

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001598/24
to the Commission
Estrella Galán (The Left)
(3 September 2024)**

Subject: Suspension of the Altri project in A Ulloa for potential breach of EU legislation and the project's serious environmental and socioeconomic consequences

As the Commission is aware, the company Altri SGPS S. A. intends to build a soluble cellulose and vegetable fibre production plant in A Ulloa (Lugo, Spain) and has applied for EUR 250 million of European public funds — including PERTE funding — despite violating the fundamental 'do no significant harm' (DNSH) principle.

Associations of local residents, environmentalists, farmers and livestock farmers, organised under the banner of the 'Ulloa Viva' Platform, have been warning for months of the serious damage the project will cause to the area's environmental and socioeconomic fabric as well as to human health, chiefly owing to pollution and over-exploitation of water resources, soil and biodiversity.

The project could also be in breach of several EU directives, such as 2010/75/EU (industrial emissions), 2014/52/EU (environmental impact assessment) and 2003/35/EC (public participation).

In its answer to Question E-001055/2024 ⁽¹⁾ the Commission states that it is aware that water in the Portodemouros reservoir is already in a 'less than good' ecological state, which could be aggravated if the project were to go ahead.

1. Is the Commission looking onto a possible infringement of EU legislation and has it requested information on the matter from the relevant Spanish authorities?
2. Does it intend to, in the name of the 'precautionary and preventive' principles governing EU environmental policy, call for the project to be suspended?

Submitted: 3.9.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(16 October 2024)**

As the Commission stated in its reply to Written Question E-001055/2024, it appears from the available information on the project referred to by the Honourable Member that the relevant environmental impact assessment procedure pursuant to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive ⁽¹⁾ is currently underway and the project has not received development consent at this point. It is therefore too early to verify compliance with the applicable EU law.

The Commission expects the responsible regional authorities to ensure that a robust environmental impact assessment be conducted in light of all relevant environmental objectives to ensure that the project complies with applicable legislation, particularly the Nature ⁽²⁾ and the Water Framework ⁽³⁾ Directives.

Regarding the main water body potentially impacted by the project, reported to be in less than good ecological potential, the authorities must in principle ensure that no further deterioration occurs and that the project does not prevent it from reaching good status.

Without prejudice to the Commission's role as guardian of the Treaties, Member States are primarily responsible to ensure compliance with EU law.

National means of redress are available, and, in case of alleged breaches of the law, the competent national Courts could order the suspension of the project, where appropriate.

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2024-001055-ASW_EN.html

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. OJ L 26, 28.1.2012, p. 1-21, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU of 16 April 2014 — OJ L 124, 25.4.2014, p. 1-18.

⁽²⁾ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7-50); Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (Codified version), OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7-25

⁽³⁾ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy — OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1-73.