

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3424/09
by Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Tritium pollution of the River Neckar in Germany

The level of tritium in unpolluted rivers is normally less than one becquerel per litre (Bq/l). Measurements have been taken near Mannheim that establish a value 16 times higher. In the search for possible causes, tests on waste from the Neckarwestheim nuclear power plant recorded a level of tritium pollution of 48.9 Bq/l.

1. How does the Commission account for the 16 Bq/l of tritium recorded in the River Neckar near Mannheim in May 2007? These findings contradict the environmental impact assessment by E.ON Kraftwerk GmbH, the nuclear power operator, which talks of undetectable discharges of radioactive substances into the environment.
2. What data is available to the Commission with regard to the measurement of tritium pollution arising from the disposal of waste from nuclear power plants in the Member States?
3. What steps can the Commission take to reduce public exposure to tritium from nuclear power plants in the EU?
4. What steps can the Commission take to prevent the nuclear industry from using EU Member States' waterways to dispose of the radioactive substances, such as tritium, that it produces?
5. In the Commission's view, what legislation should be used to monitor and restrict emissions of radioactive substances from nuclear power plants in the Member States?