

**Question for written answer E-001228/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Dominique Bilde (ID)

Subject: Vlora Airport in Albania: call for tenders and environmental impact

The contract to build and operate Vlora Airport in Albania is worth EUR 104 million¹. ‘The consortium chosen to build the airport includes a Turkish conglomerate with ties to the party of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who personally ordered the company to build a hospital near the airport’s site just before the winners were announced.’²

The consortium ‘includes the Turkish conglomerate YDA Construction Industry and Trade, whose chairman has ties to Turkey’s ruling AKP Party, and a subsidiary of Mabetex Group, owned by Rama’s friend, the wealthy and controversial Kosovar businessman Behgjet Pacolli.’

Although up to 27 000 jobs could be created³, environmentalists warn that the project will cause irreparable damage to one of the largest wetlands in the Mediterranean.⁴

1. Does the Commission intend to investigate the allegations made by a rival, UK-based bidder in a civil lawsuit accusing the Albanian Government of rigging the tender in the consortium’s favour⁵?
2. How does it intend to address the alleged environmental impact of the project within the framework of the stabilisation and association agreement entered into with Albania⁶?

Submitted: 16.4.2023

¹ ‘A 104-million-euro (\$116.5 million) contract to build and operate the airport was signed just days before his party swept national polls in April last year, in a move the opposition said had violated election laws.’

² ‘New Albanian Airport Raises Cronyism, Environment Concerns’, Lindita Çela (OCCRP), 21 June 2022, <https://www.occrp.org/en/investigations/new-albanian-airport-raises-cronyism-environment-concerns>

³ ‘Rama claims the airport could create 27,000 jobs.’

⁴ ‘Environmentalists warn Vlora airport will irreparably damage a key Mediterranean wetland.’

⁵ ‘A civil suit filed by a rival, U.K.-based bidder alleges Albania’s government manipulated the tender to favor the Turkish-Kosovar consortium with the help of another company that never even bid for the contract.’

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/stabilisation-and-association-agreement-with-albania.html#>