

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1412/99  
by Francis Decourrière (PPE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

With reference to the application of Annex III of Council Directive 92/43/EEC<sup>1</sup> of 21 May 1992, the text states under Stage 2, paragraph 2b, that assessment of the Community importance of a site will take into account the geographical situation of the site in relation to the migration routes of species in Annex II and whether it belongs to a continuous ecosystem situated on both sides of one or more internal Community frontiers.

Socio-economic activities are sometimes totally different on the two sides of a frontier and are governed by national law. For example, hunting and fishing are legitimate and traditional activities in France in coastal areas under public ownership while this is not the case on the other side of the frontier in Belgium.

1. As the economic, social and cultural requirements and the regional and local characteristics must be taken into account (Article 2 of the Directive referred to above) how does the Commission intend to harmonise the management of these frontier areas, which are environmentally very important (classified as nature reserves, biogenetic reserves, etc.) and are affected by a species in Annex II (*Phoca vitulina*), with such diverse activities?
2. Is one form of management required for these sites?
3. Will these frontier areas benefit from special conditions, in particular financial conditions, during the implementation phase of Directive 92/43/EEC and its effective implementation in 2004?

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7.