

**Question for written answer P-006680/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Target species in the draft multiannual programme for North Sea fisheries

On 6 July 2016 the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a multiannual fisheries plan for the Baltic Sea was published, covering all fish stocks present there. On 3 August 2016 the Commission submitted a proposal for a multiannual fisheries plan for the North Sea. The provisions of this proposal cover stocks of demersal fish species, but not stocks of pelagic species such as herring.

The proposal states on p. 8 that the contributors to the consultation were largely in agreement on the 'most important target species', but that there were varying points of view between the Member States and the fisheries industry on the one hand, and NGOs on the other, on the inclusion of 'additional target species'. The latter advocated specific objectives for each of the species harvested in the North Sea, i.e. including pelagic species.

1. Can the Commission state what plans it has for pelagic fish stocks?
2. How does the Commission propose to ensure, with this proposal confined solely to demersal species, that the balance between the fish species present can be preserved, as in the multi-annual plan for the Baltic Sea?
3. Can the Commission explain more clearly the differences, referred to in its proposal, over the issue of the most important target species, and state what suggestions have been made with regard to other target species?