

**Priority question for written answer P-001033/2022
to the Commission**
Rule 138
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Subject: Resignation of two Spanish scientists from the STECF 22-01 expert working group

I have been informed that two Spanish scientists have resigned from the STECF 22-01 expert working group on 'Closure areas in the Western Mediterranean'. These are experts known for their wide experience in their field, specialists in Mediterranean fishing grounds, who have, however, decided to resign from this working group because the conditions there will not allow for an open and balanced scientific debate.

What is especially alarming are reports that the research lacks objectivity and scientific rigour, owing to incorrect use of data and flawed methodologies and the fact that determinant environmental factors are not taken into account when measurements are taken. All this may cause the scientific rigour and the methodology used in this working group to be called into question.

In light of this:

1. Can the Commission explain what led to these scientists resigning from the working group?
2. What methodology did the Commission follow in preparing the working group's mandate?
3. Why was Spain's oft-made request to evaluate the measures employed not taken into account in the mandate, while an evaluation of management measures that had been rejected when the Regulation was adopted was included?