

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0267/04  
by Juan Ferrández Lezaun (Verts/ALE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Projects offering alternatives to the Spanish National Hydrological Plan (SNHP)

In November 2001 the Spanish ministries for science and technology, agriculture and the environment signed a protocol for studying and financing a project for desalination in Almeria as a possible way of remedying the water shortage in that region. In 2001 CIRCE (centre for research on energy resources and consumption) also drew up another report for the Ministry for the Environment.

The research findings support the desalination option and conclude that desalination plants, as well as offering optimum energy yield by using new technologies, would make it possible to supply 82 cubic hectometres per year at a price of EUR 0.30 per cubic metre in Almeria, whereas 90 cubic hectometres per year are supposed to be delivered under the National Hydrological Plan. The area's water needs could thus be covered with less impact on the environment and the water would cost less than the water diverted under the SNHP (EUR 0.34 per cubic metre).

Does the Commission know about these reports? If not, does it not consider that the SNHP project and its funding should be suspended until existing alternative projects have been assessed, such as those submitted by the government of Aragón or the aforementioned desalination plants, which have a lesser social, economic and environmental impact?