

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002395/26
to the Commission
Cristina Guarda (Verts/ALE)
(10 June 2026)**

Subject: Large-scale development plans with no strategic environmental assessment in Torri del Benaco

On 20 November 2025, the Municipality of Torri del Benaco (Province of Verona) adopted a development plan (P.I. 3.1) which provides for further expansion and land take in an area that is saturated with tourism and speculative development and includes two sites of Community importance (SCIs) ⁽¹⁾.

The development plan identifies measures for the transformation of the area in line with the local land-use plan (PAT). The current PAT ⁽²⁾ is subject to specific environmental requirements, such as 'environmental improvement with a view to strengthening or enhancing landscape features of primary importance for species of Community interest, taking account of ecological and functional connectivity with areas of the Natura 2000 network ⁽³⁾'. It is crucial, therefore, that the plan's cumulative effects on the environment and land use are looked into. However, of the roughly 320 building works provided for in P.I. 3, only 50 were included in P.I. 3.1 ⁽⁴⁾, which suggests that attempts are being made to bypass the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) or its screening procedure.

In the light of the above, and to prevent the carving up of this excessive development and ensure that the overall environmental impacts of Torri del Benaco town planning instruments are properly assessed, could the Commission investigate whether the SEA legislation has been complied with?

Submitted: 10.6.2026

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

According to Article 3 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (SEAD) ⁽¹⁾, an environmental assessment shall be carried out for plans and programmes which are likely to have significant environmental effects.

This includes plans and programmes which are prepared for tourism or land use and plans or programmes that have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to the Habitats Directive ⁽²⁾.

Moreover, based on Article 3 (4) of SEAD, Member States shall determine whether plans and programmes that set the framework for future development consent of projects are likely to have significant environmental effects.

It would seem that the planning instrument referred to would set the framework for future projects listed in Annex II of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive ⁽³⁾, namely apartment projects (depending on their size and scale) and could be covered by point 10(b) of Annex II and be subject to a screening.

As pointed out by the Honourable Member, it would seem that there was an assessment procedure carried out, including public consultation.

Furthermore, it seems that the municipality is in the process of preparing a new urban planning amendment and might still opt for further screening and/or environmental assessment as appropriate. Therefore, at this stage, the Commission cannot establish that there is a breach of EU law.

¹ IT3210007 — Monte Baldo: Val dei Mulini, Senge di Marciaga, Rocca di Garda; IT3210004 — Monte Luppia and Punta San Vigilio.

² Amendment 2, approved by the Province of Verona on 19 June 2025.

³ Veneto Region, technical appraisal report 85/2023 for the SEA impact assessment for amendment 2 to the PAT of the Municipality of Torri del Benaco, 27 April 2023.

⁴ P.I. 3.1 was definitively approved by the Municipal Council on 29 April 2026, rejecting numerous comments submitted within the framework of the public consultation procedure, including that of the Legal Intervention Group (GrIG), which complained about the artificial fragmentation of land. In the counterarguments prepared by the Municipality of Torri del Benaco, the issue of fragmentation was simply ignored. In the meantime, the municipality is working on a new urban planning amendment that increases land take.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, OJ L 197, 21.7.2001, p. 30-37.

⁽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, pp. 7-50. The Habitats Directive requires that plans or projects not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site, but likely to have an impact on that site must undergo an appropriate assessment of its implications in view of the site's conservation objectives (Art. 6(3)).

⁽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 the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014, OJ L 124, 25.4.2014, p. 1-18.

Furthermore, without prejudice to the Commission's role as guardian of the Treaties, Member States are primarily responsible to ensure compliance with EU law, including verifying individual cases of potential breach of the relevant rules. In line with its strategic approach on enforcement action ⁽⁴⁾ the Commission focuses on systemic non-compliance.

⁽⁴⁾ 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.