

**Question for written answer E-6016/2010
to the Council**
Rule 117
Christophe Béchu (PPE)

Subject: Ban on bluefin tuna fishing vessels

On Wednesday, 9 June 2010, the Commission announced that France's bluefin tuna quotas had already run out, and that it had decided to curtail the industrial fishing operations of tuna seiners in the Mediterranean, six days before the official closure.

At the end of talks called by Bruno Le Maire, the Commission admitted to an inaccuracy and finally gave the go-ahead for 171 remaining tonnes of the French quota.

All the same, the ban on the use of tuna seiners to the advantage of artisanal fishing methods is surprising, in that quotas are already imposed. While the promotion of 'sustainable' fishing methods is appreciated, those working in the fishing industry find it hard to understand this decision and are asking themselves questions about the future of industrial fishing in what are already difficult times for this sector.

In the final analysis, what factors determined the ban on seiner fishing? Should this be viewed as a bad sign for European industrial fishing and its future? Is the focus on 'artisanal' fishing for threatened species such as bluefin tuna bound to take precedence over industrial fishing in the medium term?