

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0946/07

by Gisela Kallenbach (Verts/ALE) and Milan Horáček (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Riverside forests near Plötzkau

The riverside forests near Plötzkau are a registered protected area under the FFH Directive ('Auenwälder Plötzkau', area No DE-4236-301) and the Bird Protection Directive ('Auenwal Plötzkau', area No DE-4236-401). As a result of logging on a massive scale by the Saxony-Anhalt Forestry Agency in 2004 and 2005, habitats of species listed in the Bird Protection Directive (79/409/EEC¹) and in the annexes to Directive 92/43/EEC² have been destroyed. Following the submission of a complaint by local residents, a compromise was reached between the Forestry Agency and conservationists concerning the logging exercise planned for autumn 2006 on the basis of which only poplars, but no pedunculate oaks, would be felled. However, this compromise did not regulate the quantity of timber involved. Since logging has already led to the felling of at least 10% of the entire stock of trees, the measures carried out by the Forestry Agency have already made the nature conservation objectives laid down for the area much more difficult to achieve.

1. Does the Commission share the view that further logging should only be allowed on the basis of derogations granted pursuant to Article 6(4) of the FFH Directive?
2. Does the Commission share the view that, in keeping with the judgment handed down by the European Court of Justice on 7 September 2004 (Case C-127/02) on cockle fishing in the Netherlands, logging in the riverside forests near Plötzkau can be described as a 'plan' or 'project' within the meaning of Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43/EEC?
3. Was an environmental impact assessment carried out in connection with the logging exercise?
4. Do the regulations governing the nature conservation area 'Auwald bei Plötzkau' and the protected landscape area 'Saale' already comply with the requirements of the FFH and bird protection directives? If not, what is the compliance deadline?

¹ OJ L 103, 25.4.1979, p. 1.

² OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7.