

**Question for written answer E-002123/2025
to the Commission**
Rule 144
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Subject: Heavy metal pollution in the estuary of the Guadalquivir and shortcomings in EU water legislation

Recent studies by the universities of Granada, Cádiz and Seville revealed high levels of heavy metals in sediment from the estuary of the River Guadalquivir (Andalusia, Spain) and that they have had ecotoxic effects. They have come from the copper mine in Las Cruces, which has been labelled strategic by the EU but was previously condemned for contaminating an aquifer with arsenic. What is more, metals, particularly lead, have been found to have bioaccumulated in fish near the discharge area. This state of affairs poses a serious threat to environmental health, public health and thousands of jobs in the Guadalquivir Estuary.

It also shows shortcomings in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), particularly in the prevention of pollution by mined toxic metals and metaloids. In Spain, metals are regulated in water, but not in sediment, which is where they usually accumulate.

In the light of these findings:

1. Does the Commission intend to revise that directive to include mandatory checks on metals in sediment and biota?
2. Is it considering proposing a temporary moratorium on the discharge of mining waste into vulnerable basins like the Guadalquivir's?
3. What monitoring mechanisms has it set up to ensure that areas with intense mining activity remain in a good ecological state?

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