

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3490/09
by Louis Grech (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Incinerator at Marsaxlokk

The Government has decided on the building of a Euro 108 million incinerator to deal with municipal solid waste at Marsaxlokk, one of the last remaining fishing villages on the southern part of the island of Malta.

The south of the island is already disproportionately burdened by industrial pollution which is detrimental to the environment and public health. What is even more worrying is the fact that it is also envisaged that the future energy- related project would be concentrated in this particular area.

The way the whole process was conducted gives rise to suspicion that the impact assessments that were done were simply rubber stamping a 'fait accompli' decision already taken by government. In actual fact only a strategic environmental assessment has been carried out, and this was carried out by Ministry officials! An environmental impact assessment has still to be done, and social and public health considerations, fundamental to the wellbeing of citizens, have not been given the priority they deserve.

It has to be pointed out that in the near vicinity lies the main power station which is still operating without any filters in spite of the interventions of the European Commission. The Government has stated that it intended to introduce automated measuring instruments, but to date the Malta Environmental Planning Authority (MEPA) does not have any records of emissions including dioxins and particulate matter.

In spite of repeated requests over the years by the local residents and local authorities, no independent study has been carried out to assess the adverse effects on public health due to these emissions, especially on the possibility of an increased incidence of asthma and respiratory diseases in children living in this locality. This adverse situation will be further aggravated with the building of an incinerator to the detriment of the residents of Marsaxlokk and the neighbouring villages.

In view of the importance of this issue for the ordinary citizens of the locality it will be appreciated if the Commission could give its views and comments on the Marsaxlokk incinerator as quickly as possible.