Question for written answer E-003248/2021
to the Commission
Rule 138
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Subject: Excessive checks and delays of search and rescue boats

Between August 2019 and May 2020, multiple humanitarian rescue boats operated by the NGO Open Arms, as well as the vessels *Alan Kurdi*, *Sea-Watch 3* and *Sea-Watch4*, were subject to state controls and administrative delays by the Italian authorities. Despite the crucial work carried out by maritime rescue NGOs, which the UNHCR defines as vital, necessary and mandatory action that provides Member States with additional capacities, some boats have been stuck for two months due to excessive technical checks intended only for commercial vessels. We must acknowledge the fact that the number of migrants arriving via the Mediterranean has increased significantly in 2021 and this trend will continue throughout the summer.

With this in mind, as well as Italy's recent history of persecuting such vessels, we would like to know:

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation?

2. Under EU law, why are non-commercial vessels subject to Paris MOU inspections?

3. Can a Member State refuse to recognise certificates issued by another Member State, in this case Spain, which acts as the flag State of the Open Arms vessel?