

**Question for written answer E-001726/2024
to the Commission**

Rule 144

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Subject: Invasion and destructive impact of various pufferfish species (*Tetraodontidae*) in the Mediterranean Sea

The increasing prevalence of various pufferfish species (*Tetraodontidae*) in the Mediterranean Sea poses a significant threat to fisheries, marine ecosystems and the economies of coastal regions. These invasive species, which have entered the Mediterranean Sea through the Suez Canal, are known for their highly poisonous tetrodotoxin, making them a serious health hazard when consumed. Furthermore, their predatory behaviour and destructive impact on fishing gear are causing substantial ecological damage.

In light of these alarming developments:

1. What initiatives does the Commission intend to take to effectively combat the spread of these species and to protect the marine ecosystem and economic activity of the EU's coastal regions?
2. Does the Commission intend to fund compensation programmes for fishers affected by pufferfish, and to promote alternative fishing methods?
3. What measures does the Commission intend to take, in cooperation with non-EU countries that share the same marine basin, to promote a transnational strategy for combating the invasion of pufferfish in the Mediterranean Sea?

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