

**Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:****Underrated dangers for humans, nature and environment on the island of the Zeus!
I: Illegal dumpsites on Crete: Conflict field with the European Union**

(See also our leaflet No. 114-05/E of the Crete Environment Info)

Already 4000 years ago (approx. 2000 BC) rinse privy's were already well-known in the Minoan culture on Crete, which disposed into a drainage system. Also channels, which derived the waste water from the houses and rain water from the roads, were not unknown in Greece! This early form of "waste"- / waste water disposal on Crete and in Greece shows, which value the refuse disposal had for humans at that time already. The more incomprehensibly is the "attitude to the refuse disposal" in Greece (and on Crete) today; their value unfortunately tends to zero - and the question remains, when the "cradle of the occident" experiences a "Ragnarok"!

In April 2005 the European commission decided to convey a last reminder because of offences against European regulations for the refuse disposal on Crete to Greece. Commission seizes this step, because the Greek authorities have not eliminated an illegal as well as a provisional garbage depot, for which Greece was already sentenced in the year 2000 by the European Court of Justice to a fine (€ 20.000 /per day). In the opinion the European Union commission the health of humans and the environment are endangered by these offences. In an opinion of experts in 2003 were stated that the dumps *Messomouri* and *Kouroupitos* (Prefecture Chania) do not correspond to the regulations and cause health and ecological hazards. Admittedly the dumps were covered with soil, but rain flush away the surface to a large extent. The waste continues to smoulder in the dump, whereby poisonous emissions can develop. It is to be feared that the dumps become unstable and that it can come to a landslide. Greece paid so far about 5 million € because of offences against European waste law on Crete. Nevertheless necessary reorganization and aftercare measures are not accomplished or only in insufficient measure. For this it comes that there are still enormous amounts of illegal garbage depots on Crete (which are not "publicly" known) and from those the same dangers for the health of humans and damages of the environment come off. Here exists urgent need for action (in order to defuse the already ticking "time bomb")! Besides the following picture documentations to the topic, see also at www.kreta-umweltforum.de, here at the forum the contributions (in German language) "Wilde Mülldeponien auf Kreta" [Professor Dr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive director UNEP] and "Natur und Tourismus auf Kreta" [Eva Schuhbeck, authoress of a travel book] as well as the info leaflets of the Crete Environmental Info. No. 007-04/E, 037-04/E and No. 084-05/E. Further information is available also by email: eu-de-kommission@cec.eu.int.



"The truth of the matter is that the private waste disposal works very well". A Pick UP collects the garbage bags (unsorted) and tilts it at a suitable moment from the roadside (outside of the locality) the slope down into a ravine (see fig.), where the pollutants, bled by surface water (during the pluvial), can seep into the groundwater or transported into the sea over the brook. If the garbage mountain becomes too large, then there is also a good method to hide the waste: "Building rubble over it, there over remainders of liquid concrete, which adapts very well after hardening by erosion and lichens growth to the landscape of a slope - and is difficult to distinguish from the natural area structure in the course of the years!



Above pictures are from a larger garbage depot in a ravine about 4 miles south of Kamina/Lassithi. To “reduce” the Garbage Mountains, the waste is regularly “set on fire” and uncontrolled “smouldering fires” occur (see fig. left), which pass poisonous emissions into the air. The pollutants rinsed out by surface water arrive by the karst subsoil directly into the groundwater and thus probably into the catchment areas of the sources, which supply the Lassithi Plateau with water.



The above pictures come from a large dump about a half mile northwest the Skotino cave (in addition see our leaflet No. 021-04/E of the Crete Environmental Info). From here you have a “beautiful view to the small port and the coast of the tourist place Gouves” (fig. left), where you can literally smell the dump “with favourable wind”. The reference of the “camera supervised dump” (which however is missing) has probably the consequence that private waste disposer gets rid of their dross already before, by using the edges of the approximately 700 m long approach as

unloading points (see fig. right). The frequent winds then distribute the light garbage (e.g. Plastic bags) over the mountain-slope and leave an “impressive” landscape. Also this dump produces poisonous emissions ¹⁾ and has anything to oppose for sluiced out pollutants!

¹⁾ Emissions from garbage depots are primarily seeping water emissions from the deposit of untreated settlement wastes. Precipitable water, which penetrates a dump body, loosens the waste contents materials and transports these toward dump basis. With the dumps insisting on Crete an appropriate seal and drainage system are usually missing, so that the waste contents materials arrive into the soil and thus in the groundwater – namely as long, until the dump is leached out. The gaseous emissions are a product of various micro-biological metabolic processes, which run off within the dump body. Main components in the dump gas are methane and carbon dioxide. Besides chlorinated, containing fluorine and sulfur components are provable.

Pictures: (2) U. Kluge / (6) H. Eikamp / (1) Karl Eckl (2005)