

WRITTEN QUESTION P-4756/08
by Carl Lang (NI)
to the Commission

Subject: Waste water treatment systems other than collective systems

If a dwelling is not connected to a mains drainage system, it has to have a system for the treatment of domestic waste water known as an individual or private treatment system, the aim being to make it possible to dispose of waste while protecting the environment.

Waste treatment services are managed directly by the local authority or delegated to a private company. In the case of waste treatment systems other than communal systems, a number of different treatment options are available in cases where no connection with the mains drainage system is possible. Such arrangements are regarded as exceptional and require the agreement of the relevant administrative authority, namely the public service for waste water treatment systems other than collective systems (SPANC) pursuant to the 'Code Général des Collectivités Territoriales (local authorities' General Code), Articles L 224-8 and 9.

French waste treatment policy is broadly governed by Council Directive 91/271/EEC¹ of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste water treatment. The current French legislation governing individual waste water treatment systems is DTU 64-1.

However, new European rules exist, and have been incorporated by the French Standards Association, AFNOR, into standard NF EN 12566-3. This is supposed to apply from July 2008.

Under the French legislation DTU 64-1, in the case of small activated sludge treatment plants, sludge spreading is mandatory, but the French Standard NF CE 12566-3 incorporating the European rules authorises direct discharges into the surface water systems, ditches etc.

Which of these texts has legal force? Is it now mandatory for public services for waste treatment systems other than collective systems (SPANC) to comply with the European legislation which has applied since July 2008?

¹ OJ L 135, 30.5.1991, p. 40.