

**Question for written answer E-004644/2013
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Jill Evans (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Decontamination of EU-protected wetlands

I have received a letter from a constituent regarding potential contamination of the Loughor Estuary and Burry Inlet, which are protected by EU regulations. They qualify under Article 4(2) of Directive 79/409/EEC as they support large numbers of migratory birds.

Near the estuary, there is a decommissioned zinc oxide works on a site which is currently contaminated. The local council gave planning permission for a housing and retail development to be built on the site, but this was refused by the Welsh Assembly Government on the grounds that the site lies on a C2 floodplain, and as such remains contaminated and unaccounted for.

The issue at stake is that if this site were to be flooded, contaminated water could endanger an area protected by EU law. Private developers obviously do not want to foot the bill for decontaminating the area if they cannot build there, and the Welsh Government cannot really afford to do so.

Does the Welsh Government or any other body have a legal responsibility to decontaminate the site? What support is available to undertake such work?