

**Priority question for written answer P-005717/2020  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Seizure of Mazara del Vallo fishing vessels in Libya

On the night of 1 September, two fishing vessels from Mazara del Vallo – ‘Antartartide’ and ‘Medinea’ – were seized in international waters 35 miles north of Benghazi by a Libyan patrol boat working for the forces of General Haftar.

18 fishermen from the Mazara del Vallo fishing fleet – which has been operating for centuries in those same international waters to fish for red shrimp – were detained.

In 2005, through a unilateral declaration, Libya decided to extend its EEZ to 62 miles instead of the 12 miles provided for by international treaties. In the light of the above, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Will it endeavour to secure the release of the 18 fishermen who operate in a sector directly managed by the European Union?
2. What is it doing at the diplomatic or legal level to settle this long-standing issue of the Libyan EEZ and the defence of the international waters in which European fishing vessels operate?