

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1922/03

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to the Commission

Subject: Administrative situation with regard to the Breña II dam

The Guadalquivir basin suffers a serious structural water shortage, which has an enormous adverse socio-economic impact. The lack of security of supply of water for irrigation leads to loss of investment in regions such as Andalucía, which is defined as an Objective 1 region by the European Union.

The Breña II dam is not only backed by economic operators and representatives of civil society linked to the agricultural sector, such as the farmers in the Guadalquivir basin and farmers' organisations (ASAJA, COAG and UPA), but also by workers' trade unions (CC.OO. and UGT), consumers (UCEUCA), provincial councils in the region (Cordoba, Granada, Jaen and Seville), the Andalusian regional government, the Spanish government itself and the Andalusian Parliament.

All this is because the dam, combined with the current policy of modernising irrigated land and improving the use and management of the scarce water resources available, is the only way of remedying the water shortage in the Guadalquivir basin.

In November 2001 the Spanish Government forwarded to the Commission, in accordance with Council Directive 92/43/EEC<sup>1</sup> on the conservation of natural habitats, the project for the Breña II dam and the plans for compensation and corrective measures, as well as justification for the reasons of overriding public interest making the dam necessary.

As the Commission well knows, the dam in question not only has the support and approval of the environmental authorities of the Spanish Government and the Andalusian regional government, but also the lobby group for the protection of the Iberian lynx, which means that only the European Union's approval is lacking.

In view of the above and the delay in settling this issue, can the Commission say why it has not yet given its final approval for the execution of this water supply project of vital importance for Andalucía? What conditions has the Spanish Government not yet fulfilled? When does the Commission envisage settling the issue once and for all?

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7.