

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-002933/26
to the Commission
César Luena (S&D), Hana Jalloul Muro (S&D), José Cepeda (S&D)
(15 July 2026)**

Subject: Protection of the Ambroz lagoons and compliance with EU environmental legislation

The Ambroz lagoons (Madrid) constitute an urban wetland with more than 1 700 species, which emerged after the renaturalisation of former open-cast mines.

The current resumption of mining and the urban development nearby raises concerns about their effects on health and on the habitats, species and ecological values of the enclave. The scaling up of mining for sepiolite — which is not a strategic raw material for the EU — is based on an environmental assessment that was carried out before the enclave had recovered ecologically.

In light of this, the Madrid Provincial Public Prosecutor's Office has opened investigative proceedings for environmental damage.

1. Does the Commission consider that the planned works at the Ambroz lagoons should be assessed in the light of the obligations arising from the Birds, Habitats and Environmental Impact Assessment Directives?
2. Does the Commission consider actions that may spoil an environmentally restored urban wetland to be compatible with the 'no net loss' objective set out in Article 8 of the regulation on nature restoration?
3. Taking into account the case law of the CJEU in Case C-301/22 (Sweetman), does the Commission consider that an environmental assessment prior to the environmental recovery of the enclave meets the requirements for up-to-date and sufficient information required by EU law?

Submitted: 15.7.2026

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(26 August 2026)**

Lagunas de Ambroz is not a Natura 2000 site, however where protected species are concerned, the obligations under Article 12 of the Habitats Directive ⁽¹⁾ (for Annex IV species) and Article 5 of the Birds Directive ⁽²⁾ apply.

Risks must be assessed case by case, with ongoing monitoring and appropriate site-specific action. On the other hand, the projects referred to by the Honourable Members fall within the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive ⁽³⁾ and may require an assessment prior to receiving development consent ⁽⁴⁾.

The no-net-loss objectives of Article 8 of the Nature Restoration Regulation ⁽⁵⁾ relate to national targets of the extent of green and blue space and tree canopy cover in urban areas and are managed by Member States. The article does not address individual urban planning decisions.

Where an assessment is required under the EIA Directive, it must be based on sufficient, up-to-date information to identify, describe, and assess significant environmental effects.

⁽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, p. 7-50.

⁽²⁾ 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, p. 7-25.

⁽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. Point 2 a) of Annex II of the EIA Directive refers to 'Open-cast mining'.

⁽⁴⁾ Quarries and open-cast mining where the surface of the site exceeds 25 hectares, or peat extraction exceeding 150 hectares are referred to in Point 19 of Annex I to the EIA Directive (which provides for a mandatory assessment). Projects under those thresholds are referred to in Point 2a) of Annex II, which requires a screening procedure. Moreover, Point 10 b) of Annex II mentions urban development projects.

⁽⁵⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869, OJ L, 2024/1991, 29.7.2024.