

**Question for written answer E-001239/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Mindelo Ornithological Reserve (ROM) – (un)protected by all

The Mindelo Ornithological Reserve is located in the municipality of Vila do Conde and was the first protected area in Portugal, having been designated as such in 1957.

Currently, the reserve is facing a number of threats, with pressure both from urban development to the north and from industrial development to the east, reducing its territory and its natural value, adding to the pressure from the sea, the incursions of which are rapidly contributing to the reserve's degradation.

Despite the important historical, cultural and natural value of the Mindelo Ornithological Reserve, it has been ignored by a number of responsible bodies, namely the Portuguese Environment Agency and the municipality of Vila do Conde, which have persistently absolved themselves of their responsibility for the preservation of the reserve.

Were it not for a group of concerned citizens actively committed to the protection of the reserve – that is the Mindelo chapter of FAPAS, the Portuguese Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity – it would have already ceased to exist as a protected area.

This association has for some time insisted that the reserve enjoys almost no protection and that, in view of the pressures it is facing, the situation should be reviewed and the reserve integrated into the Natura 2000 network, as it is currently only registered in the National Network of Protected Areas.

In view of the above, what steps will the Commission take to ensure that the Portuguese Government urges the responsible national and local authorities to enforce the appropriate Community and national legislation in order to preserve the Mindelo Ornithological Reserve?

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