

WRITTEN QUESTION P-4919/08  
by Péter Olajos (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Environmental disaster in Ukraine

Aknaszlatina (in Ukrainian: Szolotvino/Solotvyno) is a settlement in Ukraine, near the Hungarian-Romanian-Ukrainian border, which lies above a gigantic salt table and where industrial-scale salt production began in the 13th century. Sadly, the very existence of the settlement is today under threat, as failure to use the drainage system specially constructed in the mines is causing the continuous ingress of fresh water into the galleries, resulting in the continuous appearance of huge craters throughout the settlement. In order to prevent the salt from being washed out, the concentrated salt solution which is produced is continuously pumped out of the galleries. Unfortunately, part of this goes directly into the River Tisza, which flows through Hungary and Romania. Around 3 000m<sup>3</sup> of salt solution is pumped out daily and is seriously polluting the biotic and abiotic environment. The subsidence is endangering two schools, a hospital and part of the drainage and sewerage system, and thereby also human lives.

In the light of the above, I would like to ask the Commission the following:

Is the Commission aware of the above problem? Does it see any possibility of providing assistance and thereby avoiding another major environmental disaster for the River Tisza and, as a result, for a number of Member States?

What EU resources are available for dealing with this problem and finding out in detail about such situations before the problem arises?