

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1673/09
by Willy Meyer Pleite (GUE/NGL)
to the Commission

Subject: Plans to build a combined-cycle power plants of 1100 mw in Miranda (Burgos) and any other of 800 mw in Lantarón (Álava)

The plan to build combined-cycle electricity production plants – deemed harmful, unhealthy, irksome and dangerous – in Miranda and Lantarón, two towns only 5 km apart, has been almost unanimously rejected by the local people, as witness the 94% and 97% vote against during the poll on the issue organised by the local councils affected. Over 11 000 signatures have been collected against the project, and over 3000 claims lodged against the Lantarón plant's Environmental Impact Assessment, of which, according to those affected, omits, minimises and falsifies relevant data, in order to secure the plant's approval by the Ministry of the Environment.

The siting of these two plants would exacerbate the already critical situation of an area which in health and environmental terms is already at breaking-point, namely a valley housing several industrial estates producing chemicals - one of which is home to 10 chemical companies, two of which are high-risk (General Química and Alcideka) - and the Santa María de Garoña nuclear power station, 15 km away. This area, which is subject to a nuclear emergency plan and two chemical emergency plans, is one of the most polluted in Spain, with a high incidence of allergic, respiratory, cardiovascular and carcinogenic disease.

Can the Commission guarantee that the project in question will respect Directives 2008/1/EC¹ on integrated pollution prevention and control (IPPC) which lays down that electricity plants of this kind should operate on the basis of permits and emission limit values, based on the best available techniques; Directive 2001/80/EC on large combustion plants; Directive 96/62/EC² establishing a common strategy defining and establishing objectives on ambient air quality designed to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment?

Can the Commission confirm that the Environmental Impact Assessment carried out, apart from meeting a formal legal requirement, really respects the principles and parameters laid down in Directive 85/337/EC³ amending 97/11/EC⁴, and complies with the objectives thereof?

Does the Commission think that Directive 2003/4/EC⁵ on public access to environmental information is being respected, given that both the public and the administrations have complained about obscurantism and the impossibility of obtaining full details of the scheme as a whole, as well as being denied other information requested?

¹ OJ L 24, 29.1.2008, p. 8.

² OJ L 296, 21.11.1996, p. 55.

³ OJ L 175, 5.7.1985, p. 40.

⁴ OJ L 73, 14.3.1997, p. 5.

⁵ OJ L 41, 14.2.2003, p. 26.