

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4067/03
by Alexander de Roo (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Cofinancing of the Júcar-Vinalopó conduit and environmental conditions

On 18 December 2003 the Commission gave its definitive approval to the cofinancing of the Júcar-Vinalopó diversion. The conditions which the Spanish authorities have to fulfil to receive the funds are: carrying-out of studies to determine an ecological volume for the Júcar before proceeding to the transfer of resources to the Vinalopó, as well as an ecological volume for the coastal wetlands such as the Albufera; guarantees that the waters of the Valencian river will not be mingled with those of the Ebro and that the latter will not be used to offset any deficits attributable to the diversion to Alicante; and compliance with the framework water directive (including full integration of costs when setting the price of water).

On the same day, according to the newspaper 'Heraldo de Aragón' (18 December 2003), Mr Pascual Fernández, the Spanish secretary of state responsible for water, said in Saragossa that the only option ruled out was that of 'using the Júcar-Vinalopó channels to transport water to the Ebro', and that, in any case, 'there are many other rivers in the Júcar basin and the document refers only to the Júcar, not the basin'.

The representative of the Spanish Environment Ministry did not specify whether there are plans to divert water to the Júcar when he cited Article 17 of the law on the National Hydrographic Plan, which specifies how the Ebro is to supply each of the recipient basins (for the Júcar basin, 315 cubic hectometres). He added that 'the distribution of volume within each basin will be decided when the diversion is completed'.

1. What action will the Commission take to ensure that the above-mentioned conditions for granting of the funds are applied in full?
2. Can the Commission guarantee that the funds will actually be made over only once the Spanish authorities have complied with the conditions both in law and in reality?
3. What is the Commission's position on the statements by Mr Fernández concerning the possibility of diverting water from the Ebro to the Júcar basin without making use of the Júcar-Vinalopó conduit?
4. Will the Commission consider suspending the financing until the Spanish government has clarified its intentions on the matter beyond all reasonable doubt?