Question for written answer E-015806/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Benedek Jávor (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Will the nuclear plant cause overheating of the Danube habitat?

In the environmental impact study, the designers of the Paks nuclear plant expansion calculate that the amount of cooling water taken from the Danube and put back after heating might, in extreme circumstances (long-term low water level), comprise nearly one third of the current flow. In this case it would be mathematically impossible to comply with the emission limit values set down in the legislation (primarily the stipulation that the water temperature in the Danube must not exceed 30°) if the intention is to operate the reactor blocks at over 90% of capacity for the whole of their life cycle, as provided for in the design calculations. The Danube thermal plume already affects the whole of the stretch of the river downstream of Paks, and the planned expansion will lead to a doubling of the current heat load. This will all have a severe impact on the environment in this stretch of the Danube, which is a Natura 2000 site, and therefore justifies a Commission review of the Hungarian authorities' plans.

When the EU authorised the expansion of the Paks plant, did the Commission consider the likely heat pollution of the Natura 2000 areas affected or the question of whether the Habitats Directive and the Water Framework Directive would be complied with?

What is the Commission doing to ensure that Paks I and Paks II can guarantee, throughout their operating lives, that the good environmental condition of the aquatic habitat of the Danube, which is of Europe-wide importance, will be maintained and that the heat load on the river will remain within the statutory limits?