Spain´s water wars

"I will not send a single drop of water from the Ebro", said Pasquall Maragall, before November´s Catalan elections. Now, Mr Maragall hopes to "paralyse" the Spanish government´s plan to move water from north to south.

The government has condemned Mr Maragall´s stance as "unpatriotic". Last month the Spanish government formally requested European Union finance to meet a third of the E 15,000m cost of the whole project. It claimed a victory when the European Commission conditionally approved E80m to pay for a part of it. Mr Aznar has called the plan "an act of solidarity" between Spain´s regions.

The water balance between the wet north, where a third of Spain´s rain falls, and the dry south, where 60% of the land is semi-arid, continues to inflame passions. Critics say the entire plan is outmoded and designed to benefit the government´s business friends. They claim it will cost twice as much to transport the water as it would to produce more water through desalination. Greens say it will destroy the Ebro delta wetlands. The government of Aragon supports the Catalans, calling the project a "method to rob the poor to feed the rich".

Glossary: stance = postura

1. **Read the text and answer the questions about it. Use your own words. Your answers will be assessed from 0 to 1 each. (3 points as a whole).**

a) What is Mr Maragall´s attitude towards the government´s plan?
b) What is an act of solidarity?
c) Why was the plan criticised?

2. **Transform the following sentences according to the instructions. Answers will be assessed from 0 to 0.5 each. (2 points as a whole).**

a) Transform into reported speech: *"I will not sent a single drop of water from the Ebro".*
    Begin: *Mr Maragall said......*
b) Transform into passive: *The European Commission conditionally approved E80m.*
c)   Complete: *If the plan were outmoded...*
d)   Write a question to which the following words are the answer: *The government of Aragon.*

3. **Find one synonym in the text for each of the words bellow. 0 to 0.25 each (1 point as a whole).**
a) demanded   b) obsolete   c) devastate   d) backs

4. **Write about one of the following topics, between 70-100 words (0-4 points)**

a) Why is water so important in our lives?
b) How can NGOs (non-governmental organizations) help people?

Answers

Question 1:

a) He´s against the government´s plan to send water from the north of Spain to the southern regions, which are more arid. He will try to stop that plan.
b) Mr Aznar thinks that his plan to provide the south with water from the north is an "act of solidarity". It means that some regions of Spain would give generously some of their water to those which receive less rain.
c) There are two reasons why some people dislike the plan. First, it would only be good for business people related to the government. Second, it would be twice as expensive as to turn sea water into drinkable water.

Question 2:

a) Mr Maragall said (that) he would not send a single drop of water from the Ebro.
b) E80m were conditionally approved by the European Commission.
c) If the plan were outmoded, it wouldn´t be appropriate for the present. (*possible answer*)
d) Which other government supports Catalonia?

Question 3:

a) requested
b) outmoded
c) destroy
d) supports

Question 4:

Sample composition on topic A.

<u>Why is water so important in our lives?</u>

There are very important reasons why water is essential in our lives. The problem is that very often people are not aware of them because they take water for granted.

In the first place, humans and animals need to drink water to keep on living. In fact, a large percentage of our bodies is composed of water. Secondly, trees and plants can´t live without water either. And without plants, many animals wouldn´t have anything to eat, for example cows, therefore, we couldn´t eat their meat or vegetables ourselves.

In conclusion, water is a source of life. Without it, no living being would exist in the planet Earth.