

**Question for written answer E-002939/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Piernicola Pedicini (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Use of defecation gypsum in Italy

Investigations have confirmed that, between 2018 and 2019, private parties spread 150 000 tonnes' worth of toxic defecation gypsum (containing heavy metals, nitrates, hydrocarbons and other harmful substances) on farmland in the regions of Lombardy, Veneto and Emilia-Romagna. Legal proceedings are currently underway to ascertain who was responsible for this illegal practice. To date, no major surveys have been carried out to determine the extent of the areas that were contaminated, nor are there any plans to decontaminate them.

Pursuant to the provisions of the 'Soil Framework Directive' (2004/35/EC), what will the Commission do to ensure that the competent authorities identify exactly which areas ended up contaminated with a view to containing the spread of the toxic substances contained in that gypsum? Their presence might have already had repercussions on the quality of the soil and the groundwater, as well as on public health.

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