

WRITTEN QUESTION E-6195/07  
by Ambroise Guellec (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Implementation of the Nitrates Directive

Annex III of the Nitrates Directive, 91/676/EEC<sup>1</sup>, authorises derogations from the rules specifying that the amount of nitrogen contained in livestock manure applied to the land may not exceed 170 kg per hectare per year.

However, the very large maximum amounts allowed under certain of these derogations – such as 230 kg N per hectare in some regions of Germany, and 250 kg N per hectare in the Flanders region of Belgium – raise serious doubts about the objective nature of the criteria on the basis of which they were introduced. Moreover, it appears that derogations of this kind will make it almost impossible to achieve the 'good ecological status' of water required by the Water framework directive by 2015, and in particular the maximum level of 15 mg of nitrates per litre.

Can the Commission justify the positions that have been adopted and guarantee that they have not resulted in unacceptable distortion of competition between European farmers?

Does the Commission agree that, in view of these significant disparities, the Nitrates Directive should be revised to ensure a level playing-field across the whole of European Union territory?

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 375, 31.12.1991, p. 1