

**Question for written answer E-002625/2023
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Susanna Ceccardi (ID)

Subject: EU support for fisheries and to tackle the invasion of the blue crab

The blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus*) is a decapod crustacean in the Portunidae family. It is easily identifiable by the colour of its body, which is usually blue on the front, especially along the claws, and it is native to the waters of the western Atlantic Ocean.

In Europe, it is an invasive and alien species that puts a strain on natural habitats and fishing activities because its preferred prey is fry, i.e. recently hatched fish. In Italy, blue crabs arrived first in the north of the Adriatic, but they are now spreading along the Tyrrhenian coast.

Their large numbers are posing problems for fishing companies, including with regard to their marketing and disposal, as an excessive quantity is being caught. In addition, attacks on local fish populations are undermining investments in breeding, and falling catches are likely to affect market supply over the coming years.

In view of the above, does the Commission:

1. plan to include *Callinectes sapidus* on the list of invasive alien species of significant interest with regard to the economy, public health and biodiversity with a view to providing for and introducing a strategy to contain the species, whether by hunting it out or marketing it;
2. engage with research organisations to monitor the spread of the blue crab and any other alien species?

Submitted: 12.9.2023