The Commission is not in possession of all the elements about the project mentioned by the Honourable Member. Without prejudice to the Commission’s role as guardian of the Treaties, Member States are primarily responsible to ensure compliance with EU law, including in relation to assessing projects’ possible impacts on Natura 2000 sites.

According to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, any plan or project that is likely to have a significant impact on a Natura 2000 site must be subject to an assessment of its impacts in view of the site's conservation objectives. Further conditions are set out in Article 6(4), namely for the projects to be approved because of imperative reasons of overriding public interests. The Commission has produced several guidance documents to help Member States’ authorities implement the above-mentioned provisions. Italy has transposed these provisions in its national legislation and, in 2019, adopted tailored national guidelines to facilitate and ensure their consistent implementation across its regions.

While projects for cycle routes are not expressly listed in the Annexes of Directive 2011/92/EU, they may be considered as tourism and leisure projects. For similar projects, Member States have to determine, either through a case by case examination or according to thresholds or criteria, if such a project is to be made subject to an assessment because of its likely significant effects on the environment taking into account the relevant selection criteria set out in Annex III of the Directive.

If the project was to be supported through the Recovery and Resilience Facility or the European Regional Development Fund, then it would need to take into account the relevant environmental protection requirements.

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3 https://www.mite.gov.it/pagina/la-valutazione-di-incidenza-vinca -
6 Project category under Annex II 12 of Directive 2011/92/EU.