

**Question for written answer E-000651/2024  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Massimiliano Smeriglio (S&D)**

Subject: The criminalisation of NGOs operating in the Mediterranean

On 6 February 2024, the crew of the *Ocean Viking* – a rescue vessel operated by SOS Méditerranée (an NGO) in partnership with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies – saw Libyan patrol boats commit many serious human rights and maritime law violations, which included forced pushbacks and aggressive and dangerous manoeuvres.

On 9 February, the *Ocean Viking*'s crew, along with 261 migrants recently rescued from international waters, disembarked in the port of Brindisi, whereupon the Italian authorities ordered the 20-day administrative detention of the ship and a EUR 3 333 fine for the crew under the Piantadosi Decree.

On 20 February, the Court of Brindisi suspended the detention, recognising the harm this would occasion to rescue operations that were, moreover, 'consonant with the value system found in the Italian constitution and in international law'. The same court is scheduled to determine the lawfulness of the detention measure on 14 March.

In the light of the above:

1. Does the Commission believe it is still acceptable to fund the Libyan Coast Guard with resources that could be rechannelled into financing joint search and rescue services that are aligned with the EU's values?
2. Will the Commission state its position on the need to put an end to the criminalisation of NGOs by means of regulations like the above-mentioned Piantadosi Decree, which openly restricts humanitarian vessels' rescue operations?

**Supporter<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> This question is supported by a Member other than the author: Rosa D'Amato (Verts/ALE)