

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1842/09

by Roberto Musacchio (GUE/NGL), Vittorio Agnoletto (GUE/NGL), Giusto Catania (GUE/NGL), Vincenzo Aita (GUE/NGL), Luisa Morgantini (GUE/NGL) and Umberto Guidoni (GUE/NGL)
to the Commission

Subject: Failure to carry out an environmental impact assessment (EIA) on building land at Dal Molin airport (Province of Vicenza) and to provide public information in accordance with Directive 2003/4/EC

In its answer to written question E-5794/08, the Commission explicitly points to the need for an EIA on the basis of Directives 85/337/EEC¹ and 97/11/EC² since a 400% increase in both surface area and volume is planned at the site, and this cannot be classified as simple re-use owing to the substantial environmental impact it would have on a particularly valuable and fragile ecosystem.

Despite the Mayor of Vicenza having publicly called on Special Commissioner Paolo Costa to have an EIA carried out prior to formal authorisation and commencement of the works, at a press conference on 20 February 2009 Mr Costa maintained that, although no EIA had been carried out, the best possible project had been agreed, based on Italian or US standards – whichever were the more stringent – in each case. This ignores the fact that, as an EU Member State, Italy is obliged to comply with European standards alone.

On 20 February 2009, specific features and environment-friendly solutions including a cogeneration plant that would be able to supply energy to the city were outlined, but full details were not disclosed and the project was not made accessible to the local authorities and to the general public, as is required under Articles 5 and 6 of Directive 97/11/EC and Article 3 of Directive 2003/4/EC³.

Vicenza City Council has therefore not seen the final project, which was decided upon without it being involved as it should have been, without an EIA being carried out, and in breach of the obligation to duly inform the general public.

The Mayor has invited Commissioner Dimas and the Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions – to which, incidentally, a group of local inhabitants have submitted a petition (No 0515/2008) affirming the right of the local authorities and local inhabitants to information on and access to the final project and the local community's right of involvement – to visit Vicenza.

The project's potential impact on hydrogeological systems, the landscape and transport and the risk of irreversible damage have therefore not been analysed as part of an independent environmental impact assessment conducted in accordance with European law as transposed by Legislative Decree No 4 of 16 January 2008 amending Legislative Decree No 152 of 3 April 2006.

What steps does the Commission intend to take vis-à-vis the Italian authorities with a view to ensuring that, in line with its answer to question E-5794/08, Italy complies with the environmental directives that it has signed and transposed in connection with the works already authorised and commenced in the Dal Molin area and in the light of the explicit refusal to produce an EIA?

¹ OJ L 175, 5.7.1985, p. 40.

² OJ L 73, 14.3.1997, p. 5.

³ OJ L 41, 14.2.2003, p. 26.