

EN

P-003675/2022

Answer given by Mr Sinkevičius  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(8.12.2022)

The Commission agrees with the Honourable Members about the importance of wetlands for the preservation of biodiversity, climate and the water cycle. Although this importance should also apply to the peri-urban wetland of Alagoas Brancas near Lagoa, the Commission notes that this site is currently not a Natura 2000 area.

As the Commission already stated in its reply to written question E-004044/2021, the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030<sup>1</sup> identifies the need to increase the coverage of protected areas in the EU to at least 30% of EU land and sea area, and to adequately manage and protect all sites. By the end of 2022, Member States are expected to provide pledges for additional areas, as a contribution to that target. The criteria for selecting sites to be proposed as protected areas have been outlined in a Commission Staff Working document<sup>2</sup>. An EU level assessment of the pledges will take place in 2023. Depending on its outcome, the Commission might ask Portugal to protect additional wetland sites, including by mentioning specific sites that should become protected, provided it has sufficient arguments to do so. However, the Commission has no competence for classifying this area as protected.

The Commission has also no competence for blocking the works in Alagoas Brancas. Only national Courts can issue injunctions for stopping on-going works.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/strategy/index\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/strategy/index_en.htm)

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/publications/criteria-and-guidance-protected-areas-designations-staff-working-document\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/publications/criteria-and-guidance-protected-areas-designations-staff-working-document_en)