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## MISSION REPORT

following the fact-finding visit to Extremadura and Castilla la Mancha (Spain) aiming to investigate the closure of a nuclear power plant in Almaraz based on Petition No 0445/2025 and the protection of the Cabañeros National Park based on Petitions Nos 0819/2024 and 1334/2024

Committee on Petitions

Members of the mission:

Bogdan Rzońca	(ECR) (Leader of the mission)
Fredis Beleris	(PPE)
Sebastian Kruis	(Pfe)
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Juan Carlos Girauta Vidal	(Pfe)
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## *Introduction*

The objective of this fact-finding visit, as established in Article 234 of the Rules of Procedure, was on the one hand, to collect comprehensive information on the implications of the potential closure of the Almaraz nuclear power plant within the context of the Spanish and European energy transition, and, on the other hand, to examine the petitioners' concerns regarding the insufficient protection of the natural environment, the degradation of biodiversity, and shortcomings in the enforcement of EU environmental legislation - including the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive - in the Cabañeros National Park, as well as its impact on local communities.

## *Summary account of meetings*

### **Monday, 16 February 2026, Navalmoral de la Mata (Extremadura)**

On 16 February, the delegation opened its fact-finding visit in Navalmoral de la Mata with an exchange of views with regional and local authorities. The **Head of Delegation, MEP RZONCA** showed his gratitude for the warm welcoming to the City Council of Navalmoral de la Mata and after explaining the objective of the fact-finding visit gave the word to the authorities.

**Ms Maria GUARDIOLA, President of Extremadura** stated that we are experiencing a time of high electricity demand and with a debate on the table about energy sovereignty in Europe. In this context, she stressed that Spain cannot afford to forgo a source of clean and secure energy. She clarified that the issue is neither to demonize nor to abandon renewable energy, noting that in Extremadura the energy mix consists of approximately 50% nuclear and 50% renewable sources. This, she indicated, demonstrates that in order to guarantee energy security, both sources must be developed and must operate together.

The President further recalled that at COP28 in 2023, more than 20 countries signed a historic declaration committing to triple global nuclear energy capacity by 2050, recognizing it as an essential source of clean, low-emission energy to achieve carbon neutrality, alongside renewables. She also emphasized that Belgium had made a historic shift in its energy policy by reversing its planned nuclear phase-out in 2025 and extending the operational life of its reactors until 2035.

The President stated that closing the power plant would constitute a highly detrimental decision, with serious negative consequences for employment, the economy, and energy sovereignty. She described such a decision as ideological in nature and not based on technical, scientific, or objective criteria. Despite the blackout of 28 April 2025, she noted that the Spanish Government continues to insist on closing the plant, which she described as a key driver of development for Extremadura and for Spain's electricity system as a whole. Finally, the President called on the members of the delegation to convey Extremadura's position in Brussels, namely that the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant should not be closed, and to do everything within their remit to urge the Spanish Government to reconsider its decision.

**Mr Enrique HUESO, Mayor of Navalmoral de la Mata** highlighted the near-unanimous consensus among stakeholders that the continued operation of the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant is essential. He cited local and national interests, strategic autonomy, employment, reindustrialization, and decarbonization as key grounds for this position, noting that detailed data would be presented and that participants would visit the facility.

He outlined the economic structure of the Campo Arañuelo area, emphasizing the central role the plant has played—and can continue to play—in securing long-term prosperity for Extremadura and the comarca. The strategic objective, he stated, is to move beyond reliance on EU structural funds by raising income levels, combating rural depopulation and outward migration, and strengthening employment and rural development. He stressed that significant progress has been achieved in recent decades, with the plant acting as a principal economic driver, reflected in sustained growth and a nearly 50% increase in the population of Navalmoral de la Mata over forty years.

Looking ahead, the mayor underlined that in an increasingly energy-dependent economy, access to clean, stable, and secure energy from Almaraz is indispensable. He set out Navalmoral's ambition to consolidate its role as an industrial and technological hub, supported by strategic investments: a planned AI data center campus at "Espacio Navalmoral" (up to €20 billion over ten years), a lithium battery gigafactory by Envision Energy (over €1 billion and up to 3,000 jobs), and the expansion of defense manufacturing activities by the German supplier, Rheinmetall (currently 600 jobs, with plans to double employment).

He warned that the withdrawal of firm, low-emission energy at this stage would jeopardize these projects and the broader industrial ecosystem. He concluded by urging stakeholders to recognize that the closure of the plant would constitute a historic mistake, with consequences not only for the region and Spain, but also for the European Union.

**Mr Juan Antonio DÍAZ, Mayor of Almaraz** stated that he has served as mayor since 2019 representing the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE). He noted that, notwithstanding the fact that his party currently holds office at the national level and has adopted the decision to proceed with the closure of the power plant, he wishes to formally express his opposition to such decision.

The mayor emphasised that the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant is among the safest reactors in Europe and that the facility as a whole operates under excellent conditions. He underlined that the scheduled closure would be detrimental, as the plant constitutes essential, safe, and necessary infrastructure.

He further stated that most of the municipalities within the surrounding district depend, both directly and indirectly, on this industry. Companies, bars, restaurants, retail establishments, and the broader industrial and commercial fabric rely significantly on the nuclear power plant for their economic activity. He added that there is growing interest from various industries seeking to establish operations in the area; however, without access to stable and secure energy supply, such investments cannot materialise.

In addition, he referred to the case of Germany, which has described the definitive closure of its nuclear power plants, completed in 2023, as a serious strategic error. He expressed the hope that the Government of Spain will not repeat what has been characterised as a similar mistake.

**Mr Miguel Ángel MORALES, President of the Provincial Council of Cáceres** stated that, above all, he wished to defend the mayors of the municipalities concerned, as well as the interests of the district and of the Province of Cáceres. He stressed that, to this end, it is essential that the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant remain operational to ensure the continued viability and sustainability of life in the municipalities of the area.

He highlighted the strategic importance of this industry for the Province of Cáceres, particularly in light of the limited industrial base within the territory. In this regard, he specified that no "objective reason" has been provided to him to justify the closure of the

plant, maintaining that its continued operation is fundamental for the preservation of employment and for preventing depopulation in the area. He further indicated that the Government of Spain has not provided clear explanations to the local authorities regarding the reasons for the planned closure, despite repeated requests for clarification, even though the national government belongs to the same political family as the provincial leadership.

Furthermore, he appealed to institutional responsibility, insisting that this matter should remain outside the scope of political confrontation between administrations. He underlined that the issue does not constitute a dispute between political parties, nor between the Regional Government of Extremadura and the Government of Spain, but rather requires joint and coordinated action to ensure that the nuclear power plant is not closed. He warned that the municipalities concerned would lose approximately EUR 12 million per year in tax revenues as a direct consequence of the closure, while the broader economic and social impact on the region would be significantly greater, affecting employment, local services and demographic stability.

The President reiterated the unanimous support of the Provincial Institution for the continuation of the plant's activities, as evidenced by the Institutional Declarations adopted, in which the political groups Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and People's Party (PP) expressed their backing "without any reservation". He added that the mayors of the surrounding municipalities and the local population strongly support the continued operation of the plant, considering it a key source of livelihood for the region, and stated that no evidence has been presented to them indicating that the plant poses any safety risk that would justify its closure.

Finally, he regretted the absence of senior representatives of the Government of Spain from visit programme, which prevented the delegation from obtaining direct explanations from the competent national authorities.

After the interventions, MEPs took the floor for question-and-answer session.

**MEP BELERIS** underscored the distinctly European dimension of the matter, situating the debate within the broader framework of the Union's energy strategy and security of supply. In light of the full support of regional and local authorities for the continued operation of the power plant, he questioned which actors were actively advocating for the closure of the nuclear power plant and expressed the hope that pragmatic considerations, grounded in economic and energy realities, would ultimately prevail, thereby preventing its decommissioning.

**MEP KRUIS** indicated that he found the position of the Spanish Government difficult to comprehend and requested a more detailed and transparent account of the rationale underpinning the proposed closure, as well as its anticipated consequences. He stated that he did not understand the approach taken by the Spanish Government in this matter and stressed the need for clear and objective justification for a decision with such significant economic and social implications.

Addressing the mayors of the municipalities concerned, he asked whether estimates had been made regarding the number of direct and indirect jobs that would be lost in the event of the closure of the plant, as well as the expected impact on r Gross Regional Product and on the overall economic activity of the surrounding area.

**MEP SYPNIEWSKI** sought comprehensive information regarding the financial and socio-economic implications of shutting down the plant, with particular emphasis on potential job losses and the significant fiscal revenues that municipalities in the surrounding region stand to lose. He further inquired whether any structured transition strategy or compensatory development plan had been devised for the region in the event of closure.

**MEP SÁNCHEZ** clarified that Central Nuclear de Almaraz is a privately owned company which, in 2019, reached an agreement with the Spanish Government establishing a timetable for the phased closure of the facility between 2027 and 2035. He noted, however, that the company has since requested an extension of operations until 2030. He stressed that no definitive decision has yet been adopted, as the matter remains subject to governmental determination, and expressed his expectation that the requested extension would be granted. He also conveyed his dissatisfaction that the delegation had not met with the Government Delegate in Extremadura during the visit.

**MEP GIRAUTA** requested further clarification regarding the broader economic ramifications of a potential closure of the plant. He warned against maintaining or implementing decisions based on ideological considerations taken in previous years, referring to similar energy policy choices adopted in other Member States, such as Belgium, and stressed the need to reassess such decisions considering current economic and energy realities. He also sought specific information concerning the so-called “ecotasa” (eco-tax) including the possibility of its reduction or complete removal. He asked whether, if there is a genuine political will for Almaraz Nuclear Plant to continue operating, the current taxation framework allows the plant to remain economically viable and questioned whether the continued payment of approximately EUR 260 million in eco-taxes since 2023 is compatible with the long-term sustainability of the installation. He underlined that the presence of the nuclear power plant has contributed to turning Extremadura into a centre capable of attracting high-value industrial investments and stated that the closure of the facility would generate incalculable economic losses, including significant loss of future income and opportunities for the region.

**MEP SOLIER** also raised questions concerning the structure and functioning of nuclear-sector taxation. He cautioned against an overreliance on renewable energy sources alone, arguing that such an approach would be insufficient to ensure energy stability, and asked whether the Government had formulated a viable alternative plan. He further clarified that the delegation had formally invited the Minister for Ecological Transition to attend a meeting to obtain first-hand technical and policy information. However, no meeting could be arranged with the Minister or any other representative of the Ministry. Consequently, the delegation did not meet with any alternative governmental authority, on the grounds that the Ministry for Ecological Transition was the competent authority in this domain.

**MEP KÖHLER** requested information regarding the scale and trajectory of investment in renewable energy in Spain, seeking to contextualise the nuclear debate within the country’s broader energy transition strategy, also requesting information on available energy storage infrastructure and the region’s energy model. In addition, he has also inquired about whether the Government has calculated tax losses due to the closure of plants.

In response to the delegation's questions and comments, the speakers clarified the following:

President Guardiola stated that the planned closure of the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant originates from the 2019 governing agreement concluded between the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and Unidas Podemos. That agreement, she recalled, set out a national energy strategy centred on the transition towards renewable sources and expressly envisaged the phased decommissioning of Spain's nuclear fleet.

She further elaborated that, in implementation of that political commitment, the Government and the utility companies owning Almaraz — Endesa, Iberdrola and Naturgy — formalised a closure protocol in 2019. The agreed timetable provides for the orderly and progressive disconnection of the reactors from the national grid, beginning with Almaraz in the 2027–2028 timeframe and culminating with the remaining nuclear installations by approximately 2035. She added that, in view of the evolving geopolitical landscape and the resulting shifts in energy security considerations, the operating companies are now seeking an extension of the plant's operational lifespan. She stressed that the plant represents around 4,000 direct and indirect jobs and approximately 5% of the regional GDP and noted that municipalities in the surrounding area enjoy per-capita income levels around 12% higher than the regional average, largely due to the economic activity generated by the facility. She also underlined that numerous industrial investments in Extremadura are linked to the presence of the nuclear power plant, in a region already severely affected by depopulation.

Turning to taxation, President Guardiola clarified that the fiscal regime applicable to nuclear installations in Spain comprises a composite framework of State-level taxes, charges relating to radioactive waste management, and regional levies — commonly referred to as the “ecotasa”, namely a tax on the storage of radioactive waste.

With specific reference to Extremadura, she indicated that a gradual reduction of the regional eco-tax has been announced, amounting to a 50% decrease between 2027 and 2029, with the stated objective of easing the fiscal burden borne by the Almaraz facility. This adjustment is designed to mitigate financial pressure on the plant and thereby support the prospect of its continued operation; the projected savings for the owning undertakings are estimated to exceed 45 million € by 2029.

As regards solar photovoltaic energy, she observed that Extremadura currently ranks as the Spanish region with the highest installed photovoltaic capacity. Nevertheless, she emphasised that nuclear generation continues to play a pivotal role in safeguarding grid stability, warning that an overreliance on inherently variable renewable sources may expose the electricity system to structural vulnerabilities.

Both, President Guardiola and the mayors of Navalmoral de la Mata and Almaraz stated that, to date, the Government has not put forward any comprehensive alternative strategy to address or offset the anticipated economic and social repercussions of the closure. They further noted the absence of any official impact assessment evaluating such consequences. In reply to MEP KRUIS, the Mayor of Navalmoral de la Mata indicated that local authorities estimate that the municipalities located in the vicinity of the plant could lose up to 25% of their population if the facility were to close. Representatives of the municipality of Almaraz warned that the closure would represent the economic collapse of the area, with a possible reduction of up to 70% in per capita income in the surrounding towns, and that many public services — including childcare facilities, schools and elderly care residences — could no longer be financed. They urged that the experience of other countries which have taken

similar decisions should serve as a warning and called on the authorities to avoid repeating mistakes that have led to severe economic and social consequences in comparable regions.

The Mayor of Navalmoral de la Mata added that local representatives have repeatedly sought meetings with the Spanish Ministry responsible for energy matters, but that, despite having travelled to Madrid on several occasions — at least five times, according to his statement — they have never been formally received by the Ministry. He expressed his concern at the lack of direct dialogue with the national authorities on a decision with such significant consequences for the municipalities concerned.

**MEP NEVADO DEL CAMPO** expressed that the unanimous opposition voiced during the meeting to the proposed shutdown of the Almaraz plant, as well as the absence of any reasons provided by the government for the closure, led her to conclude that the decision is rooted primarily in ideological considerations deriving from the 2019 coalition agreement between PSOE and Unidas Podemos.

**MEP GIRAUTA** requested confirmation that the State-level taxation represents roughly 80% of the total fiscal burden borne by the plant and that these taxes have increased by around 70% over the last five years; President Guardiola confirmed that this assessment was correct.

The Extremadura Councillor for Agriculture, Livestock and Sustainable Development further provided technical details regarding the economic framework of the plant, indicating that the average cost of generation is around 63 €/MWh, of which approximately 16.2 € correspond to taxes, to which an additional charge of around 9 € per MWh must be added in relation to the levy for radioactive waste management. She stated that the current taxation regime has progressively rendered nuclear generation economically unviable, as the fiscal burden significantly increases the cost of each kilowatt-hour produced.

Finally, the **Head of Delegation, MEP RZONCA**, underscored that the European Parliament will continue to lend its support to regions through the instruments of EU regional policy. He also underlined the importance of constructive dialogue between regional authorities and central governments when decisions with significant regional impact are taken. Moreover, drawing on his experience within the Committee on Budgets of the European Parliament, he observed that persistently high energy prices have, in numerous instances, precipitated corporate insolvencies.

Afterwards, the delegation met with representatives of the Extremadura Assembly from different political groups.

**Mr José Ángel SÁNCHEZ JULIÁN, PP-Extremadura Unida** expressed regret that the Minister of Ecological Transition of the Spanish Government was unable to meet with the commission, emphasizing the importance of such a high-level meeting for matters affecting Extremadura. He stressed that the continuation of the Almaraz nuclear power plant is non-negotiable, highlighting its economic significance as the largest industry in Extremadura, supporting approximately 4,000 jobs directly and indirectly, and noting that its closure could threaten the livelihoods of 15,000 people in Campo Arañuelo and result in an estimated economic loss of €800 million. He emphasized that the plant's continuity is essential for the development of new industrial projects in the region, including data centers in Badajoz, Cáceres, Mérida, Navalmoral, and Valdecaballeros, which require a stable electricity supply.

He also pointed out that Almaraz provides 7% of Spain's electricity, serving four million people, and that its closure would compromise the national energy mix, energy sovereignty, and system stability, potentially increasing dependence on imported energy. He underlined the environmental benefits of nuclear energy, including a reduction in CO2 emissions of 14–23%, and noted that the plant is highly secure, with the latest safety review confirming its reliability. He referenced international examples, including Belgium, Germany, and France, where nuclear energy continues to be supported or expanded. He concluded that there are no economic, social, technical, or security reasons to close the plant and characterized opposition as ideological, reaffirming that the Popular Parliamentary Group fully supports the extension of the Almaraz plant for the benefit of both Extremadura and Spain.

**Mr Álvaro SÁNCHEZ COTRINA, PSOE** argued that the discussion surrounding Almaraz is not an ideological debate, but rather a debate about the continuity of life in an entire region. In this regard, he emphasized that the political priority must be to ensure opportunities, employment, and stability for the municipalities of Campo Arañuelo. He stated that the region should be a place where the primary objective is to stay, not to leave, highlighting that the area is home to nearly 20,000 inhabitants whose daily lives depend on strategic decisions affecting the economic, labour, and social fabric.

Mr. Sánchez Cotrina affirmed that major companies must contribute fairly to the maintenance of public services and to the development of the territories in which they operate, particularly in regions that have borne the burden of strategic infrastructure for decades. He stated that taxes are not a punishment, but a commitment to the country and to its citizens.

He underscored that the position of the Socialist Parliamentary Group of Extremadura has been clear: they have consistently supported continuity, as the issue concerns employment, families, businesses, schools, and the future—not merely infrastructure. He further stressed that discussions regarding the region's energy and territorial future must be accompanied by principles of fiscal justice and corporate responsibility, warning that scenarios of transition or continuity cannot be considered while contemplating the forgiveness or reduction of fiscal obligations for large energy companies.

**Mr Óscar FERNÁNDEZ, VOX** stated that one of the most important issues facing Extremadura is the continuity of the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant indicating that Members would leave the meeting with numerous regional and national arguments in favour of maintaining the plant's operations, including significant economic and employment-related considerations, as well as its contribution to the stability of Spain's energy system. He expressed his belief that the plant should not remain operational until 2030, but to be broadened to consider a possible extension of operations until 2050. In this regard, he referred to the example of the plant's twin facility in the United States, which is expected to operate beyond 2050, demonstrating that such an extension is feasible. He concluded by affirming that VOX group in the Assembly of Extremadura would continue to undertake all necessary efforts within its remit to support the plant's continuity. He stated that they would pursue dialogue and negotiation with the regional government to address key challenges, particularly in relation to taxation, which he identified as a significant—though not the sole—issue affecting the plant's viability. He underlined the importance of regional-level action to facilitate the continued operation of the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant, ideally beyond 2050.

After the interventions, MEPs took the floor for question-and-answer session.

**MEP BELERIS** addressed Mr Sánchez Corina directly and inquired how he intended to

persuade his political party, the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), that its position regarding the closure of the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant was mistaken, and that the facility ought to remain operational.

**MEP KRUIS** strongly criticised the Spanish Government's energy policy, stating that the current approach resembles a "Titanic-like situation, where everyone is left to fend for themselves", and warned that the lack of a clear and predictable strategy creates uncertainty for workers, local authorities and investors affected by the planned closure of nuclear facilities.

**MEP SYPNIEWSKI** addressed those present and requested clarification regarding the specific grounds for the closure of the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant. He further inquired whether such grounds had been communicated on a rigorous technical basis, supported by scientific analysis, substantiated arguments, and objective criteria.

**MEP NEVADO DEL CAMPO** stated that she welcomed the agreement reached among the various political groups represented in the Regional Assembly of Extremadura. She then inquired whether, within this context of consensus, the groups considered that the projects put forward by the Government to offset the closure of the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant would constitute a genuine and viable alternative to the facility. She also inquired whether other regions or countries could be affected by the closure, as well as about the financial impact of the tax losses owing to the plant's closure. She has also echoed regret that the minister responsible did not accept the invitation to the visit, even if through videoconference.

**MEP SÁNCHEZ** referred to the fact that the European Commission had approved State aid granted by Belgium to extend by ten years the operational lifespan of two nuclear reactors. He noted that the plan is intended to safeguard energy security and to meet climate objectives, thereby reversing the full nuclear phase-out previously scheduled for 2025. He further expressed regret that the delegation had not met with any representative of the national Government who could have set out its position on this matter.

**MEP GIRAUTA** stated that, for many years, Extremadura had been a neglected region, and that the present prosperity it enjoys is largely attributable to the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant. He expressed regret that the closure of the facility, resulting from what he described as a political and ideological agreement of the national Government, would condemn the region to renewed decline. He criticised the decision of the Popular Party (PP) to block the presence of the Government Delegate in Extremadura in this mission, considering that this had been a mistake in the current context, as it deprived the delegation of the opportunity to hear directly the position of the national authorities. He stated that he regretted the absence of representatives of the Government during the visit, noting that all the stakeholders present in the territory — including representatives of the Socialist Party — acknowledged the need to maintain the nuclear power plant in operation, as its closure would have disastrous consequences for the region. He insisted that, during the meetings held before, there was broad consensus that the plant should remain open.

He further attributed the planned closure to the political influence of radical left-wing parties within the governing coalition, arguing that the decision responds to ideological commitments included in the agreement supporting the current National socialist Government rather than to technical or economic considerations, and warned that such decisions risk undermining the interests of the country as a whole.

**MEP SOLIER** inquired as to what would occur if the decision to close Almaraz were to be put to a vote in the national Parliament, specifically asking what the voting position of Members of Parliament representing Extremadura would be and whether they would be granted freedom of vote. He further observed that businesses require certainty in order to consider investment in Extremadura and stated that, even if the operational lifespan of the plant were to be extended until 2030, such a timeframe would not, in his view, provide sufficient assurance for companies to commit to investing in the region.

In response to the delegation's questions and comments, the speakers clarified the following: Replying to MEP Beleris, Mr Sánchez Cotrina stated that the Minister for the Ecological Transition, Sara Aagesen, has repeatedly stated that, provided the three conditions deemed essential are met—namely, that the extension does not entail costs for citizens, guarantees nuclear safety, and ensures security of supply—the extension would be granted. Mr Sánchez Julián added that the Government had determined the closure schedule without conducting any impact study. He further stated that while the Government has decided to begin with Extremadura, the remaining nuclear plants in the country will follow.

Addressing the other MEPs, Mr Sánchez Julián explained that in November 2025, the plenary session of the Congress voted on the amendments introduced by the PP's absolute majority in the Senate to the Sustainable Mobility Bill, and that the PSOE deputies from Extremadura voted against them. He further emphasized that his party, the PP, supports the continued operation of the plant without specifying dates and insists that the people of Extremadura should not be deprived of a facility they wish to retain. According to him, the objective and factual reasons for closure are unknown, and, in his view, the rationale is purely ideological. In response, Mr Sánchez Cotrina clarified that the amendment presented by the PP contained two elements: firstly, it proposed allowing the plant owners to request an extension up to 18 months prior to the scheduled closure date; secondly, it sought to reduce the intervention of the Nuclear Safety Council (CSN) in the evaluation process. The latter point was the reason why the Socialist deputies from Extremadura voted against the amendment. He added that, in his view, the priority should be to ensure the continued operation of the plant for as long as the operating companies are willing to maintain activity and the safety authorities confirm that the installation can continue to function.

Mr Fernández, representing VOX, expressed that, for his party, the response to Almaraz is and will always be affirmative (“SIEMPRE SÍ ALMARAZ”). He stressed that VOX has voted, votes and will continue to vote in favour of the continuity of the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant, recalling that his party has defended its operation consistently for many years. In his view, the reasons for the closure are purely ideological, and it is difficult to comprehend that, while the rest of Europe is moving in one direction, Spain is taking a completely different path. He stated that the decision to close nuclear plants is exclusively ideological and criticised the fact that Spain is moving in the opposite direction to other European countries while attributing responsibility to external factors.

He also welcomed the fact that the PP currently supports nuclear energy, despite having decided the closure of the Garoña Nuclear plant when PP was leading the National Government and noted that a similar contradiction are observed in the position of Socialist representatives from Extremadura, who defend the continuity of Almaraz at regional level while supporting different decisions in the National Parliament in Madrid.

He added that, in VOX's opinion, the continuation of Almaraz beyond the year 2030 will depend on a change in the Government of Spain and on the determination of the regional

authorities to use all the instruments available to them to preserve this strategic industry. He stressed that tax reductions, such as those successfully introduced by VOX during the negotiations on the regional budget, should not be described as privileges, but as necessary measures to protect the plant, the employment it generates and the economic prosperity of the region.

Afterwards, the delegation met with the petitioner.

**Mr Fernando SÁNCHEZ** stated that he was the President of the civic platform *Sí a Almaraz, Sí al Futuro* and Mayor of Belvís de Monroy, a municipality of approximately 900 inhabitants in Extremadura. He explained that he was born and works in the area and therefore has direct knowledge of the structural challenges facing the region, including rural depopulation, the urgent need for stable industrial activity, and the significance of the Central Nuclear de Almaraz for local families. He stressed that, for his community, these issues are not abstract policy concepts but matters that directly affect their present and their children's future. He indicated that in December 2024, as the scheduled closure of the plant's two reactors began to materialise, he decided to act. He said that this led to the creation of the platform *Sí a Almaraz, Sí al Futuro*, a civic initiative bringing together mayors, plant workers, small business owners, representatives of rural women's associations and self-employed professionals. He underlined that, despite their diverse backgrounds, they share a single objective: ensuring the continued operation of the plant.

He reported that in fourteen months the platform had gathered nearly one hundred supporting entities and had undertaken significant actions, as detailed in the activity report distributed to Members. He highlighted that on 18 January 2025 more than 10,000 people demonstrated in Almaraz, a town of 1,700 inhabitants, in support of the plant's continuity. He added that the platform has since carried out activities throughout Extremadura, in Madrid and in Brussels. He expressed regret that three ministries of the Spanish Government had not granted them a meeting despite repeated requests.

He emphasised that the continued operation of Almaraz goes beyond Extremadura and concerns key European priorities such as stable and high-quality employment, reindustrialisation, energy sovereignty and responsible decarbonisation. He described Almaraz not merely as a power plant but as a principal economic driver of Extremadura, accounting for more than 5% of regional GDP and supporting around 4,000 direct and indirect quality jobs. He added that in its area of influence, per capita income is 12% above the regional average.

He warned that closure would accelerate depopulation and demographic ageing in northern Extremadura. He noted that approximately 22% of the region's population—around 230,000 people—are over 65, and that projections indicate that by 2037 nearly one third of the population could be above that age. He further pointed out that population density in the comarca is around 20 inhabitants per square kilometre, significantly lower than in comparable rural regions of France or Germany.

He cautioned that closure at this stage would drive young people to emigrate and risk turning northern Extremadura into a region dependent on structural assistance. He stressed that Europe's objective should not be to subsidise decline but to promote competitiveness and cohesion, and that without Almaraz the reindustrialisation of Extremadura would be severely undermined.

He clarified that the platform does not oppose renewable energy and acknowledged its positive contribution to the region. However, he argued that reindustrialisation requires stable and carbon-free baseload generation, which Almaraz provides. He stated that the plant

prevents the emission of approximately six million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually and is ranked among the safest and most efficient facilities worldwide by the World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO).

He questioned whether the geopolitical and energy context of 2019–2020, when the closure schedule was established, remains valid today. He asked whether, in the current global context, Europe can afford to dismantle reliable domestic capacity and increase dependence on external gas supplies. He noted that some European governments have reconsidered their nuclear policies, while Spain maintains its existing timetable.

He argued that this position appears inconsistent with the EU's Green Taxonomy, which recognises nuclear energy as a sustainable activity contributing to decarbonisation. He acknowledged that energy policy is primarily a Member State competence but stressed that the European Parliament has a responsibility to safeguard industrial competitiveness, energy security and territorial cohesion. He maintained that closing Almaraz would weaken interconnected supply security, hinder decarbonisation efforts and contradict the governance principles of the Energy Union.

In conclusion, he called on Members to promote an urgent assessment of the closure under Articles 13 and 22 of the Energy Governance Regulation, to question the Commission regarding potential risks to the Iberian grid and territorial cohesion, and to encourage the Spanish Government not to obstruct a possible extension should the national nuclear safety authority issue a favourable opinion. He concluded by reiterating that, in his view, the continued operation of Almaraz is not optional but essential for Extremadura, Spain and, strategically, for Europe as a whole.

After the intervention, MEPs took the floor for question-and-answer session.

**MEP KRUIS** expressed his appreciation for the comprehensive and detailed information provided by the petitioner. He conveyed his solidarity with the platform and affirmed that, within the limits of his mandate and institutional responsibilities, he would make every possible effort to support the platform in its efforts to secure the continued operation of the Central Nuclear de Almaraz.

**MEP SYPNIEWSKI** stated that he was deeply impressed by the platform's sustained and determined advocacy in defence of the continuity of the Almaraz plant, which he described as both important and necessary for the citizenry. He enquired whether, in the event that the Government were to proceed with closure, there would be any realistic possibility of reopening the facility at a later stage.

**MEP NEVADO DEL CAMPO** sought clarification as to whether the national Government had already undertaken any concrete or preparatory measures in anticipation of the plant's closure.

**MEP SÁNCHEZ** underlined that the platform genuinely reflects a tangible and widespread concern among citizens. He expressed his solidarity with the cause and voiced his hope that the Almaraz plant would remain operational.

**MEP GIRAUTA** conveyed his unequivocal support for the platform and for the continued operation of the Almaraz nuclear power plant. He emphasised the political weight and strategic significance of the matter stating that the petitioner represents not only civil society but also local administrations directly affected, and that the future of Almaraz has become a

central issue in both the national and the European debate on energy policy. He expressed that he fully shares the concerns raised by the petitioner and conveyed the full support of his political group for the continuation of the plant.

**MEP SOLIER** reiterated his support for the platform and for civil society more broadly. He argued that even the establishment of a future closure date should be avoided, as it generates prolonged uncertainty for citizens and economic operators. In his view, the debate on phasing out nuclear energy could only be responsibly revisited once a genuine and viable alternative energy source is available, which, at present, he did not consider to be the case.

**MEP KÖHLER** congratulated the platform on its sustained mobilisation and advocacy efforts and enquired whether its representatives had held meetings with any members of the national Government.

In response to the delegation's questions and comments, the petitioner clarified the following:

The petitioner explained that, should the Central Nuclear de Almaraz be closed, its reopening would be virtually impossible, or at the very least extraordinarily complex, financially burdensome and potentially unviable. He explained that once the cessation-of-activity procedure is formally initiated, it triggers an administrative and regulatory process that is inherently difficult to reverse, requiring renewed authorisations, substantial capital reinvestment and the procurement of fresh nuclear fuel. He warned that the closure of Almaraz would lead to a rapid and definitive dismantling of the installation, thereby making any future resumption of nuclear activity at the site practically impossible. He further indicated that the decommissioning process has, in practical terms, already commenced. Although the operating companies have formally submitted a request for a lifetime extension, the Government has reportedly proceeded with the publication of a public tender for the drafting and design of dismantling works associated with the plant. He expressed concern that the administrative handling of the cessation and closure procedure suggests that the Government is already moving forward with the shutdown, despite pending requests to extend the plant's operation. In addition, the petitioner stated that the platform had addressed up to five formal letters to the Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, the Ministry of Labour, and to the President of the Government. He added that the most recent letter had been delivered in person at the Moncloa President Palace together with several mayors from different political parties, yet no meeting had been granted. He noted that a reply had been received solely from the Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, which referred the matter to the Institute for a Just Transition, a body operating under the authority of that Ministry and stated that, apart from this referral to the "Just Transition" mechanism, no substantive response had been provided to the concerns raised by local authorities and civil society.

### **Tuesday, 17 February 2026, Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant (Extremadura)**

On 17 February, the delegation started its second day of mission visiting the facilities of the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant and met experts and the staff of the Power Plant.

### **Presentation of the Almaraz nuclear power plant by Javier UGEDO, General Director of Almaraz-Trillo Nuclear Power Plants (CNAT)**

Mr Ugedo expressed his gratitude to the delegation for their presence and for the keen interest shown in the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant. He emphasized that he, together with the plant manager, Mr Camps, and the entire staff, felt a strong sense of support from Europe.

Then, the General Director addressed the delegation by placing nuclear energy in a global context before focusing on Spain and, specifically, the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant. He noted that nuclear energy remains dynamic and debated worldwide, with 436 reactors in operation, 75 under construction, and 115 planned. He highlighted that Spain is currently the only country identified with a nuclear phase-out plan adding that other countries which had previously announced closures, such as Belgium and Germany, are currently reconsidering their position in light of energy security concerns.

Turning to Spain, he explained that seven reactors are in operation, making Spain the EU's second-largest nuclear producer after France. Nuclear energy supplies around 20% of Spain's electricity and avoids approximately 20 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually. He described Almaraz nuclear power plant as the largest power-producing installation in Spain and the main industrial activity in Extremadura. He also underlined the strength of Spain's nuclear industry, which supports over 30,000 skilled jobs.

Focusing on Almaraz, Mr Ugedo stressed that the plant generates about 16,000 GWh per year—roughly 7% of Spain's electricity—supplying around four million homes and avoiding six million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually. He emphasized its importance for grid stability in Extremadura, particularly given the region's high solar penetration, and described it as the largest industry and employer in the region, sustaining around 4,000 jobs and generating approximately €200 million annually.

On safety and performance, he noted Almaraz's strong ranking in WANO Paris assessments (World Association of Nuclear Operators - Paris Centre), the absence of Lost Time Injuries in 2025, and the presence of three on-site inspectors from the Spanish regulator (CSN). He presented the plant as a reference point for safety and reliability. He added that, in nuclear industry terms, the current age of the plant is not considered advanced, recalling that comparable reactors in the United States have received authorisations to operate for up to 80 years.

Regarding future operations, he explained that Almaraz has applied for a license extension until June 2030, with fuel, staffing, and investments secured. Spent fuel storage capacity is being expanded to enable operation beyond 2040. He referenced the North Anna plant in the United States, a sister facility with an 80-year license, as an example of long-term operation. He indicated that a key deadline for the future of the plant is in autumn 2026, as after that date the technical and administrative procedures for closure would begin, including the planning of fuel cycles, making it increasingly difficult to continue operation if no extension is granted. He also noted that, under the current Spanish regulatory framework, once a nuclear installation has been definitively closed it cannot be reopened.

Mr Ugedo also addressed challenges in Spain's energy transition, arguing that delays in renewables and storage deployment risk replacing nuclear generation with natural gas, potentially increasing emissions and electricity prices. He warned that, according to current projections, if Almaraz is closed the loss of production would likely need to be compensated by gas-fired generation, as the deployment of solar and wind energy and storage systems is progressing more slowly than originally planned by the Government. He referred to recent

grid instability, including a major blackout affecting Spain and Portugal, to underline system vulnerabilities. He further discussed the high fiscal burden on nuclear plants stating that the taxation system applied to nuclear energy in Spain is based on production rather than profit, meaning that charges are applied per unit of electricity generated rather than on the profit obtained from that production, for example through levies amounting to around €28 per MWh produced, regardless of the market price at which the electricity is sold. He indicated that the combined impact of the so-called eco-tax and the levy on spent nuclear fuel significantly affects the economic viability of the plant.

He recalled that the protocol establishing the timetable for the closure of the Spanish nuclear fleet, including the planned shutdown of Almaraz in 2027–2028, was signed in 2019 between the Government and the operating companies in a very different geopolitical and economic context, when low electricity prices, limited demand and the existing fiscal burden made nuclear generation less competitive. He stressed that the situation has changed significantly since then, referring in particular to the instability of gas markets following the war in Ukraine, the increase in electricity demand linked to digitalisation, artificial intelligence and data centres, and delays in the deployment of renewable energy and storage capacity, which have made the debate on the future of nuclear energy more complex and urgent. He added that the operating companies now expect a substantial increase in electricity demand in the coming years and consider that nuclear generation will be necessary to ensure supply but warned that nuclear plants cannot remain economically viable if electricity prices fall while the current fiscal burden remains unchanged.

He concluded by framing the stakes at regional, national, and European levels, emphasizing energy security, economic stability, and strategic autonomy. In closing, he reaffirmed Almaraz's technical readiness, safety standards, and long-term operational capacity, presenting it as a cornerstone of Spain's energy system and a model for reliability and regional economic contribution.

Mr Ugedo also informed the delegation that, on the same day, 17 February 2026, the companies owning the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant (CNAT: Iberdrola, Endesa, and Naturgy) submitted the requisite technical documentation and reports to the Nuclear Safety Council (CSN) to request an extension of the plant's operating license until June 2030. The CSN is expected to review this information and issue its mandatory report, scheduled for the summer of 2026. The report of the CSN would be binding on the government only in the event of a negative assessment; if the report is favourable, the final decision would rest with the government. A government decision on life extension is expected by 30 October 2026.

Responding to questions from MEPs, he explained that under Spanish law, once a plant is closed, it cannot simply be reopened, a completely new licence would be required. He also explained that a decommissioned plant is extremely difficult to restart. The representatives of the plant explained that the nuclear units that were in operation at the time responded correctly and in accordance with all safety procedures. Concerning the recent blackout affecting the Iberian electricity system, he indicated that the blackout occurred during a period of high renewable generation, while three of Spain's seven nuclear reactors were offline for economic reasons, despite prior approval from the system operator. According to the representatives, having all reactors in operation could have improved system stability and possibly prevented the blackout. Following the incident, nuclear and gas-fired plants were reactivated under reinforced operating conditions to ensure stability, with nuclear operators

receiving compensation based on their operating costs rather than market prices. The representatives stated that the operating companies had proposed reducing the fiscal burden to enable the continued operation of nuclear plants, warning that closures could increase electricity costs and eliminate tax revenues. Despite no agreement being reached, the owners of the Almaraz plant have requested a licence extension without immediate tax relief, accepting potential short-term losses to allow time to find a viable framework, while noting that planned closures around 2030 could significantly impact electricity system stability.

Following the presentation in the projection room, the delegation proceeded to visit the turbine building, toured the external roadways, and explored the training school for current and prospective employees, as well as the Plant's control room simulator.

### **Tuesday, 17 February 2026, Toledo (Castilla la Mancha)**

In the afternoon of 17 February, the delegation met with petitioners who had submitted petitions to the Committee on Petitions in order to examine their concerns regarding the alleged insufficient protection of the natural environment, the degradation of biodiversity, and shortcomings in the enforcement of EU environmental legislation — in particular the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive — in Cabañeros National Park, as well as the reported impact on local communities.

The **Head of Delegation, MEP RZÓNCA** recalled that the Committee on Petitions had previously met with the petitioners in November 2024 and September 2025. He expressed the hope that this further exchange would enable the delegation to advance its assessment and reach clear conclusions regarding the alleged environmental damage within Cabañeros National Park.

**Mr Miguel TEMBOURY**, Member of the “Asociación de Afectados del Parque Nacional de Cabañeros”, the petitioner (Petition 1334-24)

Mr Temboursy stated that since 5 December 2020 the Spanish State and Regional Administrations have applied the limitations on uses and exploitation set out in the Seventh Additional Provision of Law 30/2014, of 3 December, to Cabañeros National Park, without complying with the obligations imposed therein. No technical criteria were developed with the participation of the affected landowners, no individual agreements were concluded for incorporation into the PRUG, and no expropriation of rights was undertaken as a subsidiary measure.

He emphasised that the prohibition of hunting, which had constituted the only effective mechanism for maintaining ungulate populations at ecologically sustainable levels, has remained in force since that date. In his view, this has led to environmental deterioration and a serious imbalance in wildlife populations. He further observed that landowners have not received compensation for the limitations imposed on the use and management of their properties.

It was recalled that the PRUG was approved in June 2021 and subsequently challenged by the Association; the action was dismissed in September 2025 and is currently pending before the Supreme Court. The Wild Ungulate Management Plan (PGUS), approved in June 2023, has likewise been challenged, with no decision yet adopted. Mr T explained that the implementation of the PGUS in privately owned areas requires the conclusion of individual agreements with each landowner. To date, only one such agreement, concerning the

Cabañeros estate, has been signed and published in January 2026; however, it cannot be implemented due to the absence of the necessary budgetary allocation. The remaining landowners are still awaiting the negotiation and conclusion of their respective agreements. Mr Tembory further stated that compensation for the deprivation of use and exploitation rights has been outstanding for more than five years and that related claims are pending before the administrative courts. Liability actions have been initiated following the Administration's refusal to process and pay the compensation provided for in Law 30/2014. The Administrative Chamber of the National Court (Audiencia Nacional) has scheduled the vote and ruling on those appeals for 17 March 2026. He also noted that several decisions cancelling or segregating hunting grounds have been annulled by the courts and that hunting permits requested since December 2020 have been systematically refused, notwithstanding the acknowledged imbalance in ungulate populations; those refusals have likewise been challenged.

**Mr Rafael SÁNCHEZ**, Representative of the “Asociación de afectados del Parque nacional de Cabañeros” (Petition 819-24)

Mr Sánchez stressed that the complaint concerns alleged infringements by the Spanish authorities, at both regional and national level, of conservation obligations protected under European law. He submitted that the Administration's inaction has given rise to an extremely serious situation, resulting in a progressive decline in biodiversity affecting both vegetation and fauna. If it had been a private individual who had caused the damage, action would have been taken against him; since it was the administration, nothing has happened.

Following these interventions, Members of the European Parliament took the floor for a question-and-answer session with the petitioners.

**MEP BELLERIS** expressed appreciation for the petitioners' detailed presentation and requested that they clarify specifically what actions they expected the Committee on Petitions to undertake on their behalf.

**MEP KRUIS** thanked the petitioners for their presence and for the information conveyed to the delegation and invited them to provide concrete examples of the damage suffered by the park because of administrative inaction.

**MEP ZŁOTOWSKI** stated that the report should reflect the fact that there are left-wing governments which implement policies they describe as environmental protection measures, yet which subsequently result in highly detrimental outcomes; he noted that such examples can be found throughout Europe.

**MEP SYPNIEWSKI** expressed her agreement and solidarity with the petitioners, as well as with the remarks made by MEP ZŁOTOWSKI.

**MEP NEVADO DEL CAMPO** inquired as to which authority was responsible for authorising hunting activities within national parks. She referred to the case of Monfragüe National Park in Extremadura, where a similar issue had arisen to that affecting Cabañeros National Park, and where the regional government has now authorised hunting. She further asked whether the association had initiated civil or criminal proceedings in addition to administrative actions.

**MEP SOLIER** associated himself with this question.

**MEP GIRAUTA** asked the petitioners about the consequences of terminating hunting activities and the resulting economic impact on the region in particular regarding the loss of employment opportunities, the reduction of economic activity and the broader negative effects on the development of the area, asking the petitioners to clarify how the prohibition of hunting has affected the local economy and the prospects for the population living in the region.

**MEP KÖHLER** observed that there are international bodies which monitor and supervise developments in numerous national parks, particularly those holding special designations, although direct management remains the responsibility of each Member State. He asked whether the petitioners had approached such bodies. He also asked about which authority would be responsible for possible mismanagement of the park.

In response to the delegation's questions and comments, the petitioners clarified the following:

Mr Temboury explained that the Association of Affected Parties of Cabañeros National Park was requesting that the Committee on Petitions formally acknowledge the deterioration of the park and the consequent environmental impact resulting from the inaction of the Spanish authorities, as well as the abandonment imposed upon privately owned estates within the park since 5 December 2020. Furthermore, the association requested that the Committee call upon the European Commission to conduct, as a matter of urgency, an investigation into the alleged infringement by both the national and the regional authorities of Castilla-La Mancha of the provisions of the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive, the environmental damage caused to the National Park, and the necessity of implementing wildlife management measures to maintain equilibrium between animal populations and vegetation. The association had previously submitted a complaint to the European Commission, which at the time indicated that it lacked competence in the matter, considering it to fall within the jurisdiction of the Member State.

Regarding the damage suffered by the park because of administrative action or inaction, Mr Sánchez highlighted the excessive animal population within the park, which has led to soil erosion and to an excessive consumption of plant species due to the overpopulation of ungulates. . The high density of wildlife and their feeding requirements have resulted in vegetation depletion, with insufficient natural regeneration preventing the normal development of certain plant species and in some cases leading to their disappearance. This has created a serious conservation issue and a reduction in biodiversity as more resistant species tend to dominate while more vulnerable species decline, worsening the conservation status of the ecosystem, contrary to the objectives expected in a national park. He added that, according to the information provided, more than 60% of the natural species in the affected areas are currently at risk in terms of long-term sustainability, and that while technical criteria consider around 25 animals per square kilometre to be a sustainable density, in some parts of the park the density is now close to 100 animals per square kilometre. He warned that without appropriate management instruments, including population control measures, the ecological balance of the park cannot be restored. He noted that a detailed technical report exists on this matter. Mr Temboury further explained that, prior to submitting their petition to the Committee on Petitions of the European Parliament, the association had exhausted all

available domestic remedies. He added that the matter concerns claim for State liability, which must be pursued through administrative and administrative-judicial channels, and that such proceedings are currently underway. On 17 March 2026, the Administrative Chamber of the National High Court will determine whether to admit the cases for consideration. Criminal proceedings have also been initiated; however, the Public Prosecutor's Office has declined to pursue the case.

Regarding the authorisation of hunting activities, the petitioners explained that this is a regional competence. However, in the case of Castilla-La Mancha, the transfer of powers from the national government has not been fully completed, as the Autonomous Community lacks the capacity to assume compensation payments to landowners. In Castilla-La Mancha, a joint commission is responsible for the coordinated administration of the park between the General State Administration and the Autonomous Community. Mr Tembours clarified that if the agreement concluded on 14 January 2026 between the Ministry for Ecological Transition and a private estate within Cabañeros — the first agreement of its kind since hunting was prohibited in national parks in 2020 — proves effective and can be extended to other estates, the situation may gradually begin to improve. The agreement seeks to authorise the control of ungulate populations (deer and wild boar) on privately owned land to prevent ecosystem damage and reduce overpopulation.

Finally, Mr Sánchez emphasised the significant economic impact that the prohibition of hunting has had on the region, which is already affected by rural depopulation. Hunting has historically constituted a sector of considerable economic and touristic importance and its restriction has led to the loss of numerous jobs, affecting not only estate workers but also related professions such as butchers, veterinarians, transport services and other local businesses. The impact is not only direct but also affects the induced economic activity generated by hunting within the local community.

The petitioners explained that the prohibition had originally been justified on the expectation that tourism linked to the National Park would compensate for the loss of traditional activities; however, according to the information provided, this has not occurred in practice. Several private owners that previously employed a substantial number of workers have reportedly been forced to reduce their staff to a fraction of their former levels due to the disappearance of business opportunities, contributing to further depopulation and economic decline in the area. They also stated that the park remains one of the least visited national parks in Europe and that the expected economic benefits from tourism have not compensated for the losses suffered by the local economy.

Afterwards, the delegation met with local and provincial representatives.

**Mr Jose Ángel PÉREZ, Mayor of Navalucillos** emphasized that all traditional uses of the park have ceased, not only hunting but also the extraction of cork and timber, as well as the cultivation of land. This cessation has led to an increase in wildlife populations, particularly deer, resulting in insufficient food for all animals. He noted that the overpopulation of wildlife is causing extensive damage to the flora and has led to the reemergence of diseases that had previously been eradicated.

He expressed the hope that regulations would be amended to allow controlled hunting in national parks, not only in Cabañeros but across Spain and Europe. The prohibition of hunting in Cabañeros National Park has caused significant economic losses in the local hunting sector, which has historically formed one of the foundations of the regional economy. The ban has had a markedly negative economic impact on the area, with estimates indicating losses of up to one million euros, posing a risk to the socio-economic development of the surrounding

municipalities.

**Mr Julián FERNÁNDEZ, Mayor of Horcajo de los Montes** recalled his childhood in the territory, waking each morning to see the mountains of Cabañeros National Park. At that time, the area was privately owned, yet wildlife and livestock coexisted without harming the flora or the environment. He emphasized that traditional uses of the park—including hunting, cork and timber extraction, and cultivation—have ceased, leading to overpopulation of deer, vegetation loss, and the return of previously eradicated diseases.

He stressed that hunting in Spain is not merely about killing animals but a necessary tool for population control, maintaining balance between flora and fauna. Each estate adjusts animal numbers to match the land's capacity, highlighting the need for controlled culling.

As mayor of a small village of 900 inhabitants adjacent to the park, he noted that hunting is vital for local livelihoods and regional economic stability, particularly in a depopulated area with few employment opportunities. He called for a definitive agreement allowing controlled hunting alongside park conservation, ensuring the park's natural heritage endures while private estates sustain their activity. Finally, he warned that continued restrictions on hunting would harm both the local economy and the environment, jeopardizing the future of the community.

**Mr Eugenio DEL CASTILLO, Deputy Delegate for Heritage of the Provincial Council of Toledo** stated that he appeared to defend a firm, clear, and responsible position of the Partido Popular (PP) on hunting and natural resource management, grounded not in ideology but in knowledge of the territory and commitment to those who live and work there. He insisted that defending hunting is defending ecological balance, supporting rural communities, and ensuring that environmental protection is implemented with rigor, technical expertise, and common sense. He expressed that for too long, conservation had been portrayed in opposition to human activity, as if protecting nature required excluding people from the land, a view he described as both simplistic and mistaken. He argued that where absolute bans had been imposed, problems had worsened, and that properly regulated, scientifically planned hunting is not a threat to biodiversity but a tool to maintain ecological equilibrium and prevent irreversible damage.

He stated that the PP has consistently advocated responsible wildlife management, combining conservation with sustainable use, and rejecting ideological environmentalism that empties the countryside. He insisted that in areas such as Cabañeros National Park, total hunting bans implemented without consensus had caused overpopulation, habitat damage, threats to biodiversity, and undermined conservation goals.

He pointed out that controlled hunting supports rural economies, employment, population retention, and territorial cohesion, emphasizing that in Toledo, hunting sustains local livelihoods and ensures municipalities remain viable. He stated from personal experience as a lifelong hunter that hunters are among the best protectors of ecological systems, and he insisted that without organized hunting, wildlife populations can become unbalanced, creating environmental problems, as seen in Cabañeros and elsewhere.

He concluded by urging European institutions to listen to local realities, trust those living on the land, and adopt sensible, realistic, and effective policies. He stressed that responsible hunting is an ally of nature, and that the PP will continue to defend it, ensuring ecological balance, the future of rural communities, and the general interest of Europe.

**Mr Adrián FERNÁNDEZ, Vice-President of the Provincial Council of Ciudad Real** stated that he did not appear in a personal capacity but on behalf of the Plenary of the

Provincial Council, which in January 2025 had approved, by majority, a historic motion demanding the recovery of controlled hunting as the only way to preserve Cabañeros National Park. He insisted that those visiting the park to assess the situation firsthand would find a harsh reality: the total hunting ban imposed in 2020 as a “maximum protection” measure had become a biological and social threat to the territory.

He explained that the park, the heart of the Mediterranean forest and part of the Natura 2000 network, now suffers from severe ecological imbalance due to the absence of professional wildlife management. Overpopulation of ungulates—especially deer, roe deer, and wild boar—was out of control, destroying young trees, eroding soil, and preventing natural regeneration. He argued that allowing herbivore overpopulation undermines the Habitats Directive and threatens emblematic species such as the imperial eagle and Iberian lynx. He insisted that inaction in this case constituted a clear breach of European legislation.

He stated that Cabañeros is also home to people, and that the local population faces a “real drama.” Hunting has historically supported the local economy, providing employment, sustaining services, and preventing depopulation. By prohibiting hunting without effective alternatives, he said, the State had condemned municipalities to economic irrelevance, turning a source of wealth and ecological balance into an economic and environmental burden. He added that animal health was also at risk, as overcrowding increased tuberculosis outbreaks threatening peripheral livestock operations.

He insisted that the implementation of Law 30/2014 on National Parks had failed in Cabañeros. Management mechanisms had not been adapted to the realities of private estates, and necessary agreements with landowners had not been formalized. He stated that urgent legislative reform was required, including transfer of powers to the “Junta de Comunidades de Castilla-La Mancha”, local management, and fair compensation for affected landowners. He concluded by requesting that the delegation issue a bold and thorough report. He insisted that they document the increased risk of wildfires due to vegetation deterioration and biomass accumulation, demonstrate how lack of hunting control compromises the health of Natura 2000 habitats, and require that the Spanish government present a plan within six months for effective population management specific to Cabañeros. He stated that conservation cannot be a war against the people who live in the park and stressed that the region needs management, respect for tradition, and an opportunity for its communities to continue living on their land.

**MEP BELLERIS** requested further details regarding the economic losses sustained in the area because of the hunting ban.

**MEP KRUIS** addressing the mayors, sought additional data on the impact of the hunting prohibition on the local economy.

**MEP ZŁOTOWSKI** reflecting on the testimonies heard, reiterated that the delegation was observing first-hand how so-called “green” policy postulates may culminate in adverse and even catastrophic outcomes. He stressed that the Committee on Petitions should adopt a clear and unequivocal position on the matter.

**MEP SYPNIEWSKI** stated that the evidence presented demonstrated unequivocally that top-down, office-based policymaking is ineffective. He inquired into the assessments and studies conducted prior to the drafting of the legislation prohibiting hunting in natural parks.

**MEP NEVADO DEL CAMPO** asked why Parque Nacional de Cabañeros was not under regional management, noting that in other parks — such as Parque Nacional de Monfragüe in

Extremadura — hunting competences are regional, and hunting is currently permitted. She further inquired whether African swine fever had reached Cabañeros and, if so, how it was being managed; whether selective capture cages were used for ungulates within the Park; and how such measures were programmed. She also expressed her wish to the Head of Delegation, MEP RZONCA, that the conclusions of this mission be conveyed to the Committee on Regional Development (REGI) of the European Parliament, particularly with regard to the depopulation challenges facing the regions of Extremadura and Castilla-La Mancha and the use of cohesion funds therein, suggesting that structured dialogue might prove more effective than financial allocations alone.

**MEP GIRAUTA** expressed his conviction that local and provincial authorities are aligned in recognising the grave situation resulting from legislation which, in his view, was originally drafted on ideological grounds. He argued that those identifying themselves as environmentalists appear to believe that the human element can be excluded from the ecosystem, whereas in fact it is essential to its equilibrium. He criticised what he described as an ideological interpretation of environmental protection, which, in his opinion, ignores social and economic realities.

According to him, this ideological approach to environmental policy has led to catastrophic consequences: impoverishment, diminished opportunities, population decline, degradation of flora and animal mortality. He stated that such outcomes demonstrate the failure of policies inspired by what he described as a purely theoretical or ideological vision of nature. He further stated that the matter had reached the European level because it could not be halted within the framework of Spanish public administrations and called on the competent authorities to address the situation and to challenge what he considered to be ideologically driven decisions affecting environmental and rural policy. He conveyed his full solidarity and support for the cause presented.

**MEP SOLIER** offered a broader reflection to contextualise the issue, highlighting the profound disconnect between local and provincial entities and the central Government in both Extremadura and Castilla-La Mancha, and the consequent impact on public policy. He observed that, while the European Union seeks to combat depopulation through cohesion funding, Spain appears simultaneously to be adopting measures that exacerbate it — a situation mirrored in several other regions of the country.

**MEP KÖHLER** asked whether consultations with relevant stakeholders had taken place prior to the enactment of the hunting ban, as is customary in other Member States such as Germany. He also inquired whether the Park authorities maintain regular dialogue with affected parties.

In response to the delegation's questions and observations, local and provincial representatives provided the following clarifications:

Mr Fernández emphasised the urgent need to amend Law 30/2014, stating that approximately 2,400 specimens would need to be culled in 2026, rendering the current legal framework unviable. He criticised the present method of animal capture within the Park on welfare grounds, noting that animals suffer under the existing procedures. As a potential alternative, he suggested that captured animals could be used to repopulate areas where certain species are absent.

The Mayor of Navalucillos, who previously served as President of the Governing Board of

Parque Nacional de Cabañeros, stated that not only legislative reform but also changes to the management model of national parks were necessary. He warned that cork extraction would become the next major issue in the Park, as cork oaks left unmanaged risk deterioration and eventual desiccation.

Mr Pérez explained that the Park is overseen by a Governing Board comprising the mayors, the provincial councils of Ciudad Real and Toledo, estate owners, the Park Directorate, the Directorate of the Autonomous Agency for National Parks (OAPN), and the Government of Castilla-La Mancha. However, he stated that this Board neither resolves nor decides substantive matters, as decisions rest exclusively with the Park Director, acting under a direct mandate from the OAPN, which is subordinate to the central Government. The Board is informed of developments only twice per year.

Regarding animal removal procedures, he explained that, since animals cannot be slaughtered within the Park, they are captured in cages, loaded onto trucks, transported to Madrid for slaughter in an authorised abattoir, and subsequently returned to Ciudad Real.

He further clarified that the situation could change if management competences were transferred to the Autonomous Community. However, in Castilla-La Mancha, such transfers would need to apply jointly to both Cabañeros and Parque Nacional de las Tablas de Daimiel. The latter presents a particular complication, as 99% of its territory consists of water, an area over which autonomous communities do not hold competence.

Concerning the estimated economic losses of approximately EUR 1 million, he stated that this figure was calculated on the basis of the Park's 40,000 hectares and the substantial management volume involved. He reported the closure of hotels and bars, the cessation of trade in game meat and hunting trophies, job losses, and the disappearance of revenue from hunting licences.

The representatives of the municipalities also provided concrete examples of the economic impact of the prohibition of hunting activities. They explained that the loss of hunting-related activity has particularly affected rural accommodation, hotels and restaurants, especially during the low tourist season in winter, when hunting traditionally generated a large part of local income.

As an illustration, they referred to a land of approximately 3,500 hectares, where the suspension of hunting activity resulted in an estimated loss of around EUR 400,000 in annual revenue, in addition to the disappearance of employment linked to security, licences, hospitality services and related activities, bringing the total economic impact to approximately EUR 700,000 in a municipality of around 1,800 inhabitants.

In another example, they mentioned a municipality with around 33,000 hectares traditionally dedicated to hunting, where the prohibition is estimated to have caused losses exceeding EUR 40 million, which, in their view, represents a very severe impact for a town of approximately 8,500 inhabitants and for the surrounding region.

The **Head of Delegation, MEP RZONCA** brought the meeting to a close by observing that the petition stands a credible prospect of success. He further indicated that, upon the completion of its report and the formal adoption of its conclusions and recommendations, the Committee on Petitions would be able to communicate favourable developments in the near future.

Hunting has existed since time immemorial; the essential objective is therefore to ensure a measured equilibrium that safeguards ecosystems while acknowledging established practices.

The prevailing ecological initiative appears increasingly misaligned with empirical realities, as evidenced by the data submitted. A cooperative and inclusive approach remains the sole viable pathway to securing a sustainable and balanced outcome.

### **Wednesday 18 February 2026, Cabañeros National Park (Castilla la Mancha)**

#### **Visit to the facilities of the Cabañeros National Park (Public site)**

#### **Presentation of the Cabañeros National Park by Javier PANTOJA, Director of Autonomous Body of the National Parks (OAPN)**

Mr Pantoja welcomed the delegation of the European Parliament and thanked the representatives for their visit to the Parque Nacional de Cabañeros. He stated that the Organismo Autónomo Parques Nacionales (OAPN) is an autonomous public body attached to the Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge. In this capacity, it is entrusted with the management of Parque Nacional de Cabañeros, with the primary mandate of safeguarding the integrity of its Mediterranean ecosystems, rañas (plains), and threatened species. Its statutory responsibilities encompass scientific research, systematic wildlife monitoring, forest fire prevention, and the regulation of public use, all aimed at ensuring the long-term conservation of biodiversity.

As is likewise the case with Parque Nacional de las Tablas de Daimiel, also located within Castilla-La Mancha, the State exercises its competences in coordination with the Regional Government of Castilla-La Mancha under a framework of institutional cooperation.

The Director, together with Ms. Jara, Director-General for the Natural Environment and Biodiversity of the Regional Government of Castilla-La Mancha, underscored that Cabañeros National Park is situated within the Montes de Toledo and forms part of the Natura 2000 network, while simultaneously benefiting from its own specific legal designation as a National Park. Within the broader Montes de Toledo area, Cabañeros functions as a “core area of maximum protection” embedded in a significantly larger Natura 2000 site, where regulatory restrictions are comparatively less stringent in order to accommodate the socio-economic activities of surrounding municipalities.

National Parks represent the highest tier of environmental protection under Spanish law, expressly prohibiting recreational and commercial hunting activities to preserve ecosystem integrity.

Mr Pantoja further explained that, to date, the objective of ensuring the ecological integrity of the Park has been progressively achieved in publicly owned areas, though not to the same extent in privately owned estates. Over the past three years, efforts have been undertaken to reach a consensual framework with private landowners. These negotiations culminated on 14 January 2026 in the signature of a pioneering collaboration agreement for the management and control of ungulate populations (notably deer and wild boar) with the largest and most emblematic estate within the Park.

After this, he presented updated information on wildlife monitoring and the implementation of the Wild Ungulate Management Plan.

The Director explained the evolution of the deer census from 2004 to 2025, noting that population levels have fluctuated over the years, with peaks exceeding 4,000 individuals. He emphasized that continuous monitoring is essential to maintain ecological balance, protect vegetation, and ensure biodiversity conservation within the park.

He then presented the results of the Wild Ungulate Management Plan, updated as of 13 February 2026. He informed the delegation that 5,252 deer had been captured, representing 78.06% of the planned extractions. Regarding wild boar, he stated that 1,101 individuals had been captured, corresponding to 64.27% of the established target. He added that smaller numbers of mouflon and fallow deer were also managed according to the plan. Mr. Pantoja stressed that all actions were carried out under strict environmental and legal controls to ensure sustainable management.

Furthermore, he explained that the park currently operates 13 deer capture facilities and 9 wild boar capture facilities, which allow for effective and humane population control measures.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Pantoja reaffirmed the park's commitment to responsible wildlife management and biodiversity protection. He thanked the representatives of the European Parliament for their attention and expressed his appreciation for their interest in the conservation efforts undertaken at Cabañeros National Park.

Subsequently, the entire delegation undertook a field visit to the publicly owned sector of Parque Nacional de Cabañeros, travelling in off-road vehicles and accompanied by representatives and technical staff of the Park.

The delegation proceeded to the demarcation line separating the publicly managed area from the adjoining privately owned estates, where they paused to commence the visit to the private properties.

### **Visit to the facilities of the CABAÑEROS NATIONAL PARK (Private site)**

The delegation was received by the estate owners, as well as by Mr **Rafael Sánchez**, forestry engineer, and Mr **Christian Cortázar**, veterinarian and researcher at the Regional Institute for Applied Scientific Research of Castilla-La Mancha (IREC). Travelling in off-road vehicles, the delegation toured several privately owned estates within Parque Nacional de Cabañeros and was briefed on their current condition and management challenges.

The owner of the largest private estate within the Park, “La Finca Cabañeros”, explained that in January 2026 a first agreement had finally been concluded between the estate and the Autonomous Agency for National Parks (OAPN). He underlined the significance of this agreement, noting that after five years it would, for the first time, make it possible to resume population control measures during the current year. He stressed that without effective population control, vegetation degradation is inevitable.

The delegation first visited a fenced plot into which ungulates — primarily red deer and wild boar — are unable to enter. It was observed that, in the absence of browsing pressure, the woodland develops naturally and without animal impact. Mr Sánchez explained that holm oak shoots in this area remain intact, allowing for natural regeneration and the emergence of new trees. He further indicated that certain shrub species present within the enclosure do not exist outside it. He also drew attention to a cork oak whose branches extend to heights accessible to deer, pointing out that outside the enclosed plot no trees retain branches at such levels, as they are systematically consumed by the animals. This comparison was presented as clear evidence that animal overpopulation leads to the loss of plant species and consequently undermines biodiversity.

The delegation subsequently visited the area of the Park most severely affected. Mr Cortázar explained that the situation constituted a classic case of wildlife overabundance. He noted that excessive dominance of cervids — principally red deer, and to a lesser extent wild boar — results in a serious loss of biodiversity. The herbaceous layer is largely absent, as are both low and high shrub strata; in effect, only the tree canopies remain. He further highlighted the associated decline in animal diversity: where only large wild ruminants and wild boar predominate, the presence of rodents, lagomorphs and the broader community structure becomes highly unlikely. He stated that landowners had been unable to regulate deer and wild boar populations for five years but expressed cautious optimism following the recent agreement, which would enable the gradual reduction of population densities to levels that would at least prevent further deterioration and, with sustained effort, potentially reverse the damage. He also referred to the lack of regeneration of cork oaks and ash trees, expressing the hope that recovery could be achieved through regeneration programmes foreseen under the newly concluded agreement.

The mission concluded with this field visit.

## Conclusions

The delegation acknowledged the complexity and strategic sensitivity of the issues examined during the mission, both at the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant and in Cabañeros National Park. In both cases, the discussions highlighted the need to balance national policy objectives with regional socio-economic stability and environmental sustainability.

The visit to the **Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant** underlined the strategic importance of the facility for Spain's electricity system and for the surrounding regional economy.

The delegation noted that the plant represents a major economic pillar for the region of Extremadura, sustaining approximately 4,000 direct jobs and a large number of indirect jobs, and contributing significantly to local economic activity and regional development.

The delegation took note of the plant's role in providing stable electricity generation (7% of national electricity production) and supporting decarbonisation, as well as its contribution to energy security and its role as a stable baseload provider. It also took note of the information provided regarding the plant's high safety and reliability standards, with interlocutors highlighting that Almaraz is considered among the safest nuclear power plants in Europe, and that its sister plant in the USA has recently been granted a licence for a further 80 years of operation.

Furthermore, the delegation acknowledged the concerns expressed by regional stakeholders regarding the potential socio-economic consequences of the planned closure and the fiscal framework applied to nuclear energy.

The delegation also noted that several interlocutors highlighted the important role of nuclear energy in complementing intermittent renewable sources, particularly in the absence of sufficient energy storage capacity, and stressed that nuclear generation contributes to the stability and resilience of the electricity system and is therefore essential for preventing blackouts. It was also noted that energy policies concerning nuclear power differ across Member States, with several countries reconsidering its role in the context of energy security and decarbonisation, while Spain is one of the few Member States maintaining a policy of nuclear phase-out.

The delegation expressed regret that representatives of the Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge did not participate in the meetings, underlining that their

participation would have demonstrated the commitment of the Government of Spain to the issues raised by petitioners and by regional and local authorities.

The fact-finding visit to **Cabañeros National Park** highlighted concerns regarding the environmental and socio-economic impacts of the current management model, including the increase in wild ungulate populations and its effects on vegetation and soil conditions. According to the information received, the current density of ungulates, especially in the park's privately owned areas, significantly exceeds recommended ecological thresholds, resulting in overgrazing, soil erosion and the deterioration of vegetation regeneration. Stakeholders indicated that insufficient wildlife management may contribute to ecological imbalance and could negatively affect both biodiversity and the sustainability of traditional land uses in the area. While population control measures remain legally possible, their implementation has been uneven.

Members also took note that approximately half of the land within the park is privately owned and that negotiations between the competent authorities and private landowners on management agreements have progressed slowly. Only one such agreement has been concluded so far, in December 2025, while several others remain pending. This situation makes the coherent implementation of population management measures across the park difficult.

Stakeholders also raised concerns about the impact of the hunting ban on local employment and economic activity. According to the information provided during the meetings, the prohibition of hunting has negatively affected economic activities historically linked to regulated hunting, including rural employment and local services. Local authorities highlighted that alternative economic activities, including tourism, have not compensated for the loss of income in the surrounding municipalities resulting from the hunting ban. Overall, the delegation emphasises the importance of transparent, evidence-based decision-making and continued dialogue between national authorities, regional stakeholders and other relevant actors. The delegation reiterates its commitment to closely follow developments related to both cases within the framework of its mandate.

### ***Recommendations***

The Committee on Petitions:

1. Underlines that energy transition policies must be implemented in a balanced and evidence-based manner; stresses the importance of ensuring that decisions on the future of strategic energy infrastructure are based on transparent and technically justified assessments – which take into consideration national and European energy security, the decarbonisation objective and the decisions' socio economic impact;
2. Calls on the Spanish authorities to immediately suspend any administrative or preparatory steps towards the closure of the Almaraz nuclear power plant, as well as other nuclear facilities in Spain; urges Spain to reconsider its ideologically driven nuclear phase-out policy, which fails to reflect current energy, economic and geopolitical realities, and instead to align its energy infrastructure with the country's real and projected needs, in particular as regards security of supply, affordability and industrial competitiveness; insists that no irreversible decisions be taken prior to the completion of a comprehensive, independent and publicly available impact assessment covering energy security, electricity prices, industrial competitiveness, employment,

demographic trends and territorial cohesion; further calls on Spain to bring its energy strategy into line with the prevailing approaches of other Member States, many of which are extending or reinforcing their nuclear capacity;

3. Expresses serious concern regarding recent electricity system instability and blackout events in Spain, and regrets the lack of full transparency and timely disclosure by the Spanish authorities concerning the causes and contributing factors of such incidents; considers that reduced availability of stable baseload generation, including nuclear energy, may have increased the structural vulnerability of the system, particularly in a context of high penetration of intermittent renewable sources; warns against the adoption of ideologically driven energy policies that are not grounded in technical, economic and system-reliability considerations, and stresses that an energy transition must be pragmatic, technology-neutral and based on security of supply, affordability and industrial competitiveness;
4. Calls on the Spanish authorities to conduct and publish, in a timely and transparent manner, a comprehensive and independent assessment of the blackout, including the role of the generation mix and relevant regulatory factors; stresses the need for full transparency and accountability towards citizens and stakeholders; calls on the Spanish authorities to ensure that future energy policy decisions do not undermine the stability of the electricity system, harm citizens and businesses, or generate negative spillover effects on neighbouring Member States and the Union's internal energy market;
5. Urges national authorities to maintain an effective dialogue with regional and local authorities as well as relevant stakeholders on major energy infrastructure decisions with significant regional socio-economic consequences, such as the future of the Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant;
6. Stresses that the closure of the Almaraz nuclear power plant would undermine the stability of the Iberian electricity system, increase reliance on fossil fuels, in particular gas, and contradict the Union's objectives on energy security and strategic autonomy, given that the plant provides approximately 7% of Spain's electricity and avoids significant CO<sub>2</sub> emissions;
7. Calls on the Spanish Government to authorise the extension of the operational lifetime of the Almaraz nuclear power plant at least until 2040 and to assess the feasibility of further extensions in line with international best practices, including comparable reactors operating safely beyond 60 years;
8. Emphasises the need to safeguard energy security and technological neutrality during the energy transition ensuring EU climate objectives and maintaining a reliable and affordable energy supply; recalls that the EU Taxonomy recognises nuclear energy as a transitional activity essential for climate mitigation;
9. Invites the European Commission and the Member States to assess the contribution of all low-carbon sources, ensuring equal standing for nuclear energy in relation to renewable sources, to the EU's energy security and decarbonisation objectives, without ideological discrimination;
10. Notes with concern that the current fiscal framework applicable to nuclear energy in

Spain, including regional taxes, production-based taxation and charges on spent fuel, significantly undermines the economic viability of nuclear generation; calls for a revision of such taxation to ensure a level playing field with other energy sources;

11. Calls on the European Commission to assess whether the planned closure of Spain's nuclear power plants is consistent with the principles of good governance, transparency and evidence-based policymaking, particularly in light of the absence of a publicly available technical, economic or social justification;
12. Warns of the demographic and economic risks of industrial closures in less-developed regions; demands that any transition be supported by robust economic diversification, investment and local employment opportunities, avoiding depopulation, industrial decline and economic desertification of rural and inland areas;
13. Underlines that the closure of the Almaraz nuclear power plant would have severe socio-economic consequences, including the loss of thousands of direct and indirect jobs, significant reductions in regional GDP and income levels, and accelerated depopulation in already vulnerable rural areas;
14. Calls for the reversal of the Almaraz Nuclear Power plant's planned closure to guarantee grid stability, energy security and regional economic and social sustainability; requests the Spanish Government to provide a transparent and evidence - based impact assessment and develop comprehensive transition strategies for areas potentially affected by industrial closures in consultation with regional governments and relevant stakeholders;
15. Calls on the competent authorities to ensure the effective implementation of EU environmental legislation while reassessing the management framework of Cabañeros National Park to protect biodiversity without marginalising local communities, private landowners or traditional activities, while avoiding disproportionate regulatory burdens on local communities and traditional rural practices;
16. Notes with concern that current management practices in the Cabañeros National Park, including the prohibition of effective population control measures, have led to overpopulation of ungulates, degradation of vegetation, soil erosion and a deterioration in biodiversity, contrary to the objectives of Union environmental legislation;
17. Stresses the need for scientifically based wildlife's active management and the introduction of population control mechanisms to address the ecological imbalance caused by ungulate overpopulation and prevent further biodiversity degradation, a serious risk to agriculture and public safety;
18. Recognises the fundamental role of hunting activities as an indispensable management tool into wildlife management strategies, where scientifically justified and compatible with conservation objectives, to maintain ecological balance and prevent excessive population growth, thereby safeguarding biodiversity, agricultural activities and public safety;
19. Urges national and regional authorities to strengthen cooperation with local communities, landowners, and experts to ensure that environmental protection does not

lead to economic marginalisation but instead supports a balanced management model;

20. Requests from the competent bodies of the Kingdom of Spain a further assessment of the environmental situation in Cabañeros National Park and an evaluation of the socio-economic impacts of the hunting ban, ensuring that conservation policies are accompanied by adequate support for rural communities;
21. Calls for a balanced management model that integrates biodiversity protection with sustainable rural economic and hunting activity, thereby ensuring the long-term viability of surrounding communities and preserving the park's ecological value;
22. Invites the Commission and Member States to maintain a permanent dialogue between institutions and stakeholders, in full respect of territorial specificities and local identities, to balance environmental protection with rural development objectives;
23. Calls on national and regional authorities to accelerate negotiations with private landowners to conclude management agreements for all land within the park, ensuring a coherent and effective ecosystem management;
24. Urges the European Commission, in the absence of immediate action by the Spanish Government and the relevant authorities to remedy the situation in the private area of Cabañeros National Park, to take the necessary measures to ensure strict compliance with the Habitats Directive and to halt the deterioration of fauna in this protected area.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

<b>Date adopted</b>	06.05.2026	
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 19	
	-: 11	
	0: 0	

## RESULTS BY ROLL CALL VOTE BY THE COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

### AMENDMENT 5

18	+
ECR	Paolo Inselvini, Nora Junco García, Arkadiusz Mularczyk, Diego Solier, Ivaylo Valchev
ESN	Petras Gražulis, Marcin Sypniewski
PPE	Peter Agius, Esther Herranz García, Stefan Köhler, Ewa Kopacz, Dolors Montserrat, Fernando Navarrete Rojas, Emil Radev, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
PfE	Jorge Buxadé Villalba, Juan Carlos Girauta Vidal, Sebastian Kruis

8	-
S&D	Sandra Gómez López, Hana Jalloul Muro, Murielle Laurent, Sandro Ruotolo, Carla Tavares, Nils Ušakovs
Verts/ALE	Ana Miranda Paz, Villy Søvndal

1	0
PPE	Alexandra Mehnert

#### Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

## AMENDMENT 6

18	+
ECR	Paolo Inselvini, Nora Junco García, Arkadiusz Mularczyk, Diego Solier, Ivaylo Valchev
ESN	Petras Gražulis, Marcin Sypniewski
PPE	Peter Agius, Esther Herranz García, Stefan Köhler, Ewa Kopacz, Dolors Montserrat, Fernando Navarrete Rojas, Emil Radev, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
PfE	Jorge Buxadé Villalba, Juan Carlos Girauta Vidal, Sebastian Krüis

9	-
S&D	Sandra Gómez López, Hana Jalloul Muro, Murielle Laurent, Sandro Ruotolo, Carla Tavares, Nils Ušakovs
The Left	Damien Carême
Verts/ALE	Ana Miranda Paz, Villy Søvndal

1	0
PPE	Alexandra Mehnert

**Key to symbols:**

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

## AMENDMENT 7

18	+
ECR	Paolo Inselvini, Nora Junco García, Arkadiusz Mularczyk, Diego Solier, Ivaylo Valchev
ESN	Petras Gražulis, Marcin Sypniewski
PPE	Peter Agius, Esther Herranz García, Stefan Köhler, Ewa Kopacz, Dolors Montserrat, Fernando Navarrete Rojas, Emil Radev, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
PfE	Jorge Buxadé Villalba, Juan Carlos Girauta Vidal, Sebastian Krüis

9	-
S&D	Sandra Gómez López, Hana Jalloul Muro, Murielle Laurent, Sandro Ruotolo, Carla Tavares, Nils Ušakovs
The Left	Damien Carême
Verts/ALE	Ana Miranda Paz, Villy Søvnald

1	0
PPE	Alexandra Mehnert

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

## AMENDMENT 13

17	+
ECR	Paolo Inselvini, Nora Junco García, Arkadiusz Mularczyk, Diego Solier, Ivaylo Valchev
ESN	Marcin Sypniewski
PPE	Peter Agius, Esther Herranz García, Stefan Köhler, Ewa Kopacz, Dolors Montserrat, Fernando Navarrete Rojas, Emil Radev, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
PfE	Jorge Buxadé Villalba, Juan Carlos Girauta Vidal, Sebastian Krus

11	-
ESN	Petras Gražulis
S&D	Sandra Gómez López, Hana Jalloul Muro, Murielle Laurent, Pina Picierno, Sandro Ruotolo, Carla Tavares, Nils Ušakovs
The Left	Damien Carême
Verts/ALE	Ana Miranda Paz, Villy Søvndal

1	0
PPE	Alexandra Mehnert

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

## AMENDMENT 25 PART 1

18	+
ECR	Paolo Inselvini, Nora Junco García, Arkadiusz Mularczyk, Diego Solier, Ivaylo Valchev
ESN	Petras Gražulis, Marcin Sypniewski
PPE	Peter Agius, Esther Herranz García, Stefan Köhler, Ewa Kopacz, Dolors Montserrat, Fernando Navarrete Rojas, Emil Radev, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
PfE	Jorge Buxadé Villalba, Juan Carlos Girauta Vidal, Sebastian Krus

10	-
S&D	Sandra Gómez López, Hana Jalloul Muro, Murielle Laurent, Pina Picierno, Sandro Ruotolo, Carla Tavares, Nils Ušakovs
The Left	Damien Carême
Verts/ALE	Ana Miranda Paz, Villy Søvndal

1	0
PPE	Alexandra Mehnert

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

## AMENDMENT 25 PART 2

17	+
ECR	Paolo Inselvini, Nora Junco García, Arkadiusz Mularczyk, Diego Solier, Ivaylo Valchev
ESN	Petras Gražulis, Marcin Sypniewski
PPE	Peter Agius, Esther Herranz García, Ewa Kopacz, Dolors Montserrat, Fernando Navarrete Rojas, Emil Radev, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
PfE	Jorge Buxadé Villalba, Juan Carlos Girauta Vidal, Sebastian Krus

10	-
S&D	Sandra Gómez López, Hana Jalloul Muro, Murielle Laurent, Pina Picierno, Sandro Ruotolo, Carla Tavares, Nils Ušakovs
The Left	Damien Carême
Verts/ALE	Ana Miranda Paz, Villy Søvndal

1	0
PPE	Alexandra Mehnert

**Key to symbols:**

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

## AMENDMENT 45

10	+
ECR	Paolo Inselvini, Nora Junco García, Arkadiusz Mularczyk, Diego Solier, Ivaylo Valchev
ESN	Petras Gražulis, Marcin Sypniewski
PfE	Jorge Buxadé Villalba, Juan Carlos Girauta Vidal, Sebastian Kruis

19	-
PPE	Peter Agius, Esther Herranz García, Stefan Köhler, Ewa Kopacz, Alexandra Mehnert, Dolors Montserrat, Fernando Navarrete Rojas, Emil Radev, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
S&D	Sandra Gómez López, Hana Jalloul Muro, Murielle Laurent, Pina Picierno, Sandro Ruotolo, Carla Tavares, Nils Ušakovs
The Left	Damien Carême
Verts/ALE	Ana Miranda Paz, Villy Søvnal

0	0

### Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

## AMENDMENT 66

10	+
ECR	Paolo Inselvini, Nora Junco García, Arkadiusz Mularczyk, Diego Solier, Ivaylo Valchev
ESN	Petras Gražulis, Marcin Sypniewski
PfE	Jorge Buxadé Villalba, Juan Carlos Girauta Vidal, Sebastian Kruis

20	-
NI	Maria Zacharia
PPE	Peter Agius, Esther Herranz García, Stefan Köhler, Ewa Kopacz, Alexandra Mehnert, Dolors Montserrat, Fernando Navarrete Rojas, Emil Radev, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
S&D	Sandra Gómez López, Hana Jalloul Muro, Murielle Laurent, Pina Picierno, Sandro Ruotolo, Carla Tavares, Nils Ušakovs
The Left	Damien Carême
Verts/ALE	Ana Miranda Paz, Villy Søvndal

0	0

### Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

## FINAL VOTE - BY ROLL CALL BY THE COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

19	+
ECR	Paolo Inselvini, Nora Junco García, Arkadiusz Mularczyk, Diego Solier, Ivaylo Valchev
ESN	Petras Gražulis, Marcin Sypniewski
PPE	Peter Agius, Esther Herranz García, Stefan Köhler, Ewa Kopacz, Alexandra Mehnert, Dolors Montserrat, Fernando Navarrete Rojas, Emil Radev, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
PfE	Jorge Buxadé Villalba, Juan Carlos Girauta Vidal, Sebastian Kruis

11	-
NI	Maria Zacharia
S&D	Sandra Gómez López, Hana Jalloul Muro, Murielle Laurent, Pina Picierno, Sandro Ruotolo, Carla Tavares, Nils Ušakovs
The Left	Damien Carême
Verts/ALE	Ana Miranda Paz, Villy Søvnald

0	0

**Key to symbols:**

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention