

**Question for written answer E-004069/2021
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Tom Berendsen (PPE)

Subject: Unsafe situation for inland shippers due to toxic cargo from Europe

In the Netherlands, three inland vessels have been out of service for several weeks because excessively high concentrations of phosphine were found in cargo containing grain from Poland¹. During an inspection, 300 to 400 parts per unit of the toxic fumigant were measured, which is already dangerous as of a concentration of 0.5 parts per unit. The skippers concerned were not informed about the toxic cargo when the grain was shipped². The excessively high concentrations of phosphine in combination with the inadequate provision of information have led to an unsafe situation for the crew concerned and all other parties involved in the shipment.

1. On the European transport market, which EU legislation governs the use of phosphine and other toxic substances in cargoes, including the provision of information about them to the carrier?
2. In the light of both the current situation and similar unsafe situations in the past, how does the European Commission assess the effectiveness of current EU legislation?
3. Is the Commission considering tightening up EU legislation in order to prevent unsafe situations for humans, animals and the environment as a result of excessively high concentrations of phosphine and other toxic substances in cargoes from Europe and elsewhere, and to guarantee the provision of adequate information and the effective enforcement of legislation?

¹ <https://nos.nl/artikel/2393426-weer-geen-oplossing-voor-binnenvaartschepen-met-giftige-lading-nul-resultaaten-onrust>

² <https://www.destentor.nl/zwolle/gifschip-uit-zwolle-aangekomen-bij-ketelmeer-waar-gevaarlijke-lading-wordt-gelost~a685cb4b/>