

**Priority question for written answer P-004489/2021
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Inese Vaidere (PPE)

Subject: Alignment of EU climate goals with the extraction of peat for horticultural use and jobs

More than 10% of Latvia's territory is covered by bogs. There is no doubt that peat bogs are home to many rare and threatened species that are not found anywhere else. They help to regulate our climate by storing carbon. Therefore, in progressing towards the goals set in the European Climate Law, it is becoming increasingly important to protect bogs. Within the framework of Natura 2000, bogs in Latvia are already protected and renewed, under the LIFE programme.

At the same time, bogs also play an important economic role in Latvia. In view of Latvia's specific soils, at present it is hard to manage in horticulture without organic fertilisers. The organic substance content in peat is twice as high as in manure, while moisture capacity is as much as four times higher. The use of peat thus enables the soil to obtain more organic substances than from other local fertilisers. Peat extraction also secures jobs in regions with lower incomes, and leads to contributions to the state budget.

The EU 2030 environment and climate plans stipulate that the use of peat for energy must end completely and that bogs that have been developed must be recultivated. It is not clear, however, exactly what the proposed changes will mean for activity in the peat extraction sector. Therefore, in view of the importance of peat in Latvia's horticultural sector and the jobs created there:

does the Commission plan to ban the commercial extraction of peat in Latvia in the food-producing horticulture sector?