

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0883/08  
by Anne Laperrouze (ALDE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Building of a multi-purpose waste treatment and storage plant

Is the Commission in a position to prevent the implementation of a project which could harm the environment in a Member State?

I have been alerted to the existence of a scheme to build a gigantic multi-purpose waste treatment and storage plant, with a capacity of 2 million tonnes, in the Hérault département in France.

The decision of the Prefect of Hérault, taken on 2 February 2007, described the planned dump as 'a project of general interest'.

While there is no question that the Montpellier conurbation and the Hérault département need to find a site for stocking their waste as soon as possible, it appears that the siting of this scheme is unsuitable, namely 'La Gardiole', right in the middle of a karstic area, on top of the département's second largest ground water deposit, linked to the Thau lake. Furthermore, the scheme's layout follows the contours of numerous protected natural areas: protected massif, drinking water resource protection zone, Natura 2000 network area, etc.

The situation can be summed up as follows: the Member State is ready to authorise the construction of the scheme, and the local people, having formed an association of some 1500 members under the name of 'The Guardians of La Gardiole', are firmly opposed to the choice of site, but are proposing another site in the same local administrative area (commune). Their opposition is based on the contradictory results of studies carried out by independent experts, which confirm the vulnerability of the geological and hydrogeological area.

The EU has just adopted a Directive on protecting underground water (2006/118/EC<sup>1</sup>), deriving from the Water Framework Directive, while the Waste Directive (2006/12/EC<sup>2</sup>) is also under review. On the basis of these Directives, can the Commission intervene to authorise or forbid the building of this waste treatment and storage plant in the area in question?

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 372, 27.12.2006, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 114, 27.4.2006, p. 9.