

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0548/09
by Giusto Catania (GUE/NGL)
to the Commission

Subject: 2007 Sicilian regional air protection plan, copied from the plan produced by Veneto Region in 2000, adopted by the regional authorities, and submitted to the Commission

By decision No 176 of 9 August 2007 the Sicilian Regional Council approved its regional air protection plan, cobbled together from various documents originating from the Veneto Regional Protection and Improvement Plan from the year 2000, which the Commission, however, rejected and sent back.

Specifically, the Sicilian plan refers to Community directives in force in 2000 as if they had still to be transposed, whereas they have on the contrary been amended; the programming documents, the SPDs, relate to Veneto Region, as do certain measures to relieve urban traffic congestion, for example protected cycle paths along river and canal embankments, which are to be found in Veneto and not in Sicily; the environmental conditions cover matters such as 'the entire', lowland mountain communities, which were disbanded 20 years ago in Sicily, or measures to limit the heating hours of civil heating plants.

The bibliography has also been copied, as have the references to projects implemented in Lombardy region in 2004, relabelled as projects carried out in the municipality of Palermo in 2006. Chapter 6 of the plan is a hotchpotch of Veneto and Sicilian measures resulting from clumsy corrections by the relevant department, which, after Legambiente (an environmental organisation) revealed the story to the press on 21 November 2007, touched up the plan by changing Veneto's errors to Sicilian errors.

Having railed in December 2007 against the complaint about the plan – one that is ethically and professionally unacceptable by the standards of a public authority – the Head of the Regional Department of Land and the Environment amended the plan by decision No 43 of 12 March 2008; he claimed that the errors had been due to misprints and slips of the pen.

In November 2008 those responsible for the crude plagiarism, which, moreover, has proved ineffective to the extent that it has failed to secure the adoption of, or funding for, measures to protect health and air quality in Sicily, were served with a summons to appear in court because, in spite of the belated alterations, the incomprehensible errors are still on the department's website; the related documents have also been sent to the Commission.

Does not the Commission see a need to ascertain whether the version of the plan that it received in March 2008, which, even though it might have been corrected, still contains errors, is sound and appropriate for its purpose? Does it not believe in addition that it should ask the Sicilian regional authorities to draw up an effective and ethically acceptable new air protection plan?