

**Priority question for written answer P-003046/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Danube Delta and reed beds under threat owing partly to EU agricultural grants

A recent newspaper investigation has shown how the Danube Delta, a world biodiversity site in Romania, has become politically ensnared and is at risk of disappearing owing to its reed beds being of financial interest while, paradoxically, they are also receiving EU agricultural grants. A recent set of regulatory changes has turned the harvesting of reeds from the Delta into a farming activity, for which grants worth millions of euro are being obtained. According to scientists, marshes, peat bogs and plants that grow in naturally inundated zones store carbon in the same way as forests do, precisely because they are not being used for intensive farming.

The newspaper investigation shows how laws and ministerial-level regulations have been altered to help companies with political links to those in power to obtain millions of euro in EU funding.

1. Can the Commission assess whether these regulatory changes violate EU legislation?
2. Can the Commission evaluate the grants the EU has been awarding for this farming activity?
3. If irregularities are detected, should the Commission not refer the matter to the European Public Prosecutor's Office to recover the grants awarded and punish those who have allowed this to happen?

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