Question for written answer E-004913/2018 to the Commission
Rule 130
Miapetra Kumpula-Natri (S&D)

Subject: Study of the potential effects of oxidation of deep water in the Baltic Sea in order to reduce the phosphorus load

The state of the Baltic Sea has remained bad, although the external pollution load has fallen to less than half the figure for the 1980s. Some 37 000 tonnes of phosphorus enters the Baltic Sea each year; at present, the quantity of phosphorus in the Sea is 700 000 tonnes. Deepwater oxygen depletion in the Baltic Sea has increased the amount of phosphorus present. According to the latest studies, the situation could be improved by means of large-scale oxidation of deep water as a measure directly targeting phosphorus.

Oxidation could be brought about, for example, by using wind-powered pumps to transfer oxidised water to the seabed, which would render phosphorus-binding processes more effective. Oxidation would be a cheap and quick method of improving the state of the sea, but there are also major uncertainties attached to it. Real effects would be seen only once the measure had been trialled on a sufficient scale and in such a way that its impact could be distinguished from the random effects of nature.

Does the Commission have any plans for taking action to obtain further information about the anticipated effects of oxidation to reduce the amount of phosphorus in the Baltic? Will the Commission study the risks and opportunities associated with oxidation of deep water in the Baltic?