

**Question for written answer E-011681/2013/rev.1
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Lucas Hartong (NI)

Subject: Bizarre fine for Urk fisherman

Last Friday, it seems that Urk-based fishing vessel PW 447 was fined EUR 16 000 in Norway¹. What was the offence? It was the accidental release overboard of seven dabs that fell out when the nets were put out. According to the owner, when lost fishing hours, legal bills and the increased costs in bringing the fish back from Norway are taken into account, this all amounts to a loss of EUR 23 000. When he told the Norwegian head inspector that he had never been involved in anything like it in his 35-year career, he was told, 'Norway: we protect our waters.' The Norwegians are evidently using the discard ban to keep fishermen from EU Member States away.

1. Does the Commission agree with the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) that this action on Norway's part against a fisherman from an EU Member State is completely unacceptable behaviour?
2. Can fishermen from EU Member States expect more of this kind of idiotic fines, should seven dabs accidentally slip overboard? What is the Commission going to do to prevent this?
3. What is the Commission going to do to call Norway to account and ensure that this fine against PW 447 is immediately reversed?
4. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that the discard ban should now be considered a completely failed measure?

¹ <http://visserijnieuws.punt.nl/content/2013/10/Noorse-boete-van-16000-euro-voor-een-paar-scharretjes#sthash.nEsTtowt.dpuf>.