

**Question for oral answer O-0165/2010
to the Commission**

Rule 115

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

Subject: Toxic red sludge disaster in Hungary

Following the disaster which occurred in Hungary on 4 October 2010, when an aluminium plant reservoir in Ajka ruptured and a massive wave of red sludge flooded towns and villages in the area, killing at least nine people and injuring many others and causing damage to the environment and human health in neighbouring countries through which the River Danube flows which cannot yet be assessed, could the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Is the Commission aware of the quantity of lead contained in the red sludge?
2. Can the Commission indicate the protected areas which have been affected or will eventually be affected by this disaster in Hungary and neighbouring countries?
3. Is the Commission willing to support the efforts to assess the impact on the environment and human health of the heavy metals which have entered the River Danube and its tributaries?
4. Taking into account the difficulties in making applications to the EU Solidarity Fund which provides financial support in the event of natural disasters of this kind, has the Commission simplified access to this financing tool? Is the Commission willing to simplify application procedures and funding allocation?
5. What practical measures has the Commission taken to ensure the correct implementation by the Member States of the relevant items of legislation (e.g. concerning *in situ* quality checks)? What human and financial resources does DG Environment have at its disposal to guarantee and strengthen the proper implementation of this legislation?
6. Is the Commission thinking of developing specific emergency response strategies in order to prevent and react to such disasters?

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Deadline for reply: 25.10.2010