

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3090/03
by Antonios Trakatellis (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Declassification of forest land and forests and redefinition of the term 'forest' under new legislation proposed by the Greek Government.

Under the new forestry bill tabled by the Greek Government, around 3 million hectares of forest and forest land will be declassified. The proposed legislation will also redefine the term 'forests' and reset the legal limits for authorisation of land and clearance operations.

In view of this and the numerous grey areas existing under the proposed legislation:

1. To what extent does this proposed legislation comply with the directives on the preservation of natural habitats (92/43/EEC¹) and environmental impact assessment (85/337/EEC²).
2. How great is the danger which could arise from declassifying forest areas for construction or infrastructural development purposes, given that it could result in soil erosion and increase flood risks?
3. Has a general Community strategy and a programme of action been formulated for nature conservation and protection regarding forests and if so, are the new measures being proposed by the Greek Government in line with this?
4. To what extent is the new bill in line with Common Position (EC) No. 46/2003³ of 13 June 2003 adopted by the Council with a view to adopting a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the monitoring of forests and environmental interactions in the Community (Forest Focus) and to what extent does the definition of the term 'forest' contained in this regulation coincide with that contained in the new Greek Government bill?

¹ OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p.7.

² OJ L 175, 5.7.1985, p.40.

³ OJ C 233 E, 30.9.2003, p.1.