

**Question for written answer E-002737/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Environmental impact of a planned bypass in Wiener Neustadt

Environmental impact assessments (EIAs) are intended to ensure that major construction projects take account of environmental concerns. But this does not always happen, as one example in Austria shows: The construction of a bypass road in Wiener Neustadt has been approved¹, despite the fact that it crosses an area of natural value protected in the Natura 2000 network. The project will also destroy fields that both count among of Austria's most fertile² and are drought-resistant, something that is of particular importance in times of drought owing to the climate crisis. This would appear to run counter to the aims of the EIA legislation, since the bypass may undermine biodiversity, local food production and climate-change resilience. No work has been done to explore alternatives to building the bypass.

Austria's EIA was amended this year and now contains clearer provisions, such as on climate protection and reducing soil use³.

1. Does the Commission consider that this project meets the requirements of EIA legislation and, if so, how does it fit in with the commitments and current legislative plans to protect the environment and soils?
2. Does the Commission believe that planned construction projects, such as this bypass, should be reassessed under the new EIA legislation?
3. How can we ensure that EIA rules will be implemented in practice in a manner that truly safeguards all relevant assets of environmental value?

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¹ <https://www.wn24.at/umwelt/plattform-gegen-ostumfahrung-bauprojekt-werde-durchgewunken-40167.html>

² <https://secure.umweltbundesamt.at/webgis-portal/beat/index.html>

³ <https://www.oesterreich.gv.at/Gesetzliche-Neuerungen/Bundesgesetzblatt/Umweltvertraeglichkeitspruefungsgesetz.html>