

**Question for written answer E-009769/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 130
José Blanco López (S&D)

Subject: Urban pollution

The report on air quality in Europe published by the European Environment Agency reveals that up to 98% of town and city dwellers have been exposed to higher-than-permitted levels of ozone pollution, up to 93% to PM_{2.5} particulate emissions and around 89% to benzopyrenes, among other pollutants.

Pollution is responsible annually for more than 450 000 premature deaths in Europe and it also has a specific economic impact, costing, according to the Environment Commissioner, around EUR 940 000 million a year.

Moreover, the permissible levels of pollution set under EU law are less strict than those of the World Health Organisation: the permitted annual average for PM_{2.5} particulates in the Union is 25 mcg/m³, as against the WHO figure of 10 mcg/m³.

1. What does the Commission think of the European Environment Agency report? Does it intend to take steps to reduce the levels of environmental pollution to which town and city dwellers are exposed?
2. Does it not think that the EU reference values need to be aligned with those of the WHO – which are much stricter – as a matter of urgency?