

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0872/04
by Giovanni Pittella (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Precautionary principle

On 18 January, ENEL (Italian national electricity company) submitted to the Commune of Rapolla (Basilicata, Italy) a request for authorisation to build a high-voltage 380 kV electricity line between Matera and S. Sofia.

On 10 May 1990 ENEL requested authorisation for an alternative plan, which would bring the line closer to housing areas in the Commune of Rapolla.

In 1994 a number of Rapolla residents took legal action against the building of the electricity line on the grounds that it was dangerously close to housing areas.

On 28 May 2003 the Potenza Court of Appeal ruled against the building of the section of electricity line to which the complaint referred, partly on the basis of an experts' report which had highlighted the increased risk of child leukaemia arising from prolonged exposure to high-level (0.3-0.4 μ T) electromagnetic fields. The consultants estimated that the exposure levels at average current intensity levels exceeded 0.4 μ T (limit established in the implementing decree of 8 July 2003 relating to framework law 36/2001).

A draft presidential decree authorising the building and operation of the alternative plan for the electricity line has been submitted to the President of the Republic for his signature.

Does the Commission not consider that this proposal is contrary to the 'precautionary principle' laid down by the Maastricht Treaty?