

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3130/09
by Katerina Batzeli (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Dead fish in the Maliakos Gulf, prefecture of Fthiotida

Dead fish have been caught in the Maliakos Gulf since October 2008, a phenomenon which has assumed the proportions of an ecological disaster in the last month. Investigations are ongoing, with chemical analyses and random checks being carried out on dead fish to ascertain the cause of their asphyxiation. Initial indications appear to point to the development of phytoplankton on the seabed, the cause of which, however, remains officially unknown. It should be noted that neither the regional authorities, the Ministry of Rural Development nor the Ministry of the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works have incorporated the River Sperchios or the broader maritime area of the Maliakos Gulf into any projects cofinanced by the Community.

Have the national authorities informed the Commission about this ecological disaster and the possibility that this form of fish disease will spread?

Is it possible for the national research authorities to cooperate and cross-check their findings with specialised European ichthyological laboratories, along the lines of the collaboration which took place between specialised veterinary laboratories when diseases such as avian influenza and mad cow disease broke out?

Has the ecological balance in the Maliakos Gulf been made an immediate priority given that the balance is totally dependent on compliance with environmental standards governing the management of urban wastewater and the operation of industries and fish farms in the region, activities which also pollute the River Sperchios, which has not yet been incorporated into the monitoring and environment management programmes?

Is it possible, in principle, for the fishermen concerned to receive financial support and compensation from Community programmes since the fish resources have been destroyed as a result of a disease caused by environmental pollution?