

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002583/26
to the Commission
Sandro Gozi (Renew)
(23 June 2026)**

Subject: Albania's accession process: rule of law, transparency and protected areas

Following the 2024 amendments to Albania's Law on Protected Areas, a major real estate project is being developed in the Vjosa-Narta protected lagoon, including initial construction and site fencing.

The project, which is linked to foreign investors who were granted preferential access, raises serious concerns over transparency, governance and the use of public assets. It has triggered large peaceful protests, now on their 24th consecutive day, and is reportedly under investigation by Albania's Special Prosecution Office against Corruption and Organised Crime (SPAK).

The Commission has indicated that it is monitoring the situation closely and has urged Albania to act without delay to safeguard progress under Chapter 27 of the EU accession process.

In this context:

1. How does the Commission assess these developments against Albania's obligations on the rule of law, transparency and public procurement, notably under the 'fundamentals' cluster of negotiating chapters and the Copenhagen criteria?
2. Are Albania's 2024 legislative amendments and the ongoing works in the Vjosa-Narta area compatible with the EU environmental *acquis* and the Chapter 27 benchmarks?
3. What actions will the Commission take to ensure transparent decision-making, sound environmental assessments with effective public participation and respect for the right to peaceful protest?

Submitted: 23.6.2026

**Answer given by Ms Kos on behalf of the European Commission
(25 August 2026)**

The Commission is closely following Albania's progress in aligning with the EU *acquis*. More generally, respect for the rule of law remains at the heart of the EU accession process and this work needs to continue in Albania to meet the closing benchmarks set under the fundamentals cluster of accession negotiations.

Chapter 27, 'Environment and climate change', is assessed in Albania's accession negotiations and reported on in the Commission's annual report.

Under this chapter Albania is expected to align its legislation with the EU environmental *acquis*, including the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive ⁽¹⁾, the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive ⁽²⁾, and the Birds ⁽³⁾ and Habitats Directives ⁽⁴⁾.

The closing benchmarks also require Albania to repeal incompatible provisions introduced through amendments to the law on Protected Areas and terminating the 2015 legislation on strategic investments.

Albania must also demonstrate adequate capacity to manage future Natura 2000 sites and ensure effective conservation measures preventing habitat and species deterioration.

The Commission is in continuous contact with the Albanian authorities and civil society regarding the developments in the Pishë Poro-Nartë area.

It has encouraged the Albanian authorities to continue taking steps to fulfil of the closing benchmarks and coming to decisions in a transparent, accountable and inclusive manner.

⁽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, pp. 1-21.

⁽²⁾ 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, pp. 30-37.

⁽³⁾ Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds, OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, pp. 7-25.

⁽⁴⁾ 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.