

**Question for written answer E-015340/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**

Subject: Reduction in flights over the Baltic Sea

According to data from the HELCOM annual report on aerial surveillance over the Baltic Sea, a further decline in the number of aerial surveillance flights carried out by Member States was observed in 2014. Compared with the 2012-2013 period, 20% fewer flights were carried out in 2014.

Aerial surveillance is one of the most important tools we have to monitor and detect the illicit jettisoning of waste oil and other petroleum products into the sea, and to effectively monitor pollution emitted by ships in violation of the established rules.

It is important to note that in 2014, the Member States reported for the first time that occurrences of the jettisoning into the sea of other potentially harmful substances had been uncovered.

Although the majority of illegal jettisoning into the sea goes on at night, nocturnal aerial surveillance flights accounted for barely 15% of all flight time in 2014.

Reducing pollution in the Baltic Sea is one of the most important priorities of the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Does the Commission not feel that it should undertake more initiatives and actions to coordinate on this matter?