

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3173/09
by Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Netherlands ship detained in Germany

A Dutch historic sailing ship has again been detained during a journey within the EU. This time it is the Mare Frisium from Laag Zuthem. In Hamburg the German authorities have detained the ship because they say it fails to comply with German safety requirements. The Mare Frisium has the Dutch SPS safety certificate issued by the Transport, Public Works and Water Management Inspectorate. With this certificate ships can travel anywhere in the world, but within our own European Union Germany and Denmark are causing problems.

I have already put questions to the Commission on this subject. To date the Commission has always stated that the current framework provides sufficient clarity and that there is no need for legislation. Previously the Commission has also stated that the three Member States should work out a solution among themselves.

Following several discussions between the Member States no definitive solution has been found and ships are again being detained. It is time for European action. In a European Union with free movement of goods and services, we cannot have a state of affairs in which ships (historic sailing ships) are detained in another European Member State.

1. Is the Commission aware of the action taken by the German authorities to detain a Dutch historic sailing ship?
2. Does the Commission consider it a normal state of affairs for ships from one Member State to be detained in another Member State within the European Union?
3. Is the Commission prepared to sit around the table with the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany in order to find a solution to this problem?
4. Is the Commission still convinced that no specific safety legislation is needed for historic sailing ships, leaving it ultimately to individual Member States to decide arbitrarily which safety requirements are to be applied to historic sailing ships? What is the Commission prepared to do?