

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004980/25
to the Commission
Rachel Blom (Pfe)
(17 December 2025)

Subject: Temporary exemption from nitrogen regulations for sustainable energy infrastructure, housing construction and essential infrastructure in the Netherlands

The Netherlands is facing an urgent need to expand its housing stock and energy infrastructure. Hundreds of projects are being delayed by strict nitrogen regulations, jeopardising both the electrification and connection of households and businesses to the electricity grid. This is hampering the economy, limiting the supply of affordable housing and delaying essential infrastructure projects. A temporary exemption from nitrogen regulations during the construction of energy infrastructure, housing and other essential infrastructure is therefore necessary to achieve these social and economic goals.

1. Can the Commission confirm that temporary nitrogen emissions during the construction of electricity infrastructure, such as cables, transformer stations and other energy projects, will be permitted within Natura 2000 areas in the Netherlands and other Member States?
2. Is the Commission prepared to formally apply this exemption to the construction of new homes, the renovation of existing homes and other essential infrastructure, so that delays and project shutdowns in the Netherlands can be substantially reduced?
3. What legal instruments or amendments to EU nature conservation law does the Commission consider necessary to formally enable a temporary exemption for nitrogen emissions from construction and infrastructure projects in the Netherlands?

Submitted: 17.12.2025

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

The Commission adopted on 10 December 2025 a proposal for a directive amending Directives (EU) 2018/2001 ⁽¹⁾, (EU) 2019/944 ⁽²⁾ and (EU) 2024/1788 ⁽³⁾ as regards acceleration of permit-granting procedures ⁽⁴⁾.

On the basis that the fast deployment of electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure is not to be limited by temporary nitrogen emissions from their construction, the proposal includes a rebuttable presumption that planning, construction and operation of such infrastructure contributes to a long-term reduction of nitrogen emissions and shall not require an assessment of nitrogen emissions in an assessment that may be carried out to comply with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive ⁽⁵⁾.

The proposal does not exempt Member States from their obligation to take all required measures including for nitrogen reduction, to comply with the Habitats Directive and the Nitrates Directive ⁽⁶⁾.

The presumption introduced is applicable exclusively to electricity infrastructure. The construction of new homes and renovation of existing ones falls outside the scope of the proposal.

Nitrogen pollution, mainly from intensive agriculture production, is a key source of concern in the Netherlands, notably for its impact on nature, water quality and human health ⁽⁷⁾. 45 out of 52 protected habitats in the Netherlands are sensitive to nitrogen and many habitat types are deteriorating.

Bringing nitrogen down to a level compatible with the carrying capacity of the local environment is a national public interest. It is for the Dutch authorities to identify the most appropriate measures to achieve that objective, while considering other important socioeconomic objectives, like the need for construction and infrastructure developments.

⁽¹⁾ 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 (recast), OJ L 328, 21.12.2018, pp. 82-209.

⁽²⁾ Directive (EU) 2019/944 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 on common rules for the internal market for electricity and amending Directive 2012/27/EU (recast), OJ L 158, 14.6.2019, pp. 125-199.

⁽³⁾ Directive (EU) 2024/1788 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on common rules for the internal markets for renewable gas, natural gas and hydrogen, amending Directive (EU) 2023/1791 and repealing Directive 2009/73/EC (recast), OJ L, 2024/1788, 15.7.2024.

⁽⁴⁾ Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the European Council amending Directives (EU) 2018/2001, (EU) 2019/944, (EU) 2024/1788 as regards acceleration of permit-granting procedures.

⁽⁵⁾ 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.

⁽⁶⁾ Council Directive 91/676/EEC of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources, OJ L 375, 31.12.1991, p. 1.

⁽⁷⁾ 2025 Environmental Implementation Review Country Report — THE NETHERLANDS — SWD(2025)319.