

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3176/09

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to the Commission

Subject: Levels of uranium in the air over the territory of the European Union

According to data published by the Atomic Weapons Establishment,¹ levels of uranium considerably higher than normal were detected in the air in Berkshire (UK) in March and April 2003 and were reported to the Environment Agency because they exceeded the 1000 ng/m³ threshold value for notification. According to Professor Chris Busby, these levels can be linked to the use in Iraq during the same period² of weapons containing uranium. It had already been shown, in an EU-wide report in 1999 by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe, that wind-borne particles of uranium could travel hundreds of kilometres.

Can the Commission forward to Parliament all the data it possesses on uranium levels in the air over the entire territory of the European Union in the years 1998-2005, and ask all the agencies and bodies responsible to supply corresponding data in their possession for the same period?

Did the Atomic Weapons Establishment, the Environment Agency, the Defence Procurement Agency or any other competent body alert it to the fact that warning levels had been exceeded in the UK and, if so, how did the Commission and the UK authorities act on the information?

Is the Commission minded to authorise a study on possible contamination of EU territory, and specifically airspace, resulting from the use of weapons containing uranium?

¹ <http://www.awe.co.uk/Publications.aspx?SubCategory=38c7af2>

² 'Did the use of uranium weapons in Gulf War 2 result in contamination of Europe? Evidence from the measurements of the Atomic Weapons Establishment, Aldermaston, Berkshire, UK', C. Busby and S. Morgan, January 2006, European Biology and Bioelectromagnetics