

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3489/09

by Satu Hassi (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Action to counter the death of Lake Koronia in Greece with funding from the Cohesion Fund

Lake Koronia, a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, was once a shallow lake full of life. However, irrigation abuse led to the repeated complete drying out of the lake, which, in combination with pollution, resulted in the massive deaths of fish, waterfowl and other birds.

According to the latest plan in Greece, € 26 m from the Cohesion Fund are to be spent on inter alia:

- diverting two streams from near Lake Volvi to Lake Koronia,
- building a canal between the two lakes.

While the plan foresees the closure of 2200 illegal water bores, it does not foresee the reform of agricultural activities in this area, nor the reduction of irrigation, nor any measures to prevent pollution or to clean up Lake Koronia, thus not addressing the root causes of this ecological disaster.

The diversion of two streams from Lake Volvi, which is also a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, and the hydrological canal from it to Lake Koronia, will have serious impacts on the quality of Lake Volvi, because of water deprivation and pollutants transfer, without restoring the quality of Lake Koronia, as the root causes for its near death are not being addressed.

According to Regulation 1083/2006¹ on the general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund, operations financed by the Funds shall comply with the provisions of the Treaty and of acts adopted under it. According to Article 4(1)(a) of Directive 2000/60/EC² on water policy, Member States shall implement the necessary measures to prevent deterioration of the status of all bodies of surface water, and they shall protect, enhance and restore all bodies of surface water, with the aim of achieving good surface water status.

1. Does the Commission agree that the above plan does not comply with the relevant provisions of Directive 2000/60/EC, and that the use of Community funds for it would be in violation of Regulation 1083/2006? What action will the Commission take so that this project does not receive EC funding?
2. Does the Commission agree that Greece should rather invest in reforming agricultural activities in this area, reduce irrigation and implement and enforce relevant pollution reduction measures to rectify the environmental damage at source, and furthermore in the clean-up of Lake Koronia?

¹ OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 25.

² OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1.