

**Question for written answer E-006657/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Mercury pollution in the Paglia-Tiber river basin

Research carried out by the Life Sciences Department at the University of Florence has found there to be extensive mercury pollution in the Paglia-Tiber river basin, caused by more than one hundred years of mercury ore mining and processing in the Mount Amiata area in Tuscany.

The researchers found mercury concentrations of between 150 and 400 mg/kg in the ground around the distillation plants.

High levels of the metal were also found in river sediment (14 mg/kg) and in surface water (from 0.0032 to more than 1.4 µg/L).

In addition to this, mercury levels of between 160 and 1200 µg/kg were found in freshwater fish in the river basin and between 19 and 1565 µg/kg in mussels cultivated along the coast.

The mercury levels found in most of the samples taken from surface water and plants and animals in the area were above the permitted limits.

1. In view of the above and with reference to Directives 2000/60/EC, 2013/39/EU and 2004/35/EC, can the Commission say what steps have been taken to prevent further damage to the environment in the area and repair the damage already caused?
2. What further steps will the Commission be taking to protect the environment and public health?