

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1595/06
by Guido Sacconi (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: LIFE programme and the aims of the project for the integrated rehabilitation of the well-fields fed by the river Serchio

The aims of the project 'Integrated rehabilitation of the well-fields fed by the river Serchio' are the introduction of sustainable crops into the area and constant monitoring. The area provides drinking water for 20% of the population of Tuscany and is at high risk of chemical pollution because of herbicides leaching into the groundwater.

The project aims to reduce pollution by 40%, provide back-up measures and identify best practices for safeguarding the biodiversity of the park.

The decisions taken by Lucca town council after adopting the amended town planning regulation are in conflict with the project's objectives and recommendations.

By Decision No 104 of 18 November 2004 Lucca town council gave final approval for changing the destination of the area along the river Serchio from 'agricultural land' to 'sports facilities' and provides for the creation of a golf course. An appeal regarding this change lodged by landowners and a large number of local inhabitants is still pending before the Court of Appeal. They see the building of a golf-course as a danger to the wells supplying the aqueduct.

In the meantime, on 18 June 2004 Lucca town council, together with its partners, submitted the project for the integrated rehabilitation of the well-fields fed by the river Serchio, which was approved by the Commission on 2 September 2004.

On 3 January 2006 the local press published a number of articles in which local government spokesmen stated that the funding from the LIFE programme would help to 'lighten the burden' of expenditure borne by the municipality for the creation of the golf course.

Although there is no definite proof that funding for the project is being used for purposes other than that intended, what view does the Commission take of the behaviour of the town council, which is giving the public inaccurate and non-transparent information that harms the image of the European Union?