

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-002691/26
to the Commission**

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(29 June 2026)

Subject: Compliance with Chapter 27 benchmarks and the EU environmental *acquis* in relation to developments in the Vjosa-Narta Protected Area in Albania

On 15 June 2026, Commissioner Marta Kos stated that an environmental impact assessment would be carried out and that European environmental standards would be respected in relation to developments affecting the Vjosa-Narta Protected Area. However, according to publicly available information, works have already taken place within the protected area before the completion of the environmental impact assessment, raising concerns about compliance with environmental safeguards and Albania's obligations under Chapter 27 (Environment and Climate Change). Furthermore, the 2024 amendments to Albania's Law on Protected Areas remain in force.

In this context:

1. How does the Commission assess the compatibility of the reported use of heavy machinery in the Vjosa-Narta Protected Area, as well as the 2024 amendments to Albania's Law on Protected Areas, with Albania's closing benchmarks under Chapter 27?
2. Beyond assurances provided by the Albanian authorities, what steps is the Commission taking to independently verify compliance with Chapter 27 benchmarks on nature protection, environmental assessments, public participation and the implementation of environmental legislation?
3. How will the Commission reflect any confirmed breaches of environmental legislation, the continued application of incompatible provisions of the Law on Protected Areas and the concerns expressed by Parliament in its 2026 Albania report in its assessment of Albania's progress towards EU membership?

Supporters ⁽¹⁾

Submitted: 29.6.2026

**Answer given by Ms Kos on behalf of the European Commission
(22 September 2026)**

The Commission is closely following Albania's progress towards meeting the closing benchmarks across all chapters of negotiations, including on Chapter 27 on environment.

The Commission is in continuous contact with the Albanian authorities and civil society. It verifies whether the relevant closing benchmarks of Chapter 27 are met.

This concerns in particular the alignment with the EU nature protection and environmental impact assessment *acquis*, the removal of provisions incompatible with that *acquis* such as those introduced through amendments to the law on protected areas, the termination of the 2015 legislation on strategic investments, and the establishment of sufficient capacity to manage future Natura 2 000 sites and prevent deterioration of habitats and species and to effectively enforce EU environmental law.

The Commission has received assurances from the Government of Albania that it will carry out a full environmental impact assessment and that European environmental standards will be respected. The Commission will continue to closely monitor the developments regarding this and other similar large-scale projects in Albania.

The Commission will consider any confirmed shortcomings concerning nature protection, environmental assessments, public participation or implementation of environmental legislation as part of its assessment of Albania's progress in the accession process.

¹ This question is supported by Members other than the authors: Majdouline Sbai (Verts/ALE), Erik Marquardt (Verts/ALE), Tineke Strik (Verts/ALE), Benedetta Scuderi (Verts/ALE), Lena Schilling (Verts/ALE), Thomas Waitz (Verts/ALE), Anna Cavazzini (Verts/ALE).