

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0269/09
by Alessandro Foglietta (UEN)
to the Commission

Subject: Pollution in the Valle del Sacco

For a long time the Valle del Sacco, which straddles the border between the provinces of Rome and Frosinone, has been displaying obvious signs of environmental degradation and levels of pollution, both of its waters and of the surrounding land, which are unprecedented in Italy, mainly due to contamination through human agency with beta-hexachlorocyclohexane, an organic substance derived from toxic industrial waste.

Recently, analyses of milk from cows in the area have detected massive quantities of pesticides, on account of which the sale of this milk has been halted and the slaughter of many animals has been ordered, seriously affecting farming in the area.

Moreover, and more worryingly, the recent publication of clinical analyses relating to residents of the valley has revealed the alarming presence of various chemicals, such as beta-hexachlorocyclohexane (used to produce an insecticide, lindane, which has been banned since 2001), causing serious concern on health and social grounds.

The study 'Mortalità e ricoveri ospedalieri dei residenti nella Valle del Sacco, 1997-2004' (Mortality and hospitalisation of residents of the Valle del Sacco, 1997-2004) by the Epidemiology Department of Rome E Health Authority, which looked at the population of the Valle del Sacco living between the Communes of Colferro and Anagni, reported that the prevalence of cancer was substantially above the national average and that the number of deaths from cancer had risen by 21%.

This critical situation is said to be due both to the presence of toxic drums buried without the necessary precautions and to illegal discharges of effluent into the River Sacco.

- Will the Commission study the health and environmental situation in the Valle del Sacco?
- Will it send an inspection team to verify how polluted this area is?
- How will it enforce the directives on protection of water, particularly the Framework Directive on water policy (2000/60/EC¹), Directive 2006/118/EC² and the Directive on environmental quality standards (2008/105/EC³)?

¹ OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1.

² OJ L 372, 27.12.2006, p. 19.

³ OJ L 348, 24.12.2008, p. 84.