

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1186/04

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to the Commission

Subject: Impact which the construction and the enlargement of ports in the Alicante region will have on *Posidonia oceanica*

In its reply to Written Question E-3668/03¹ and in its communication relating to Petition 254/02 on the conservation of the Alicante region's *posidonia* beds (some of which have been declared as Sites of Community Interest), the Commission came to the conclusion that the Spanish authorities had correctly applied Community legislation solely in respect of the enlargement of the Altea marina. However, the Commission appears to have forgotten that:

- the enlargement of that marina is taking place as one of a series of urban projects which include extensions to the ports of Campomanes, Xabia, Camp Blanc, Torrevieja, Orihuela and Tabarca (amongst others), in respect of which - even though the Commission may claim to have no information - there already exist enlargement projects and/or statements of intent;
- approval for the marina from the environmental-impact point of view was granted only in respect of the first of the projects (in July 2002). That project has since been revised and has twice been put on display to the public. The Environment Ministry has not, however, seen any need to revise the original environmental-impact statement;
- both the Mediterranean Institute for Advanced Studies and WWF-ADENA have issued reports stating that the extension should not be authorised on account of the effect which it will have on the *posidonia*.

In view of the above:

Can the Commission guarantee that the protected species *Posidonia oceanica* will not be seriously affected by the following planned port or marina extensions (taken both individually and as a set): Campomanes, Altea, Puerto de la Olla, Xabia, Tabarca, Santa Pola and Cala Baeza en Campello? Is the Commission not at least intending to check that each of those extension projects is being carried out in accordance with Community law?

Does the Commission consider that, when the various port-extension projects which may affect *posidonia* are viewed as a whole, the Spanish Ministry's favourable opinion of July 2002 continues to be valid - and that the same applies to the calculation that only 1% of the protected beds will be destroyed?

Can the Commission specify the compensatory measures proposed by the Spanish authorities which it endorsed when it issued its further communication on 13 November 2003? Does the Commission continue to maintain that, despite the research to which the author of this question referred in her earlier question, the replanting of *posidonia* heads is a safe and effective means of preserving the species in question?

¹ OJ C