

**Question for written answer E-001038/2014  
to the Commission  
Rule 117  
Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE)**

**Subject:** Aqua Domitia project incompatible with the Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) has a number of objectives, including preventing and reducing pollution, promoting a sustainable use of water and improving the status of aquatic ecosystems. Its ultimate objective – ambitious but necessary – is to achieve a good ecological and chemical status for waters by 2015, from both a qualitative and a quantitative point of view.

The Aqua Domitia project is a global water distribution programme that comprises five links (Val d'Hérault, Biterrois, North and West Montpellier, the Audois Coast and Minervois) aimed at diverting water from the Rhône in order to irrigate the Languedoc-Roussillon region. The cost of constructing this network is estimated at 140 million euro. To this must be added an equivalent sum for construction of the secondary networks, to be undertaken by local contracting authorities as yet to be established.

There is reason to question whether the Aqua Domitia project is compatible with the Water Framework Directive. In its current state, Aqua Domitia seems above all to respond to a supply-side policy aimed at meeting the increasing need for water due to intensive agriculture, the decline in use of Mediterranean grape varieties resistant to water stress, the irrigation of 'English lawn-style' golf courses in a Mediterranean climate and climate change. And yet the European-level objectives will not be achieved without an effective policy of reducing water consumption. This reflection on needs must be conducted for all areas of expenditure, particularly agriculture, which accounts for no less than 24% of all the water abstracted in Europe.

Moreover, according to the conclusions of the public consultation that took place in 2012, 'Although the general ecological status of this river (the Rhône) is more or less satisfactory, its chemical status is far less so due to the presence of diffuse toxic pollutants, particularly medicinal residues, the synergistic effects of which are as yet unknown.' This pollution could gradually contaminate the Languedoc-Roussillon's water resources in the long-term, by crossing highly permeable karsts (limestone) and entering the aquifers.

1. Is the Commission aware of this project?
2. Are European funds going to be allocated to the project given that it is incompatible with the Water Framework Directive?