

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000424/26
to the Commission
Vicent Marzà Ibáñez (Verts/ALE)
(3 February 2026)**

Subject: Breaches of environmental rules in Albufera de València

The European Commission brought infringement proceedings against the Kingdom of Spain (reference No 2015/2003) for failure to comply with the obligation to designate special conservation areas and establish the corresponding environmental objectives and management plans with which to achieve them. Among the sites of Community importance (SCIs) identified by the Commission as being in breach was that of Albufera de València.

1. What is the state of play in this infringement procedure (including expected deadlines for resolution) and which SCIs or special protection areas for birds (SPAs) are covered by it?
2. What is the state of play with regard to the SCI of Albufera de València's compliance with EU environmental legislation, including the infringements identified by the Commission?
3. What information has the Commission received from the Government of the Kingdom of Spain in relation to the SCI of Albufera de València?

Submitted: 3.2.2026

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(23 March 2026)**

The infringement procedure mentioned by the Honourable Member ⁽¹⁾ is still ongoing. The Commission sent an additional letter of formal notice to Spain requesting to complete the designation of Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) as special areas of conservation (SACs) and the establishment of site-specific conservation objectives and measures for SACs ⁽²⁾, as required by the Habitats Directive ⁽³⁾.

According to the latest information submitted to the Commission in August 2025, pursuant to Article 4(4) of the Habitats Directive, from a total of 1 278 SCIs, Spain has designated 1 209 SCIs as SAC, with 69 SCIs still in the process of becoming SAC (ten in the region of Valencia, including SCI *L'Albufera* [ES0000023], with approval expected in the fourth quarter of 2026).

As regards the failure to set site-specific conservation objectives and conservation measures, the Commission is assessing the multiple replies and progress reports provided by Spain prior to deciding on the most appropriate way forward for this case in the light of the judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union in cases C-444/21 ⁽⁴⁾ and C-116/22 ⁽⁵⁾.

⁽¹⁾ INFR(2015)2003. [https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&refId=INFR\(2015\)2003&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumnns=decisionDate](https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&refId=INFR(2015)2003&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumnns=decisionDate). This is part of a structural action involving several other Member States in a similar situation.

⁽²⁾ Therefore, special protection areas (SPAs) for birds are not part of this infringement procedure.

⁽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, pp. 7-50.

⁽⁴⁾ Case C-444/21: Judgment of the Court (Second Chamber) of 29 June 2023 — European Commission v Ireland, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:62021CJ0444>.

⁽⁵⁾ Case C-116/22: Judgment of the Court (Second Chamber) of 21 September 2023 — European Commission v Federal Republic of Germany, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:62022CJ0116>.