

**Question for written answer E-000807/2020  
to the Commission**  
Rule 138  
**Julie Lechanteux (ID)**

**Subject:** Maritime freight: collateral damage of the coronavirus epidemic

The maritime freight sector has become a collateral victim of the coronavirus epidemic which is sweeping China.

Slowing international trade owing to the Chinese health crisis has caused the Baltic Dry Index (BDI) to drop to its lowest level since 2016. The BDI, a price index for the transport by sea of dry cargo (mainly ores, coal and grains), is published by the London-based British company Baltic Exchange.

The maritime freight sector has another serious problem to tackle, following the recent hike in fuel prices caused by the entry into force on 1 January 2020 of the International Maritime Organisation's new rule capping sulphur emissions at 0.5%.

This complicated situation could, in the short term, have repercussions on port activities and, of course, on the rates for freight transport.

Given the Commission's sea transport competences established in Article 100(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, what measures will it take to support the maritime freight sector, a strategically important area for the European economy?