

**Question for written answer E-007546/2015
to the Commission**

Rule 130

José Inácio Faria (ALDE)

Subject: The Berlengas black rat

In 1989, the Berlengas archipelago was given the status of Biogenetic Reserve by the Council of Europe. At the time, Jean Dorst said that the black rat population alone justified this classification.

The black rat, an ancient and resilient species, was introduced to Berlenga island in the seventh century and is now an integral part of the local ecosystem. It has some unusual behaviour patterns, identified in mediaeval times, such as the males being involved in rearing the young.

One of the objectives of the Berlengas LIFE programme (with a total budget of EUR 1.4 million) is to eliminate the black rat population on the islands using an illegal substance (bromadiolone). The programme also includes the elimination of rabbits and willow trees, which could pose a threat to the ecosystem and even to the stability of the islands' cliffs. The aim of these measures is to allow for the accommodation of a tourist invasion that the island is incapable of supporting. The black rat population is mainly concentrated around camp sites where there is food waste and, although they are not carriers of disease, the rats are seen as a threat to tourism in the Berlengas.

What does the Commission think of the partial use of European funding to support the elimination of rats on the island?

To what extent can the use of bromadiolone be permitted, and who is going to supervise its use?