

**Question for written answer E-002834/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Chemical weapons dumped in the Baltic Sea

Historians estimate that around 60 000 tonnes of chemical weapons – including between 12 000 and 13 000 tonnes of toxic warfare agents – were secretly dumped in the Baltic Sea after the Second World War. Currently, three dumping sites have been identified: the Bornholm Trench (to the East of Bornholm), the Little Belt and the south-western part of the Gotland Trench. These bodies of water are identified on navigation charts.

Ecologists warn that the dumped chemical weapons are a ticking time bomb that could blow up at any moment. They pose a threat to the sensitive and fragile Baltic ecosystem, as well as to the health and lives of coastal residents. According to estimates, if just one-sixth of the dumped chemicals leaked from their containers, life in the Baltic Sea and coastal regions could be wiped out for over 100 years.

1. Does the Commission have any information on the chemical weapons abandoned at the bottom of the Baltic Sea?
2. In the Commission's view, how high is the risk posed by the dumping sites? Does the Commission agree with experts who state that the Baltic ecosystem could be destroyed in the event that the containers holding the chemical weapons are damaged?
3. What steps has the Commission taken to secure and remove harmful materials?