

**Question for written answer E-008054/2016
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Mireille D'Ornano (ENF)

Subject: Environmental risks linked to the use of dams

At the end of October 2015, the European Commissioner for Competition, Margrethe Vestager, ordered France to open to competition 50 hydraulic concessions due for completion between 2011 and 2015. Several days later, two mining dams burst in Brazil. These accidents released tens of thousands of cubic metres of toxic mud and caused considerable environmental damage. This event has highlighted, once again, the risks associated with dams if they burst.

Concerning hydroelectric dams, often presented as a source of renewable energy, they constitute an obstacle to the circulation of sediments that accumulate in the reservoirs. Apart from the fact that they destroy the fauna, flora and the natural heritage, these artificial lakes, where the water stagnates, are home to numerous pollutants. Lastly, migrating fish (salmon, eels, etc.) are deprived of access to areas for reproduction, which accelerates their disappearance.

1. Does the Commission recognise the danger that dams pose to the environment?
2. In the hydroelectric sector, does the opening up to competition, and therefore the search for maximum profit, not present a risk to the safety of the structures that require maintenance and costly works?