

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002938/24
to the Commission
César Luena (S&D), Iratxe García Pérez (S&D)
(13 December 2024)**

Subject: Impacts of quartz mining in north-east Segovia and its alignment with EU strategic policies

Erimsa's mining megaproject in north-east Segovia (Spain) will occupy 436 hectares for the open-cast extraction of quartz by ground screening, a method that could cause serious damage to the local economy, rural communities and the environment in a region with high ecological value close to Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Sites of Community Importance (SCIs). Led by a Norwegian company with a majority of Chinese-held capital, the project will transfer the economic benefits outside the EU, as the ore will be processed outside Spain and possibly outside Europe.

In view of the above:

1. How does the Commission ensure that projects led by non-EU companies and with negative impacts on biodiversity and local economies are aligned with the EU's strategic autonomy and sustainability?
2. Does the Commission think this project could infringe the precautionary principle laid down in Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, given its potential impact on the environment — including biodiversity, critical habitats, soils and water resources — and on human health and nearby SPAs and SCIs?
3. What measures is the Commission proposing to address the climate risks and increased CO₂ emissions resulting from this activity, in line with the EU's climate commitments, including Directive 2009/31/EC?

Submitted: 13.12.2024

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(14 March 2025)**

According to the available information⁽¹⁾, the project is currently undergoing the assessment procedure pursuant to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive⁽²⁾ and has not yet received development consent.

During this procedure, the competent authorities would need to assess any potential impact on the environment, independently of the origin of the company leading the project, and to ensure that the project complies with applicable EU legislation such as the Mining Waste⁽³⁾, Nature⁽⁴⁾ and Water Framework⁽⁵⁾ Directives.

The Commission is not aware of CO₂ storage permits in preparation in Spain that would need the application of Directive 2009/31/EC⁽⁶⁾.

Mining activities normally falls under the scope of Regulation (EC) 2018/842⁽⁷⁾, setting limits to Member States on emissions of greenhouse gases and leaving them the freedom to choose the measures to achieve such targets.

Member States are primarily responsible to ensure compliance with EU law. In line with its strategic approach on enforcement action⁽⁸⁾, which focuses on cases of systemic non-compliance, the Commission considers that the means of redress available under national legislation are the most appropriate mechanism to address individual cases of possible non-compliance, such as the issue raised by the Honourable Members.

⁽¹⁾ <https://energia.jcyl.es/web/jcyl/Energia/es/Plantilla100Detalle/1284766759323/Texto%20Generico/1285446129394/Texto>

⁽²⁾ 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.

⁽³⁾ Directive 2006/21/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006 on the management of waste from extractive industries and amending Directive 2004/35/EC. OJ L 102, 11.4.2006, p. 15-34.

⁽⁴⁾ 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

⁽⁵⁾ 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

⁽⁶⁾ Directive 2009/31/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the geological storage of carbon dioxide and amending Council Directive 85/337/EEC, European Parliament and Council Directives 2000/60/EC, 2001/80/EC, 2004/35/EC, 2006/12/EC, 2008/1/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006. OJ L 140, 5.6.2009, p. 114-135.

⁽⁷⁾ Regulation (EU) 2018/842 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 on binding annual greenhouse gas emission reductions by Member States from 2021 to 2030 contributing to climate action to meet commitments under the Paris Agreement and amending Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 (Text with EEA relevance). PE/3/2018/REV/2. OJ L 156, 19.6.2018, p. 26-42.

⁽⁸⁾ As set out in the communication of 19 January 2017 (EU law: Better results through better application — C/2016/8600, OJ C 18, 19.1.2017, p. 10-20) and in the communication of 13 October 2022 COM(2022) 518 final — Enforcing EU law for a Europe that delivers.

Moreover, the competent national Courts could order the suspension of the project, where appropriate. In its role as guardian of the Treaties, the Commission will continue monitoring the situation and may decide to take appropriate action.
