

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3326/00
by Mariotto Segni (UEN)
to the Commission

Subject: Severe water shortage in Sardinia

Sardinia is currently suffering from a critical water shortage, which is affecting the agricultural sector in particular but also supplies of drinking water and water for industry. This cannot be passed off as a temporary emergency, as there is no doubt that there has been a radical change in the climate over the last sixty years and it should be noted that, at the beginning of this year's draw-off period (March), the island's artificial reservoirs contained only 27% of their total capacity and the three years from 1997 to 2000 appear to have been the driest in the last 78 years. The level of available water supplies, the equivalent of 270m³ per inhabitant per year, is far below the 1000m³ laid down by the Worldwatch Institute as the minimum threshold below which scarcity of supply places constraints on the primary needs of domestic consumers and on economic development; it is comparable to the level of supply in countries such as Egypt, Libya and Saudi Arabia. This problem is threatening Sardinia's economy and disrupting the lives of all the island's inhabitants. The measures set out under 1.1 and 1.2 in the ROP are completely inadequate to cope with one of the most serious water shortages in the Mediterranean area.

In view of the foregoing, would the Commission state what concrete proposals are currently being considered to tackle this situation, with particular emphasis on the framework for the future?

What 'ad hoc' measures to address natural disasters could be used to provide financial support for action to optimise the distribution of the island's water resources, limit leaks, recycle urban effluent, construct new water storage facilities and divert water courses which are not being used towards artificial reservoirs?