

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004749/25
to the Commission
César Luena (S&D)
(1 December 2025)**

Subject: Public funding of studies supporting the trapping of finches in Andalusia

According to recent reports, the Regional Government of Andalusia has used public funds to fund a study aimed at assessing the ‘viability of *silvestrismo*,’ a practice consisting of capturing wild finches (such as goldfinches, linnets and greenfinches) to raise in captivity and be trained to sing in traditional bird singing contests. The study, which is the subject of controversy due to potential conflicts of interest and the institutional endorsement it has received, presents itself as an attempt to justify the resumption of captures, despite the fact that directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds explicitly prohibits the capture of these species, save for very limited exceptions that are notified to the Commission.

1. Has the Commission been informed of this project and of the possible use of public funds to promote practices that are contrary to Directive 2009/147/EC?
2. Does the Commission believe that institutional funding or backing of studies that aim to legitimise the capture of wild birds could constitute a violation of Member State obligations under Articles 5 and 9 of the aforementioned Directive?
3. Does the Commission intend to request information from the competent regional authorities and, where appropriate, take necessary action to ensure full compliance with EU biodiversity protection legislation?

Submitted: 1.12.2025

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(2 February 2026)**

In a reply to the Commission sent in the framework of an infringement procedure ⁽¹⁾, Spain announced in 2018 their intention to carry out an independent scientific study on the viability of captive breeding, as an alternative to finch trapping. According to that announcement, the study started in 2021.

Given that Article 9(1)(b) of the Birds Directive ⁽²⁾ specifically provides for a possibility for Member States to issue derogations ‘for the purpose of research and teaching’, it notes that issuing a study aimed at justifying the viability of a practice of capturing wild finches does not automatically constitute a breach of the Birds Directive.

Given that Member States must only report *ex post* to the Commission about derogations issued under Article 9 of the directive, and assuming that the study involves the capture of finches, the Commission expects receiving information on the study through the annual report to be sent by Spain. The Commission will assess legal compliance of the relevant derogation once it has received the report.

⁽¹⁾ INFR 2016/4028, [https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumns=decisionDate&refId=INFR\(2016\)4028](https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumns=decisionDate&refId=INFR(2016)4028).

⁽²⁾ 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.