

**Question for written answer P-004225/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Isabelle Thomas (S&D)

Subject: Electrofishing

Various scientific studies over the last 20 years have shown that electrofishing may be having an adverse effect on fish, resulting in retarded growth, reduced fertility, damage to the nervous system, damage to the immune system of juvenile fish and increased mortality, to name but a few. Furthermore, the electrical charge used is fatal for adult and juvenile fish alike, making it incompatible with the common fisheries policy (CFP).

Despite this, the Netherlands has recently been granted an exemption by the Commission, which has authorised it to double from 42 to 84 the number of vessels using electrical beam trawls. In addition to concerns expressed by scientists, local fishermen have been reporting increasing numbers of damaged fish in their catches.

1. Can the Commission indicate how this method of fishing is compatible with the CFP principle of selectivity and the protection of juvenile fish?
2. On what legal basis has this exemption been granted? Can this practice really be considered experimental if 10% of fishing vessels are authorised to engage in it?
3. How has the principle of precaution been applied in this situation, particularly regarding the impact on vulnerable marine ecosystems?