



Karmenu VELLA
Member of the European Commission

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Brussels, 04/06/2018
Ref. Ares(2018)2176171

Ms Ana Gomes
Member of the European Parliament
Bât. Altiero Spinelli, 14G201, 60
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Brussels 1047
BELGIUM

Dear Ms Gomes,

Thank you for your letter of 23 April 2018 in which you draw my attention to the letter by Ms Raquel Baptista Lopes of 3 April 2018 regarding the dumping of pulp-mill waste in the "Portas de Ródão" area in Portugal.

I can inform you that my services have already responded to Ms Baptista Lopes and would ask you to please find attached a copy of the reply for your convenience.

As explained in the letter the "Portas de Ródão" area is not part of the nearby Natura 2000 site "São Mamede" and therefore falls entirely under Portuguese jurisdiction. However, my services were informed, that the sludge tested negative for hazardous substances and that the site will be restored to its original condition after conclusion of the works.

Finally, I would like to inform you of a study being carried out under the supervision of the Portuguese Ministry of the Environment to determine the most significant pressures on the Tagus. In this context, the discharge licenses of several potentially polluting companies are being reviewed and provisional measures are being decided in respect of the Celtejo pulp-mill.

In the light of the above, I consider that the situation is being adequately monitored by the national competent authorities and that there are no grounds for the European Commission to further investigate at this stage.

I hope that the explanations provided are of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT
Directorate E – Implementation & Support to Member States
ENV.E.2 – Environmental Implementation
The Head of Unit

Brussels, **23 AVR. 2018**
ENV.E.2/MAS/am/Ares(2018)

Ms. Raquel Lopes

E-mail : raquelbblopes@gmail.com

Dear Madam,

I have been asked by Commissioner Karmenu Vella to respond to your e-mail of 4 April 2018 in which you drew the attention of the Commission to the nuisances caused by the dumping of waste in a property located in the protected area/site of "Portas de Ródão", in Portugal.

According to the information gathered by the Commission services, the intervention you refer to was considered as a matter of urgency in the framework of the program called "Operação Tejo 2018", recently adopted by the Portuguese Government (Despacho n°2260-A/2018 of 6 March 2018). The program aims at preventing the serious episodes of pollution recently occurred in the Tagus and improving the water quality of the river.

The intervention at stake entails the removal of the sludge accumulated on the bottom of Fratel Reservoir, as a measure to avoid the eutrophication and reduction of the required levels of oxygen in the river, and its deposit on a place close to the riverbanks. This deposit will be temporary and strictly limited to the necessary time span for the drying of the sludge (not more than one year) and its subsequent treatment in a different place. The decision authorizing the operation was preceded by an appropriate analysis of the sludge, which concluded that it only contains organic nutrients and excluded the presence of hazardous substances.

The choice of the dumping site was guided by several criteria, and 5 different alternatives were considered. The property finally chosen offered the best conditions in terms of area, distance to the zone of intervention, accessibility to the river, road transport and topography. Even if the property is covered by the "Portas do Ródão" national protection regime, according to the information at the disposal of the Commission services, it is not included in Natura 2000 site "São Mamede". Therefore, all the potential restrictions you refer to fall within the exclusive scope of Portuguese legislation and under the remit of the national authorities.

Finally, it should be noted that, according to the Portuguese authorities, the soil will be adequately protected and waterproofed and the property will be restored to its original condition after the conclusion of the works.

Consequently, we consider that there are no grounds for a further investigation by the Commission.

I hope that the explanations above are of assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Ion Codescu