

# Speeding-up environmental assessments (Omnibus VIII on environmental legislation)

2025/0391(COD) - 10/12/2025 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to accelerate and streamline environmental assessments across the EU.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: the Union has committed to the accelerated decarbonisation of its economy to achieve climate neutrality, namely net-zero emissions or emissions after the deduction of removals, by 2050.

The findings of the **2024 Draghi report** indicate that lengthy and uncertain permit granting procedures are an obstacle for the roll-out of critical projects such as new power supply and grids. The **Clean Industrial Deal Communication** indicates that it is to speed up permit granting procedures, in particular for the deployment of grids, energy storage and renewables projects, industrial access to energy and industrial decarbonisation projects as well as manufacturing of clean technologies.

Faster permit granting procedures are necessary, amongst other:

- for Data centre projects, EuroHPC supercomputer facilities, AI factories, AI Gigafactories, semiconductor projects;
- for projects supporting the digital transition, for those related to the decarbonisation of maritime and inland ports, airports and railways of trans-European transport network;
- for projects which are critical to ensure food security in the Union.

Furthermore, access to affordable housing is strategic for the European Union's competitiveness, including for labour mobility.

Procedures linked to environmental assessments should be accelerated and streamlined for plans, programmes and projects across all sectors of the economy by establishing a common acceleration framework for environmental assessments in order to boost EU's roll out of key technologies, reduce dependencies and strengthen competitiveness. The proposed Regulation provides for such framework, while maintaining the same level of protection of human health and of the environment.

CONTENT: this proposal contains concrete measures to **accelerate environmental assessments across the European Union**, given their central role in the planning and permitting process. It builds on the existing environmental acquis and provides a **common procedural framework** for environmental assessments, ensuring that all environmental assessments within the overall permitting process are faster, more efficient, and more cost-effective.

The main elements of the proposal are as follows:

***Environmental single point of contact***

By 6 months after the entry into force of this Regulation, Member States should establish or designate environmental single points of contact at the relevant administrative level for environmental assessments. Each single point of contact should be responsible for facilitating and coordinating all aspects of the environmental assessments under this Regulation, including for providing information on when an application is considered to be completed.

The single points of contact should adequately staffed and resourced.

### ***Streamlining of environmental assessment procedures***

The proposal ensures that in the case of plans, programmes, or projects for which there is an obligation to carry out assessments of the effects on the environment or a screening arising simultaneously from Directive 2001/42/EC, Directive 2011/92/EU, Council Directive 92/43/EEC, Directive 2009/147/EC and Directive 2000/60/EC. Member States apply coordinated or joint procedures fulfilling all the requirements of those Union legislative acts.

### ***Changes to projects***

Changes or extensions of projects, such as repurposing of pipelines or of industrial sites, and extension of their operation period and modifications to ensure decarbonisation, shall only be subject to screening by the competent authorities in order to determine if they are likely to have significant effects on the environment. Those changes or extensions shall be subject to an environmental assessment only where they involve major works that represent risks that are similar to or greater than, in terms of their effects on the environment, to those posed by the original project.

### ***Duration of due diligence and environmental assessments***

The proposal sets out maximum time limits for impact assessments under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive, in order to respond to the widespread demand to accelerate environmental assessments.

### ***Protected species***

This provision outlines that occasional harm to protected bird and other species during project activities is not considered deliberate be considered to be deliberate within the meaning of Directive 2009/147/EC and Directive 92/43/EEC if appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures are used and best technologies are considered, requiring Member States to monitor effectiveness and adapt measures to prevent significant impacts on species populations.

Furthermore, the proposal:

- requires **effective collaboration** among national authorities in assessing transboundary environmental effects for plans requiring multi-state decisions, with the Commission available as a facilitator for joint procedures;
- aims to fully **digitise** impact assessments procedures and related data management. In the interim, project developers should be allowed to submit their applications digitally;
- encourages Member States to bear the **administrative costs** (levies) associated with the environmental assessments for a given project, in order to reduce costs for project developers across the covered priority projects.