

**Question for written answer E-002325/2014  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

**Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)**

Subject: Inadequate fines for polluting installations in Bulgaria

The Maritsa/Evros river is regularly contaminated with toxic substances from a paper plant in Belovo, Bulgaria.

The Maritsa/Evros is an international river: after leaving Bulgaria, it forms the border between Greece and Turkey.

The ongoing contamination of the river by emissions from the Belovo paper plant may be causing cross-border pollution.

The contamination of the Maritsa river by the plant continues notwithstanding regular financial sanctions imposed by the regional inspectorate of environment and waters. This illustrates the problem of the inadequate fines levied on polluting installations in the country.

In Bulgaria such fines are typically very small, and do not therefore stop polluters. According to the Ministry of Environment and Waters, 2012 saw 1 383 instances in which the regional inspectorate of environment and waters imposed financial sanctions on polluters of the environment. With a total sum levied of BGN 3 062 745, this amounts to an average fine of BGN 2 215 (EUR 1 139)<sup>1</sup>.

Compared with the profits that companies in Bulgaria earn from the operation of polluting installations, such low fines are wholly ineffective in contributing to the improvement of the environmental and public health situation in the country.

Is the Commission willing to cooperate with the Bulgarian Government in ensuring that the 'polluter pays' principle is efficiently implemented as a means of preventing further damage to the environment and public health?

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.moew.government.bg/?show=169>