

**Question for written answer E-002918/2024**

**to the Commission**

Rule 144

**Sebastian Everding (The Left), Cristina Guarda (Verts/ALE)**

**Subject:** Serious environmental and safety concerns regarding the construction of the new Vlorë International Airport

Vlorë International Airport is under construction in Albania's Vjosa river delta, within the Pishë Poro-Nartë Protected Area. This protected area is also a candidate Emerald network site, Important Bird Area and Key Biodiversity Area, and has been assessed for potential inclusion in the Natura 2000 network. It is a key stopover along the Adriatic flyway.

Parliament's resolution of 12 July 2023 on the 2022 Commission Report on Albania requested a halt to the building work. In September and December 2023, the Bern Convention officially requested that construction of the airport be suspended.

In its 2024 Albania report, the Commission expressed serious concern that this request had been disregarded: 'The construction of the new Vlorë Airport within the Pishë Poro-Narta Protected Area, started in December 2021 continues, despite the request of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention in December 2023 to suspend the works until a new and sufficient Environmental Impact Assessment procedure is conducted'. The Commission has repeatedly emphasised the violation of national and international environmental legislation in its Albania reports since 2021. The works on the airport also violated other national legislation by starting in 2021 without a building permit.

What will the Commission do to push for the implementation of the Bern Convention's request now that Albania is in accession negotiations?

Submitted: 12.12.2024