

**Question for written answer E-006507/2017
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Lola Sánchez Caldentey (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Corta Pastora opencast coal mine in La Pola de Gordón (León)

The Corta Pastora opencast coal mine has been in operation for more than 20 years.

The mine is in the Alto Bernesga Biosphere Reserve, in Montaña Central de León (ES4130050), a Natura 2000 network site of Community importance (SCI).

After years of arguments over the validity of the environmental impact study (EIS) on the mine, both the local municipality and the Government of the Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon have decided to grant the mine a licence to expand.

In its analysis, the EIS overlooks the Natura 2000 areas and the specific effects of expansion on the Faedo de Ciñera, part of the Biosphere Reserve. What is more, it fails to raise the fact that the expansion encroaches on the inter-population corridor of the brown bear (an endangered species), nor does it take into account the species' needs, the repercussions of expansion for its habitat or the connection between its sub-populations.

1. Is the Commission aware of the EIS's shortcomings?
2. Given the fallout that will likely result for the Natura 2000 network owing to the closeness and visibility of the mine to the Faedo de Ciñera and the capacity, intensity and duration of opencast mining on this scale, should the EIS include compensatory measures for the Montaña Central de León SCI?
3. To rule out the expansion having any impact on the Natura 2000 network, how will the Commission ensure that the proper analytical steps are taken, as required under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC)?