

**Question for written answer E-010986/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Environmental impact of the Adriatic underwater power line

Under Decree No 239/EL-189/148/2011, the Italian State authorised the laying of a 400 kilometre-long underwater direct-current power line in the Adriatic.

The scheme has not been subject to an environmental impact assessment, nor to any assessment of environmental implications, on the ground that works are not going to be carried out in areas covered by Natura 2000.

Directive 43/92/EC states that an environmental impact assessment must be carried out even for schemes to be conducted outside Natura 2000 sites if they are likely to have significant implications.

Laying of the cable involves drilling the seabed using techniques such as multi-beam sonar that, even at long distance, have a detrimental effect on fauna, and particularly on cetaceans, including the species listed in Annexes II and IV to the Habitats Directive which are present in the Adriatic (such as *Tursiops truncatus*, the common bottlenose dolphin).

On 8 September 2014, seven sperm whales beached themselves at SCI IT 7140108 in Abruzzo, inshore of the area in which the drill ships Franklin and Argo, which are involved in the scheme, were operating during the summer of 2014.

1. Does the Commission think that Italy has breached Directive 43/92/EEC by not insisting on an environmental impact assessment of the scheme, including preliminary operations?
2. Since the scheme is not yet under way, does the Commission think Italy should insist on an environmental impact assessment before work begins?