

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0144/06
by María Sornosa Martínez (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: 'La Cerrichera' site of Community interest

On 30 October 2005 the council at Águilas (with the blessing of the regional government of Murcia) approved the planning agreement classifying 250 hectares of land at La Cerrichera as unscheduled building land for the purpose of constructing more than 3000 dwellings, hotels and an 18-hole golf course on land previously designated as not for building. This land is protected and listed as a site of Community interest (ES6200035) under the name Sierra de la Almenara.

This project would pose a serious threat to species protected under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC¹ which are to be found in the area, particularly the spur-thighed tortoise (*Testudo graeca graeca*), which needs La Cerrichera's traditional olive and almond groves and cereal fields for its survival.

Does the Commission not believe that Águilas council's approval of this project is in breach of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, given that the probable development of the site, which would no longer be designated as an SCI, would involve the destruction of habitats which are a priority for conservation?

Does the Commission not believe that the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC would also be contravened in that an area protected as a site of Community interest is to be modified even though the project does not involve any imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature?

¹ OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7.