

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001980/25
to the Commission
Giuseppe Antoci (The Left)
(16 May 2025)**

Subject: Infringement procedure INFR(2023)2181 against Italy for breach of the Habitats Directive

In February 2024 ⁽¹⁾, by way of letter of formal notice, the Commission opened infringement procedure INFR(2023)2181 against Italy for its failure to comply with its obligations under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) to monitor and prevent the by-catch of protected marine species, including cetaceans and turtles.

Article 12 of the directive requires that the Member States adopt strict measures to protect animal species and that they establish a system to monitor their incidental capture and killing, in order to keep track of and reduce by-catches.

With the procedure currently still in the formal notice stage, no precise information is available on the geographic areas concerned, the scientific data collected or the official responses from the Italian Government.

In light of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Has Italy provided responses to the letter of formal notice? Were these responses deemed sufficient to remedy the issues raised in procedure INFR(2023)2181?
2. In respect of what specific geographic areas of Italy and on the basis of what scientific data did the Commission open the infringement procedure? What is the true extent of the by-catches at issue?

Submitted: 16.5.2025

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(3 July 2025)**

With regard to infringement procedure INFR(2023)2181 ⁽¹⁾, the Commission sent a letter of formal notice to Italy on 7 February 2024, to which Italy responded on 21 June 2024 ⁽²⁾.

The Commission is assessing Italy's reply together with additional data and information gathered since the letter of formal notice was sent. Based on this assessment, the Commission will decide on the next step of the procedure.

The breaches concern the Italian fleet and the implementation of the Habitats Directive ⁽³⁾ in the waters over which Italy exercises its jurisdiction in the Mediterranean Sea. Several locations and Natura 2000 sites across Italy have been taken as examples of the contested breaches.

The Commission based its assessment on a combination of sources, including official data reported by Member States, scientific assessments from international organisations, and peer-reviewed academic research.

Although some information is available, the real extent of bycatch in Italian waters is not fully known because Italy has failed to put in place an appropriate monitoring system in accordance with Article 12(4) of the Habitats Directive.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/inf_24_301

⁽¹⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/inf_24_301.

⁽²⁾ Upon request by the Italian authorities, a two-month extension of the time limit to reply to the letter of formal notice was granted.

⁽³⁾ 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.