

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002580/25
to the Commission
Kostas Papadakis (NI)
(26 June 2025)

Subject: Dangerous plans to install wind turbines and photovoltaics on Mount Kaimakchalan, specifically in areas of the regional unit of Florina

The dangerous plans to install wind turbines and photovoltaics on Mount Kaimakchalan entail the installation of 44 photovoltaic units and 22 wind turbines (with a target of 80 in total), altering the cultural and environmental profile of the area, with an impact on farmers, livestock breeders and beekeepers. Like its predecessors, the Nea Dimokratia Government is promoting the EU's 'green growth' strategy by strengthening monopolies in order to exploit natural resources and the environment.

Residents demand that the mountains and natural environment not be handed over to business groups, that the environmental feasibility impact studies be rejected, that applications for installation permits and lease agreements be made, that the start of the works be stopped, that no wind turbines, photovoltaic parks, substations or high-voltage lines be installed close to populated areas, and that proximity limits be revised upwards and noise pollution limits downwards.

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

1. What is its position regarding calls by local residents for measures to protect Natura 2000 areas and regarding the rejection of the special environmental report, which is in fact detrimental to the environment and to the interests of working people?
2. What view does it take of the fact that, on the basis of Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive (EU) 2018/2001, it is possible for 'green' business groups to restrict conservation areas in order to maximise their profits, on the back of various studies at the expense of local character and environmental protection?

Submitted: 26.6.2025

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

Plans or projects likely to have a significant effect on Natura 2000 sites, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, must be subject to an appropriate assessment of their implications for the sites in accordance with the Habitats Directive (HD) ⁽¹⁾. They can only be authorised if the integrity of the sites is safeguarded.

When adverse effects cannot be excluded, the plan or project can exceptionally be authorised under Article 6(4) of the HD only under certain conditions ⁽²⁾. Without prejudice to the Commission's role as guardian of the Treaties, it is primarily the responsibility of the Greek authorities to ensure compliance with EU environmental law.

In June 2025, the Commission sent a letter of formal notice under Article 260 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU to Greece ⁽³⁾ for failing to comply with the judgment of the Court of Justice of the EU of 17 December 2020 ⁽⁴⁾ as Greece has yet to establish the necessary conservation measures for 239 Natura 2000 sites.

The Renewable Energy Directive (RED) ⁽⁵⁾ as amended ⁽⁶⁾ introduces measures to accelerate permitting for renewable energy projects with appropriate safeguards.

In general, the installation of renewable energy projects is subject to an environmental assessment under the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive ⁽⁷⁾ or an appropriate assessment under the HD. These assessments ensure that the environmental impacts of projects are duly addressed and mitigated or compensated.

⁽¹⁾ Article 6(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.

⁽²⁾ Commission's guidance document: Directorate-General for Environment, Managing Natura 2000 sites — The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC, Publications Office, 2019, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2779/02245>.

⁽³⁾ INFR(2014)2260: [https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&refId=INFR\(2014\)2260&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(2014)2260&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumns=decisionDate).
⁽⁴⁾ C 849/19.

⁽⁵⁾ Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources, OJ L 328, 21.12.2018, pp. 82-209.

⁽⁶⁾ Directive (EU) 2023/2413 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 October 2023 amending Directive (EU) 2018/2001, Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 and Directive 98/70/EC as regards the promotion of energy from renewable sources, and repealing Council Directive (EU) 2015/652, OJ L, 2023/2413, 31.10.2023.

⁽⁷⁾ 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.

The RED includes an obligation for Member States to identify specific areas ⁽⁸⁾ where a lighter permitting regime applies. These should be areas where the renewable energy plants would not have a significant environmental impact, so Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas are to be excluded.

⁽⁸⁾ By February 2026.