

**Question for written answer E-002135/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Putting effective means in place to stop the proliferation of sargassum in the outermost regions

Sargassum – a brown seaweed that has been plaguing the waters and beaches of the Caribbean – is now regularly washing ashore in huge quantities. An 8 000 km-wide belt threatens to soon pollute all of the French West Indies and Guyana. Sargassum emits high levels of ammonia and hydrogen sulphide, which are toxic and cause harm to people, the local economy and tourism, and can have a particularly devastating impact on biodiversity.

The seaweed has to be collected at sea to prevent it from rotting and releasing gasses; doing so also allows it to be used for other purposes. Collecting and recovering sargassum is vital for the outermost regions and overseas countries and territories in the Atlantic area and requires urgent resources and operational assistance.

The risk of a major health and environmental disaster must be anticipated and prepared for, and calls for coordinated action.

In view of the above:

1. How could the EU civil protection mechanism be mobilised to help deal with the shoring of sargassum?
2. Under what conditions could the Commission include this phenomenon among the major disasters eligible for support from the European Union Solidarity Fund?
3. Would it be possible to create a sargassum emergency fund from the affected regions' unused 2014–2020 funds?

Submitted: 5.7.2023