



27.3.2013

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS

**Subject: Petition 0573/2009 by A. P. (Romanian), on on the poor quality of the drinking water in Buzau (Romania)**

### 1. Summary of petition

The petitioner criticizes the poor quality of the drinking water supplied to consumers in Buzau County by the local water company (Regia Autonoma Municipala - RAM). According to the petitioner, the tap-water supplied to the whole of Buzau County is full of rust and does not meet drinking water standards. The petitioner maintains that all her complaints to the supplier or other public authorities have led to nothing. She asks the European Parliament to help put an end to this situation which poses a great health risk for the population of Buzau.

### 2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 13 July 2009. Information requested from Commission under Rule 202(6).

### 3. Commission reply, received on 21 January 2010.

The petitioner is concerned about the substandard quality of drinking water delivered by the Regia Autonoma Municipala (RAM) in Buzau, Romania. The drinking water supply is frequently interrupted and, when the water returns, it is rust-coloured.

On several occasions, the petitioner has contacted the Regia Autonoma Municipala, but to no avail. She feels the problem is recognised, but passed over in silence. She believes the quality of the network is at stake, even though only last year a programme was completed to replace the water pipes using external funding. Her impression is that personal interests and even corruption

are at the origin of the bad water quality.

The petitioner notices that after her intervention, the volume of water consumed in her apartment block was reduced. She does not clearly explain the reason of the reduction.

The aim of the Drinking Water Directive 98/83/EC<sup>1</sup> is to deliver clean and wholesome water to the consumer. The water must comply with parameter lists, specified in Annex 1, comprising microbiological, chemical and organoleptic parameters.

Even though no analyses results are provided, the petitioner believes that the drinking water supplied by the Regia Autonoma Municipala (RAM) in Buzau is unlikely to comply with indicator parameters for 'iron', 'colour' and 'turbidity' as the water is 'not acceptable to consumers and sudden changes occur in colour and turbidity'.

In case of non compliance with parameter values, "*Member State shall ensure that necessary remedial action is taken as soon as possible to restore drinking water quality and shall give priority to enforcement action, having regard to the extent to which the relevant parametric value has been exceeded*". In particular, in the case of non-compliance of parameters such as 'iron', 'colour' and 'turbidity', "*Member States shall consider whether that non-compliance poses any risk to human health and they shall take remedial action to restore the quality of the water where that is necessary to protect human health*".

As the petitioner has had to frequently contact the RAM, it would appear that the above remedial actions, as foreseen by the directive were not undertaken.

## Conclusions

As the Drinking Water Directive regulates only the quality of water and not the continuity of supply, the Commission has no grounds for taking action on the interruptions of the water supply in Buzau.

The Commission is currently assessing the first tri-annual report on drinking water quality sent in by Romania and, in order to be able to present a synthesis report for the period 2005-2007, the Commission will be obliged to request further explanations from Romania. In the process, the Commission will request an explanation about this petition from the Romanian Ministry of Health. The Commission will keep the Parliament informed about the results of its enquiries.

## 4. (REV) Commission reply, received on 30 September 2011.

Following the assessment of the first tri-annual report on drinking water quality sent by Romania, the Commission concluded that the data provided was inconsistent. Therefore, the Romanian authorities were requested to clarify and update the data.

Regardless of the situation of Romania, the draft "Synthesis Report on the Quality of

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive 98/83/EC of 3 November 1998 on the quality of water intended for human consumption OJ L 330, 5.12.1998.

Drinking Water in the Member States of the European Union in the period 2005-2007" had to be completed in line with the contractual terms under which the report had to be produced and, above all, in view of the efforts made by the other Member States to report on time.

The synthesis report was sent to the Member States for review in February 2011. The deadline for the consultation was 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

The Romanian authorities have since updated their data for inclusion in the final version of the synthesis report.

A consistency check of the data for Romania is currently being carried out.

The estimated date for the publication of the synthesis report is October 2011.

**5. (REV II) Commission reply**, received on 16 December 2011.

The Drinking Water Directive Synthesis Report (to be published on the web shortly) shows that, for the 2005-2007 period, six water supply zones have been reported in Buzau Country. During this period, no violations of the parametric values were reported for any of these six water supply zones, however, for all of them, inconsistencies as regards the monitoring and sampling arrangements were reported, mainly as regards the indicator parameters (odour, turbidity, coliform bacteria, colony count 22, etc).

At present, Member States are preparing the reports on the quality of water intended for human consumption for the 2008-2010 period, which they have to send to the Commission before February 2012.

If, following the assessment of the data, no improvements in the monitoring and sampling arrangements are reported by Romania, the Commission may decide to take action against this Member State.

**6. Commission reply (REV. III)**, received on 27 March 2013.

The preliminary assessment of the data submitted by the Romanian authorities showed that during the reporting period (2008-2010), no instances of non-compliance with the relevant parameters (iron, turbidity and colour) were reported for Buzau County.

The Commission intends to publish its findings following the analysis of the Member States' drinking water reports later this year.

Even though the relevant County preliminary results of the analysis do not suggest any lack of compliance with the Directive, the Commission may decide to further investigate the issue, depending on the final results.