

hi, this week the Environmental Safety Group would like to talk to you about the pollution from the Cepsa oil refinery and the various actions being pursued in this regard.

We start, however, with a look back to last week, where, following on from the success of the "In town without my car" discussion, representatives from the ESG, GONHS and Friends of the Earth met with Minister for the Environment, Jaime Nieto. The NGO delegation presented the Minister with a series of recommendations to improve traffic congestion and the corresponding noise and air pollution. The recommendations address the need to make it easier and more convenient for people to cycle, use public transport and walk. Also suggested are economic measures designed to result in greener use of cars. This document will be available on our website soon: [esg@hyphen.gib](mailto:esg@hyphen.gib)

In a few weeks time, the Plataforma por el Estudio Epidemiológico will submit to Government the petition of several thousand signatures calling for health studies to investigate the higher mortality rates prevalent in the Bay. Copies of this petition will be handed to La Comisión Mixta, as well as to the European Commission via MEP Neil Parish, who is visiting at the end of the month....

(breathe & pause)

Assessing recent developments, it appears that a firmer stance has been taken by the Junta de Andalucía's chief environmental official Fuensanta Coves in respect of the Cepsa Refinery, conveying a sense that, finally, deliberate steps might be taken to limit toxic emissions.

However, environmentalists on both sides of the border remain cautious for a number of reasons.

Firstly, a deadline has been given to the Refinery for an independent, environmental evaluation of its operations to be done prior to the beginning of November. This date coincides with the enforcement of the new IPPC environmental regulation and, as such, this independent evaluation could merely reflect an existing process already underway.

It is important to verify whether this "audit" is separate to the IPPC process or one and the same.

And there is a second reason for caution. Many citizens believe that with Spanish elections just weeks away, the Junta might be trying to give the appearance that they are taking a firmer stance against the Cepsa refinery in the lead up to these elections, when the reality is that they will revert back to normal once these have taken place and there will have been little discernible change at this, one of the dirtiest refineries in western Europe.

For these reasons, it would appear important that environmental groups and concerned citizens continue to make their anxiety known and try to hold Senora Coves

to her word: she has said that the recent, regular and heavy polluting incidents by the CEPSA plant have to stop.

Certainly, the ESG believes that the recent levels of pollution *should* stop. \*\* We all remember that the results of Professor Benach's nationwide public health studies indicated that people in the Campo area have among the highest levels of cancer and respiratory disorders in the whole of Spain. These scientific studies also point towards the likelihood that industrial pollution - such as that emanating from the petrochemical plant - plays a significant part in this. \*\*

So, in order to remind the authorities and Cepsa of how concerned citizens of the Bay are, a demonstration has been organised by La Plataforma. (SLOWLY...) It will take place tomorrow Friday the 4th of May at 6.30pm at Puente Mayorga. We hope it will be well supported. The ESG has organised a free bus leaving from the coach station on Waterport Road at half past 5. If you are one of the many concerned citizens, we urge you to make your voice heard tomorrow.

\*\* please time yourself reading this and if it is longer than 4 minutes, then you can remove the part between the \*\*