

**Question for written answer E-001063/2022  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Ignazio Corrao** (Verts/ALE)

**Subject:** Planned Malta-Gela gas pipeline, protection of Natura 2000 sites and presence of depleted uranium

On 1 March 2022, the Managing Authority of the Biviere Reserve in Gela sent the Ministry for Ecological Transition, on behalf of Sicily Region, an opinion on the planned gas pipeline between Malta and Gela (Italy).

Drawn up as part of the Ministry's environmental impact assessment, the document recommends considering alternative routes, in view of the large number of impacts and high environmental costs.

The route of the EU-funded gas pipeline was determined on the basis of solely economic – and no environmental – criteria. Indeed, it would pass through Natura 2000 sites, including special areas of conservation (ITA050001 and ITA050011), a special protection area (ITA050012) and a bird and biodiversity area (166 'Biviere and Plain of Gela'), as well as priority marine ecosystems.

The report also reveals worrying levels of pollution of the seabed of the Gulf of Gela, which the pipeline would cross, owing to concentrations of uranium 238 and thorium 234.

In view of this:

1. What is the Commission's assessment of the project in relation to EU law (for example, Directive 79/409/EEC and Directive 92/43/EEC) and Commission communication C(2018)7621?
2. Will it verify the presence (and origin) of uranium and thorium in the waters around Gela?
3. What does it make of the opinion<sup>1</sup> and its annexes<sup>2</sup> as regards the environmental status of the area under consideration?

**Supporter<sup>3</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bPxKgTVpDkKAmfiySJNieutRTEg6JOVL/view?usp=sharing>

<sup>2</sup> [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1bgUaH7IZsjrFZUzd3b\\_FUaQnoSPMFt-P](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1bgUaH7IZsjrFZUzd3b_FUaQnoSPMFt-P)

<sup>3</sup> This question is supported by a Member other than the author: Rosa D'Amato (Verts/ALE)