

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2182/09

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to the Commission

Subject: Safety of tailing ponds in Bulgaria

According to the Regional Inspectorate of the Ministry of Environment and Waters – Plovdiv, Bulgaria, on 25 November the amount of lead in the River Chepelarska was 0.48mg/l, which is 9.6 times higher than the allowed amount (0.05mg/l). Even dead fish have started to appear along the river bed.

The main dangers to human health after such disasters are related to the pollution of soils in the fertile territories that may be flooded or irrigated with poisonous water and the pollution of the underground waters used for drinking.

The cause for the current pollution was a break in the tailing pond of the mining company GORUBSO-Luky.

The catastrophe was caused by a lack of sufficient measures for ensuring the safety of the working facilities.

It is a fact that a great number of the tailing ponds in Bulgaria were built many years ago, are overfilled and do not even have retention basins, which may stop the waste waters in case of break.

What measures does the Commission think will be undertaken by the Government of Bulgaria to ensure safety of the tailing ponds in the country and to prevent pollution endangering the health of the Bulgarian population and the population of neighbouring countries?