

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3253/08

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to the Commission

Subject: Environmental catastrophe in Ischia

On 14 June 2007, there was a breakage in one of the four high-voltage underwater cables forming the power line maintained by Enel Spa – although never authorised by the competent Italian authorities - between Cuma on the Campania coast and Lake Ameno on the island of Ischia. Inside each cable there is an 18 mm-diameter channel filled with oil under high pressure.

The breakage of the Enel cable resulted in the spillage of oil into the sea and into other environmental matrices – with the consequent pollution by polychlorobiphenyls (PCBs, the use of which was banned by the Italian authorities as long ago as 1984), aromatic polycyclic hydrocarbons (APHs) and linear alkyl benzenes (aromatic hydrocarbons) – in the 'Regno di Nettuno' a marine protected area, and the largest ecosystem in the Mediterranean Sea, designated as a 'priority habitat' in Annex I to the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and comprising oceanic posidonia beds.

Considering that the area affected by the spillage of pollutants is a site of Community interest, would the Commission not consider it appropriate to take action to protect this Community environmental asset?