

**Question for written answer E-013424/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Pollution of Lake Sanabria and possible misuse of European regional development funds

According to various recently-published scientific reports, Lake Sanabria (Zamora) is being seriously polluted by the recurring inflow of sewage from neighbouring towns and the poor condition of water treatment infrastructure in the area. This pollution could lead to the destruction of the Iberian Peninsula's largest lake of glacier origin, which forms part of the Natura 2000 network and is listed as a Special Protection Area (SPA) for birds and a habitat of Community interest.

A recent study carried out by the Duero-Douro International Biological Station, with the collaboration of over 20 scientists and experts from Spain, Portugal, France and Switzerland, warned that the lake's waters are undergoing a process of eutrophication which is seriously unbalancing its ecosystem. Nevertheless, the Castile and Leon regional government has questioned the accuracy of these scientific findings and refused to accept its share of responsibility for the construction of defective water treatment plants and the adoption of maintenance agreements which have not been implemented.

Since the protection of nature, endangered species and the most important European habitats is one of the EU's aims and commitments, what steps does the Commission intend to take to monitor and ensure compliance with European law in these Natura 2000 sites protected under the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) and the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in Castile and Leon?

If it is proven that sewage dumping is causing the lake's pollution and loss of biodiversity, as observed by the scientists, will the Commission fine Spain for its possible misuse of European regional development funds to finance the construction of the water treatment plant responsible for this environmental destruction?