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E-002519/2025

Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(11.8.2025)

At the request of the Spanish authorities, the services of the Commission met the representatives of Aena (Spanish Airport Operator) and the Regional Government of Catalonia on 2 April 2025 to discuss the new plans to further develop Barcelona's Airport¹.

Pursuant to the Habitats Directive², any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site must be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site, the competent national authorities can agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned. If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, all the necessary compensatory measures must be taken to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected.

The appropriate assessment referred to above has not yet been conducted and, consequently, it is not possible to pre-empt its results. In order to clarify the baseline for the assessment of any new project, the competent authorities need to complete the implementation of the measures necessary to put an end to an ongoing infringement case³ regarding the inadequate protection of the Natura 2000 site *Delta del Llobregat*⁴.

¹ Commission's Transparency Register:

<https://ec.europa.eu/transparencyinitiative/meetings/meeting.do?host=ca175ad3-c2c5-457e-8f6d-f17956bdcc4e&page=8>.

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.

³ Ref. INFR(2020)4133: [https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&refId=INFR\(2020\)4133&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumns=decisionDate](https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&refId=INFR(2020)4133&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumns=decisionDate).

⁴ Code ES0000146.