Question for written answer E-010557/2012
to the Commission
Rule 117
Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)

Subject: Simplification of free circulation and equal access to medical-veterinary products used in aquaculture within the EU

At present, the registration of medical-veterinary products used in aquaculture is a prerogative of the Governments of the Member States. The number of such products registered in Portugal is very small, as the procedure is tedious and time-consuming. Owing to the small size of the Portuguese market and low business turnover, pharmaceutical companies are unable to make a profit from investing in the studies and permits required in order to licence these products, so they make no effort to do so. This makes it particularly difficult for Portuguese fish-farmers to gain access to certain pharmaceutical products for aquaculture, placing them at a clear and markedly unfavourable competitive disadvantage in relation to their European rivals.

In its answer of18 August 2010 to a question on this subject presented on 13 July 2010, the Commission said that it 'is aware of the problem of availability of veterinary medicines in the EU, in particular for minor species and minor use, and the administrative burden involved in the authorisation procedure of veterinary medicines and of keeping existing products on the market. Therefore, the Commission has initiated a review of the legal framework for veterinary medicines. In the public consultation of this review the significant problems for producers of aquatic food have been pointed out. In 2011 the Commission will publish the impact assessment of this review with a view to making, where appropriate, legal proposals'.

In light of the above, and bearing in mind that some two years on from the Commission's reply the situation of Portuguese fish-farmers remains unchanged, could the Commission answer the following:

1. Given that the Commission initiated a review of the legal framework for veterinary medicines in 2010 and carried out an impact assessment of said review in 2011, what decisions has it reached since then? When will it publish them?

2. Does the Commission intend to regulate to simplify the free circulation of and equal access to medical-veterinary products for use in aquaculture by all EU fish-farmers? If so, when and in what form does it plan to present a legislative proposal on this matter?