

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001123/26
to the Commission
Cristina Guarda (Verts/ALE)
(18 March 2026)**

Subject: Cycle paths on the Verona side of Lake Garda and their environmental impact

The municipalities of Malcesine and Torri del Benaco (Province of Verona) are completing cycle paths built on entire sections of natural beaches, landscapes that are increasingly rare, as the shores of Lake Garda are subject to extensive overdevelopment. No environmental impact assessment (EIA) was carried out for those works, which have disfigured the shoreline and fish spawning grounds, nor were any studies conducted on the lake's ecosystem or animal and plant life, against a backdrop of dramatic declines in native fish stocks and the destruction of beaches and lake beds. The routes (Lot 6 Baitone-Galleria Cantone in Malcesine, Lot 2 Ciclovia Nazionale 'del Garda' in Torri) also fall within and adjacent to SCI/SPA areas (IT3210039 ⁽¹⁾, IT3210004 ⁽²⁾), further disrupting the landscape continuity between the lake and the mountains. The works were also pointless: the neighbouring municipalities of Torbole and Garda do not intend to extend the routes because they would take a heavy environmental toll. The press has already condemned the projects ⁽³⁾. The works, which are still going on ⁽⁴⁾, were financed with NRRP money. The Commission has already received a question on this matter (E-002947/2024), but work has continued in the meantime and it has had a serious impact on the environment.

Can the Commission investigate the failure to assess whether the works were subject to an EIA and call for the natural stretches of shore that they have ruined to be restored, and if those steps are not taken, open an infringement procedure?

Submitted: 18.3.2026

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(7 May 2026)**

The Commission is not informed on whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken for the project at stake.

The construction of cycling paths could fall within the scope of Annex II, point 10 (infrastructure projects), letter (b) of the EIA Directive ⁽¹⁾. Under Article 4(2) of this directive, 'Subject to Article 2(4), for projects listed in Annex II, Member States shall determine whether the project shall be made subject to an assessment in accordance with Articles 5 to 10 [...]'.

Furthermore, according to Article 6.3 of the Habitats Directive ⁽²⁾, any project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

According to Article 6.4, if, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected.

Italy has transposed these provisions in its legislation ⁽³⁾ and has adopted national guidelines ⁽⁴⁾ to improve their application across its regions. Veneto has also transposed such guidelines into its regional legal order ⁽⁵⁾.

It is for the Italian competent authorities to apply the above rules and procedures to this project and to ensure that, if damage to a protected sites has occurred, it is adequately restored. In its role as guardian of the Treaties, the Commission may decide to intervene if systemic issues with application of these provisions of EU law arise ⁽⁶⁾.

¹ <https://eunis.eea.europa.eu/sites/IT3210039>.

² <https://eunis.eea.europa.eu/sites/IT3210004>.

³ <https://lespresso.it/c/sostenibilita/2025/11/27/ciclovia-distruzione-lago-di-garda-ecomostri/58446>.

⁴ <https://cadoreasfalti.com/realizzazione/pista-ciclabile-del-garda/>.

⁽¹⁾ 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 (codification) OJ L 26, 28.1.2012, p. 1-21; Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment Text with EEA relevance OJ L 124, 25.4.2014, p. 1-18.

⁽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.

⁽³⁾ <https://www.mase.gov.it/pagina/la-valutazione-di-incidenza-vinca#:~:text=Si%20tratta%20del%20processo%20d,di%20significativit%C3%A0%20di%20tali%20incidenze>.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://www.mase.gov.it/pagina/linee-guida-nazionali-la-valutazione-di-incidenza-vinca-direttiva-92-43-cee-habitat-articolo>.

⁽⁵⁾ Legge regionale della Regione Veneto n. 12 del 27 maggio 2024 — Disciplina regionale in materia di valutazione ambientale strategica (VAS), valutazione di impatto ambientale (VIA), valutazione d'incidenza ambientale (VINCA) e autorizzazione integrata ambientale (AIA).

⁽⁶⁾ Communication of 19 January 2017 (EU law: Better results through better application — C/2016/8600, OJ C 18, 19.1.2017, p. 10-20) and in the communication of 13 October 2022 COM(2022) 518 final — Enforcing EU law for a Europe that delivers.