

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2197/09
by Marcello Vernola (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Recycling of polyethylene waste

The need to protect the environment has prompted the EU institutions to make every effort to implement policies to encourage, amongst various other related priorities, the mindful recycling of waste, also through more forceful policies on 'green' public procurement. The problem of polyethylene-based goods and waste should be seen against this background. The current financial crisis is upsetting the balance owing to a reduction in the costs of the pure raw material. The most immediate consequence of this has been a slump in the market for recycled polyethylene. This is having an impact on the companies operating in the sector, in financial and employment terms, and is also damaging the environment because of the increased use of the raw material.

Directive 2008/98/EC¹ aims to help move the EU closer to a 'recycling society' by using waste as a resource, so as to manage it in an environmentally-friendly way, thereby preventing waste from being produced in the first place.

In this regard, it is worth noting how weak the policies and action hitherto implemented by the Italian Government have been, in terms of boosting polyethylene recycling; the obvious result of this has been the growing production of such waste. In Italy, in fact, the prices of recycled and raw polyethylene are virtually the same and since there are no targeted policies, there is a considerably greater demand for the raw product than for the recycled product. This is having an adverse impact on the environment.

Does the Commission not therefore think it should check on the action hitherto taken by Italy in relation to the recycling policies on polyethylene-based goods and waste, in accordance with the requirements of Community legislation on environmental protection and waste disposal, in order to verify whether that recycling process needs to be facilitated?

¹ OJ L 312, 22.11.2008, p.3.