

**Question for written answer E-000387/2024
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Building an on-shore regasification plant in Porto Empedocle

The project for the construction of an on-shore regasification plant in Porto Empedocle will have a significant impact on two Natura 2000 sites¹ and could lead to Agrigento's Valley of the Temples being removed from UNESCO's Heritage List, as the facility would be built right alongside the archaeological park and the project also provides for the construction of a connecting pipeline running through it².

Fondali di Torre Salsa was designated as a protected area in 2019, at a time when the construction project's authorisation – which had been granted on 22 October 2009 by means of Decree No 112/GAB – had expired.

The construction site itself had, at one point, been seized by the authorities, and the project has also been significantly amended. It should also be noted that the project was initially denied authorisation. The authorisation was hurriedly extended³ without carrying out a new set of environmental assessments, a legal requirement. As regards Fondali di Torre Salsa, the existing regulations also required that a new risk and environmental assessment be carried out, but this was not done either.

In the light of the above:

1. Given that the area concerned has since been designated as a Natura 2000 site, does the Commission believe that the project's Environmental Impact Assessment is still valid?
2. Given that the project's technological specifications have since been amended, does the Commission believe that its authorisation is still valid?

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¹ 1. The Maccalube di Aragona (ITA040008) protected nature reserve was established in September 1995 and includes 4 protected habitats and 36 protected species 2. The Fondali di Torre Salsa (ITA040016) protected area was established in December 2019 and includes 2 protected habitats and 2 protected species, including the Caretta caretta (or Loggerhead) Turtle, which also nests on Porto Empedocle beach, the projected site for the regasification plant.

² Official Communiqué No 24 by the Head of Italian Delegation of UNESCO of 27 April 2007.

³ Decree No 45/GAB of 13 September 2023 by Sicily's Regional Councillor for Energy.