

**Question for written answer E-004424/2020  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: European Hamster now a critically endangered species

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) <sup>1</sup>, a membership union of 1 400 nature conservation organisations, has just issued a warning that 30 000 of the 120 000 species it has assessed are threatened with extinction <sup>2</sup>. These figures represent a wildlife disaster.

The results for Europe are far from perfect and the European Hamster, also known as the Great Hamster of Alsace (*Cricetus cricetus*) <sup>3</sup>, has now moved into the critically endangered category. How is it that this rodent, once so very widespread, now comes to be included on this list? For several reasons, amongst which figure the spread of single-crop farming, industrial development, light pollution and the effects of uncontrolled globalisation.

As a result, the rodent has vanished from three quarters of its original habitat in Alsace, from at least a third of its range in Germany and from more than 75 % of its range in Eastern Europe. The IUCN says the species could become extinct within the next 30 years.

On the brink of extinction, the European Hamster joins the long list of species our children and grandchildren will only be able to see in books and museums.

What action will the Commission take concerning this significant decline in a species endemic to Europe?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.iucn.org>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.iucn.org/news/species/202007/almost-a-third-lemurs-and-north-atlantic-right-whale-now-critically-endangered-iucn-red-list>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.hamster-alsace.fr/qui-est-le-grand-hamster-dalsace/>