

**Question for written answer P-001090/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Iratxe García Pérez (S&D)

Subject: Environmental impact assessment of projects in Natura 2000 network sites

The Cronos research project into hydrocarbons affects Natura 2000 network sites in the Spanish autonomous communities of Castilla-La Mancha and Castilla y León. The areas in question have special protection status, and include: Altos de Barahona (SCI¹ and SPAB²), Páramos de Layna (SCI and SPAB), Embalse de Monteagudo de las Vicarías (SPAB) and Sabinares del Jalón (SCI), all of which are located in Castilla y León; and las Parameras de Maranchón, Hoz del Mesa y Aragoncillo (SCI and SPAB) in Castilla-La Mancha.

On 26 April 2013 the Spanish Council of Ministers granted Frontera Energy Corporation a six-year licence to carry out research into hydrocarbons. The Green Development Association (Asociación Desarrollo Verde), one of the organisations which appealed against the licencing decision, has reason to doubt whether the firm has carried out the environmental impact assessment (EIA) required under EU rules governing such activities in Natura 2000 sites.

Can a Member State government authorise activities of this kind when the company awarded the licence for the work has failed to carry out an EIA to assess its impact on Natura 2000 sites?

Does the Commission think that hydraulic fracturing or fracking studies will have such a limited environmental impact on SCIs and SPABs that a government does not need to submit such projects to an EIA?

¹ Site of Community Interest.

² Special Protection Area for Birds.