

**Question for written answer P-002155/2019
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Sea Watch case and Tunisia

Further to the case involving the vessel 'Sea Watch', on 2 July 2019 the magistrate in charge of preliminary investigations, Alessandra Vella, decided not to confirm the arrest of Captain Carola Rackete.

The order states that 'Tunisia could not be considered a place that would grant those rescued at sea fundamental guarantees'.

This is a surprising conclusion as Tunisia seems to meet fully the criteria set out by the Commission in its issues paper on an EU list of safe countries of origin, and by Directive 2013/32/EU, for defining a non-EU country as safe.

Furthermore, recent information published by UNHCR shows that the Tunisian Government, which is a signatory to the UN Convention on the rights of refugees, has accepted over 400 asylum requests. Overall, UNHCR considers that the level of protection in Tunisia and the operational environment there remain favourable.

In light of these facts, could the Commission say whether Tunisia should be considered a safe non-EU country and qualified as a consequence to receive survivors rescued at sea by private organisations in international waters?

Will the Commission take a fresh look during its next mandate at the definition of an EU list of safe non-EU countries that draws on the good practices introduced by Italy in its 'Security Decree' in order to speed up asylum procedures throughout Europe and ensure greater legal certainty?