Question for written answer E-001908/2023
to the Commission
Rule 138
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Subject: Uses of sargassum seaweed

Sargassum seaweed floats on ocean surfaces thanks to small gas-filled bladders and often clumps together to form ‘rafts’. These brown algae regularly wash up on the shores of the West Indies and Guyana. They soil beaches, obstruct ships from navigating in and out of ports and release a dangerous gas when decomposing: hydrogen sulphide (H_2S). Fishing and tourism are severely affected by these algae washing up on shores.

However, they could become a useful resource for our overseas territories. Sargassum can be turned into fertiliser, biomass, biomaterials (cardboard, paper, bioplastics, etc.) and even fodder for chickens or sheep. Some research suggests that it may be possible to produce activated carbon from it, which can in turn be used to filter chlordecone.

However, harvesting sargassum for these purposes is difficult as it washes up on shores irregularly and removing it from shorelines is expensive. Furthermore, it cannot be collected directly from the sea, as it provides a valuable habitat for fish, invertebrates and sea turtles.

Substantial investment is needed to help our overseas territories reap the benefits of these algae.

In light of the above, will the Commission fund projects to produce fertiliser, biomass, biomaterials or animal feed from sargassum seaweed?

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