

**Question for written answer E-012816/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Gaston Franco (PPE) and Richard Seeber (PPE)

Subject: Marine Natura 2000 sites

Following the Third International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC3), 20 national ministers representing all of the oceans reaffirmed their determination to reach the target of covering 10% of the oceans with marine protected areas by 2020 (Aichi Target 11), compared with 3% today, and committed to leveraging the necessary means to do so, in the Ajaccio ministerial message of 26 October 2013.

Regarding progress made in designating Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in the form of marine Natura 2000 sites in the EU, could the Commission say what measures have been taken against Member States which have not respected either the deadlines or the obligations arising from the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (further to Question E-009597/2012)?

We note with regret the many reprimands issued by the Commission to Member States: during the meetings of all the Natura 2000 expert groups (Nature Directors' meetings, Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature, Natura 2000 Management, Marine Expert Group, Habitats Committee, etc.); by means of the drafting of two specific framework guidelines on the designation of SACs and the conservation objectives to be defined; following several complaints from non-governmental organisations (Oceana, WWF); as well as by means of the opening of several EU Pilot cases in order to clarify the failures in the enforcement of EU law.

The Habitats Committee, at its meeting of 25 April 2013, also expressed its concerns given that the advancements under way are far from fully complying with European obligations in terms of nature protection, particularly with regard to the establishment of the necessary conservation measures for each site. We are seeking a firmer stance from the Commission on this issue, in order that Member States rapidly implement effective mechanisms to ensure the compliance of their network of protected areas.

Consequently, could the Commission supply the reports from the EU Pilot cases opened in April 2013, including the responses from the Member States concerned, and confirm whether it intends to initiate infringement proceedings to directly tackle these proven and repeated cases of non-compliance?