

**Question for written answer E-002402/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Contamination of the Ribeira da Pantanha stream (Nelas, Portugal) by industrial effluent discharges

It has been 5 years since AZU (*Associação Ambiente em Zonas Uraníferas* - environmental association in uranium mining areas) first warned about contamination of the Ribeira da Pantanha stream (Nelas, Portugal) by industrial effluent discharged by the textile company Borgstena. The entities to which AZU submitted complaints include the Portuguese Ministry of the Environment and the European Environment Commissioner (on 9.6.2013), which to date have not issued any response.

These serious polluting discharges have been occurring since 2008, causing considerable environmental damage in one of the region's main ecosystems, apart from negating the clean-up and recovery work that had been carried out and on which around 10 million euros (with Community co-funding) had been spent.

Borgstena still showed willingness to change the situation, having agreed to share responsibility with Nelas town council (CMN) for building a final treatment system for the industrial effluent. Whilst Borgstena fulfilled its side of the bargain, the CMN for its part did not follow up the project during the next two years, building six filtration wells only in 2013, an investment which proved useless since it did not achieve the claimed objectives and the stream continued to suffer the same pollution.

This being the case, we ask the Commission:

1. Whether it is aware of the complaint sent by AZU? If so, what is its analysis of the situation?
2. In order to avoid a continuing flagrant breach of Directive 2004/35/EC, will it or will it not look carefully into this case with a view to clarifying responsibilities and putting an end to this environmental outrage? Specifically, what measures is it going to take?
3. Having regard to Directive 2006/21/EC, will it or will it not ensure application of the polluter pays principle and coverage of the costs of repairing and preventing environmental damage by harmful and/or negligent entities?