

**Question for written answer E-001237/2016  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Renaud Muselier (PPE)**

Subject: 'Red mud' and EU environmental regulations

The Alteo plant at Gardanne in the Bouches-du-Rhône Department of France has been manufacturing aluminium for decades, and until 31 December 2015 was authorised to dispose of the waste 'red mud' generated by this production process in the sea, through a 47-km-long underground and 7-km-long undersea pipeline connecting the Gardanne site to the Cassidaigne submarine canyon. Since 1996, over 20 million tonnes of this mud have been blanketing a 2 400 km<sup>2</sup> section of the seabed, extending beyond the outfall point and, driven by currents, as far as the Var.

In the interests of preserving jobs, the Alteo aluminium plant in the Bouches-du-Rhône enjoyed a long period of grace prior to discontinuing discharges of red mud into the Mediterranean. Twenty years after the discharges began, the pollution they cause continues to spread and those jobs have never seemed more threatened, owing to a lack of long-term solutions. In December 2015, the French Government granted Alteo authorisation to continue discharging red mud for another six years.

Can the Commission state whether this decision adopted by the French Government complies with EU environmental legislation?