

WRITTEN QUESTION P-5246/09  
by Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Court Case against Croatian NGO Zelena akcija/Friends of the Earth Croatia

Is the Commission aware of a court case initiated by the Croatian Ministry of the Environment against an environmental NGO, Zelena akcija /Friends of the Earth Croatia, following a peaceful protest action held in front of the Ministry on 12 March 2009?

According to the NGO in question, the action consisted of a small group of activists exhibiting empty cans of paint and varnish for seven hours to protest against a failure to implement waste legislation and provide collection points for waste paint. The Ministry is threatening the organisation with a fine of € 50 000 to 110 000, which if imposed, would bankrupt the NGO.

The Copenhagen criteria require, inter alia, that candidate countries guarantee democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Does the Commission judge the actions by the Ministry of the Environment consistent with respect for political and civil rights as required for EU membership?

Has the Commission reacted to the court case yet? If so, what kind of procedure and message did the Commission choose? If not, what exactly is the Commission planning to do, given that the Regular Report on Croatia has just been finalised?