

**Question for written answer E-000954/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)

Subject: Amendment of fishing regulations by reason of the change of status of Mayotte

On 12 December 2013, in plenary session, the European Parliament adopted a legislative decision concerning amendments to certain fishery regulations as a result of Mayotte becoming an Ultra-Peripheral Region of the European Union (2013/0191(COD)), some of them due to the need to protect the sensitive ecological and biological position of the waters off the coast of this island and to preserve the local economy, aiming to restrict certain fishing activities to vessels registered in Mayotte.

These regulatory amendments envisage the designation of the Mayotte Marine Natural Park as the entire Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Mayotte and include a derogation that permits France to restrict fishing within 100 nautical miles to the local fleet, as well as to adopt any conservation measures deemed necessary to preserve the protected natural assets throughout the area of the Mayotte Marine Natural Park.

In terms of environmental sensitivity and dependency on fishing activities, the situation of all the Ultra-Peripheral Regions (UPRs) is similar. This means that UPRs in the Atlantic are characterised by a high level of marine biodiversity and the existence of deep-sea ecosystems that are highly fragile and vulnerable, namely the seamounts. Fishing activity in UPRs in the Atlantic, primarily undertaken in deep sea areas, means that the fishery sector is of enormous socio-economic importance for local communities.

Against this background and with a view to ensuring that there is no discrimination in treatment between the UPRs of the European Union, I have the following question:

Given the identification, characterisation and delimitation of bio-geographically sensitive areas also outside the EEZs of the UPRs, namely seamounts, does the Commission intend to apply the same principle and promote the adoption of the same kind of measures to protect the environment and restrict fishing in these areas to the local fleet alone?