

WRITTEN QUESTION P-6919/08
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to the Commission

Subject: Construction of a cement storage megacomplex at wharves 19 and 21 of the port of Alicante (Spain)

The port authority and city council of Alicante (Spain) intend to build, at the port of Alicante, a cement storage and distribution megacomplex, promoted by the following companies: Cemex España SA, Holcim España SA, Cementos Colacem España SLU, Tecnifield SL and Cimsa Cementos España SAU. This complex, involving the construction of 4 container plants and 17 silos with a storage capacity amounting to 102 000 tonnes of cement and of a height varying from 31 to 54 metres, is likely to have adverse effects on the environment and landscape as well as generating serious problems of noise and air pollution which may lead to illness. A plant constituting a nuisance and a threat would thus be constructed less than 1000 metres away from Alicante's residential quarters of San Gabriel, Gran Vía Sur, Benalúa Sur, etc, in other words at a distance potentially in breach of that laid down in Article 12 of the 'Seveso II' directive.

The construction of the extension to the port of Alicante, in which zone the megacomplex would be built, has been financed by the EU (to the sum of EUR 25 m, or 40% of the total public funding received). The five projects approved by the Alicante port authority and city council have not been the subject of an environmental impact assessment, nor have there been any reliable studies concerning HGV traffic, noise and air pollution or the impact on the landscape. In addition, both port authority and city council have processed each of the five projects separately in order to avoid any evaluation of the impact of the proposed installations as a whole.

The Commission's communication of October 2007 on policy for ports expresses an unfavourable position regarding projects of this nature in port zones located near urban areas. It advocates diverting traffic and port activity from built-up areas, and, in particular, urges public authorities to examine the development options which are most in keeping with the public interest and the need for integration of ports with their urban hinterlands.

Is the Commission aware of these facts?

What measures will the Commission adopt to ensure that EU law is complied with in this case? Does it believe there should be a joint evaluation of the projects presented, covering the environmental, landscape and other aspects?

Is the Commission aware that alternative sites have been proposed for the cement silos and other polluting plant in the dry-dock area, and that this option could be included in the 'logistic platform' currently being drawn up for the city of Alicante by the Valencian regional government?