

**Question for written answer E-004487/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Ignazio Corrao (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Photovoltaic mega-plant in rural agricultural and tourism areas in Sicily, destruction of the landscape and violation of EU rules

On 16 April 2021 the Sicilian Regional Government ruled that a project for a ground-mounted photovoltaic plant covering 112 hectares in the municipalities of Canicattini Bagni, Syracuse and Noto was compatible with the environment. This, in an area designated as agricultural and mainly agricultural, as stipulated in the local land-use plan.

This positive opinion, which has no justification whatsoever, reproduces Opinion No 375/2020 of the Technical Scientific Committee, which ignores many aspects relating to environmental incompatibility.

Indeed, the plant is to be installed in areas identified by the regional landscape plan as a stretch of 'perceptive-panoramic' landscape. These areas are supposed to be part of the 'South East Hyblaean Circuit' and were destined to become part of the 'Hyblaean National Park' (Parco Nazionale degli Iblei), the proposal for which has already been submitted to the ministry.

The plant is also incompatible with Article 24 of the provincial territorial plan and the regional environmental and energy plan for Sicily, known as PEARS.

Finally, the EIA is apparently in breach of the legal framework that prevents photovoltaic plants from being located within agricultural areas, unless the latter have been assessed as 'degraded'.

With reference to its answer to question E-003211/2021 (ASW), can the Commission clarify:

1. whether it regards it as a breach of the EIA Directive and the EU subsidiarity principle when local land-use and land management plans are ignored;
2. what action it intends to take to protect EU legislation in cases such as this?