

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002345/25
to the Commission
Valentina Palmisano (The Left)
(11 June 2025)

Subject: Taranto: disparities in accessing information pertaining to, and lack of public participation in, the IEP procedure for the Acciaierie d'Italia steel plant

Local environmental associations are complaining about the serious disparities in how the stakeholders involved in the approval process for the Acciaierie d'Italia steelworks' integrated environmental permit (IEP) are being treated. These groups claim that they were not officially sent the final investigation opinion for the IEP (which contains 477 technical specifications), even though they are formally part of the approval procedure and had, in this capacity, previously submitted specific comments.

The final investigation opinion was, however, sent to the plant's operator, who was in a position to study it and propose changes, therefore exerting a clear influence on the drafting of the final opinion. The environmental associations claim that they have received neither the first nor the second PIC, nor plant management's proposals, thus preventing them from putting forward any arguments and playing an effective role in the approval process.

In the light of Directive 2010/75/EU on industrial emissions and the Aarhus Convention, both of which guarantee the right to public participation and transparency in environmental proceedings:

1. Is the Commission aware of the state of affairs described above?
2. Does it think that the Taranto steelworks' EIP approval procedure has been carried in accordance with EU law?
3. Will the Commission check whether Italy is complying with its obligations under Directive 2010/75/EU and the Aarhus Convention?

Submitted: 11.6.2025

Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(30 July 2025)

The Commission is aware that the permit of Acciaierie d'Italia steel plant is being reviewed.

The participation of the public concerned in permit-granting and update procedures for installations subject to the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) ⁽¹⁾ is regulated by Article 24(1) IED, which requires Member States to ensure that the public concerned are given early and effective opportunities to participate in the listed permit procedures, in compliance with Annex IV IED.

That Annex requires that the public concerned must have access to relevant information made available to the competent authority while the permit granting procedure is ongoing, subject to the provisions of Directive 2003/4/EC ⁽²⁾.

IED provisions must be interpreted in light of the Aarhus Convention ⁽³⁾, in particular its Article 6(6). A guidance ⁽⁴⁾ on Article 6(6) specifies that all information relevant to decision-making should be made available to the public concerned as soon as it becomes available to public authorities, at whatever stage in the decision-making procedure.

It also states that if further information becomes available during the public participation procedure, members of the public who have already participated before the additional information becomes available may submit further comments.

In line with its policy approach on infringements, the Commission prioritises its enforcement efforts on cases pointing to a systemic breach of EU law in a Member State.

The primary responsibility for fully and correctly implementing EU law lies with the Member States. National administrations and courts have the power to order coercive measures or to annul acts of Member States' authorities and are best placed to do so with regard to individual cases.

⁽¹⁾ Directive (EU) 2024/1785 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 April 2024 amending Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on industrial emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control) and Council Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste, OJ L, 2024/1785, 15.7.2024.

⁽²⁾ Directive 2003/4/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2003 on public access to environmental information and repealing Council Directive 90/313/EEC, OJ L 41, 14.2.2003, p. 26-32.

⁽³⁾ <https://unece.org/environment-policy/public-participation/aarhus-convention/introduction>.

⁽⁴⁾ https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/1514364_E_web.pdf.