

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3415/09
by David Hammerstein (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Tourism development plan for Ribagorza Norte (Spain)

The purpose of this question is to inform the Commission concerning the project for extending the ski-slopes at Cerler in the Pyrenees, in Aragon (Spain). This project involves creating four new skiable areas, with a total of 140 km of skiable surface, 130 slopes, 46 ski-lifts and 70 km² of snow areas and capacity for 300 000 skiers, the aim being to become the biggest ski resort in the Spanish Pyrenees.

It is also proposed to construct three golf courses of 80 ha each, as well as two water tanks of 100 000 m³ each, for irrigation purposes.

The development plan for the ski resort project received final approval from the planning committee of Huesca province on 24 December 2008. It authorises the construction of 4 053 second homes, in a municipality which now has 308 inhabitants.

This project would have an irreversible impact on the Isabena River SCI, as recognised by the Commission itself in relation to Petition No 2003/5212 (SG(2003) A/11687). No action was taken on this petition when it was first submitted, on the grounds that no project existed at the time, but it could now be revived.

The project would also affect the LIC corresponding to the Esera River, the Posets-Maladeta Park and its area of influence, as well as various types of landscape covered by the habitats directive (92/43/EEC)¹. Also affected would be areas of special interest for the conservation of the bearded vulture, the ptarmigan, the wood grouse and the brown bear, species classified as endangered for which a specific management plan exists, drawn up by the Aragon regional government. The impact on the landscape would be grave. There would also be a significant impact on the area of influence of the Posets-Maladeta nature park.

This project is in breach of the water framework directive (2000/60/EC)², by reason of both its demands in terms of water resources and the demands of the associated development projects: it is materially impossible to supply the proposed facilities and constructions with water. No report has been drawn up by the Hydrographic Confederation of the Ebro (CHE).

No emergency plan has been prepared, in an area characterised by high risk levels in geological, hydrographic and seismic terms, and, especially, avalanche risks in the Ardonés and Aneto areas.

No action has been taken to inform the public or to ensure its participation in transparent fashion, above all as regards the process of approval of the General Urban Development Plan (PGOU) for the Montanuy area. There may, therefore, be a breach of the directive on access to environmental information (90/313/CEE)³.

Is the Commission aware of these circumstances?

What measures will the Commission take, given that there may be a breach of the habitats directive, the water framework directive and the directive on access to environmental information?

¹ OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7.

² OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1.

³ OJ L 158, 23.6.1990, p. 56.