Priority question for written answer P-003760/2021

to the Commission

Rule 138
Tiemo Wölken (S&D)

Subject: Conflict between the EU and Norway over the unilateral reduction of EU fishing rights in the Svalbard Archipelago

In December 2020 the Norwegian government unilaterally reduced EU fishing quotas in the Svalbard Archipelago by over 7 000 tonnes, at the same time considerably increasing its own quotas. This is a clear breach of international law.

The Norwegian government is even threatening EU fishers with arrest and the seizure of their vessels for conducting activities which are legal under international and EU law.

The Commission and the Member States concerned (Germany, Spain, Portugal, France and Poland) share this view and have repeatedly called on the Norwegian government to rectify their decision, so far without success. The fishers are running out of time, as their quotas will be fulfilled at the end of July. I would therefore like to ask the following:

1. How does the Commission assess this situation, including its urgency?
2. Why has the Commission so far been unable to bring about a solution to this conflict with Norway?
3. What action is the Commission considering taking, as soon as possible, to protect the rights of the EU fishing industry?