

**Question for written answer E-003746/2015  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Offshore drilling in the Adriatic Sea

In recent weeks, the Republic of Croatia has launched a seabed exploitation plan for its part of the Adriatic Sea, affecting 90 % of the sea floor within that area. Three of the 29 exploration permits issued to date are located just a few kilometres away from areas included in the Natura 2000 network, namely IT 911001 Isole Tremiti (SCI), IT 9110040 Isole Tremiti (SPA) and IT 330009 'Trezze San Pietro Bordelli' – a marine site of European interest. These exploration permits were issued despite the fact that the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is still ongoing, and disregarding the Espoo Convention of the UN/ECE which applies to cross-border scenarios. In addition, the failure to provide restrictions and limiting provisions concerning hydrocarbon exploration conflicts with the offshore protocol of the Barcelona Convention, in addition to violating the precautionary principle.

In light of Decision 2013/5/EU and Directives 2001/42/EC and 2011/92/EU, and in compliance with Community and international legislation, how does the Commission plan to protect the ecosystems of the Adriatic Sea?