

**Question for written answer E-009876/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Therese Comodini Cachia (PPE)

Subject: Natura 2000 site Ras il-Wardija, island of Gozo (Malta)

Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) defines how Natura 2000 sites are managed and protected, requiring Member States to take appropriate conservation measures to maintain and restore the habitats and species to a favourable conservation status, and to avoid damaging activities that could significantly disturb these species or deteriorate the habitats.

Photos which appeared in the Maltese press this month¹ showed how trappers have taken over large portions of a Maltese Natura 2000 site by spraying herbicides on the ground to destroy wild plants in order to prevent their nets from becoming entangled when they lift them to catch wild birds. The article also alleges that trappers have been levelling the ground of this site and laying nets, while others have been using off-road vehicles.

The Habitats Directive is transposed in Malta through the Environment Protection Act (CAP. 435) - Development Planning Act (CAP. 356) of 2006:

1. Can the Commission state whether it is aware of the circumstances raised?
2. If so, can the Commission state whether an explanation has been sought or this issue investigated with the competent Maltese authority?
3. If the Commission was not aware of this alleged situation, will it consider taking remedial action to address this abusive practice?

¹ <http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2014-11-15/local-news/Hunters-and-trappers-continue-to-make-a-mockery-of-the-Eco-Gozo-concept-6736125753>