

**Question for written answer E-002742/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Containing the spread of the blue crab and derogations on the use of towed gears

In recent months, the Adriatic Sea has witnessed the mass proliferation of the blue crab (*Callinectes Sapidus*), a non-indigenous species originating in the western Atlantic whose swift destruction of marine ecosystems is having catastrophic repercussions for the fisheries economy, food supply chains and the tourism sector.

The coastlines of Emilia-Romagna, Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia have been particularly badly hit as, more specifically, has the Goro-Comacchio area, which accounts for more than 40% of European clam production.

It appears that the only way to tackle the spread of the blue crab is using towed gears, which is why the Veneto Region has already authorised their deployment. However their use within three nautical miles of the coast is banned at EU level under Article 13 of Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006.

In the light of the above and with a view to preventing this state of affairs from deteriorating further, will the Commission provide for a derogation to Article 13 of Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006, thus permitting the use of towed gears within three nautical miles of the coast?

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