranean is currently protected in this way, while the goal is to reach 10% by 2020. According to Greenpeace, we should be aiming for 40% in the long term². What is more, these protected areas should be interconnected³.

What action is the Commission planning to take to ensure that we meet the objective of 10% by 2020 and a connected network of 40 % by 2050?

Is it planning to ban maritime traffic in and around the network of protected areas?

¹ C. Piroddi (2017), 'Historical changes of the Mediterranean Sea ecosystem', Scientific reports.

² Greenpeace (2007), 'Réserves marines pour la Méditerranée'.

³ M. Andreello et al. (2013), 'Low Connectivity between Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas', PLoS ONE