

EN

E-004618/2025

Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(30.1.2026)

The Commission has not received information about the potential impact of the Sophia solar farm project on species or Natura 2000 sites protected under the Birds¹ and Habitats² Directives. The competent authorities in Portugal, including judicial ones, have the primary responsibility to ensure that the project complies with relevant provisions of these directives³, as well as with any other relevant national nature protection rules. The Commission understands that the licensing process for the project is currently underway⁴ and an environmental impact assessment procedure is ongoing⁵.

The European Green Deal⁶ aims to ensure that there are no net EU emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050, thereby supporting renewable energy production, including solar. It also aims to protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital, while all European policies should contribute to this aim. Deployment of solar energy projects should therefore preserve the environmental values of the areas involved. Assessment of the effects on the environment of projects, including solar farms, before their authorisation is essential to ensure that any likely significant impacts are avoided or reduced in line with the applicable EU law and precautionary principle in the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union. Since the relevant environmental permitting procedures are ongoing, the Commission has no indication that the project deviates from these.

Subject to the EU requirements on environmental impact assessments and other relevant EU legislation, such as the Regulation on land use, land use change, and forestry⁷, land use decisions and related criteria fall within national competence.

¹ Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds, OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7–25.

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 Articles 4 and 5 of Directive 2009/147/EC and Articles 6 and 12 of Directive 92/43/EEC.

⁴ https://apambiente.pt/sites/default/files/_A_APA/Comunicacao/Media/NotasOCS2025/notaocs_115_2025_cp-centralsolarfotovoltacadesophiaelmatassociadas.pdf.

⁵ As required by the national legislation and the Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.

⁶ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en.

⁷ LULUCF, Regulation (EU) 2018/841 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 on the inclusion of greenhouse gas emissions and removals from land use, land use change and forestry in the 2030 climate and energy framework and amending Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 and Decision No 529/2013/EU, OJ L 156, 19.6.2018, p. 1–25.