

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001862/26
to the Commission
Vicent Marzà Ibáñez (Verts/ALE)
(6 May 2026)**

Subject: Administrative fragmentation and environmental assessment of the Escatrón-La Secuita very high voltage power line

Plans for the Escatrón-Els Aubals-La Secuita very high voltage power line — running for around 181 km between Aragon and Catalonia, and with an estimated transmission capacity of 3 000 MW — have been processed in seven separate administrative files, despite being presented as a unitary and interdependent infrastructure. According to various institutional and social complaints, this fragmentation would prevent a full environmental assessment of its cumulative and synergistic effects on the municipalities concerned, Natura 2000 sites, the landscape, agricultural activity and property owners.

1. Does the Commission consider the administrative fragmentation of a functionally unitary infrastructure to be compatible with EU law, in particular with the Environmental Impact Assessment Act and the Habitats Directive, when this may prevent an integrated assessment of its impacts?
2. Does the Commission intend to look into whether this project should be subject to a comprehensive environmental assessment that takes into account the line and its associated infrastructure as a whole and its cumulative effects on the areas concerned?

Submitted: 6.5.2026

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

The purpose of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive ⁽¹⁾ is to ensure that, before consent is given, projects likely to have significant effects on the environment are made subject to an assessment of their effects.

As the Court of Justice of the European Union has consistently held ⁽²⁾, this purpose cannot be circumvented by artificially splitting a project into smaller parts, each falling below the applicable thresholds or criteria ⁽³⁾, to avoid the requirement for an EIA.

Furthermore, the EIA must consider cumulation with other existing, approved, or reasonably foreseeable projects ⁽⁴⁾. This covers synergistic impacts where combined effects may be significant, even if individual ones are not ⁽⁵⁾.

Under the Habitats Directive ⁽⁶⁾, projects likely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 require an appropriate assessment prior to authorisation, which is possible only if it is ascertained — also taking into account cumulative effects — that the project in question will not adversely affect the integrity of the sites concerned ⁽⁷⁾ or, exceptionally, under the strict conditions laid down in the directive ⁽⁸⁾.

Without prejudice to the Commission's role as guardian of the Treaties, Member States are primarily responsible for the correct implementation of the above provisions.

Moreover, the EIA Directive requires Member States to ensure national legal systems make available the appropriate review procedures to interested or impacted parties, which assess compliance with substantive or procedural requirements under the directive.

Thus, national means of redress are the most effective to address individual cases of non-compliance and complement the Commission's strategic enforcement policy focused on systemic and structural issues ⁽⁹⁾.

⁽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. 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.

⁽²⁾ e.g., Case C-227/01 Commission v Spain, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:62001CC0227>.

⁽³⁾ Set out in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive.

⁽⁴⁾ Set out in Annex IV, point 5(e).

⁽⁵⁾ e.g. Case C-531/13 (Marktgemeinde Straßwalchen), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A62013CJ0531>.

⁽⁶⁾ Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206 of 22.7.1992, p. 7.

⁽⁷⁾ Commission's guidance documents https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/EN_art_6_guide_jun_2019.pdf and https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/pdf/methodological-guidance_2021-10/EN.pdf.

⁽⁸⁾ Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.

⁽⁹⁾ 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.