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Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(6.7.2026)

According to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive¹, projects likely to have a significant impact on Natura 2000 sites must undergo an appropriate assessment and can only proceed if the integrity of the sites is safeguarded. Exceptionally, authorisation may be granted under Article 6(4) if there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest and respective compensatory measures are adopted. According to the revised Renewable Energy Directive², renewable energy systems are presumed as being in the overriding public interest for the purpose of Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. Additionally, the provisions of Article 6(4) including compensatory measures, remain fully applicable.

Under the Nature Restoration Regulation³, for the purposes of the derogations from the obligations of continuous improvement and non-deterioration outside Natura 2000 sites, projects for the production of energy from renewable sources are presumed as being of overriding public interest. However, this does not affect the application of the requirements under the Habitats Directive within Natura 2000 sites, where any such project remains subject to the conditions set out in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.

Without prejudice to the Commission's role as guardian of the Treaties, it is primarily the responsibility of the Greek authorities to ensure compliance with EU environmental law.

¹ 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.

² Directive (EU) 2023/2413 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 October 2023 amending Directive (EU) 2018/2001, Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 and Directive 98/70/EC as regards the promotion of energy from renewable sources, and repealing Council Directive (EU) 2015/652, OJ L, 2023/2413, 31.10.2023.

³ Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869, OJ L, 2024/1991, 29.7.2024.