



Green Law Group Cannot Accept Secrecy of Air Pollution Data Preferred by Commission

Why can't the public know who is liable for our polluted air?

[Brussels, June 10, 2016] – Justice & Environment (J&E), the leading green law group for the civil society in the EU cannot accept that data relating to air pollution are kept secret by the Commission.

In 2014 and 2015, J&E requested information from the European Commission in several occasions in air pollution related cases. J&E wanted to know what is happening in the infringement cases the Commission started against the Czech Republic and Hungary for the latter countries failing to ensure clean air to their citizens.

In all these instances, the Commission refused to disclose information on the communication between the EC and the respective Member States. In one such case, J&E decided to fight further for transparency and took the EC to the Court of Justice of the European Union. The EC denies in its defence that there is overriding public interest in the disclosure of such information and insists that infringement data should be kept secret.

J&E, in its latest action made in the beginning of June, confirmed its conviction towards more transparency and asks the EU Court to order the Commission to disclose the disputed information. J&E is convinced that in case a Member State is liable for bad air quality due to inactivity, its faults and the way the Commission tries to engage that Member State into action should be made public. J&E is also convinced that public access to such data would inspire governments to ensure clean air to its citizens.

J&E believes that secrecy in such matters contributes to the problem of bad air quality that takes numerous lives in Europe and causes grave health problems for the public.

Transparency is more clean air!

Notes to editors:

1. The link to the CJEU case: <http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=174372&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=962346>
2. The link to the EC Regulation 1049/2001 that regulates access to documents held by EU institutions and bodies: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/PDF/r1049_en.pdf

Justice and Environment (J&E) is an association of public interest environmental law organizations. The objective of J&E is to contribute to a better status of environment and human health in Europe where J&E is active through the use of law (European and national environmental laws) and the improvement of access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters by legal means. To learn more visit <http://justiceandenvironment.org/>

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