

**Question for written answer E-005066/2021/rev.1
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Jutta Paulus (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Environmental impact assessment and public consultation on the lithium prospecting and exploration programme in Portugal

Within the Portuguese lithium prospecting and exploration programme, eight potential areas in the north and centre of the country have been targeted for exploration. According to the NGO Quercus, 28 % of these areas are located inside nationally protected areas such as the Naturtejo da Meseta Meridional UNESCO Global Geopark. Recently, the Portuguese Government announced plans to suspend exploration rights for the company LusoRecursos owing to the insufficient nature of their environmental impact study.

1. Is Portugal planning a trans-boundary environmental impact assessment for the areas close to the Spanish border and, if not, is the Commission planning to take any procedural steps to remedy this transgression?
2. How will the Commission ensure that special areas of conservation protected under Council Directive 92/43/EEC are not negatively affected by this lithium mining?
3. How is the Commission encouraging Member States to make sure that environmental impact studies are adequate, and is it planning to review future environmental impact studies in more detail?