

ORAL QUESTION H-0828/01

for Question Time at the part-session in November 2001

pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure

by Jean Saint-Josse

to the Commission

Subject: Natura 2000 - site notification procedure - judgments against France, Ireland and Germany - taking into consideration of socio-economic factors - amendment

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has delivered judgments against the French Republic (case C-220/99), the Federal Republic of Germany (case C-71/99) and Ireland (case C-67/99) for late and inadequate notification of sites eligible for recognition as sites of Community importance within the meaning of Directive 92/43/EEC¹ (Habitats Directive). What these Member States actually did was to take socio-economic factors into consideration at the notification stage, whilst Annex III of the directive specifies only scientific criteria. Ireland wished 'to launch a vast programme of public consultation' and thus finds itself censured by the European Court of Justice. (cf. point 32 of the above-mentioned judgment).

In view of the difficulties the majority of Member States currently have in forwarding lists of sites without regard to socio-economic factors and of the future difficulties of managing such sites, given that local people are left out of the notification procedure, is it not now necessary to amend Annex III of Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 with a view to ensuring sustainable development?

Is amendment of Annex III not needed in this respect in order to ensure the support of local people for the principles governing management of the sites in future? Is the Commission really concerned about this issue or, faced with the foreseeable difficulties, will it routinely allow the matter to rest ultimately with ECJ judgments?

Tabled: 15.10.2001

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¹ OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7.