

**Question for written answer E-001361/2014  
to the Commission  
Rule 117  
Mojca Kleva Kekuš (S&D)**

**Subject:** Free berths in fishing ports and incentives for young fishermen

Slovenia's coastal municipalities (Koper, Izola and Piran) with fishing ports that have been modernised using funding from the European Fisheries Fund (EFR) have informed me that they are having problems because of a ban on leasing free berths in these fishing ports to entities not involved exclusively in fishing. These municipalities, which received funding under the 'Fishing ports, landing sites and shelters' measure, were required to comply with the provisions of Article 64 of the Regulation on the Implementation of the Operational Programme for Fisheries Development in the Republic of Slovenia 2007-2013, which provides that an investment activity for which a beneficiary receives funding under the 'Fishing ports, landing sites and shelters' measure must continue for at least 10 years after the final payment. During this period the beneficiary may not make substantial changes to or sell off the investments and may not use the investment for a purpose other than that for which the funds were allocated, otherwise all the funds received will have to be returned to the budget of the Republic of Slovenia, plus statutory interest. Consequently, and pursuant to Article 39 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006 on the European Fisheries Fund, the fishing ports whose modernisation was cofinanced by the EFF can only be used for fishing and fish-farming purposes.

As a result of other measures under the EFF which encouraged fishermen to reskill and diversify into other activities, a lot of fishermen scrapped their boats and stopped fishing as an exclusive activity. Then with EU funds they bought boats intended, for example, to transport tourists as a supplementary activity, or environmental vessels to assist in the event of accidents at sea. These people, who now find themselves not exclusively involved in fishing but also carrying out additional activities, thus no longer have the possibility of obtaining a berth in the modernised fishing ports. Will the Commission therefore adopt new rules to address this problem so as to allow the municipalities to allocate berths in fishing ports cofinanced with EFF funds also to entities only partly engaged in fishing?

Furthermore, during the negotiations on the new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund for the period 2014-2020, Slovenia clearly highlighted the specific situation of its fisheries sector, in which over the last 20 years the total catch has fallen from 6 000 tons to 317 tons, so that today we are talking only about maintaining the traditional multipurpose function of Slovenian fisheries. Given the importance of ensuring that the tradition of fishing remains attractive to young and new fishermen, I would like to ask what support mechanisms and financial incentives the Commission will provide for young fishermen and apprentices wishing to gain experience of fishing boats?