

**Question for written answer E-003266/2017
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Josep-Maria Terricabras (Verts/ALE) and Jordi Solé (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Military exercises in natural areas protected by the Natura 2000 network

Military exercises, including target practice and the firing of explosive devices, have been conducted in protected areas, such as the Area of National Interest in Les Gavarres, the Albera National Park and the Collserola National Park. The three areas are part of the Natura 2000 European network¹, which protects natural habitats and wildlife. The areas are not suitable locations for conducting those practices because of the risk that they pose to the plants, animals, habitats and people there. A large number of sportsmen and women and hikers use the parks. Furthermore, the risk affects tourism, as it restricts leisure activities in the park. Exercises have also been conducted near urban settlements, which puts their communities at risk. As a result, the municipalities affected oppose those practices²³.

1. Is the Commission aware that military exercises are being carried out in protected areas?
2. Does the Commission take the view that the measures are compatible with the environmental protection provided by the Nature 2000 network?
3. Will the Commission take any action on the above issues?

¹ Directives 2009/147/EC and 92/43/EEC

² Celrà, Girona, Sant Climent Sescebes, Espolla, Llançà, Barcelona, Sant Cugat, Esplugues and Cerdanyola, among others.

³ http://www.ara.cat/societat/Alcalde-passa-nomes-maniobres-militars_0_1477652249.html (Spanish language only)
http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2017/02/20/catalunya/1487577286_828555.html (Spanish language only)