

Question for written answer E-004214/2025
to the Commission
Rule 144
Thomas Bajada (S&D)

Subject: Case of non-compliance by Tunisian fishing vessel

In spite of years of reports by fishers and the Maltese authorities with respect to illegal fishing and aggression by Tunisian-flagged vessels in the Mediterranean, engaged in common dolphinfish (*coryphaena hippurus*) fisheries, little action has been taken by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) Compliance Committee to rectify this long-standing situation.

On 19 August 2025, Maltese media reported that the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) patrol vessel 'Ocean Sentinel' had successfully traced and identified Tunisian vessels engaged in illegal fishing of common dolphinfish using fishing aggregating devices. This constitutes clear evidence, gathered by the EFCA itself, of potential non-compliance by Tunisian vessels with GFCM rules.

1. What was the potential non-compliance by these Tunisian vessels as detected by the EFCA?
2. Will the Commission raise these cases during the upcoming GFCM Compliance Committee meeting in November 2025, and demand enforcement by the Tunisian authorities against these vessels, thereby ensuring that Maltese and Italian fishers start to receive justice for years of inaction?
3. What steps does the Commission intend to take as a follow-up to this case, as well as to other similar cases that occurred this year but were not detected by the EFCA, to prevent future incidents, particularly those involving fishing during the closed season?

Submitted: 27.10.2025