

WRITTEN QUESTION E-5201/08
by Cornelis Visser (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Danger to shipping posed by dumping of stone blocks in the sea area to the west of the island of Sylt

I should like to put this question to the Commission against the background of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (1973), as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto (MARPOL), and of Directive 2005/35/EC¹ on ship-source pollution and the introduction of penalties for infringements.

Is the Commission aware that Greenpeace is still dumping stone blocks a cubic metre in size and weighing 2 to 3 tonnes in the sea to the west of the North Sea island of Sylt?

Is the Commission aware that small fishing vessels (24 metres and 300 hp at the most) from Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark are to be found in considerable concentrations in this sea area?

Is the Commission aware that the submerged stone blocks are not marked and their exact position is unknown?

Is the Commission aware that there is considerable danger if the fishing gear of small fishing vessels comes into contact with stone blocks such as these – including the danger that the vessel will capsize and the crew be drowned?

Does the Commission share my view that the dumping must be stopped?

Does the Commission agree that, given the long-term nature of the campaign, the danger will persist for many years?

Does the Commission share my view that the submerged stone blocks must be removed as quickly as possible in order to protect the safety of vessels and crews?

Is the Member State affected – Germany – prepared to apply the sanctions set out in the abovementioned Directive?

Is the Commission prepared to make an visit of inspection to the sea area in question?

¹ OJ L 255, 30.9.2005, p. 11.