

**Priority question for written answer P-000605/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Pollution of the Adriatic Sea

More than 90 % of plastic and other waste washing up on Croatia's coasts comes from southern Europe, and in particular from Albania. Moreover, 229 thousand tonnes of plastic end up in the Mediterranean Sea each year, and due to the influence of currents and the relative shallowness of the sea, after passing through the Strait of Otranto, plastic waste from the Mediterranean Sea often ends up in Croatia. The Albanian Government announced an investigation in the last decade into plastic pollution from Albania, which washes up every day the Croatian coast, but no conclusions were reached.

As a country dependent on tourism which is renowned for the conservation and exceptional nature of its natural beauty, Croatia is facing a serious problem that it cannot solve on its own. Geographically, the area hardest hit is Dubrovnik, a globally recognised tourist destination, and other parts of Dubrovnik-Neretva County, such as the Mljet National Park and the Neretva Delta, the latter of which has been under UNESCO protection since 1992. For centuries we have lived by the sea, from the sea and with the sea. We have also inherited respect and recognition of the need to care for our sea from previous generations, which is why it is still necessary to protect it today.

In the context of Albania's accession negotiations with the European Union and European environmental programmes, how can the Commission intervene to prevent further pollution of our Adriatic Sea and the most beautiful coastline on the European continent?