

**Question for written answer E-005577/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Protection of *Caretta caretta* (loggerhead) sea turtles

In view of the catastrophe affecting *Caretta caretta* sea turtles, typical of the Mediterranean, the Life Programme is taking action to protect them, by implementing the Tartalife project. The high mortality rate of these turtles depends to a large extent on the fact that they are caught accidentally, remaining trapped in fishermen's trawler (or similar) nets.

In particular, a number of turtle-saving strategies and tools have been devised and developed by a well-established Italian network bringing together the strengths and expertise of various stakeholders (e.g. fisheries trade associations, government departments, environmental groups), under the leadership of the CNR (Institute of Marine Sciences) in Ancona.

Among the various devices that have been designed are 'TEDs' (Turtle Excluder Devices). These are special grids inserted into trawl nets, which prevent turtles from being accidentally trapped and give them an 'emergency exit' along one side of the net. In addition, the use of circle hooks prevents death by suffocation for turtles that are accidentally snared by them (unlike the widespread J-hooks). Other measures include the use of the STAR (Sea Turtle Acoustic Deterrent) electro-acoustic system, which is designed to keep turtles away from fishing areas.

Obviously, the project seeks to involve fishermen to as great an extent as possible.

With regard to the above, can the Commission:

1. provide information on the mortality rate for *Caretta caretta* (further to accidental catches during fishing);
2. provide, if possible, data on the initial results of the implementation of the above-mentioned strategies;
3. say whether any incentives are available for the fishermen involved in the project?