

**Question for written answer P-002046/2017
to the Commission**

Rule 130

José Inácio Faria (PPE)

Subject: Environmental crime in the Sintra-Cascais Natural Park - felling of thousands of trees along a 5 km stretch

Today's news carried reports of plans by the Institute for Nature and Forest Conservation (ICNF) for the imminent felling of thousands of pines and cedars along a 5 km stretch in the Sintra-Cascais Natural Park.

This represents an attack on the environment in the Sintra-Cascais protected landscape area, which was created by Decree-Law 19/93 as a means of combating the intense tourism and urban development pressure that was threatening an ecologically sensitive area.

Causing damage to nature is a criminal offence under Article 278 of the Portuguese Penal Code.

1. Is the Commission, as guardian of the Treaties, aware of this attack on the environment by the ICNF, whose mission, according to Decree-Law 135/2012 of 29 June, is to monitor nature and forest conservation policy with the aim of ensuring the conservation and sustainable development of forests, and which is responsible for managing classified areas and ensuring compliance with European Union obligations, such as those linked to the Natura 2000 network and protected areas?
2. What steps will the Commission take in response to this plan, which amounts to a criminal offence, and what steps will it take in relation to the ICNF, which is a body that answers to the Environment Ministry, as regards compliance with EU obligations in the field of nature conservation and the Natura 2000 network?