

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1319/08

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to the Commission

Subject: Waste management in Campania

Although it is now 14 years since the emergence of the current crisis, there is as yet no effective waste management policy in place in Campania and in fact the situation has deteriorated further, leading to popular protests and disturbances. The rate of waste disposal is stationary at 11% of waste generated, compared to the EU threshold of 25%. Apart from the damage this state of affairs does to the region's image and economy, especially the tourist industry, it has had extremely serious health consequences including an increase in the mortality rate and the incidence of lung and liver tumours, lymphomas, sarcomas and congenital malformations. The Commission has opened an infringement procedure against Italy and announced the withdrawal of some of the Structural Funds earmarked for Campania for the 2007-2013 period (EUR 330 million).

Campania's 1997 regional waste disposal plan provided for the construction of two energy-producing incinerators and seven facilities for the production of waste-derived fuels, which were halted by the courts on the grounds that the processing of the waste was inadequate and did not comply with environmental legislation. The emergency plan launched by the Italian Prime Minister last week is supposed to resolve this long-running crisis in 120 days by appointing a 'special commissioner' backed up by the police, ordering the construction of three energy-producing incinerators and, meanwhile, appealing to other regions of Italy to show solidarity by disposing of Campania's waste. The plan takes no account of the fact that a very large proportion of Campania's waste is 'raw' (i.e. has not been treated and cannot be processed), that other regions are already on the verge of crisis and that the national plan itself still contravenes Articles 4 and 5 of the waste disposal directive, despite various complaints by the Commission. There is no sign of the requisite long-term strategic planning aimed at reducing the volume of waste generated by sorting waste for collection, cutting down on packaging and, above all, recycling and progressively closing rubbish dumps. On the contrary, the only concrete measures taken by the special commissioner involve enlarging the rubbish dumps and moving waste elsewhere in Italy or abroad.

Directive 2006/12/EC¹ requires Member States to take the necessary measures to prevent the abandonment, dumping or uncontrolled disposal of waste and to avoid health risks or environmental damage by using the most modern and convenient technology and aiming to achieve self-sufficiency in waste disposal for individual regions and the country as a whole.

What measures could the Commission suggest as an alternative to withdrawing European funding, which would undermine any efforts to achieve economic regeneration?

What measures could the Commission also take to ensure the Italian authorities rectify the national plan?

¹ OJ L 114, 27.4.2006, p. 9.