

**Question for written answer E-9063/2010
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Toxic red sludge disaster in Hungary

Hungary's largest ecological disaster occurred on 4 October 2010, when the reservoir of an aluminium plant ruptured and an enormous wave of 1 million m³ of toxic red sludge flooded towns and villages, killing at least eight people and injuring several hundred in its way. The toxic waste has also polluted agricultural fields and waterways, and a great deal of time and effort will be required to clear it away. In addition, several hundred families lost their homes and existence. Though exact data on the damages is not yet available, according to preliminary calculations the amount of damages may significantly exceed EUR 100 million Euros.

Since the Hungarian case and other European industrial accidents of the last decade demonstrate that such disasters can happen at any time and anywhere, and the EU Solidarity Fund gives no opportunity for the Member State concerned to call for EU financial support in the event of this kind of catastrophe, we would like to ask the Commission the following questions:

- Is it possible under the existing European financial instruments to provide financial support in the event of such catastrophes?
- Does the Commission consider that the application of a more adequate financial mechanism to enhance post-disaster damage limitation, e.g. in the form of insurance obligations or guarantees, would be possible?
- What is the Commission planning to do to improve and strengthen already existing EU legislation, particularly with regard to the safety rules and controlling provisions applicable to potentially dangerous industrial activities, so that such a catastrophe cannot happen again in the EU?
- Will the Commission carry out an EU-wide inspection of the implementation of EU legislation, particularly in regard to environmental regulations in the Member States?
- Will the Commission carry out an impact assessment on qualification of the 'red sludge' as a hazardous substance under the relevant EU regulations?