

**Priority question for written answer P-001465/2024
to the Commission**
Rule 144
Emma Fourreau (The Left)

Subject: Call for the release of Captain Paul Watson

Paul Watson, founder of the NGO Sea Shepherd, has been held in custody in Nuuk, Greenland ever since his arrest there by Danish authorities on Sunday 21 July 2024, and now awaits a decision on a potential extradition to Japan. Since 2012, Watson has been the subject of an Interpol red notice issued at the request of the Japanese authorities for his involvement in efforts to combat illegal whaling activities in the Antarctic.

Watson has worked to safeguard marine biodiversity and uphold international law, and commercial whaling has been subject to a temporary International Whaling Commission (IWC) ban since 1986 – a moratorium to which Denmark, an IWC member, is a signatory.

Extraditing Paul Watson to Japan would send an alarming signal to whistleblowers and environmental activists, who are facing increasing repression and criminalisation across the globe. Watson's plight is made all the more alarming by the fact that Japan's judicial system has been repeatedly singled out by human rights NGOs for violating the rights of accused persons.

What steps will the Commission take vis-à-vis the Danish authorities in order to secure the release of Paul Watson?

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