

**Question for written answer E-003891/2017
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Posidonia oceanica conservation in the EU

Posidonia oceanica is a sea grass. It is one of the longest-living and most productive species on the planet, and provides one of the most important ecosystems in terms of maintaining biodiversity. As a sign of just how valuable it is, one hectare of *Posidonia oceanica* converts the same amount of carbon dioxide to oxygen as five hectares of Amazonian forest. It also helps to mitigate the strength of waves, prevent coastal erosion and stabilise sandbanks.

Despite all this, however, it is also one of the most endangered ecosystems. The loss of the species is practically irreversible, it being the slowest-growing plant on Earth. It is estimated that over a quarter of the global distribution of *Posidonia oceanica* has been destroyed, chiefly as a result of dredging and excessive levels of nutrients. Other risks it faces include climate change, dumping and anchoring. It is therefore vital that seafarers are made aware of the situation if the species is to be saved.

Posidonia oceanica beds are protected under the Habitats Directive. This means that it is forbidden to destroy them, but more can be done. Action could include identifying *Posidonia oceanica* beds on nautical charts, and banning vessels from anchoring in those beds.

Does the Commission have data on the situation as regards this plant? What has been the outcome of the action taken? What steps does the Commission intend to take in future?