

Foam in River Olona, phantom company sequestered

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To all appearances, the company had been closed for years, but was **one of the main causes of foam in the Olona river**. **INSA Srl**, a company that had produced detergents since 1934, situated between Fagnano Olona and Cairate, has been **sequestered** by the State Forestry Corps, after a careful investigation by the Public Prosecutor's Office in Busto Arsizio, in particular, by the Assistant Public Prosecutor, **Nadia Calcaterra**, and by the Environmental Crime Team, led by the commander **Davide Corbella**, who coordinated the work of **ARPA** (the regional agency for environmental protection), of the **local police**, of the **Forestry Corps** and of the **Environmental Protection Squad** of the Carabinieri. And so, after months of complaints and of warnings, there has been a positive outcome also to the relentless work of the associations that protect the river, who kept the attention focused on what was happening in the water of the river, which was often full of foam. The results of the investigation were presented on the morning of 24 May, in the Public Prosecutor's Office, to the approval of the acting Public Prosecutor, **Eugenio Fusco**, who complimented his officers.

The assistant, Nadia Calcaterra, then explained what had been done to discover the polluters. "We brought together all of the files on cases of pollution of the river water and, after a series of checks of the drains of all of the companies that had authorisation, we came to this company, whose situation was truly alarming, not only in terms of respecting environmental regulations, but also safety at work." A number of crimes were confirmed, starting with the **total lack of dumping licences**. Corbella explained, "We found over **2000 cubic metres of waste stored in an area**, with a complete lack of systems preventing the pollutants from flowing into the drains. There was mud and waste dating back to the last time the Olona overflowed, in the 1990s."

Whenever it rained, this material was washed away by the water and ended up directly in the river. The type of material is still being examined by ARPA, who are doing tests on samples, and who provided important support during the inspection phase. Corbella continued, "Of course, there are surfactants and hydrocarbons present, but what was more disturbing was discovering that neither the rain water nor the cesspit were treated, and the

waste water ended up directly in the Olona.” This discovery was possible thanks to the use of colouring agents, which traced the route of the liquids as far as the river.

Finally, there is the safety at work issue. As mentioned, the building that housed INSA appeared to have been abandoned for years, and this is also why it was difficult to discover the causes of the river pollution.

At the time of the inspection, there were fewer than ten people working, and violation of a whole series of safety at work regulations was discovered. The only positive aspect was that all of the employees had regular contracts. Three people, the managers of the company, have been charged with a number of offences.

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