

# GREEK's CANCER VILLAGES

\*underground water's and Asopos river has been toxified.

\*citizens and workers of the area die prematurely.

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All over Europe, now days, it would be difficult to find worse place to live, than in Oinofyta area, Viotia county, south Greece. Just 65 km. outside Athens capital city. The fact is: underground waters, the only source for water supply in the area, have been found to contain chromium 6, lead, nitrates, and chlorine ions. So pumping water supply system has been jeopardized.

A depressing dilemma has been appearing: a chemical's cocktail can be regarded as safe water for uses? (Drinking, Irrigation, Animal breeding, as well as industrial food production use.)

Opinions around the issue are confusing and dissent!! And that actually is the worse.

Government officials and local Authorities, as "producers", insist that no problem exist, and distribute it for consumption, in praxis they say the water is O.K.

In European Directive and relevant Greek law for "Drinking water and water for human use" of 1998 and 2001 respectively, exist only a "total chromium" limit of 50 µg /lt. No any specific limit for chromium 6, so "by the book" everything is in order but actually everything is open to law interpretations.

The actuality is: Certain pumping wells, presenting heavy contamination as "total chromium" above 50 µg/ lt (and chromium 6 also above 50 µg / lt ) diluted and mixed with cleaner waters to became acceptable with total chromium content below 50 µ g / l t. Others, on the same underground horizon, is giving waters with 15-20-35- or 40 µg/lt chromium 6 (and total chromium under 50 µg/lt) and that is considered o.k. and drive directly for distribution in houses and industry.

In the bag round we have to have in mind that does not exist, on local Authorities level, any quality assurance operation system and experienced personel, equipped with relevant installations and lab to perform on spot such examinations and assure a management of distributed waters.

So the question arose: Waters containing 15 – 35 -40 µg/lt chromium 6, if drunked, swallowed, used, e.t.c. has any long time consequences?? Have any toxic effect???

Everyone recognize consequences if chromium 6 became breathable or come in touch with derma, but what is going on if swallowed thought

- \*Drinking, cooking.

- \*Producing food items in shops like bread, sweets, coffees e.t.c

- \*irrigating fields (specially producing carrots, potatos, onions as in our area)

- \*serving poultry and animals breeding units (milk, meat, eggs production)

- \*supplying industrial units producing food, beverages, cosmetics pharmatiutical products)

And the dilemma insists: Through such uses are people provided by doses of chromium 6? Are they subjects of chromium chronic toxification or not??

Government and local Authorities people are not giving answers! They do not define position. They only consume time.

University Patras, Medical school is backing such actions declaring that waters containing 15 ,20,30,40 µg/l chromium 6 is o.k., no problem. It is suitable for any use .

Institute for local Development and Environmental Protection (I.T.A.Π.), long time ago, uncover waters analyses results, published environmental data, and open the theme and opposed such actions. I.T.A.Π. consider that such waters, containing any amount of chromium 6, are an unsuitable and dangerous water to use. Based on law principles of “prevention” and “risk avoidance” I.T.A.Π. declare that such waters have not to be distributed, not to be used in houses and industry as well as for irrigation on carrots fields.

I.T.A.Π. insist that health risk exist if, swallowed chromium 6 and having so, press local Authorities to stop distributing such toxified waters and Government officials to act preventing pollution from hazardous toxic waste illegal dumping. Unfortunately 400 days after documentation of the facts, Public health protection measures still expected ,as well as , inspectorate to stop illegal dumping of industrial liquids wastes from existing around aluminium and copper factories.

They just now, “started to think” about preventing hazardous wastes to stop dumped in Asopos River. But officials resist accepting the health issue. They present now a new motto: “we do not know yet” They stick on the thesis that the “European directives do not mention anything specific on it” .Science know any more for swallowed chromium 6. When, public protection E.U. Directives shall meet the knowledge and the facts????

For I.T.A.Π. such a thesis is unacceptable because REACH directive the most recent law, into E.C about chemicals, characterize chromium 6(if by any way come into the human body) a carcinogenic, mutagenic and material which intervene in reproduction process. It characterized bioaccumulative and toxic persistent.

So I.T.A.Π., has addressed to public and the local people now, opposing Government. Requesting substitution of local water distributed. People organizations and citizen’s representatives, believe that such Government decisions and practice are wrong and officials undertake moral, political and legal responsibilities. Now they try to address the all case to Greek justice. Press and T.V have taken side with people. Greek justice, has decided, the distributed water, from local authorities is dangerous for public health.

In the mean time “Greece Chemist Association “in October 2007 and “Medical Association of Thiva” have taken officially position to public dispute. Both organizations, in agreement with I.T.A.Π., are requesting ”emergency actions for health protection” and environmental protection measures. They request immediate stop of toxified waters distribution, and consider chromium 6 as a dangerous toxic for people.

Unfortunately Greek Government thesis of “we don’t know yet” is also a European commission official’s thesis. They are answering that by 1998 (year of relevant directive edition for drinking water) they have not from W.H.O. or other

organization relevant specific data and “proving evidence” for swallowed chromium 6 toxicity!

Having so , I.T.A.Π.started a new round of appeals, in European Parliament, European Commissioners, and Greek Parliament asking only one question: What is going on with chromium 6 standards for drinking water??

How has been managed to be forgotten that: W,H.O. from 1970 (1) have present and adopt a European drinking water standard for chromium 6 = 0,05 µg/lit ???

W.H.O. is repeating that standard in a second relevant document at 1988 (2) and the American Ministry of Health discover it at 2000 and refer toward it in a relevant document (3).

In actuality ,chromium 6 event is one additional fact , summed up in a long series of industrial pollution problems in Oinofyta- Shimatari area. That killing happening has mounted distasability and dishonest actions from officials and interventions to local Authorities .

Local awful pollution problem in air, waters, and land ,is not new phenomenon in the specific area. Hear be present a well documented and continuous history of environmental violations from local industry, including the big units of aluminium and copper.(main chromium 6 utilizers)

Asopos river, long time ago, has been transformed in a hazardous liquid industrial sewage carrier which is transferring all these substances to underground water horizon as well as to the near by seaside of Oropos town. Liquid waste disposal problem for industry has been “solved” by licensing them to dispose directly to “old wells”. Injecting the liquid sewage into underground water horizon. Every one was keeping “eves, ears and mouth” close and local corruption and political interventions, manage to keep problems in the shadow, apart of people real understanding.

Officials’ political dogma is that “pollution is an unavoidable price to be paid in order to have locally industries,(they named local development) .But always : payments was for citizens and the profits of “political power” and tax revenues are reserved for Authorities, The “big profits”, by sure, obtained from polluting industry. Actually the “we don’t know yet ”platform is another gift for them, offering more time to operate, as they like. Officials do not intervene and do not “disturb” them with any anti –pollution measure and action to prevent chromium 6 dispersion.

All these years, on witch the industrial pollution drama is going on in Oinofyta, They are enjoying ”freedom of actions “and regarded as special care subject from authorities. But now “health Crisis” is maturing to 200.000 people area .Cancer victims from 6-7%,very near to average national index ,at 1987 has gone to 32% at 2007 in Oinofyta district.

Chromium 6 utilizers, Government and local Authority officials try to keep the all issue as “a cosa nostra “theme, and try to keep data apart of citizens understanding and governing the all case with “omerta” rules.

Chromium 6 polluters are the kings of the situation. They stand above laws and regulations, together with any custom firm benefited from their work.

One of them, a Government owned industry, work “under contract” for big American and European airplane manufacturers, producing for them Aluminium parts, He also has undertaken maintenance jobs for American fighters Airplanes inclusive all job whits gave troubles in Los Angeles area.

They claimed that they bring “advance technology” and currency into country, and so they consume as they like 3500 kgr. Dichromate’s per month and as much water they like in their anodizing baths, and is emptying the anodizing baths content 2 times per year instead of make it up. So applying dirty technology without any restriction and relevant environmental inspection they present themselves as “major benefactor” of the area and recently present themselves as “green Industrial development.” Ambassador, to consume E.U money

The other one is “a big boss” in area. Owner of many aluminium and copper processing units, he produce, between others , aluminum foil, cans for beverage industry and auto-body parts for German car makers.

Usually, he spoke “with Prime Ministers” directly, if some one, disturb him with officials inspections! for many years now.

Having so, for us, remain only one question for international customers of them.

Does any one of them know anything about chromium 6 trouble??

Very often, officials of them, paying visit on subcontractor’s factories side. Very often they are making “quality work inspections”( !!!)

Does any one of them( we mean the inspectors),ever has report any unusual?

And something additional. The chief technician, in one of the utilizers’ factory, working in anodizing department, obtained health examination results scoring 5 µg /dl chromium 6 in blood plasma. Nobody bothered about.

Do they have any opinion on that?

As you probably know, Avlida is an ancient town, mentioned by Homer, as a town on which “bosses of those times” was sacrificing daughter in order to start “Troy war”. 25 centuries after the “new local bosses” practices sacrifice (of workers and citizens) on the road to sustain “their profitability war”.

You see : That is a Greek way to sustainability!!!

## REFERENCES

- 1) W.H.O. 1970: 2 edition Geneva N 33 “European standards for Drinking water”
- 2) W.H.O 1988 ed Geneva N197 “Environmental Health Criteria :chromium6
- 3) “Toxicology profile of chromium” U.S.Department of Health and Human services. Public health services. Agency for toxic substances and disease Registry. September 2000 p 329