

**Priority question for written answer P-002637/2024
to the Commission**
Rule 144
Manuela Ripa (PPE)

Subject: Planned gypsum mining in Saxony-Anhalt and possible breach of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)

The internationally active gypsum processing company Knauf Gips KG has applied for authorisation to conduct seven exploratory drillings in protected areas in Saxony-Anhalt (Germany). The landscape in question is unique in the world owing to its distinctive gypsum karst ecosystem and cannot be restored once destroyed. Several sites protected under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) are concerned. This includes, in particular, the protected area designated under the Habitats Directive as ‘Buntsandstein- und Gipskarstlandschaft bei Questenberg im Südharz’ (EU code DE 4432-301).

1. Does the Commission have any knowledge of the ongoing approval procedure for the seven exploratory drillings requested?
2. Does the Commission consider that a possible authorisation of the exploratory drilling would constitute an infringement of the provisions of the Habitats Directive?
3. If so, is the Commission planning to intervene, or has there already been an exchange between the Commission and the competent authorities in this connection?

Submitted: 22.11.2024