

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

Green Party
for the South East of England

Commissioner Dimas
DG Environment
The European Commission
200 Rue de la Loi
B1049 Brussels
Belgium

November 5th 2009

Dear Commissioner,

I understand from media reports that you share my concern about the 2006 dumping of toxic waste at 15 locations in the town of Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire, by oil company Trafigura.

Upwards of 30,000 residents of Abidjan sought medical help for symptoms that included headaches, nausea, skin burns and respiratory tract irritation, whilst as many as 17 deaths appear to be associated with the event. As you know, Trafigura have settled out of court, paying compensation to the Ivorian government for a cleanup operation and to the victims of the incident. However, the company continue to deny any causal relationship between their actions and any symptoms beyond transient flu-like illness.

At the time much of this came to light, you promised to close any loopholes in EU law regarding the shipment of waste, as Trafigura had off loaded the toxic waste in the Netherlands and then reloaded it for shipping to the Cote D'Ivoire. Please can you confirm whether EU law at the time was breached and, if so, what action was taken against Trafigura? Also, are you confident that the necessary safe-guards have been put in place to prevent a repeat occurrence, as well as to ensure companies like Trafigura can be held to account for such behaviour?

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.