

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1031/04
by Alexander de Roo (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Oostzanerveld bird sanctuary threatened by building of housing and second Coen tunnel

The Oostzanerveld area in the municipality of Oostzaan, north of Amsterdam, was very recently designated a protected area pursuant to the European directive on wild birds. Many rare birds, such as the ruff, live there. It is one of the five most important bittern habitats in the Netherlands. Each year, 240 brooding black-tailed godwits are counted and 9000 black-tailed godwits forage there before their annual migration to the south.

The Oostzanerveld is threatened by two developments. The construction of the second Coen tunnel will swallow up a strip of land from its western side. On the eastern side there are plans to build housing. The Oostzaan municipal executive, backed by the North Holland provincial authority, has approved the building of the homes in the Oostzanerveld.

According to the European wild birds directive, the Netherlands authorities ought first to have examined whether the two projects might cause significant damage to bird populations. In neither case have they done so.

Will the Commission remind the Netherlands of its responsibilities and ensure that the European wild birds directive is fully implemented in the Oostzanerveld as elsewhere?