

**Question for written answer E-006112/2020  
to the Commission**  
Rule 138  
**Annika Bruna** (ID)

Subject: Protecting ecologically rare species

On 8 October 2020, the journal Nature Communication published a study on ecologically rare species and the threats to them that could cause their extinction. Conducted by scientists from the French National Centre for Scientific Research (the CNRS), the French Foundation for Biodiversity Research (the FRB), and Grenoble and Montpellier Universities, this study describes these species as having an 'irreplaceable' and unique ecological role in their ecosystem.

The researchers deplore the fact that a species is only regarded as rare when its population size has severely dwindled or its geographical range has become very limited. They, however, consider the unique role a species plays in its ecosystem to be the most decisive factor. They conclude from this that their ecological originality must be taken into account in conservation programmes.

1. What is the Commission doing to encourage Member States to protect those 'ecologically rare' species present on their soil and, in particular, in their overseas territories?
2. Is the Commission also acting to encourage non-EU countries to protect these same species?