

**Question for written answer E-000814/2024  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Illegal fishing of undersized sardines and swordfish in Italy

Every year between January and May, along the southern coasts of Italy, many tens of tons of young sardines (*Sardina pilchardus*) are fished illegally. The undersized fish are illegally sold in markets, often in broad daylight. The Adorno Group, O.D.V., specialising in anti-poaching, sent as many as 16 reports to the competent authorities in 2023 alone, regarding both the illegal fishing of young sardines and the equally illegal marketing of undersized specimens of Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*), accompanied by photographic evidence. All the reports have remained unanswered and have not produced any outcomes, while illegal sales have continued.

Sea controls on the fishing of young sardines are very scarce, not least because they have sometimes provoked violent reactions from illegal fishers. In fact, the actions of the Italian law enforcement agencies to counter these illegal phenomena focus almost exclusively on the transportation phase, by which time the fish are dead and serious environmental damage has been done.

Does the Commission intend to take action against the Italian Government, calling for systematic controls, both at sea and on land, aimed at ensuring compliance with national and European regulations established to protect marine fauna and biodiversity?

Submitted: 15.3.2024