

**Question for written answer E-005388/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Damage to health caused by intensive gas production

Increasing concern is being expressed at the possible damage to health caused by conventional gas production in the district of Rotenburg/Wümme. This in turn leads to a number of questions about the lack of information concerning the innumerable cases of harm caused by toxic substances such as volatile hydrocarbons, methanol, fine dust, PAH, benzene, nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, heavy metals, endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) and many others over more than 50 years of intensive gas production. This situation can only be attributed to inadequate documentation, not to mention failure to exercise due care and diligence in this respect. The reported incidence of cancer, including various forms of leukaemia affecting young people around the age of 20, is particularly high in the area concerned.

Under Article 7(4) of the EU Environmental Information Directive, Member States are required to take the necessary measures to ensure that, in the event of an imminent threat to human health or the environment, all information which could enable the public likely to be affected to take preventive measures is disseminated immediately and without delay. Under Article 2(f), this requirement also relates to information concerning the state of human health and safety.

1. In the Commission's view, what can be done to assist the members of the public concerned?
2. What can be done to inform the public what measures were taken, when and where they were taken and whether any adequate environmental monitoring commensurate with the nature of the threat was in fact carried out by the authorities?
3. What action can the Commission take to ensure that verifiable and comprehensive environmental monitoring is carried out for the benefit of the members of the public concerned, with the involvement of independent institutions and watchdog organisations?
4. At what juncture are the EU authorities required to intervene following refusal by the authorities to take suitable action in response to justified public concerns regarding serious damage to health caused by emissions from gas production (which are, in the case of benzene for example, highly dangerous even at low levels)?