

**Question for written answer E-002693/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Alain Cadec (PPE) and Tokia Saïfi (PPE)

Subject: Herring war - WTO Dispute Settlement Body

On 12 September 2012, Parliament adopted by 659 votes to 11, with seven abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on certain measures in relation to countries allowing non-sustainable fishing for the purpose of the conservation of fish stocks. Following the adoption of the regulation, the Commission may impose sanctions on countries allowing non-sustainable fishing if they fail to cooperate in the management of a stock of common interest in compliance with the provisions of the UNCLOS of 10 December 1982 and if they fail to cooperate in any international agreement that has the aim of maintaining a common fish stock at a biomass level above that which can produce the maximum sustainable yield.

The Faroe Islands withdrew from the coastal agreement under which fishing quotas for Atlanto-Scandian herring are set by the five 'coastal states'. On 26 March 2013, the Faroese authorities announced that they had unilaterally increased their quotas by 145% for the year 2013. Under Regulation (EU) No 1026/2012, the Commission therefore proposed that the following trade sanctions be imposed on the Faroe Islands from August 2013: firstly, a ban on imports into the Union of herring and mackerel from the Atlanto-Scandian stocks that have been caught under the control of the Faroe Islands, and, secondly, restricted access to European Union ports for Faroese vessels.

Denmark has expressed concern over the coercive economic measures imposed on the Faroe Islands – an autonomous territory forming an integral part of Denmark – by the European Union under Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 793/2013. It considers those measures to be incompatible with WTO law and has asked the WTO Dispute Settlement Body to set up a special panel of experts to settle the dispute between the Faroe Islands and the European Union.

In our capacity as Members of the European Parliament, we wish to assert that the resolution of this dispute is essential to maintaining the herring stock in the North-East Atlantic at levels above those that can produce the maximum sustainable yield. In light of this, we consider that it would be inadmissible for the Commission to show any signs of weakening in the face of the Faroese authorities' assertion that the trade sanctions are contrary to WTO law.

Are the sanctions imposed under Implementing Regulation (EU) No 793/2013 compatible with WTO law?

Does the Commission intend to repeal the sanctions imposed on the Faroe Islands?

What position will the European Union be defending before the WTO panel of experts with a view to resolving this dispute?