

EN  
P-6057/2011  
Answer given by Mr Potočnik  
on behalf of the Commission  
(31.7.2012)

1. The Commission has not been officially informed of this project.

2. The use of cyanide for gold extraction does not contravene European legislation. There is a comprehensive set of rules in place to ensure safe mining in the European Union, including Directives on Environmental Impact Assessment<sup>1</sup>, on Strategic Environmental Assessment<sup>2</sup> and on Mining Waste<sup>3</sup>. The Mining Waste Directive includes requirements to ensure the safety of mining waste facilities, including strict limit values for cyanide concentrations. Spain has also identified cyanide as a specific pollutant under the Water Framework Directive<sup>4</sup> and set an environmental quality standard for it in surface waters. Non-compliance with this standard would have to be reported in its river basin management plans.

3. The Mining Waste and the Water Framework Directives include clear requirements in terms of public participation and transparency. As Guardian of the Treaty, the Commission will ensure that all the requirements of the existing European legislation are fully respected.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, OJ L 175, 5.7.1985

<sup>2</sup> Directive 2001/42/EC of the Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programs on the environment, OJ L 197, 21.7.2001

<sup>3</sup> Directive 2006/21/EC of the Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006 on the management of waste from extractive industries and amending Directive 2004/35/EC, OJ L 102, 11.4.2006

<sup>4</sup> Directive 2000/60/EC of the Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000