

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3729/07

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to the Commission

Subject: Plans for the underground storage of gas in the Rivara (Modena) district:
environmental compatibility and risks to the local population

In the Rivara district (Modena province) there are plans for 3.7 billion cubic metres of methane gas to be sequestered each year and to be stored underground, in a project to be conducted by the IGM company.

The storage project - one of the largest in Europe - is causing much concern amongst local inhabitants, who fear in particular the risk of seismic activity such as has occurred on previous occasions - for example, at the Basle hydrothermal plant, where seismic activity once caused mini-earthquakes of up to 3.1 on the Richter scale.

According to newspaper reports the franchise company IGM would appear to have no specific relevant experience.

The project in question has been opposed by the Northern Italy Mining Office - although the governing authorities in Rome seem to be turning a deaf ear to all criticism and are insisting that the storage project is feasible.

Does the Commission not think that the project poses a serious risk to the health and safety of the people living in the Rivara district and in Modena province?

Is the project compatible with current Community environmental law?

Does the Commission not think that it should contact local residents' committees who are opposed to the project in order to hear their arguments?