

**Question for written answer E-011741/2011
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Maintaining European air quality standards

1. Will the Commission take note of the attached article from Dagblad de Limburger of 26 November 2011 entitled 'Shocking statistics on fine particles in Maastricht'?
2. Does the Commission recognise that, following appeals from local action committees and independent scientists, there are once again signs that the air quality in Maastricht, as well as in other Dutch cities, does not meet European standards?
3. The Commission has indicated that it will not take any action until official figures have been made available. When it does have access to the figures, what action can the Commission take if a Member State or region of a Member State does not meet European standards for air quality in relation to fine particles?
4. The article entitled 'Shocking statistics on fine particles in Maastricht' shows that measurements taken at street level, where many people breathe, turn out much worse than measurements such as those taken in Maastricht and elsewhere at a much higher level. Can Member States decide for themselves at what height they can measure air quality? Or are there European standards as to the height at which measurements may be carried out?
5. If local authorities can decide this for themselves, does the Commission agree that in some cases this paints a distorted picture of reality? Will the Commission set standardised heights at which measurements are to be taken?
6. Is the Commission prepared to take practical action if a Member State has excessive levels of air pollution? Can the Commission cite examples of action it has taken in the past when a Member State did not meet the required air quality standards? If not, does the Commission therefore claim that air quality throughout the EU meets current European standards?
7. When subsidising future infrastructure projects in Member States, will the Commission set as a precondition that these projects should never lead to a worsening of the air quality for local residents? Will the Commission set a 100% guarantee of EU standards as a precondition for the granting of future subsidies?
8. If not, in which way does the Commission think that an air quality can be achieved which falls within EU standards? And what value do these standards possess if no single government takes appropriate action when the air becomes too polluted?