

**Question for written answer E-001818/2019
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Matt Carthy (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Exploration and mining in County Cavan, Ireland

In accordance with Directive 92/43/CEE and the Irish transposing law, exploration and mining projects in Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) must be assessed in order to determine their potential impact on the conservation objectives of the area and can only be authorised when it is certain that they will not cause any damage to its integrity. This was confirmed by the Tribunal Superior de Justicia de Navarra in case no. 147/2011 (Zilbeti Mine – Navarra, Spain). In this case, the Spanish court considered it irrelevant that the quarry would occupy only 0.25% of the surface area of the SAC since the decisive factor was the impact that the quarry would have on the total area.

Ireland's Exploration and Mining Division (EMD) is currently offering large areas of land in County Cavan to two mining companies. These areas encompass both SACs and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

Can the Commission state whether the Irish Government has contravened EU law by failing to at the very least carry out an assessment of the impact that the activities of the two mining companies will have on the SACs?