

**Question for written answer E-005191/2014  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

**Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL) and Alda Sousa (GUE/NGL)**

Subject: Limits to fishing off Culatra Island

On Culatra Island (Faro, Portugal) there are 90 boats for local, small-scale fishing and six for coastal fishing. Together with shellfish collecting and production, fishing is the lifeline of this community. The vast majority of the fishing folk are confined to fishing in a sea area between a quarter and three miles off the coast and six miles on either side of the estuary.

However, the Aquaculture Production Area of Armona (APAA) was recently created and marked out within this area. Not only does it take up about half of the area, but the community has been banned from fishing and sailing their boats there. This has caused serious problems for the fishers and their families, who have been fishing there since time immemorial, and it even threatens their survival.

In addition, the western end of the APAA is positioned in such a way at the mouth of the Lavajo estuary and close to the coastline that it makes it difficult for boats to sail in or out to sea safely.

Despite several appeals, particularly by the Culatra Island Residents' Association (AMIC), to minimise the impact on the fishers and their families and mitigate the harm caused by the creation of the APAA, so far nothing has been done, and implementing the project has not brought about any visible benefit or positive effect either.

In view of all the above, it is difficult to understand why the ban on sailing and fishing in the area has not been lifted, since only a small part of the APAA is actually being used for the purpose for which it was created.

1. Is the Commission aware of the APAA project?
2. Does the Commission think it might be possible to grant a special authorisation for this community's local and coastal fishing boats to sail and fish within this area, particularly in the part that is not being used?
3. Might there be some measure that could be used to protect these fishers and their families so that they can carry on fishing and secure their livelihoods?