

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0185/10
by János Áder (PPE)
to the Commission

Subject: Cyanide mining

10 years ago, in January 2000, an Australian gold mining company called Aurul SA in Baia Mare (Northern Romania) released cyanide into the Szamos - Tisza - Danube river system, causing one of Europe's largest ecological disasters. Toxic materials killed many organisms, damaging the ecological system, food chain and essential human use of the river.

Although some Member States (Czech Republic and Hungary) have introduced a ban on cyanide mining since then, the danger of a similar future disaster still exists. There are several cyanide mining projects waiting for their licences across Central Eastern Europe which may start to operate, thanks to the shortcomings of EU law. Namely, there is no legislation within the EU which would ban cyanide in mining or the different mining procedures which use cyanide technology. While cyanide mining is less job intensive, on the one hand, it runs the risk of enormous ecological damages, on the other.

Therefore we suggest a general ban on cyanide mining at a European Union level.

I hereby request the Commission to inform us how a general ban on cyanide mining (i.e. any mining technologies which use cyanide) at a European level could be introduced into EU legislation in the shortest period of time.