

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1797/09
by Sebastiano (Nello) Musumeci (UEN)
to the Commission

Subject: Alleged contamination of drinking water in Treviglio (Bergamo)

In a complaint lodged at the end of August 2008 with the Brescia environmental unit (which is responsible for Lombardy as a whole), the inhabitants of Treviglio expressed their deep concern at the alleged contamination of the water table by hexavalent chromium and the potentially disastrous effects on the health of thousands of people.

Domestic tap water in Treviglio is showing peak concentrations of 14 micrograms of chromium per litre.

While admitting that since 2000 there has been hexavalent chromium in the domestic water supply (with a maximum concentration of 21 micrograms per litre during the period 2004-2005), the local council maintains that the health authorities have always certified the tap water as drinkable, since the reference threshold for chromium (chromium VI + chromium III) is the 50 micrograms laid down in legislative decree 31/2001 on the quality of water intended for human consumption. However, those who criticise the council's failure to act point to legislative decree 471/1999, which sets the limit at 5 micrograms of Chromium VI, although this threshold applies to groundwater.

Given the uncertainty as to what standards should apply, will the Commission answer the following:

1. Can it say what rules establish the maximum limit for the presence of hexavalent chromium in groundwater and tap water?
2. Have any studies been conducted with support from the Commission into the effects on human health of the inhalation and absorption of hexavalent chromium?
3. Does it not think that the alleged presence of chromium should be investigated on the spot as a matter of urgency?