

**Question for written answer E-000251/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Vito Bonsignore (PPE)

Subject: Mercury exposure prevention measures - economic benefits and consumer protection

Some 20 eminent research institutes have published the results of a study into the impact of excessive levels of mercury exposure on IQ, especially among children.

The report, 'Economic benefits of methylmercury exposure control in Europe: Monetary value of neurotoxicity prevention', shows that across the EU more than 1.8 million children suffer exposure THAT exceeds the safety limits set by the EU itself. That is not all, however; the report reveals significant differences between countries, and indicates that the highest levels of exposure are found in the countries of southern Europe.

Using statistical models and respected scientific literature, the research also reveals that the lowering of IQ caused by mercury exposure results in a 'loss of productivity and thus a lower earning potential', which can be quantified at around EUR 8 billion for the EU countries.

In view of these results, I would ask the Commission:

1. Does it intend to take the above-mentioned report into consideration, with regard to specific programmes and measures, both from the point of view of public safety and in relation to the serious implications in terms of the growth and competitiveness of the EU economies?
2. In particular, does it agree with the quantification of the economic benefit that could be achieved by removing the excessive exposure?
3. What specific measures does it intend to take in this regard, in terms of environmental policy and of incentives for innovation in processes and food safety standards in the fishing industry?