

**Question for written answer E-001793/2018
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Ska Keller (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Iron hydroxide slurry at the bottom of the Spree and its surrounding waters

Rising groundwater is causing iron from former and active opencast brown coal mines in Brandenburg and Saxony to flow into the Spree and its tributaries. The iron hydroxide this is forming is turning the river waters brown, and is being deposited at the bottom of the riverbed. The Commission rightfully said in its response (E-005334/2017 of 16 October 2017) to the question I posed on 21 August 2017 that the aforementioned iron hydroxide slurry came from brown coal mines, and should thus be viewed as mineral waste.

1. What is the Commission's view on the iron hydroxide slurry deposited at the bottom of the Spree, its tributaries and lakes in the area in light of the fact that said iron hydroxide has been introduced into the water by opencast brown coal mining with respect to the Mining Waste Directive? Additionally, if it is proven to originate from opencast brown coal mining, does the Commission believe that said iron hydroxide slurry deposited at the bottom of rivers and lakes falls within the definition of mining waste?
2. In the Commission's opinion, how should the Spree waters affected by deposits of iron hydroxide slurry, a byproduct of mining, be assessed under the Mining Waste Directive, and do these waters constitute a mining waste deposit given the deposits of this slurry at the bottom of the riverbed?
3. What does the Commission believe must be done if this iron hydroxide slurry from mining is to remain in the water: Does the Commission believe this is possible in accordance with the specifications of the Mining Waste Directive, and should there be a waste management plan for the waters affected in these instances?