

**Question for written answer E-004618/2025
to the Commission**
Rule 144
Catarina Martins (The Left)

Subject: Sophia solar farm in Castelo Branco (Portugal)

The planned Sophia solar farm in the district of Castelo Branco, Portugal, would see more than 425 000 solar panels installed, covering 524.4 hectares, along with very high voltage power lines to distribute the energy produced. The site comprises a number of classified areas, including the Tejo International Natural Park and the first UNESCO geopark in Portugal, Naturtejo. It is also home to sensitive ecosystems and protected species: cork oak and holm oak forests and open areas interspersed with low-density scrubland, which are essential for species such as the Adalbert's eagle (critically endangered in Portugal) and the black stork, among others. The solar plant also profoundly changes land use. A large swathe of farmland and nature conservation areas will be exclusively used for electricity production. Its environmental and social impact means the project has met with public opposition, particularly with regard to the lack of transparency in the ongoing consultation process.

In light of the above:

1. Does the Commission believe the project is in line with the Habitats and Birds Directives?
2. Does the Commission believe the project is in line with the European Green Deal?
3. Does the Commission believe the project is in line with sustainability and land use criteria and the principle of environmental non-regression?

Submitted: 19.11.2025