Question for written answer P-002379/2019 to the Commission
Rule 138
Damien Carême (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Health, environmental and economic challenges of dealing with WWI and WWII munitions dumped in the North and Baltic Seas

The approximately three billion tonnes of munitions, including chemical weapons, that were dumped offshore around Europe during the two World Wars constitute a serious threat to the marine environment and human health. The drums in which the munitions were disposed of are starting to leak their poisonous content into the sea. If as little as 16% of this is dispersed it could wipe out all forms of life for centuries. The seabed off the entire Belgian coast between France and Germany is carpeted with toxic bombs.

In June 2018, under the EU Maritime Security Strategy, the Member States promised to take practical measures to address the problem, notably to eliminate sea-dumped chemical munitions and unexploded ordnance (Action No B.5.2, North Sea).

1. Can the Commission report what steps have been taken by the Member States, particularly France, to implement the Maritime Security Strategy?

2. Unlike other EU Member States, France is hiding behind defence secrecy rules in this regard. Can the Commission share what information it has vis-à-vis France and thus bring more transparency to what is a public-interest matter?

3. Is France participating in specific munitions elimination programmes in cooperation with the Commission?