WRITTEN QUESTION E-4815/06
by Monica Frassoni (Verts/ALE), Roberto Musacchio (GUE/NGL), Umberto Guidoni (GUE/NGL) and Vittorio Prodi (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: Statements made by the Commissioner for Energy Andris Piebalgs at the Torre Valdaliga Nord power plant in Civitavecchia, Italy

On 16 October 2006 the Commissioner for Energy Andris Piebalgs visited the construction site of the Torre Valdaliga Nord power plant in Civitavecchia, Italy, due to be converted from fuel oil to coal, which has caused a dispute between the Italian local institutions and ENEL, which advocates the coal option.

During his visit the Commissioner said 'Clean coal technologies contribute to the three core objectives of the new European Energy Policy: security of supply, fight against climate change and competitiveness of the European economy. The development of low carbon plants, like this one in Civitavecchia, should be one of the common EU objectives that the Commission wants to put forward in its EU Strategic Energy Review'. He went on to say that the new plant would not only help to reduce emissions by as much as 80%, but would promote a more balanced mix of fuels in electricity production in Italy. He was therefore speaking in support of only one of the sides in the dispute, whilst there are various different ideas about the region's development.

A recent study by the Italian Institute for Sustainable Development shows that to produce the same level of power, the process in a 'clean' coal-fired power plant is significantly more polluting than that used in a combined-cycle gas plant, as the following table shows:

Specific emissions	SO_2 mg/kWh	NO_X mg/kWh	PM mg/kWh	CO_2 g/kWh
Improved technology coal-fired plant (USC)	280	420	71	770
Combined-cycle gas power plant (CC)	2	95	1	368

Can the Commission say whether it is still convinced that the kind of technology used at Civitavecchia may help to combat climate change and whether it does not consider it misleading to describe the 'low carbon-emission' power plant as capable of reducing emissions 'by as much as 80%' when this kind of power plant has proved far worse than a combined cycle gas plant as far as carbon emissions are concerned?