

**Question for written answer E-015454/2015
to the Commission**
Rule 130
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Subject: Trawl limit in fishing

Researchers have noted that biodiversity increases with ocean depth. On average, an extra 18 fish species show up with each 100-metre increase. Many of these species are, however, of little commercial value. Such so-called by-catch is thrown back, but, by then, most of it is dead.

A study by Jo Clarke of Glasgow University and Francis Neat of Marine Scotland Science (a government agency), suggests that the appropriate cut-off depth for trawlers should be 600 metres, below which the ecological damage caused by trawling increases substantially.

In terms of weight, trawls at 300 metres have a ratio of catch to by-catch of five to one. At 600 metres the ratio is approximately three to one. At 800 metres, however, it is ten to nine, while at 1 000 metres it is one to one, and at 1 200 metres, one to two.

A bonus of imposing such a cut-off depth would be that any fishing boat caught in the north-east Atlantic with gear equipped with ropes long enough to let it trawl at a lower depth would automatically be breaking the law, making enforcement easier.

Does the Commission intend to regulate the depth of trawlers and, if so, when?