

**Question for written answer E-000131/2024**

**to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**

Rule 138

**Paolo Borchia (ID)**

**Subject:** Protection of international trade in view of Houthi attacks in the Red Sea

The situation in the Red Sea, a key channel for international trade between Europe and Asia, is causing concern among European business owners.

Following the UK and US strikes in Yemen against Houthi military sites, and, in turn, the Houthis' attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea, there is a risk of fresh attacks, making it difficult for ships to use one of the world's most important watercourses.

The problem for companies deciding to use alternative routes is that other routes can slow journey times and fuel uncertainty about goods' date of arrival, which has an impact on the market, as the prices of transported goods inevitably go up. As it stands, the cost of transport from Shanghai to Genoa has risen by 114%; from Shanghai to Rotterdam by 115%.

The other option is to take the plunge and pass through the Suez Canal regardless, but insurance costs for that route have quadrupled owing to the risk of Houthi attacks.

In the light of the above:

1. What action is the EU taking to mitigate the conflict and protect European trade?
2. To what extent are EU Special Representatives involved in mediation activities?

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