

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002381/24
to the Commission
Gaetano Pedulla' (The Left), Carolina Morace (The Left), Pasquale Tridico (The Left)
(31 October 2024)**

Subject: Destruction of urban woodland in Gallarate (VA) and the Grow29 project

The 'Grow29' project includes an 'urban regeneration' initiative to close four existing schools and group them in a newly built school complex.

The project, funded from the Lombardy region's 2021-2027 regional operational programmes (ROPs) under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the ERDF+, is worth EUR 15 930 000.

It has entailed the felling of the woodland in via Curtatone in Gallarate, a natural habitat both for the nesting of various bird species and for other fauna. This has caused a serious loss of flora-fauna biodiversity and runs counter to general objective pursued by the European Union of safeguarding and improving the environment, including the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora. The municipal authorities have completed these works, flying in the face of protests against them from citizens' groups and environmental associations which had called for the renovation of the neighbourhood schools and the revitalisation of the green area.

With this in mind:

1. Does the Commission consider using EU funding to destroy this urban woodland to be in line with the objectives of the same funds and of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030, the Birds and Habitats Directives and other EU environmental protection instruments?
2. How could it improve the instruments at its disposal to prevent unsustainable land consumption and the irreversible destruction of natural areas?

Supporter ⁽¹⁾

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**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(3 January 2025)**

The regional programme Lombardia 2021/27, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, supports the Urban Development Strategy of the Gallarate Municipality, which includes the construction of a new school complex in an area which is occupied by woodland.

That woodland is not located in areas protected at EU level and/or areas of high naturalistic value, it does not fall within Natura 2000 network sites and there are no interferences with ecological networks.

The woodland is situated in an area under the responsibility of the Ticino Valley Regional Park. The Ticino Park Authority already issued the authorisations for the transformation of the woodland.

On 17 July 2024, the Gallarate Municipality proceeded with monetary compensation in favour of the Ticino Park Authority, so that the same authority can implement mitigation and compensation works in other areas with high environmental value, also within the municipality of Gallarate.

The objective to achieve no net land take in the EU by 2050 is enshrined in the EU Soil Strategy for 2030 ⁽¹⁾. In view of that, the Commission aims to support Member States with guidance on how to reduce soil sealing and land take by revising the EU soil sealing guidelines.

The proposed Soil Monitoring Law ⁽²⁾, currently undergoing interinstitutional negotiations between the co-legislators, puts forward mitigation principles that Member States should observe in case of land take.

¹ This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Dario Tamburrano (The Left)

⁽¹⁾ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/eu-soil-strategy-2030_en

⁽²⁾ Proposal for a DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on Soil Monitoring and Resilience (Soil Monitoring Law), COM/2023/416 final.