

**Priority question for written answer P-003433/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: The plans for the construction of the 'Istanbul Canal'

Just a few days ago, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan broke ground for the megalomaniacal Istanbul Canal project, which will connect the Black, Marmara and Aegean Seas. The Istanbul Canal project could lead to the biggest environmental catastrophe in the modern world, even bigger than the one in the Aral Sea. It risks destroying the fragile flora and fauna in the Black Sea.

The new Istanbul canal will be 45 km long, 300 metres wide and 25 metres deep. Millions of cubic meters of seawater will flow through the lower layer at the bottom of the canal to the Black Sea, with this seawater being twice as salty (35 % salinity) as the water in the Black Sea (17 % salinity).

The project initiated by Turkey violates the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, better known as the Bern Convention. Furthermore, Turkey is also violating the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution, which was signed in Bucharest in 1992.

1. Is the Commission aware of the Canal Istanbul project?
2. Does the Commission intend to commission impact assessments on the environmental toll of the project?
3. Will the Commission insist that current treaties governing the Turkish Straits are upheld?