

Question for written answer E-002872/2021
to the Commission
Rule 138
Søren Gade (Renew)

Subject: Greenpeace's actions in a marine protected area

Greenpeace activists recently placed granite boulders across 55 square miles of seabed in the Offshore Brighton Marine Protected Area (MPA). Similar actions have been conducted in the North Sea and the Baltic since 2008.

1. Does the Commission see these activities as legal, and what is it doing to prevent and stop the illegal expansion of boulder dumping in EU seas? What legal instruments does the Commission recommend to Member States for stopping this illegal activity?
2. Given that boulders can get caught in fishing nets, which is a serious danger to marine traffic and human life, and can sink vessels, what is the Commission doing to ensure the safety and continuation of fishing operations in these areas?
3. Since the boulders come from a quarry in northern Germany, is the Commission assessing the environmental impact caused by the destruction of distant mountains with the purpose of dumping these rocks in a completely new habitat, changing its ecosystem and destroying the sandbanks the MPA aims to protect? Does the Commission see the artificial introduction of hard substrate as a quality change in sandbank habitats as defined by Natura 2000, and is this in line with conservation targets and the protection of the specific biological community in sandy areas?