

Commissioner Michel Barnier
The European Commission
rue de la loi 200
Bruxelles

12 January 2003

Dear Commissioner,

During our debate in December at the Environment Committee meeting in Strasbourg on the use of structural funds for the Spanish Hydrological Plan, I raised the specific question of approval of EU funds for the La Brena II dam, to which you proposed responding in writing.

Before my forthcoming visit to the proposed La Brena dam site this month, I should like to clarify my question and obtain an answer from you as soon as possible.

Following your response to Brian Simpson's question in November 2003 that the Commission had launched infringement proceedings against Spain in relation to this project, I was very surprised to learn that approval had been granted, just one month later, for Structural Fund financing. Can you please explain how this is possible and clarify the status of the infringement proceedings?

Can you also explain your assessment of the potential threat this dam would pose to the small remaining population of Iberian Lynx, which are near extinction? I understand that this large dam, which lies exactly between Sierra Morena and Doñana national park, the two remaining viable lynx populations, would block the interaction of the small lynx populations in these two areas and could hinder their reproduction or cause genetic problems which would push the lynx further towards extinction.

Furthermore, I would be grateful for a full list of all EU funded infrastructure projects in Spain and Portugal.

Thank you in advance for your response.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Caroline Lucas MEP