

**Question for written answer E-000511/2022  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Bycatches of dolphins in the bay of Biscay

Every year, thousands of common dolphins are killed in the Bay of Biscay as a result of bycatch. France and Spain have legal obligations under EU law to adopt conservation measures to stop this bycatch. Following a Commission request, a joint recommendation on the matter was submitted by the South Western Waters (SWW) High Level Group in October 2020. However, in March 2021 the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) deemed the proposed measures insufficient to ensure compliance with EU environmental legislation. In October 2021, the Commission therefore advised the SWW Group to agree on a new joint recommendation. In their answer, the SWW Group made clear that they do not intend to implement closure periods, as recommended by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES).

1. Will the Commission be sending a reasoned opinion to the Member States concerned, since the joint recommendation does not meet requirements under EU legislation and the Member States made clear that they do not intend to implement closure periods, and thus do not follow scientific advice on the measures needed to minimise and where possible eliminate bycatch?
2. If not, what does the Commission intend to do to prevent the killing of thousands of dolphins this winter?