

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0539/09

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to the Commission

Subject: Continuing pollution of the O Burgo estuary in A Coruña (Galicia, Spain)

The O Burgo estuary in A Coruña (Galicia, Spain) still carries a level of pollution that exceeds the limits set by Community environmental legislation and affects marine biodiversity. This is the result of uncontrolled discharges by various industries that have been going on for more than half a century, and also of the inadequate treatment network for solid urban waste and waste water from the surrounding area. The wastewater treatment centre that would serve the area along the estuary has not yet been built. The most recent discharges were recorded at the start of January 2009. Various environmental groups, political organisations and fishermen's and shellfish harvesters' associations in the area have repeatedly protested at the existence of more than 80 pipes that discharge waste directly into the estuary, which is rich in marine resources. This is having a significant effect, particularly on shellfish-growing, and the high level of pollution is leading to high levels of toxicity with economic consequences for those who make their living from the sea, stemming from this lack of control.

The Commission has already been notified of this serious situation through various channels. Does it believe that the pollution levels found in this Galician estuary, which are in breach of Community legislation on water quality, will be reduced so that compliance is guaranteed? Has the Commission received any information from the competent Spanish authorities regarding the plans envisaged in order to comply with the obligation to guarantee Community quality standards and reduce the current pollution? Will the Commission open infringement proceedings against Spain for failure to comply with applicable Community legislation? Is it aware that the Spanish Government has a budget heading for the implementation of a plan to reduce pollution that would have prevented the emergence of new sources of pollution and ensured greater environmental controls in the area affected and the rehabilitation of this Galician estuary, a plan which should have been implemented in previous years and has still not been set in motion?