

**Question for written answer E-001446/2018
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Svetoslav Hristov Malinov (PPE)

Subject: Protection of priority species in the Rila Mountains

Despite numerous parliamentary questions and repeated recommendations from the Commission on the need to complete the designation of additional Natura 2000 sites for the Brown bear and the European bullhead in the Rila Mountains, there has been no real development on this issue since 2008. No progress has been made, even after the National Museum of Natural History, which is affiliated with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, submitted a balanced proposal in 2015 for a new Natura 2000 site based on the latest scientific research.

Subsequent to my Written Questions E-013908-13 and E-010342-15, and the commitment given by the competent Bulgarian authorities that these procedures are ongoing and should be finalised during the second half of 2015, I was informed that the only tangible outcome of this process was that the Ministry for Environment and Water had been blocking the work of the National Biodiversity Council. Since 2015, the Biodiversity Council has met only twice and the proposal for the new site in Rila has not been discussed at all.

Can the Commission provide more detailed and up-to-date information on how this issue has developed?

What action has the Commission taken, and what measures does it intend to use?