WRITTEN QUESTION E-4471/08
by Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Illegal waste incineration in Greece

On 6 October 2005 the Court of Justice of the European Communities (ECJ) found, in Case C-502/03, that illegal, uncontrolled waste incineration was taking place at 1,125 locations in Greece, in contravention of EU Directive 75/442/EEC1 (the Framework Directive on Waste). The judgment contains the requirement to cease this practice by the end of 2008. Reports suggest that the Greek authorities are refusing to take action in such cases. There is a fear that they are behaving as they did in 2000, when an illegal waste incineration plant only stopped operating after the ECJ had imposed a fine (Case C-387/97, 04.07.2000).

1. Eyewitness reports state that open waste incineration is still continuing, at least in the towns of Kranidi and Ermioni. Does the Commission know how many illegal waste disposal sites are currently in operation in Greece?

2. Can the Commission give any details on the situation of the transposition of ECJ judgment C-502/03 by the Greek authorities? How many illegal incineration sites have shut down since the judgment was passed?

3. What does the Commission know about the Greek authorities’ refusal to take action against the waste incineration, which is harmful to the environment? What measures has the Commission introduced to persuade the Greek authorities to comply with the ECJ judgment and stop illegal waste incineration by the end of the year?

4. Is it true that the Commission intends to give the Greek authorities an extra two years to comply with the judgment? What is the reasoning behind this extension of the deadline? To what extent are the devastating negative ecological consequences of illegal waste incineration taken into account in reaching such a decision?