

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1678/08
by Feleknas Uca (GUE/NGL)
to the Commission

Subject: EU aid for Halabja

Between 16 and 18 March 1988, the Iraqi air force launched poison gas attacks on approximately 200 Kurdish villages. The worst hit was the town of Halabja. Here alone, 5 000 people died an agonising death and a further 10 000 were injured, some seriously. Mustard gas and the nerve gases Sarin, Tabun and VX were detected.

The poison gas attacks would not have been possible without the active assistance of Western states. During the Iraq-Iran war, the West supplied weapons and dual-use goods on a massive scale to Iraq, which was viewed as a buffer against the Iranian regime of Ayatollah Khomeini. Suppliers included companies from Germany, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland, among other countries.

As the 20th anniversary of this brutal attack approaches, people in the affected region are still dying from the after-effects of the poison gas attacks. Skin damage, leukaemia and respiratory illness are commonplace, as are deformities in children. Unexploded bombs still present a deadly danger.

1. Does the Commission intend to provide medical attention for the people affected by the after-effects of the poison gas attacks?
2. Are there any plans to launch, or any consideration being given to launching, a programme to investigate scientifically the medium- to long-term effects of poison gas on the local population and to provide medical and psychological care and treatment on the basis of the findings and in response to need?
3. Does the Commission intend to provide reconstruction aid to assist the town of Halabja and the surrounding area directly?