

**Question for written answer E-006366/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Herbert Reul (PPE)

Subject: Very high levels of tributyltin on the British Virgin Islands

Soil analyses by LUFA Nord-West in cooperation with the University of Trier commissioned by Mr Martin Rechmann have revealed very high levels of the pollutant tributyltin (TBT) at various places in Road Town, the capital of the British Virgin Islands. TBT is seriously harmful to the hormone systems of human beings and animals. One possible explanation for this finding is the inclusion of TBT in antifouling paints for ships in the region. Pursuant to an IMO (International Maritime Organisation) convention, the sale and application of paint containing TBT have been banned in the EU since 2003 (2002/62/EEC). Despite that, the presence of TBT in a concentration of 14 600 µg/kg of soil has been demonstrated in Road Town, which is many times the maximum permitted concentration of 3 µg/kg of soil (RIVM, Netherlands).

In its directive on environmental standards for water quality and in the REACH Regulation, the European Union has concerned itself with the occurrence of TBT, adopted a clear position on the matter and set limit values for TBT in products and waters.

1. Is the Commission aware of the very high levels of TBT which prevail within EU territory in the Caribbean?
2. Does the Commission have any further information and data about the occurrence of TBT?
3. Does the Commission consider that the IMO's ban on TBT has been breached in this instance and that those responsible for the breach ought to be appropriately punished?