

EN

P-003923/2021

Answer given by Mr Sinkevičius  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(23.9.2021)

The Commission is aware of the fish die-off in the Mar Menor, Murcia, and will continue its actions, within the remit of its competence, to address the issues of concern in this area. In its fifth Water Framework Directive<sup>1</sup> Implementation Report<sup>2</sup>, it recommended to Spain that quantitative and qualitative needs for protected habitats and species are specified and translated into specific objectives for each protected area, such as the Mar Menor, along with relevant monitoring and measures. Member States are required to report their third River Basin Management Plans<sup>3</sup> by March 2022. The Commission will assess these against the obligations of the Water Framework Directive and take necessary actions accordingly.

As regards the Nitrates Directive<sup>4</sup>, the Commission opened an infringement procedure against Spain<sup>5</sup> on insufficient protection of waters against pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources in November 2018. This case covers many autonomous communities including Murcia and Mar Menor. The Commission sent a Reasoned Opinion on 2 July 2020.

The Commission also opened an infringement procedure concerning Spain's failure to fulfil its obligations under the Habitats Directive<sup>6</sup> to adopt site-specific detailed conservation objectives and measures for all Special Areas of Conservation, including in the Mar Menor area, since the time limit for completing these steps in Spain had long expired. The Commission sent an Additional Letter of Formal Notice on 2 July 2020<sup>7</sup>.

In light of the outcome of the ongoing assessment of the responses submitted by Spain in both infringement procedures, the Commission shall take the action best suited to ensure full compliance with the Directives.

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/impl\\_reports.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/impl_reports.htm)

<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/participation/map\\_mc/map.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/participation/map_mc/map.htm)

<sup>4</sup> Council Directive 91/676/EEC of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources, OJ L 375, 31.12.1991, p.1.

<sup>5</sup> Infringement procedure n° 2018/2250, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/EN/INF\\_20\\_1212](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/EN/INF_20_1212)

<sup>6</sup> Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Infringement procedure n° 2015/2003, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/EN/INF\\_20\\_1212](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/EN/INF_20_1212)