

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001454/26
to the Commission
Ana Miranda Paz (Verts/ALE)
(9 April 2026)**

Subject: Hydropower project threatening biodiversity goes ahead despite local opposition and warnings from experts

Despite opposition from local residents and various social groups, the Galician Government is going ahead with the construction of a pumped-storage hydroelectric power plant on the Tambre River. The plant will affect the municipalities of Brión, Negreira, Lousame and Rois. The campaign group 'Non á Balsa Cornanda-Tambre' denounces that, despite the area being saturated with wind farms, the project seeks only private profit and does not take into account the general interest or the future of Galicia's rural areas.

Building the new plant would involve 36 farms being destroyed (48% of the land affected), three cubic hectometres of earth being moved and a 35-hectare reservoir being built only 198 metres away from people's homes — with the risk that entails, not to mention the foreseeable environmental impact on fauna, changes to the microclimate and the project's proximity to protected Natura 2000 areas.

As a member of the Committee on Petitions, I brought this case before the European Parliament on the basis that the project breaches EU directives such as the Aarhus Convention (lack of transparency and public participation) and the EU Habitats Directive.

1. Is the Commission aware of the project, which violates the Habitats Directive and the Aarhus Convention?
2. What does it intend to do in the face of another instance of the right to participation being violated and EU directives being breached?

Submitted: 9.4.2026

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(6 July 2026)**

The Commission does not possess information on the project in question, nor evidence indicating that the competent authorities have infringed EU law.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive ⁽¹⁾ requires Member States to subject any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site to an appropriate assessment of their implications for the site.

A project can only be authorised after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned, or exceptionally under conditions specified in Article 6(4).

Installations for hydroelectric energy production ⁽²⁾ fall within the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive ⁽³⁾, which implements the Aarhus Convention ⁽⁴⁾ requirements in relation to the projects it covers.

The directive ensures that the public is informed early in the decision-making process and has the right to express opinions that must be taken into account by the competent authority.

Moreover, the EIA Directive specifically requires that review procedures be available at national level allowing the members of the public to challenge the legality of the decisions, acts or omissions of the competent authority.

The Commission therefore considers that the available national remedies constitute the most appropriate mechanism for the public concerned to exercise their rights and, where appropriate, seek compensation for any damages caused.

This avenue is furthermore consistent with the Commission strategic approach to its enforcement policy, focused on systemic issues of non-compliance ⁽⁵⁾.

⁽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⁾ Referred to in Point 3 h) of Annex II of Directive 2011/92/EU. The project in question may also fall under Point 15 of Annex I to the directive if it involves 'Dams and other installations designed for the holding back or permanent storage of water, where a new or additional amount of water held back or stored exceeds 10 million cubic metres'.

⁽³⁾ 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. OJ L 26, 28.1.2012, p. 1-21, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU of 16 April 2014 — OJ L 124, 25.4.2014, p. 1-18.

⁽⁴⁾ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/law-and-governance/aarhus_en.

⁽⁵⁾ As set out in the 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.