

WRITTEN QUESTION E-6298/08
by Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne (ALDE)
to the Council

Subject: Lead poisoning in refugee camps in Kosovo

Since November 1999 150 Roma families from Mitrovica have been living as refugees in camps at Cesmin Lug and Osterode, placed there by the UN. The siting of these camps has exposed the families to acute lead poisoning, since they are close to the tailing stands of the Trepca lead mines.

A sequence of blood tests shows lead levels in the families reaching more than 65 micrograms/decilitre. Irreversible brain damage normally starts at 10 micrograms/decilitre particularly in children under the age of six. Further consequences have been tracked in 77 early deaths and many miscarriages, together with other clear symptoms of lead poisoning.

Since early assurances by the UN to the families that their stay in this dangerous environment would be limited to 45 days and various NGO promises of help have been unfulfilled, will the Council of Ministers use its authority and influence to save these families from further damage?