

WRITTEN QUESTION P-4338/07
by Marcello Vernola (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: ENEL power plant in Cerano, Brindisi (Italy)

ENEL's 'Federico II' power plant¹ is causing an environmental disaster in the Salento peninsula, producing as it does more than 1/3 of Italian CO₂ emissions². The Italian Ministry for the Environment has classed the farmland within a radius of approximately 300 m of the plant as an area in which there is a 'high risk of potential contamination'. Out of the 243 analysis points in the area, in the soil and in groundwater, only 12 are not contaminated by metals and pesticides³. The plant discharges 3 bn tonnes of hot water a year into the sea; new life forms typically found in warmer seas reappeared in the waters concerned in winter 2006. The monitoring of the atmosphere carried out in 2006 close to the plant (in Torchiarolo) showed that the legal limit applying to PM₁₀ emissions, expressed as a daily average, had been exceeded 93 times. In February 2007 the Apulian Regional Environment Agency (ARPA) recorded higher PM₁₀ values in the Province of Brindisi as well as a widespread increase in other pollutants and in CO. The Salento-Ionian Tumour Register has revealed a worrying incidence of airway tumours in the provinces of Lecce (11.8%), Brindisi (9.3%), and Taranto (8.3%). On 23 March 2007 the Tuturano district authorities (Brindisi) spoke out in protest at the alarming degree of environmental and electromagnetic pollution being caused by the power transmission lines; the appearance of new parasite species and the noxious dusts which settle on agricultural products and render them unsaleable; the high incidence of chronic and neoplastic diseases; the noise pollution caused by passing vehicles; the fact that groundwater layers are drying up; and the alteration of the coastal microclimate, making the area less attractive for tourism. Under an order issued on 28 June 2007 the Mayor of Brindisi has banned crop-growing on the farmland adjoining the power plant and thus brought about the destruction of the herbaceous crops, and of the profits stemming from them. The Province of Brindisi, having rejected what it considered to be an inadequate proposal from ENEL to reduce the CO₂ emissions by 10%, has called for a 33% cut and for a gas-fired plant to replace some of the coal used, in keeping with the Kyoto Protocol, coupled with a ban on obtaining CO₂ emission allowances abroad.

Does the Commission not believe the ENEL emissions to be in breach not only of Directive 2004/35/EC on environmental damage⁴, but also of Directive 96/62/EC on air quality⁵ (and directives 1999/30/EC⁶, 2000/69/EC⁷, and 2002/3/EC⁸), and the directives on industrial emissions (84/360/EEC⁹, 96/61/EC¹⁰, 1999/13/EC¹¹, and 2003/87/EC¹²), groundwater (2006/118/EC¹³), and the marine environment and bathing water (76/464/EEC¹⁴, 82/176/EEC¹⁵, 83/513/EEC¹⁶, 84/156/EEC¹⁷, 84/491/EEC¹⁸, 88/347/EEC¹⁹, 90/415/EEC²⁰, 2000/60/EC²¹, 76/160/EEC²², and 2006/07/EC²³)? If the

¹ Coal-fired thermoelectric power plant on a 270-hectare site in Cerano (Brindisi): it has a total capacity of 2 580 MW.

² 15.8 m tonnes a year out of a total of 44.5 m tonnes ('Stop al carbone per salvare il Pianeta' ('Stop carbon to save the planet'), report compiled by Legambiente, 14 February 2007).

³ Report published in May 2006 by the Environment Ministry's Quality of Life Department.

⁴ OJ L 143, 30.4.2004, p. 56.

⁵ OJ L 296, 21.11.1996, p. 55.

⁶ OJ L 163, 29.6.1999, p. 41.

⁷ OJ L 313, 13.12.2000, p. 12.

⁸ OJ L 67, 9.3.2002, p. 14.

⁹ OJ L 188, 16.7.1984, p. 20.

¹⁰ OJ L 257, 10.10.1996, p. 26.

¹¹ OJ L 85, 29.3.1999, p. 1.

¹² OJ L 275, 25.10.2003, p. 32.

¹³ OJ L 372, 27.12.2006, p. 19.

¹⁴ OJ L 129, 18.5.1976, p. 23.

¹⁵ OJ L 81, 27.3.1982, p. 29.

¹⁶ OJ L 291, 24.10.1983, p. 1.

¹⁷ OJ L 74, 17.3.1984, p. 49.

¹⁸ OJ L 274, 17.10.1984, p. 11.

¹⁹ OJ L 158, 25.6.1988, p. 35.

²⁰ OJ L 219, 14.8.1990, p. 49.

Italian Government and the company were proven to have environmental liability, what penalties should be imposed on them by virtue of the 'polluter pays' principle, the aim being to counteract or curb unlawful industrial activities in order to reduce the loss of biodiversity?

²¹ OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1.

²² OJ L 31, 5.2.1976, p. 1.

²³ OJ L 64, 4.3.2006, p. 37.