

**Question for written answer P-007666/2017
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Svetoslav Hristov Malinov (PPE)

Subject: Potential infringement of EU law in connection with the construction and operation of hydroelectric power stations in Bulgaria

Bulgarian citizens and citizens' organisation (the 'Balkanka-Sofia' Association and WWF Bulgaria) have drawn attention to specific cases which give good grounds to believe there have been violations of EU law during the construction and operation of hydroelectric power plants in Bulgaria. The Commission will already be aware of complaint (Ref. No. CHAP(2015)2363) and has launched the EU Pilot procedure EUP(2017)9183.

There has been significant growth in field of hydroelectric power station construction in Bulgaria in recent years. Unfortunately, from what one can gather, this success has come at the cost of the violation of a number of environmental rules under the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), the Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (2001/42/EC) and the Directive on the assessment and management of flood risks (2007/60/EC). More specifically, there has been a failure to:

1. maintain the compulsory minimum flow rate in rivers following water extraction so as to ensure the survival of ecosystems;
2. ensure that fish and other aquatic organisms can migrate, by means of suitable fishways;
3. dredge silt deposits from lakes upstream of dams using special equipment, thereby preventing their uncontrolled discharge into rivers.

Can the Commission state what action it has taken or intends to take in this regard?