

**Question for written answer E-009456/2015
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Lidia Senra Rodríguez (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Environmental assault on the Rio Tea SCI

In 2013 work began on the laying of several riverside paths on the Rio Tea SCI; funding was provided by the EU. The work was carried out using heavy machinery in a very vulnerable environment in which there are a number of animal and plant species of Community interest. The habitat has been damaged, probably irreversibly. The paths, which lie on one of the river-banks, are having a direct impact on the protected site, as they cover swathes of what should be wooded areas, and many alder and ash trees have had to be uprooted to make room for them.

Furthermore, because of the rainy weather in the autumn and winter of 2013 to 2014, large quantities of building materials were washed away (hundreds of kilos of gravel, cement, etc.), with the result that the aquatic environment has been affected too.

Under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, when plans or projects are likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, their implications for the site must be properly assessed, taking into account the site's conservation objectives. Projects may not be approved until it has been ascertained that they will not harm the integrity of the site concerned.

Will the Commission act to stop this violation and destruction of endangered and protected habitats and species deep within the Natura 2000 network, given that the damage has been brought about in part by EU funding?

Will it continue to allow onslaughts of this kind on protected areas?