

**Question for written answer E-005478/2017  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Lola Sánchez Caldentey (GUE/NGL)**

Subject: Toxic mining footprint in the Sierra de Cartagena

The last mines and quarries around the town of El Llano del Beal, mainly engaged in the extraction of silver, lead and zinc, closed more than 20 years ago.

Nevertheless, the local landscape is still blighted by a number of enormous mounds consisting of the accumulation of debris extracted from the mines. According to a study by the researcher José Matías Peñas (UPCT / UMU), endorsed at the request of the regional government by the AFESA laboratory, 2.1 kg of erosional matter x / m<sup>2</sup>, with a high content of heavy metals, are released each year into the waters of the Mar Menor. The presence of highly toxic saline efflorescence has also been detected throughout the area.

In addition, to the environmental impacts, the serious public health risks and problems posed by these residues must also be taken into account: according to this same study, 94 children from the districts of El Llano del Beal, El Beal and El Estrecho have levels of heavy metals and metalloids (zinc, lead, cadmium, bromine and mercury) in their bodies 100 times higher than normal.

1. How does the Commission intend to ensure compliance with Directive 2004/3/ EC on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage?
2. Does the Commission intend to take any specific action to ensure that the institutions responsible for the management and ownership of the contaminated land – the Segura River Basin authority, the regional government – ensure the safety and health of the neighbouring population?