

WRITTEN QUESTION P-6287/08
by Antonios Trakatellis (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Construction of hydroelectric dams along the river Axios

It has recently been reported that the government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) has announced an international call for tenders for the construction of hydroelectric dams along the river Axios ("Vardar Valley Project"). According to this announcement which was published on the website of FYROM's Ministry of Economy, the project comprises the construction of 12 hydroelectric dams with a total output of 320 MW. Fatmir Besimi, FYROM's Minister of Economy has stated that the project is one of the country's bigger energy sector projects, costing a total of EUR 1.2 bn.

1. Is the Commission aware that the FYROM authorities have launched this project and has an environmental impact assessment been carried out in respect of the region concerned and also of the River Axios?
2. What will the impact of the project be as regards pollution of the river and of the Thermaikos Gulf where the river Axios enters the sea, and has a survey been carried out into whether the flow and volume of water in the river will be affected?
3. Does the EU intend to fund a project of this nature through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)¹? If so, does it not agree that the conditions set in questions 1 and 2 should be binding if the project is to receive Commission funding?

¹ OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 82.