

**Question for oral answer O-000066/2011
to the Commission**

Rule 115

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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

Subject: Enforcement of regulations on the shipping of toxic waste to developing countries

The European Union countries generate an enormous volume of toxic waste every year. The OECD estimates that, by 2020, the EU could be generating 45% more waste than in 1995. This leads to an increase of waste shipments which involve hazardous waste and create risks for human health and the environment. Investigations show that the third world countries have become the leading destination of hazardous waste. Africa, for example, is gradually becoming the prime hunting ground for waste disposal companies. Faced with increasing costs of pollution controls and safety standards at EU level, toxic waste generators and brokers have found a convenient escape hatch to evade these liabilities by sending their waste materials to countries where labour is cheap and enforcement of environmental regulations is poor, if not altogether absent. Despite the Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and Waste Shipment Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006, illegal exports and dumping of hazardous waste represent an unprecedented threat to the health and the environment of millions of inhabitants in developing countries.

Does the Commission agree that, in spite of the restrictions imposed by European and international legislation regarding toxic waste destination, not only has the volume of residues generated not gone down, over the last few years, but it has gone up, and this increase has not been accompanied by the implementation of effective waste recycling or resource conservation techniques?

Is the Commission aware of the environmental, economic and social impact of sending hazardous waste to these countries? What information or studies does the Commission have regarding this issue?

What measures is the Commission taking to avoid these situations, preventing these illegal acts and ensuring that the polluters take responsibility for them?

What instruments will the Commission adopt to help these countries to reverse the abovementioned negative consequences and, in particular, to restore affected soils and their full production potential?

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