

(2001/C 174 E/146)

**WRITTEN QUESTION P-3787/00****by Monica Frassoni (Verts/ALE) to the Commission**

(29 November 2000)

*Subject:* Conservation of the Marina di Ravenna wandering dunes, Ravenna, Italy

The local authority has given permission for a bathing establishment covering a total area of more than 10 000 m<sup>2</sup> to be set up on the beach in front of the old Marina di Ravenna holiday camp, which used to be run by the Italian Red Cross, about 3 km south of Ravenna Harbour. This operation would adversely affect one of the last examples of moving, or wandering, dunes on the Romagnolo coast, which stretch across some 400 m and down over 100 m deep and lie between the seaside resorts of Marina di Ravenna and Punta Marina. The dunes in question have been included in a site of Community interest (IT4070006, Pialassa dei Piomboni and Punta Marina pine forest) under Ministerial Decree No 65, adopted on 3 April 2000 pursuant to Directive 92/43/EEC<sup>(1)</sup>. In addition, the area is subject to various restrictions imposed at national or regional level<sup>(2)</sup>. The site includes some 0,5 km of moving coastal dunes with a sandy shore in front. The vegetation is typical of the sands' colonisation phases (Salsolo and *Cakile* spp. on the waterline, *Ammophila* spp. on the wandering dunes, and *Silene colorata* and *Vulpium* spp. on the barren grassland behind the dunes). Furthermore, *Pinus pinaster* grows on the fixed dunes at the back of the wandering dunes. Among the other plant species that might be mentioned are *Salicornia veneta* (Annex II to Directive 92/43/EEC) and *Bassia hirsuta* and *Limonium bellidifolium* (on the Italian Red List). As far as fauna is concerned, some invertebrate species of national importance to Italy (*Cicindela majalis* and *Scarabaeus semipunctatus*) are to be found in the area, as are certain reptile and amphibian species protected by Annex IV to Directive 92/43/EEC (*Bufo viridis*, *Podarcis sicula*, and *Lacerta viridis*). An endangered bird species, *Charadrius alexandrinus*, also nests there.

The Italian Natural Heritage Service has proposed that the bathing establishment be set up on the stretch of beach in front of the wandering dunes. This solution, however, would do nothing to resolve the problems, because although it would not damage the dunes as such, it would completely break up the ecological and geomorphological continuum that they form with the sea and the waterline — which is essential in order to maintain both the biotic community and the coastal dynamics — and irreparably destroy their landscape value.

Can the Commission intervene to ensure that work on the bathing establishment is halted and the mandatory assessment of its implications carried out, as laid down in Directive 92/43/EEC?

Does it not believe in any event that a project of the type concerned should be checked or made subject to environmental impact assessment proper within the meaning of Directive 97/11/EC<sup>(3)</sup>?

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

<sup>(2)</sup> In particular, the dunes and the pine forest are subject to land use restrictions on hydrogeological grounds (Royal Decree Law of 30 December 1923) and constitute a State nature reserve (Ministerial Decree of 13 July 1977). The stretch of coast as a whole is a tied landscape area (Law 1497 of 29 June 1939). The sands are classed as an environmental improvement area under the Regional Landscape Plan (Regional Law 47/78). Finally, within the Po Delta Regional Park (Regional Law 27/78), the central dune area is protected as a 'C zone' and the fringe areas as a 'pre-park' zone.

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ L 73, 14.3.1997.

**Answer given by Mrs Wallström on behalf of the Commission**

(22 December 2000)

According to Article 2 of Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985<sup>(1)</sup> on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (EIA) and Council Directive 97/11/EC of 3 March 1997<sup>(2)</sup> which has modified Directive 85/337/EEC, Member States are obliged to ensure that, before consent is given, projects likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of their nature, size or location are made subject to a requirement for development consent and an assessment with regard to their effects. Classes of projects relevant to the Directive are defined in Article 4 and listed in the first two annexes.

On the basis of the information given by the Honourable Member, it is not possible to assess whether the project mentioned by the Honourable Member falls within one of the classes listed in the annexes of the Directive. Therefore, on the basis of the information given by the Honourable Member, due to a lack of grounds of complaint on the application of Community law on environmental impact assessment, no breach of it can be identified at present.

In contrast, the sites mentioned by the Honourable Member, claimed to be affected by the project, are proposed sites of Community importance (pSCI), under Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992<sup>(3)</sup> on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. With reference to pSCI, Member States have to ensure that the aims of the Directive are not jeopardised. Even in the absence of a Community list, Member States' authorities are therefore advised at least to abstain from activities that may cause a site on the national list to deteriorate.

In the specific case, not being aware of the situation described by the Honourable Member, the Commission will take the appropriate steps to gather detailed information about it and to ensure the observance of Community law.

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(<sup>1</sup>) OJ L 175, 5.7.1985.

(<sup>2</sup>) OJ L 73, 14.3.1997.

(<sup>3</sup>) OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

(2001/C 174 E/147)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-3791/00**

**by Charles Tannock (PPE-DE) to the Commission**

*(7 December 2000)*

*Subject:* Repair of churches

Is the Commission prepared to consider providing funds for the repair of cathedrals and churches of major historical importance throughout the European Union, given the importance of the role which they have played in the development of a common European heritage, their architectural value and the role which they continue to play in the life of many communities?

**Answer given by Ms Reding on behalf of the Commission**

*(8 February 2001)*

The Commission may provide support for cultural initiatives, including for the protection, preservation and development of the cultural heritage, under the 'Culture 2000' programme and in accordance with its criteria, this programme being the Community's main instrument for financing and planning in the area of cultural cooperation.

In this connection, the Commission would point out to the Honourable Member that a call for proposals for projects running in the year 2001 was published in the Official Journal in January 2001<sup>(1)</sup>. Consequently, cultural operators will be free to submit projects to be considered for funding.

Operators may find information at the following site: [http://europe.eu.int/com/culture/index\\_en.html](http://europe.eu.int/com/culture/index_en.html)

Furthermore, as part of the assistance provided to regions under the Structural Funds, cultural projects may obtain Community support. However, these projects will only be eligible if it is clearly demonstrated that they make a direct contribution to the economic and social development of the region.

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(<sup>1</sup>) OJ C 21, 24.1.2001.