

**Question for written answer E-003125/2012
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Younous Omarjee (GUE/NGL)

Subject: French outermost regions (ORs) and the Natura 2000 programme

In order to benefit from the Natura 2000 programme, the sites concerned must comply with Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. To achieve compliance, it must also be possible to apply this Directive in all European regions. Article 2 of the Directive states that the aim of the Directive is to contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats in the European territory of the Member States to which the Treaty applies and that regional and local requirements shall be taken into account.

However, it must be pointed out that Annex I, which lists the habitats and species that are to be protected, concerns only those within continental Europe. The species and types of habitat found in French ORs are not included. Consequently, Directive 92/43/EEC cannot be applied in these regions. The priority sites and species of the French ORs therefore cannot be integrated into the Natura 2000 programme.

Annex I to the Directive was established on the basis of the European Corine programme, launched in 1988. Why did this programme never list the habitats and species of the French ORs? What provision justifies the exclusion of French outermost regions from this programme? Why has the classification of the sites in the French outermost regions still not been completed to this day? When does the Commission plan to list the priority habitats, fauna and flora of the French ORs?

Furthermore, Directive 92/43/EEC, particularly in Article 5 thereof, considers that suitable sites for designation as special conservation areas should be proposed by Member States, but also states that there is a procedure to permit the designation of sites not proposed by a Member State in exceptional cases and that, to this end, a consultation procedure shall take place between this Member State and the Commission.

Has the Commission taken any steps to request the classification of certain sites in French outermost regions since 1992? If such steps have not been taken, could the Commission please explain why not? If such steps have been taken, when did this happen and why have they failed?