

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0527/04
by Matti Wuori (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Enlargement of Arinaga port (Gran Canaria, Spain)

The Las Palmas de Gran Canaria Port Authority published (Canaries Official Journal of 14 November 2003) the Arinaga Port Basic Extension Scheme which, affects the towns of Agüimes and Santa Lucía. The Environmental Impact Study is riddled with all sorts of inexcusable omissions. These include: the possible negative repercussions on the tourist beaches of the south of the island, following the declassification of part of the La Isleta Protected Nature Reserve, and the extension of Puerto de Las Palmas (there is no justification for creating a further port and commercial area, and moreover, a port on this scale is not necessary for off-loading gas); the extent of the sebadales which will be affected is greater than that of the sebadales included in the Site of Community Interest (SCI) aforementioned; the conditions established in the impact statement of the first stage have not been met; the serious damage done during the construction of the first phase to the marine SCI's sebadales, where dredging and other activities have been carried out without an impact statement, or the requisite administrative authorisation to affect listed species; the existence of other ports or alternative areas where there would be less environmental impact, and therefore a lower price to be paid in environmental terms. The consequences of the building scheme will be the destruction of a large part of Important Bird Area (IBA) 531, of major importance for the conservation of various species, which was already broken up some years ago by the building of a power station. The negative impact of the building of the first phase of the scheme on SCI ES7010053 will be worsened still further. Windsurfing and surfing in this area, which is visited by some ten thousand windsurfers per year, will be seriously affected, and will no longer be possible in Punta de La Gaviota and subject to restrictions in Pozo Izquierdo, which site is famed for its ideal windsurfing conditions, as indicated by the various world championships which have been held there for the last 13 years.

Can the Commission verify whether the environmental impact study has taken account of all the consequences of extending the port, and the establishment of a system for compensating for the effects on part of an SCI, part of an IBA, the loss of a saline system and of a major leisure and sporting area?