

**Question for written answer E-002327/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Bulgaria's designation of a needed Natura 2000 zone in the Rila Mountains for the protection of the brown bear delayed seven years

Bulgaria had agreed to designate Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) for the conservation of habitats of protected species, in compliance with the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), no later than its accession date of 1 January 2007. More than seven years later, however, the Bulgarian Government has still not designated a sufficient number of areas in the Rila Mountains for the protection of the brown bear.

In its answer to Written Question E-003709/2010, tabled by Sandrine Bélier and Michail Tremopoulos, the Commission stated that 'Bulgaria is carrying out further evaluation in order to find out if additional parts of the Rila Mountains are to be included in the national proposal for the brown bear'. Evaluation results were due to be submitted by autumn 2010.

Furthermore, in its answer to Written Question E-007439/2012, tabled by Nikos Chrysogelos, the Commission stated that it was to organise a bilateral biogeographical seminar in October 2012 in which the Natura 2000 network would be discussed with Bulgarian authorities and with nature conservation NGOs, also with regard to the brown bear.

According to the conclusions of the biogeographical seminar, the Bulgarian Government was to designate the lower Rila Mountains as an SCI in order to protect the habitat of the brown bear. Until now, more than one year after the biogeographical seminar, no step in this direction has been taken.

What steps will the Commission take to urge the Bulgarian Government finally to designate the scientifically determined brown bear habitats in the Rila Mountains as an SCI?