

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0419/03
by Laura González Álvarez (GUE/NGL)
to the Commission

Subject: Spanish National Hydrological Plan (NHP): Júcar-Vinalopó transfer scheme

The construction scheme for transferring water from the basin of the river Júcar to that of the Vinalopó was approved as part of the Júcar Basin Hydrological Plan, and ratified in Annex II of the NHP in July 2001. The course to be followed by the transfer channel runs parallel to the existing Tagus-Segura link, and converges with the planned transfer of the Ebro to the Spanish south-east. The water transfer is designed to develop new irrigation areas for heavily subsidised continental crops in the upper and middle reaches of the Júcar, as well as unsustainable tourist and urban development. All this will have increased negative repercussions on the lower reaches of the Júcar and the Albufera, and on the quality of Valencia's water supplies. The scheme's environmental impact assessment did not assess alternatives, nor take account of these and other problems, such as environmental impact on the Natura 2000 Network and areas of ornithological importance.

On 4 October, the Spanish Government asked the Commission to cofund the project (EUR 54 million). The Commission indicated that its reply would be given within three months, i.e. before 4 January 2003. Without waiting for the EU decision, the Spanish Prime Minister laid the first stone of the new channel on 14 November 2002.

Can the Commission tell me what stage has been reached with regard to processing this request for aid?

Has the Commission made any assessment of the project and of the accompanying environmental impact study?