

**Question for written answer E-001738/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Domènec Ruiz Devesa (S&D), **Dietmar Köster** (S&D), **Sylvie Guillaume** (S&D), **José Gusmão** (The Left), **Tineke Strik** (Verts/ALE), **Thijs Reuten** (S&D), **Damien Carême** (Verts/ALE)

Subject: New Italian decree-law limiting the operations of NGO rescue boats

Italian Decree-Law 1/2023 of 2 January 2023 stipulates that NGO boats may only carry out one rescue at a time.

On 17 February 2023, Doctors Without Borders' ship Geo Barents, after receiving instructions from the authorities to proceed to an assigned port, carried out two additional rescues, saving 48 people. As a result, the ship was detained in Ancona on 23 February 2023 and the organisation was fined EUR 10 000.

On 25 March 2023, the crew of the boat Louise Michel contacted the competent authorities after an initial rescue. When the authorities failed to promptly assign a port of disembarkation, the ship carried out three further rescue operations, saving 180 lives. The authorities subsequently seized the boat in Lampedusa.

1. In a letter dated 13 April 2023, Commissioner Johansson stated that the expectation was that the rules requiring private vessels to reach the port of disembarkation without delay after the completion of a rescue 'will not be interpreted or implemented in contradiction with international customs and maritime law'. Therefore, what is the Commission's response to the seizing of these boats?
2. Additionally, the letter states that the decree-law does not conform with Article 6(1) of the Asylum Procedures Directive¹. What steps will the Commission take to ensure full compliance with EU law?

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¹ Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (OJ L 180, 29.6.2013, p. 60).