

Question for written answer E-002719/2019
to the Commission
Rule 138
Alex Agius Saliba (S&D)

Subject: Protection of Maltese lampuki fishers

The fishing season for lampuki (*Coryphaena hippurus* – dolphin-fish) runs from 15 August to the end of December, in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1343/2011. During this period, fishers lay out their *kannizzati* (lampuki fish aggregating devices) in areas officially designated for that purpose. The first floats are normally set up some eight miles from the Maltese coastline, extending out a further 100 miles into international waters. Maltese and Gozitan fishers have repeatedly reported the recurrent and systematic problem of Tunisian fishers pilfering lampuki catches from their float rafts, destroying their floats and lines and using strong-arm tactics to prevent the Maltese from accessing their equipment during the lampuki season.

Is the Commission aware of these violations, particularly the Tunisians' fishing methods, which include the unlawful use of Maltese fishers' fishing devices?

What measures will it take to help Maltese fishers and prevent these illegal practices during the lampuki season?

Can it raise this particular problem as part of current negotiations with Tunisia on the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area or use the EU's bilateral assistance to Tunisia under the European Neighbourhood instrument to enforce good practices and governance on Tunisian fishing vessels, given that the EU assistance to Tunisia had increased substantially over the years?