**TRANSCRIPCIÓN DOCUMENTAL “UN LUGAR DIFERENTE”**

**Juan García Calero (obrero Fosfórico español):**

My name is Juan García Calero. I work in the Spanish sulphuric acid industry. I started working there around 1972, in the production of sulphuric acid. I worked there for approximately 29 years. Many of my co-workers passed away on account of working with phosphoric acid, in the production of sulphuric acid and from cancer. There are still particular cases of co-workers of mine who have cancer, terminal cancer.

**Locutor de Radio:**

Huelva, ¿do you want phosphogypsum to be extracted from your bowels? if you care about your family’s health, go, stand up for Huelva, no more phosphogypsum. Demonstration organized by the Estuary Board (Mesa de la Ría)

**Juan García Calero (obrero Fosfórico Español):**

Working here was hell on earth, it was very dangerous not only because you sucked in all the sulphuric acid, sulphurous gases etc. A worker’s life wasn’t worth anything. There were people who protested over work conditions and people who didn’t. In my case, when there was too much contamination, I called the civil protection office. And they quickly sent an inspector. In that moment they would halt production and when the inspector left they would just start again. They halted everything and then restarted once again. We tried to get a hospital for burnt victims set up so we wouldn’t have to be transferred to Seville because once a burnt victim arrived in Seville they couldn’t really do much to help him. But we didn’t manage to do it. Years later, a number of diseases have appeared, the most simple one being allergies because the raw materials that are used in the manufacturing of phosphoric acid and sulphuric acid cause allergies and also, cancer. All kinds of cancer, from lung to prostate to liver and so on.

**Voz NO-DO**:

In the Sebo basin, at the end of the confluence between the Tinto and Odiel rivers, the Cristopher Columbus central terminal was erected. It was owned by the Seville Electricity Company (Compañia Sevillana de Electricidad) and it supplied electricity to all of Andalusia and part of Badajoz and Murcia. Later, Generalissimo Franco inaugurated the sulphuric acid factory of the Spanish acid company that owned the mines of the River Tinto. Their facilities consist of a 3.82 million euro plant with annual outputs of 230 million tonnes.

**Emilio Luque (Profesor Facultad Sociología UNED):**

The historical evolution of the industrial complex is consistent with Spain’s evolution, right? From the harsh beginning of Franco’s regime which unfolds into the development era of the 1960s with plans for stabilization. In 1964 the chemical complex is established and immediately, many companies begin pouring in, amongst them Fertibería, Fosfórico Español and Foret. By 1967 they had come into operation and were dumping on the marshlands, one of the main components of the environmental issue. My first impression is depicted very well in the first photo I took; I brought my newly purchased digital camera. When I woke up in my hotel room smoke was everywhere, so, my first impression was almost that of a citizen who wakes up every day to this unsettling situation of chimneys, smoke, smells etc. But as I spoke to more people I got the impression this was a problem that represents everything that happens to us. The end of the 19th century saw a surge of environmental mobilizations. Citizen’s felt they have no say in their future, in the role of expert knowledge, how to diagnose what goes on in the city. So it’s not that I found this case interesting in one isolated aspect, rather, I discovered the world represented in the town of Huelva.

**Voz NO-DO:**

As he made his way to the capital of the province, the commander ground to a halt in three new industries he inaugurated. When he entered Huelva he disguised it as an apotheosis, a town that has been freed from secular poverty, despite containing so many unexploited resources. And Huelva is grateful and expresses this (feeling) warmly.

**Emilio Luque (Profesor Facultad Sociología UNED**):

The socioeconomic impact was that people who worked in agriculture, mainly family members, even land owners, came to Huelva to work in the chemical complex. They had excellent salaries for that time. The effects it would have on the workers became apparent after a few years. One begins to intuitively sense that this isn’t right. We’re talking about a time where industry was much less regulated, and one begins to notice health is deteriorating. And this problem of divided loyalty arises. Because a lot of people make a living from this job while many people die from it. How does one trade-in their health, when they are sick and how does one trade-in their job when they are a worker. There are pictures from the 70s of demonstrations in which they cry out: “they stole our health, they stole our history”. It is very difficult to reconcile, and on the other hand, they are aware that maybe their cousin, or their brother-in-law, or their friend rely on these factory jobs. The tension is very difficult to solve and it’s still a problem today even though the employment created by the chemical complex factories are evidently just a tiny fraction of what they were before. One of my first experiences with Huelva was to try to decipher, to understand what was going on here because it is difficult to believe it. This may be one of the most surprising facts for the people who are already familiar with the situation, that all of this is almost as big as Huelva itself, all of this area that the River Tinto runs through, it’s all a phosphogypsum stack, and it’s the result of decades of accumulating phosphogypsum. Countless tonnes, countless kilos of phosphoric rock used in the manufacture of of these fertilizers, and that needs to be dumped somewhere. At first, they dumped it straight into the marshland, but it needed to be piled up somehow. I believe it was in 1995 when Fertiberia and Foret were allowed the possibility to stack up the waste. All of this was a virgin marshland. Just as there is a bird conservation area in Odiel, this place was a naturally preserved area and now there is absolutely nothing left there. Interestingly, you can see the city centre is restricted, there is a closure, and the town doesn’t expand towards the sea. It is not a natural town in urban terms. It is sealed, blocked in its natural surroundings by the railway as a border, but especially by the blockage that the industries and their wastelands have historically purported. When I saw these immense stockpiles of phosphogypsum, I said to myself, this on its own is a waste town. One senses those things which are made present to them. And the residents of Huelva, who are in the areas closest to the phosphogypsum stockpiles, such as the neighbourhood of Pérez Cubillas, the feeling of danger, the smells, are much more present and are much more clear for them than say, for someone who can afford the luxury of forgetting about it all day.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** I have lived in Perez Cubillas since 1960. My children were born here. They don’t live here anymore, only my wife and I do. This is a good neighbourhood, because this is a neighbourhood in the periphery of Huelva, and moreover it is a humble neighbourhood. We are all manual workers, those who can work, and we try to get by as best we can.

**Pepe (vecino Pérez Cubillas):** What’s up?

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** How are you Pepe?

**Pepe (vecino Pérez Cubillas):** I am great.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** And your wife?

**Pepe (vecino Pérez Cubillas):** She’s working.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** That’s life.

**Pepe (vecino Pérez Cubillas):** She’s working part-time

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** And that’s that.

**Pepe (vecino Pérez Cubillas):** And I’m still unemployed, we do what we can.

**Pepe (Vecino Pérez Cubillas):** I’ve been unemployed for five years, receiving the 426 euros in benefits, until I find a job to retire with. I worked for 10 years between Atlantic Cooper and the refinery. And there I suffered from the poison. Arsenic and phosphoric acid, phosphoric gases are fatal as well. You can end up dying from it. I’m scared I caught an illness because despite everything I was also removing the asbestos. Provided that I was monitored every once in a while, with a plaque on my chest, to see if my lungs were affected. For now, I am ok, but the results aren’t visible now, it takes around 20 or 30 years right?

**Locutor de Radio:**

Huge protest of the Estuary Board (Mesa de la Ría) against phosphogypsum. Thursday, October 9th at 8 pm, leaving from the Merced Square and ending at the Monjas Square. All of Huelva committed to their future. Because the law is on our hands, and another Huelva is possible and necessary.

**Srs jugando al dominio.**

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** What’s up Jesus

**Jesús:** What’s up…

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** Isra, man, how’s it going?

**Isra:** Terribly, I am expecting us to get beaten by Betis in Seville.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** And where are ‘Four Eyes’ and ‘President’

**Isra:** The ‘President’ went to take a shower to go to work.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** Did you see that there’s a demonstration tonight against phosphogypsum?

**Isra:** I heard something but I have no idea where they leave from and what it entails…

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** The one who should know all the info is the president.

**Isra:** Well, let’s see if the president gets on it, and puts up some posters.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** This is already the fourth demonstration on this issue…

**Isra:** We need to support them because we are the most affected by it.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** The estuary platform…

**Isra:** Supports

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** Are the ones supporting the cause. Little by little we are becoming strong.

**Isra:** Of course, here you can’t get things done one day to the next.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** This costs a lot of money. The Villar Mir Group have filled their pockets just like all the rest of Spain.

**Isra:** Just like all the rest.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** They keep everything, they keep all the money and don’t do anything good with it.

**Isra:** The thing is, we know that we won’t see any of it, that it’ll never reach us.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** And the only people who are harmed by it are us. We are at the heart of it all.

**Isra:** We are at the centre of the commotion, the focal point. We bear the brunt of it all.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** We have to put up with all this mess. We have to bear the hardship of all these diseases.

**Francisco García (Ecologistas Ayuda en Acción):** We are now in the dump site of the Huelva phosphate industry. For about 43 years, the waste has come mainly from two companies: Fertiberia and Foret. They have been dumping 3 million tonnes of waste every year. This has led to the formation of a semilunar landscape occupying 1200 hectares of marshland and 130 million tonnes of phosphogypsum has been dumped.

Fertiberia’s waste-dumping terminated on December 31st, 2010; this was the Supreme Court’s final sentence after 7 or 8 years of law suits. Their license to dump waste in the area expired permanently and on 31st of December of 2010 waste-dumping ceased.

We are going to enter a radioactive zone were levels of radiation are significant, so, logically, we have to protect ourselves. We wear an antiparticle suit so most of the radiation doesn’t permeate through, but some inevitably still passes through. We also wear gloves to protect our hands because our hands are what get closest to the floor, and logically on our footwear so our shoes don’t get dirtied by the residues that we would later bring home with us.

No authority figures, none of the administrations, want to come in and solve this serious problem that we have in Huelva. The Nuclear Security Council claims the radiation readings measured here are below the legislation’s maximum permitted levels. But here we use a Geiger counter to measure and the Geiger counter tells us that what the Nuclear Security Council says is incorrect. The Geiger counter measures radioactivity so there is no catch to it. Just like a thermometer measures temperature. This is radioactivity, regardless of who is doing the measuring. You simply have to interpret the reading you see here, multiply it by the number of hours in a day and the number of days in a year, in order to obtain the annual figure. If we compare this with what the Spanish legislation states, whether the values of radioactivity are below the limit, we find that the readings we measure here are 140-150 times greater than the Spanish law’s maximum permitted levels. So this waste clearly needs to be dealt with and needs to be treated as radioactive waste. It’s another matter altogether if the Nuclear Security Council doesn’t want to acknowledge that it has an open air radioactive landfill in the marshlands of Huelva, with a length of 1200 hectares and 130 million tonnes of waste mixed in there. Approximately 5000 tonnes of uranium oxide are scattered across these marshlands.

They have sold us this idea as though we were in a safety vault. As though the stockpiles were a safety deposit box. Here we can see perfectly how the waste is constantly spilling out of the stockpiles. It’s been a long time since it rained yet we can still see how the acidic water leaches from the stockpiles directly into the estuary.

Another problem arising from the waste, apart from the heavy metals, is that the acidity contains a large amount of radioactivity that leaches out from the beginning of the stockpiles. Look at this wood; it looks like this because of the acid. The high acidity level breaks the wood. This shows that the level of acidity here is tremendous.

This is the highest value I have ever recorded in the phosphogypsum stockpile. This is barbaric, it’s incredible. This is radioactive waste, and it should be treated as so. It shouldn’t be abandoned here in the marshland. Here, it is currently measuring levels of radiation approximately 140-150 times the maximum permitted by Spanish and Andalusian law.

For this type of radiation we wear protection, in part for alpha and beta radiation but there is also a large amount of gamma radiation. A significant amount of radiation not to come in protective gear. And now it’s as though we are permanently in an x-ray. We are exposed to high levels of radiation, gamma radiation. Gamma radiation is carcinogenic and mutagenic. It has the capacity to produce genetic changes and logically, causes cancer.

On December 31st, 1998 there was a huge storm in Huelva, with strong winds. I arrived home around midday after having gone to work that day. And I heard noise, the sound of water. I approached the window and see there is water spilling out of the stockpiles, from the north-eastern wall a considerable amount of water was flowing out. That day I got dressed, put on my rain boots and came here to the phosphogypsum area, it was practically unfeasible because the wall had been torn down and an enormous amount of water was pouring out, and almost the entire stockpile area was flooded, so you couldn’t walk on the path, it was dangerous. And we calculated that out of the two hectometre cubed area comprising the stockpile, about half a million cubic metres of acidic water containing heavy metals spilled out directly into the Tinto River, polluting the river.

Fertiberia wants – what they call “recuperating the marshland” – approximately one third of all the occupied land since dumping began in the marshlands. We are talking about more than 400 hectares that occupies the area we have over there at the back, which would be the decantation base and this area we are in now is the security base. What does Fertiberia want to do with this? Firstly, they want to apply a plastic layer made out of polyethylene over the waste, followed by a layer of clay, and finally, a layer of topsoil where some trees would be planted. This is the restoration plan Fertiberia talks about. Evidently, this is solely a landscape-based recuperation, a visual recovery to cover up the waste, sweep it under the rug, that’s what the company currently wants to do.

These stockpiles pollute in different ways, one of them is air pollution. Air pollution mainly consists of radon gas emitted from here, a radioactive gas concentrated in Huelva’s atmosphere and the villages surrounding it which are concentrated in lowlands and is highly toxic and carcinogenic. Scientific measurements have already been conducted which report on how radioactive elements of the stockpiles are being detected in Huelva’s pollution measuring stations. Inside the town itself.

**Jesús de la Rosa (geoquímico Universidad de Huelva):**

Historically, in Huelva’s atmosphere, just like any other town next to an industrial complex, it’s clear that we breathe a portion of the emissions expelled by these industries, like the one we have in the capital, that make up the industrial complex.

In 1999 our group begins to study the air quality in Huelva, with the fundamental support of the Superior Scientific Research Council and we found that a series of pollutants are present among the most notable: arsenic, selenium, bismuth, copper, zinc and lead. We found that in Huelva, the ultrathin particle concentration was very high, but the figures coincided not with the peak of traffic, rather with the peak of industry. So, after doing methodology based on periodical measurements of the metals, it was no longer just one day, which implies a series of new, more complex methodologies that aren’t even practiced in Spain, we saw that the ultrathin concentration also had particles of arsenic, selenium, bismuth, copper, zinc, etc.

What I said before. If the particles were thick then well, everything depends on the respiratory device, I am not an epidemiologist, nor a doctor, but it’s clear that the thinner it is, the more toxic the particle will be. And that is what has been happening over all these years, since the companies of the complex were installed. The industrial emissions weren’t only gases; they were particles, of elements that are now classified as toxic and carcinogenic.

Huelva is one of the European cities that have a phosphogypsum landfill closest to its parameters. It reaches heights of up to 30 metres, 30 metre hills and the rainfall, what it does is that it cleans the metals, it leaches the metals from the phosphogypsum. It is just like a chimney, in other words, if we go there, whatever we breathe will surely be toxic. From our point of view and looking at the data, and considering how we’ve evolved with our experience, we believe that are contaminants in the atmosphere that raises mortality rates within the population. If we are to apply European guidelines, you have to start with the anomaly, with the workers who are breathing these contaminants, so a study needs to be conducted in the factories. The industry needs to allow this information to exist, so that we, the scientists, can handle this data.

**Entrevistador:** Why do you think an epidemiological study has never been conducted?

**Jesús de la Rosa (geoquímico Universidad de Huelva):** Well, the data belongs to the company.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** What’s up Manoli?

**Manoli:** What’s up.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** I can’t, I can’t. If you go out they’ll film you.

**Manoli:** They’re filming me.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** I’ll give you a kiss and they’ll film you. Because you’re so beautiful.

**Manoli:** Go on then, film me.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** Come here.

**Manoli:** You come here Pepito.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** How are you? How is it going?

**Manoli:** Fine.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** How are you today?

**Manoli:** I’m feeling terrible today.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** Feeling terrible?

**Manoli:** Well, I’m always ill.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** Yes.

**Manoli:** Don’t film me looking too ugly.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** And Manuel?

**Manoli:** He’s lying down, the poor guy.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** Well…

**Manoli:** He doesn’t even want to eat.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** OK. See you.

**Manoli:** Bye.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** Bye.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** See you on Sunday, bye gorgeous, bye.

**Manoli:** God willing. Bye darling.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** Bye.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** I go and see 20 elderly people and 14 of them have problems in their chest, bronchus, or cancer. There is no doubt that this is a product of everything that’s in the phosphogypsum stockpiles.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** Bye beautiful, when are you coming over?

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** aquí hay mucho enfermo, de esto. No solamente aquí en el barrio, sino en Huelva que es producto de la…de lo que ha sido la fábrica esta, de Fertiberia que es la que más ha echado.

Here there are a lot of people sick from this. Not only in the neighbourhood, but in Huelva, who are a product of the factory, of Fertiberia, the company that expelled the most emissions.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** Quini! What’s up man? How are you?

**Quini:** Hey, how are you?

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** How’s your health?

**Quini:** Well, it’s steady.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** Has Carmen not come yet? And the medicines?

**Quini:** I am due for a revision in three or four months

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** And you’re better right?

**Quini:** Well…

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** You’re getting on…

**Quini:** As far as it goes, it’s OK. There are good days and bad days that get the best of you.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** Are you going to the demonstration against phosphogypsum?

**Quini:** Of course.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** We all have to go.

**Quini:** We have to go.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** That’s right.

**Quini:** We have to go to lend a helping hand.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** Because these scumbags/degenerates need a reality check.

**Quini:** Yes yes, this is poison.

**José Aroca (vecino barrio Pérez Cubillas):** We can’t let them go there.

**Quini (vecino del barrio Pérez Cubillas):** They detected breast cancer in me 6 years ago. I have good days and bad days. Sometimes I get very irritated and nervous and my children pay for it. Without any fault whatsoever. And you don’t realize, you know? I was also there cleaning up the acid and the factory. It’s disgusting. It’s disgusting. Disgusting. Here we get all the smoke at night, early evening rather. It comes in bearing a strong smell, like acid. That’s when they take advantage to open the valves. And everything comes out, all the filth. I would like everything to be cleaned, everything. And for them to leave it as it used to be.

**Voz programa LINEA 900:** Franco’s economic reforms turned the Huelva sea inlet into a garbage dump for the chemical industry.

**Sr programa:** It needs to be dumped somewhere, or else the factory closes.

**Sr programa 2:** They came here unscrupulously to plunder this patrimony.

**Sr programa 3:** Lies have begun to spiral out of control.

**Voz programa LINEA 900:** Las medidas de la administración andaluza para recuperar un área de marismas de gran riqueza ecológica, se han empantanado con el secretismo.

The measures taken by the Andalusian administration to restore the marshlands, an area of great ecological richness, got bogged down by secrecy.

**Sr programa 4:** Sorry, one moment, stop filming.

If you tell me that there is absolute transparency in this matter, that we’re going to see the places…come on…of course

**Sr programa 5:** Let’s go see them, come on.

**Sr programa LINEA 900:** Line 900 unveils some of these secrets.

**José Manuel Cantó (geólogo):** This programme is born out of a decision that others and myself made to make people aware of this problem, and the only way is to leave Huelva. The big problem that exists in Huelva is that everything is very provincialized. And we managed to spark the interest of a Catalan programme, LINEA 900, very trendy at the time.

**Línea 900 voz en off:** José Manuel Canto is a civil servant, he worked in the Environmental Agency and attends the geological school of Andalusia.

**José Manuel Canto (geólogo) (en el programa línea 900):** A spiral of fabrications has begun here, a spiral of lies that becomes more and more difficult to solve.

**José Manuel Canto (geólogo) (actualidad):** The programme in my opinion was very successful because it made evident the reality of everything that was being denounced. Moreover, it was the trigger that made the administration decide to go against me.

In my capacity as technical director of the environmental agency and manager of the dumping correction plan of Huelva’s chemical complex, I talked about principles in the 90s. One of the important issues that needed to be solved was the generation of a very aggressive residue, so-called weak acids or arsenics. Different companies manufactured it, just as much Fertiberia as Atlantis Cooper, as Foret etc. We search for a solution to this problem and someone with political administrative authority says they’ll confront other companies, namely Fertiberia and Foret but not the biggest copper smelter in Europe, Atlantis Cooper.

**Voz en off:** The company River Tinto belongs 100% to FreePort MCMORAN, a multinational created by Henry Kissinger, at the time Nixon’s Secretary of State. Kissinger was warmly welcomed and shared his smiles in Andalusia while his tanker trucks transported 40,000 tonnes per year of weak acids to the mines and dumped it in a way that his country would have never tolerated.

**José Manuel Canto (geólogo) (actualidad):** This surprised me a lot, and I demanded the measures also be applied to Atlantis Cooper. They said no. And when I told them to tell me that on paper they strongly refused. Ultimately, what they were asking of me, as a civil servant, was for me to prevaricate. Consequently there was a first lawsuit which lasted from 1994-1998, a criminal proceeding that ended in the conviction of the managing director of the copper smelter. They suspended my job and my salary for three years, they’ve had me for 5. And even though I was in this situation I still kept fighting for it. This turned into a huge economic and personal problem for me. I’ve even had death threats.

**Voz en off:** The pollutants of the Huelva estuary tripled in the last year, millions of cubic metres of contaminated mud are deposited at the bottom of the estuary.

**José Manuel Canto (programa LINEA 900):** These marshlands have been covered by around 50 million tonnes, along with other residues such as ashes from pyrite blast furnaces for the production of sulphuric acid.

**José Manuel Canto (geólogo) (actualidad):** I’ve said it already and I’ll say it again, the Council against the Environment have incurred in active connivance, allowing for these crimes to take place, crimes that have been firmly sentenced twice under penal authority.

**Carmen Lloret (secretaria de medio ambiente y agua de la junta de Andalucía):**

The European Union begins to develop their environmental protection standpoint in 1999. Across Spain there were many industrial complexes that didn’t have the regulations they have nowadays. Why? Because they were complexes that had been built during the Francoist dictatorship’s period of economic development, which evidently had a completely different criteria on construction compared to today and that did not have absolutely anything to do with what we have today.

To revisit the past, where the Andalusian Junta should have adopted a *mea culpa* approach… we should all adopt mea culpa as citizens. Why? Because our attitudes as citizens and our demands at a specific point in time mirror the administration’s modification of standards. What was allowed in certain periods of time is no longer allowed today, it’s totally impossible to allow it. And we continue to deal with bad attitudes that can arise at any moment in time.

**Entrevistador:** I think your reflection is not exactly right because it is true that now there is environmental legislation, but the damages that took place before 1999 are still felt just 500 metres from the town of Huelva.

**Carmen Lloret (secretaria de medio ambiente y agua de la junta de Andalucía):** Precisamente quien ha contaminado y ha puesto ahí ese vertido, y esas balsas de fosfoyesos, es quien tiene que hacer la inversión para regenerar y para sacar, o para regenerar ese entorno, y para que esa contaminación que se puso en un momento determinado deje de afectar a los ciudadanos que están en el entorno.

Precisely those who are involved in polluting and dumping, and placing those phosphogypsum stockpiles, should be the ones investing to regenerate the environment so that the pollution that kicked off at a specific moment in time stops affecting the citizens that are in those surroundings.

**Entrevistador:** In January 2013, the department grants Fertiberia integrated environmental permission. Why?

**Carmen Lloret (secretaria de medio ambiente y agua de la junta de Andalucía):**

It doesn’t grant integrated environmental permission. Rather, it substantially modifies the authorization that it already had. We have to remember that the first environmental permission Fertiberia is granted is from 2008, and therefore, seeing that a series of changes are being carried out thanks to the National High Court, they make a substantial change to this environmental authorization, to introduce the high court’s sentence.

**Entrevistador:** Does Fertiberia receive subsidies from the Andalusian Junta?

**Carmen Lloret (secretaria de medio ambiente y agua de la junta de Andalucía):** Not on behalf of the Environmental and Land Management Department.

**Entrevistador:** And on behalf of other departments?

**Carmen Lloret (secretaria de medio ambiente y agua de la junta de Andalucía):** Well I can only tell you about the Environment and Land Management Department. I honestly do not know if on behalf of other departments they receive subsidies, I don’t know.

**Entrevistador:** The regeneration plan presented by Feriberia doesn’t intend to mobilize the phosphogypsum stockpiles. It just plans on covering a small area of ground soil and other products, and on top of it, to put a green layer, to try and regenerate the area. What does the Andalusian Junta think?

**Carmen Lloret (secretaria de medio ambiente y agua de la junta de Andalucía):** Well, we have to evaluate said plan to see exactly what can be done and what can’t in an area like the phosphogyspum stockpiles. From a technical point of view… I am technically not a specialist but there are excellent professionals within the Junta of Andalusia who are analysing it, I can tell you to the very last detail, and I can assure you that the plan cannot stay, and I will tell you that the Junta of Andalusia is solely covering 30cm of land with a couple of plants on top.

**Entrevistador:**

Fertiberia plans on regenerating 300 hectares. In the area there are another 500 hectares that are contaminated, not only with phosphogypsum but also other materials: arsenic acid, heavy metals, radioactive material from the Acerinox ashes. What is going to happen to those 500 hectares that Fertiberia hasn’t included in its plan?

**Carmen Lloret (secretaria de medio ambiente y agua de la junta de Andalucía):**

If the administrative concession of the soil was granted to Fertiberia out of those terrains that are affected, I imagine that, in compliance with the National High Court’s sentence, the ministry will demand Fertiberia to regenerate what the court ruled. One mustn’t forget that the sentence is from 2003 and we are currently in 2015. We believe it’s about time for the National High Court’s sentence to be complied with.

**Entrevistador:** It’s a company that belongs to Mr. Villar Mir, supposedly the richest man in Spain, close friends with Juan Carlos I, former King of Spain. Can the Junta of Andalusia put pressure on someone like Villar Mir?

**Carmen Lloret (secretaria de medio ambiente y agua de la junta de Andalucía):** They will demand any citizen, any company located in Andalusia to comply with environmental standards. Everyone is treated the same. As for the contacts one has, good for them, but complying with regulations is obligatory for everyone. The company is the one who has to act. It was sentenced by the National High Court. There is a government administration who has to oblige the sentence to be complied with. That dumping exists and phosphogypsum stockpiles are there, of course! The public administration doesn’t have a magic wand, of course. But that the company has to be the one who solves the problem, yes of course!

**Juan Manuel Dial del Valle (gerente de AIQBE, asociación de industrias químicas y básicas de Huelva):**

The regeneration of gypsum-covered land will be very positive because among other things, it will create a space which I’m sure that in 15 years, when we see it, everyone will have forgotten what this was like. It’s a recent idea. We will be talking about this green space, practically integrated to the city.

**Entrevistador:** Once this regeneration plan is completed, you wouldn’t have any problem of going with your family on a stroll through this hypothetical park?

**Juan Manuel Dial del Valle (gerente de AIQBE, asociación de industrias químicas y básicas de Huelva):** No, no, I surely won’t. There will be no problem. Because there is no doubt that it will be done with all the possible technical and environmental guarantees. You have to take into account that during a long time and from the beginning this has been supervised, and in a continuous and scrupulous way by the administrations. Therefore, I think this was done in a completely legal way. The question whether the chemical industry has any side effects…let me put it this way, does the chemical industry in Tarragona, Cartagena or Algeciras cause any health problems?

**Entrevistador:** But you know Huelva is one of the places with the highest rate of certain types of cancer. Why? Why does this happen?

**Juan Manuel Dial del Valle (gerente de AIQBE, asociación de industrias químicas y básicas de Huelva):** But is this just a comment or reality?

**Entrevistador:** I will read out news headlines that I found: “The cancer rate in Huelva, Cadiz and Seville is higher than the rest of Spain”; “Huelva mortality rate is 20% higher than the national average”; “Medical experts warn of imminent outbreak of lung cancer in women from provinces of Cadiz and Huelva”

**Juan Manuel Dial del Valle (gerente de AIQBE, asociación de industrias químicas y básicas de Huelva):** The news is not reality. We must ask the experts what they think.

**Joan Benach (Investigador de la Universidad Pompeu Fabra):** My name is Joan Benach, I am the director of the research group on health inequalities from Pompeu Fabra University and I started working in the field of health equity at the end of the 1980s.

In this atlas what we do is we analyse the most significant causes of deaths and in every one of these zones we locate the risk, and compare the risk of mortality there with other areas in Spain. There is a public health issue in Huelva. It’s another thing to say we don’t know or we can’t scientifically identify what the causes of this problem are. But there is a greater risk of mortality for certain causes in Huelva, in southwestern Spain, including diverse cancers. I think multiple studies have shown this and therefore it can’t be denied. The mortality triangle based on mortality maps that were done several years ago show how, in general, in southwestern Spain there is a greater risk of mortality for certain causes of death. In the case of Huelva, we also find that greater mortality risk and among the most important causes we consistently detected were lung cancer, bladder cancer and breast cancer.

What are the possible causes of this excess of mortality in southwest Spain? For many years we have pointed to three main possible causes: social causes, work-related causes and environmental causes. Why? Because they are linked in certain circumstances to socioeconomic problems, poverty and so on, to problems linked to the workplace and also to environmental causes. The way we understand it, they may all be interconnected, causing a greater risk of mortality in this area.

However, in my point of view a lot of the time you don’t need to have proof of the cause. If one finds that in certain areas, there is a socioeconomic problem, or there is a problem of excess heavy metals, which puts one’s health highly at risk, why do we need to look for the cause?

What I am commenting on has to do with published scientific studies, and the value or interpretation of these studies. Therefore, they are not merely opinions like someone who maybe comes from industry and thus logically defends certain interests. When the Junta of Andalusia denies or hides or minimizes certain problems and uses certain expressions very similar to those used by the industrial sector, at the very least one of them can say they are not doing enough, from the point of view I think should be a priority and that is public health. You have to grab the bull by the horns and the principle of precaution needs to be applied. Many actions in the political scope need to be done and not continuing to deny the problem, or cover it up, or minimize the problem, or even worse: putting the blame on the citizens themselves.

To say that that the health problem in Huelva or of other areas in the southwest of Spain, that are well-documented and thoroughly studied, doesn’t really exist, that to me is indicative of a very low democratic level. I think we have to opt for radical solutions. What one cannot do is put a ticking time bomb in a certain place and just sit and wait and not do anything and expect things to go well. And the case of the phosphogypsum stockpiles is just one case therefore this needs to be taken very seriously and we need to act radically. The administration there needs to act promptly to avoid certain problems from occurring in the future.

**Entrevistador:** Is it dangerous, the waste found in…

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** Look, about that, I’ve been mayor for 20 years. Some say yes, some say no. I am not an expert. I cannot say for sure. I have reports that say they are not dangerous.

**Entrevistador:** We were in the phosphogypsum stockpiles yesterday. We had a Geiger counter that detected levels that surpassed the maximum permitted amount by 140 times what is recommended by the National Security Council.

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** Whatever you have or haven’t measured, you are not a scientist. You are not an expert. Each person tells me something different. Since I’m not an expert and since everyone says something different, while you’re saying this, the university says the opposite.

Insisto, este alcalde lo que quiere es que ningún onubense tenga preocupación por si los residuos de fosfoyesos son contaminantes, son radioactivos.

I insist, what this mayor wants is for no Huelva citien to be worried whether the phosphogypsum waste is radioactive.

**Entrevistador:** This regeneration plan presented by the company Fertiberia only affects 500 hectares out of the approx. 1200 hectares. Why does it only affect…?

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** Look, sorry I don’t…I mean…I don’t know about the issue with the company.

**Entrevistador:** Well they presented the plan here in a meeting.

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** No, it affects 700 hectares, not 500.

**Entrevistador:** And why doesn’t it affect…?

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** Well because they weren’t dumping in the other parts. They only dumped in the affected area. The regeneration plan affects Fertiberia where they operate. Fertiberia didn’t dump that. Acerinox dumped it.

**Entrevistador:** So the rest will just remain there for now.

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** No, it will not remain there. Restoration needs to be carried out throughout the area. Our idea is that apart from Fertiberia, to do a restoration of all the affected hectares that have been dumped on and covered in waste, be it phosphogypsum or any other type.

**Entrevistador:** So I can infer from your words that Fertiberia’s plan will happen and a subsequent one will encompass…

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** Sorry to tell you but…this cannot be…

**Andrés:** It’s just, we don’t know, we don’t know…

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** This cannot be, Andrés!

**Entrevistador:** I ask you this so there are no doubts…

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** You see… sorry, sorry, sorry.

**Entrevistador:** So we are sure of what we are talking about.

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** It’s just, no. Excuse me, this cannot be.

**Andrés:** The details are too technical.

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** Come on, sorry but I came to talk about Huelva, not about…

**Entrevistador:** Well, this is a part of Huelva.

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** No, no, no.

**Andrés:** The details are too technical.

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** Sorry, you can’t ask me such thorough questions.

**Entrevistador:** OK…

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** No sorry, and besides, we are filming! If you want you can release this.

**Entrevistador:** No, man, no.

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** Seriously, this cannot be. It cannot be this way sorry. It cannot be.

**Entrevistador:** OK.

**Andrés:** Relax, Pedro.

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** I won’t relax, damn it. It can’t be like this Andrés my friend.

**Entrevistador:** Can I ask you one last question?

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** No, not one more question. Sorry…don’t trick me, damn it. Nope, nope, it cannot be like this.

**Entrevistador:** Trick you in what way?

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** Yes. We are only talking about phosphogypsums, that’s all. What are we talking about? Not about Huelva, damn it.

**Entrevistador:** Well, I told you that…

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** No, man! I’m a journalist. And a producer. Don’t fuck/mess with me!

**Entrevistador:** çWell, I told you we were doing a documentaries about…

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** No, this cannot be. Sorry but this cannot be. It cannot be.

**Entrevistador:** Ok, ok.

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** It cannot be.

**Entrevistador:** I ask you to please not get angry with us.

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** cannot be. You ask me to come talk to you about Acerinox, not about Huelva, damn it!

**Entrevistador:** But, man…

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** No!

**Entrevistador:** Ok, ok, perfect.

**Pedro Rodríguez (Alcalde Huelva):** Of course! This cannot be! And I was afraid this was going to happen!

**Francisco Romero (portavoz de la Mesa de la Ría):** The proposal by the Estuary Board/Mesa de la Ría for the regeneration of the surrounding dams occupied by the phosphogypsum stockpiles, which are marshlands, is to remove phosphogypsums from there. We know cases of environmental disasters in Spain where the space was successfully recovered. The closest case we have to Huelva’s is the Aznalcollar case. Everyone thought to clean everything that was dumped in the Aznacollar stockpiles. Or when the Prestige incident happened and the Galician coasts were filled with tar. No one thought that it shouldn’t be cleaned, that it was impossible to remove.

Fertiberia breached the law. Fertiberia dumped phosphogypsum in a marshland so it needs to remove the phosphogypsum and comply with the sentence established by the National High Court. Marquis Juan Miguel Villar Mir was a minister in Franco’s time. He acquired Fertiberia after it was polished up by the state and sold for next to nothing. And since then it was always protected by the public administration, surviving on contracts made with the government, with the different Autonomous Communities, he’s thus a personality who’s very close to power. So close that he was involved in cases such as the so called Barcenas’ Secret Papers scandal, where he had to declare alleged donations made by to Popular Party. He declared he hadn’t made any donations to the Popular Party but he had to trade unions like CCOO and the General Worker’s Union and strangely, to strands of the chemical industry.

Certainly here in Huelva the chemical industries used employment to blackmail the citizenry. And the fear inside many citizens of Huelva to go outside and complain and protest about the environmental situation we are suffering, it’s precisely this fear that has been instilled in the issue of employment…the loss of jobs.

But we have the figures and they show that there are less and less workers in the chemical industry, because these industries are disappearing. The current Environment Minister Isabel García Tejerina, is a clear example of the revolving door syndrome that exists between the public and private sector, considering she is currently the Environment Minister and before that she was a board member of Fertiberia, Villar Mir’s company. There seems to be a collision of interests in defending it. On the one hand, how she needs to treat Huelva’s environment, being the Environment Minister, and on the other hand, the fact that she is very close to Villar Mir and Fertiberia.

***Imágenes televisión.***

**Entrevistador:** Don’t you want to talk about the phosphogypsum stockpiles? Do you think it’s a good idea for Huelva? What do you think about this minister? It’s a plan that competes with the environment. Do you think the plan is good or not?

**Isabel García Tejerina (Ministra de Medio Ambiente):** The ministry will fulfil everything it dictates. This case was filed before the court. So, there is a project we have to comply with that we will absolutely make sure is accomplished.

**Entrevistador:** Can it be accomplished considering you are…

**Isabel García Tejerina (Ministra de Medio Ambiente):** It will be accomplished.

**Entrevistador:** Considering you are an advisor for Feriberia, having a position there…

**Isabel García Tejerina (Ministra de Medio Ambiente):** Especially because of that, since I am now minister of the environment and my responsibility is for Spain’s environment to be perfectly preserved, and this, I will do.

**Francisco Romero (portavoz de la Mesa de la Ría):**

If there is political will and there is money to do it, we believe that it is indeed possible to remove the phosphogypsum. If we see the administrations continue to support Fertiberia by covering up the phosphogypsum issue, the fight will carry on. We will use all the tools at our disposal to avoid precisely this from happening. From recurring to the judiciary and the administration to protesting in the street, we will not allow, and don’t want the phosphogypsum to be covered, we want them removed. And we will continue fighting like this until we achieve it.

**Manifestante:** We came to defend the rights of Huelva’s citizens, to breathe nature, fresh air, rather than all this cancer they are making us suffer.

**Manifestante 2 (chica):** Huelva is in a geographically privileged place, like a small Mesopotamia in between two rivers, and well, there is an alternative way of life.

**Manifestante 3:** The citizenry of Huelva sadly did not have the means to get by over the years. So they had to undersell themselves in the 60s in order to bring home some income.

**Manifestante 4:** We suffer so many incidences of cancer, a product of the high levels of pollution we’ve been suffering for over 50 years.

**Manifestante 5 (señora):** I am from Seville. I’ve been here for many years and I’ve seen a lot of cancer, in family members and everything. A lot of cancer.

**Manifestante 6:** We are here so that once and for all, those responsible can do something about that trash that was abandoned there over 40 years ago.

**Manifestante 7:** We should have protested way before, but unquestionably, we must keep protesting until they get rid of it.

**Manifestante 4:** To those people who over decades and decades have been scraping off what they could from their job, and their money. By scaring them in any way you can do as you like with them. That’s why the Huelva citizenry takes so long to respond. But they will respond.

**Manifestante con micrófono**: Huelva is fed up of this situation. And Huelva is eager to say: enough is enough.