

EN
E-005562/2015
Answer given by Mr Vella
on behalf of the Commission
(15.6.2015)

As requested by the Commission, the UK provided clarification on bunkering activities in the Bay of Gibraltar, its impact assessment of the Eastside project and the placement of 70 concrete blocks in Algeciras Bay in March 2014. Spain subsequently provided additional information in October 2014 on all three issues and in March 2015 on the Eastside project. The Commission assessed the information provided and was unable to identify any breach of EU environmental legislation as regards the bunkering activities and the placement of 70 concrete blocks.

As regards the bunkering activities, the UK indicated that the potential pressures were assessed in accordance with Marine Strategy Framework Directive¹ (MSFD) and that Gibraltar Port authority operates a strict Bunkering Code of Practice and enforcement programme to protect the marine environment. Furthermore, it appears that there are no vessels acting as floating fuel stations in the *Estrecho Oriental* site at present. As regards the placement of 70 blocks, the UK explained that the London Convention and Protocol/UNEP guidelines were followed and that potential pressures were assessed under the MSFD and the Habitats Directive². Under the latter, it was concluded that no protected species were present within the footprint of the proposed artificial reef.

As regards the impacts of the Eastside Project and land reclamation activities, the UK has considered them in their MSFD assessment. In respect of the impact of the project on protected species, the UK indicated that a survey was undertaken, concluding that there were no transboundary impacts on protected species. The Commission is still assessing the information provided on the impact assessment procedure in relation to the Eastside Project.

¹ Directive 2008/56/EC, OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19–40

² Directive 92/43/EEC, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7–50