

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001990/25
to the Commission
Nicolae Ștefănuță (Verts/ALE)
(19 May 2025)**

Subject: Protection of the Zamostea-Luncă Forest and compliance with EU legislation

The Zamostea-Luncă Forest is a unique, old-growth riparian forest in Romania, protected as a national nature reserve since 1973, which partially overlaps with a Natura 2000 site. Concerns have recently been raised by civil society and environmental experts regarding a proposed infrastructure project — the ‘Vârful Câmpului Complex Development’ — which may have significant impacts on the forest and surrounding ecosystems, including on highly fertile agricultural land and the free-flowing section of the Siret river.

Despite the project having previously been rejected by the Romanian Parliament, recent developments suggest that the use of emergency procedures may allow it to continue, bypassing the usual public consultation and environmental safeguards.

1. In the light of increasing reports of nationally significant infrastructure projects being advanced in or near protected areas in several Member States, how is the Commission assessing the adequacy of current safeguards to ensure that Natura 2000 sites, such as the Zamostea-Luncă Forest in Romania, are not adversely affected by such developments?
2. Can the Commission clarify whether such projects, where derogations are introduced via emergency legislation, are compatible with EU environmental law, particularly the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU)?
3. Does the Commission intend to request further information from the Romanian authorities to ensure that EU environmental safeguards and public participation requirements are being upheld in this case?

Submitted: 19.5.2025

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(30 June 2025)**

The Commission is committed to ensuring that Natura 2000 sites are safeguarded against adverse effects from infrastructure projects.

To assess the adequacy of current safeguards, in particular stemming from the Habitats Directive (HD)⁽¹⁾, the Commission regularly monitors the implementation of EU environmental legislation, including the HD and the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive⁽²⁾.

The Commission also works closely with Member States to provide guidance and support in the implementation of these Directives.

Emergency legislation can be used to introduce derogations from EU environmental law, but such derogations must be strictly limited to what is necessary to address the emergency situation and must not compromise the overall protection of the environment.

Article 6(4) of the HD allows for derogations from the prohibition on plans or projects that may have a significant impact on a Natura 2000 site, but only in exceptional circumstances, when no other alternatives are available and mitigation measures are not enough, and subject to strict conditions.

Any derogations introduced via emergency legislation must be carefully assessed to ensure that they are necessary, proportionate, and do not compromise the integrity of the Natura 2000 site or its network as a whole.

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

⁽¹⁾ Articles 6(3) and (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.

⁽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 the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014, OJ L 124, 25.4.2014, p. 1-18.

In line with its strategic approach on enforcement action⁽³⁾, which focuses on cases of systemic non-compliance, the Commission considers that the means of redress available under national legislation would be the most appropriate mechanism to address individual cases of possible non-compliance.

⁽³⁾ 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.