

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3372/07

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to the Commission

Subject: Plagues of jellyfish as a symptom of the imbalance of the Mediterranean Sea's ecosystem

For several years, jellyfish have plagued Mediterranean coastlines. A great many people have had to be treated for jellyfish stings, which cause pain, inflammation and health problems, prompting the authorities to advise against swimming in the sea in some places.

This plague is a symptom of the imbalance from which the Mediterranean ecosystem is suffering. The abuse of certain fishing practices is bringing about the disappearance of species such as bluefin tuna, which compete with jellyfish for zooplankton, or loggerhead turtles, which are their natural predators.

The overabundance of jellyfish can also be attributed to the warming-up of coastal waters – a consequence of climate change – and growing salinity owing to the reduced influx of freshwater as a result of drought.

The Council has recently approved a management plan for bluefin tuna. This no doubt represents a first step towards tackling the large number of jellyfish on our beaches; however, we are faced with an environmental issue that concerns all coastal states and that requires a Community approach.

Experts warn that the problem needs to be addressed immediately in order to prevent the situation from worsening. Is the Commission aware of the economic and environmental implications of this problem? Does the Commission intend to take some form of action in order to tackle it?

Does the Commission intend to promote improved coordination between the Member States that will improve the efficacy of the actions taken by national and regional coastal authorities?