



Brussels, 17th February 2016

Commissioner Karmenu Vella,
Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
European Commission
Brussels

Dear Commissioner,

Peacelink, together with the Association 'CovaContro', would like to bring to your kind attention the difficult environmental situation that the Basilicata region, south Italy, is facing nowadays, a generalised problem extended over its two Provinces of Matera and Potenza.

In an area of less than ten thousand kilometres of geographical extension, Basilicata hosts a centre for the treatment of nuclear exhausted fuel, the ITREC plant of Trisaia, with more than 40 oil and gas wells in function or ready to provide material; in addition to three centres for oil-refining (two of which functioning), the Oil Centre Val d'Agri and the Oil Centre of Pisticci; not less than four landfills for special waste; the incinerator Fenice of Melfi, that treats every year at least sixty-five thousand tons of normal and special material; two cement plants, the Italcementi of Matera and the Costantinopoli of Barile, that burn waste. Basilicata is also home to two National Strategic Sites of Tito and Val Basento. A recipe for disaster.

Through a thorough action of scientific support and civil action, we have been in measure of counting more than 390 polluted sites, plus an undefined number of locations where waste has been illegally buried. Municipal decrees forbidding the use of underwater, because of several phenomena of contamination, keep on multiplying, and the concern on the consequences upon the alimentary chain and the population grow.

Basilicata is at the same time a strategic water provider for South Italy, as it supplies 3 million people with water in the neighbouring Regions of Apulia and Campania.

Citizens have no more health rights nor the possibility of access to public decisions involving their life and their future. Civil society participation to decisions related to industrial processes with heavy environmental impact is a fundamental right, as foreseen in the Aarhus Convention, ratified in Italy with law n.108 of 2001, and as outlined in the EU Directive 2010/75/EU on pollution and industrial emissions.

The important health consequences of oil-extraction and refining processes have not been duly checked nor verified by local and national Institutions. The modalities of production do not allow the respect of minimum security requirements as foreseen by European legislation.

Our worries do not concern only the installations already present and working, but also the very important imminent kick-start to the realization of the oil-centre “Tempa Rossa”, that will produce fifty thousand oil barrels per day at circa 900 mt a.s.l., pouring, as foreseen in the relative environmental integrated authorization, waste waters in the underlying Sauro river, with incredible consequences.

We denounce the lack of an environmental impact study on the effects of this heavy industrial production, and the lack of involvement of civil society in the decision-making process on issues that touch every citizen’s rights to health.

Peacelink and CovaContro call upon the European Commission to investigate into Basilicata environmental issues and to stand up for the respect of European law, along with those magistrates who are already inquiring into the afore mentioned issues.

Best regards,

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