

**Question for written answer E-6547/2010
to the Commission
Rule 117
Jens Rohde (ALDE)**

Subject: Impact assessments

The compulsory impact assessment for all new proposed legislation was introduced with a view to enhancing the transparency of the EU's legislative process and ensuring balanced legislation which takes account of its economic, social and environmental impact. Experience with impact assessments has led some operators both within and outside the Institutions to criticise the quality of such assessments. Most recently the January 2010 issue of the medical journal PLoS (vol. 7:1) published a study on the influence of British American Tobacco (BAT) on the form taken by EU impact assessments. It concluded that BAT, together with a network of other major firms and the European Policy Centre (EPC) think-tank, had managed to influence the shaping of impact assessments in such a way that they favoured business by focusing in particular on the economic costs and neglecting the social and environmental impact, including health impact.

According to the study, this influence was to a large extent made possible by the strong direct input from the EPC think-tank and BAT as 'covert' partners. In an interview with present and former Commission staff members, conducted as part of the study, there was no-one who was aware of BAT's role in the EPC lobbying campaign in favour of compulsory impact assessments.

Is the Commission aware of this study, and if so what is the Commission's view of its conclusions?

Does the Commission consider that it has had the wool pulled over its eyes, and what does it propose to do in future to ensure transparency regarding the interest groups behind lobbying campaigns?

What working methods did the Commission employ to ensure that economic, social and environmental impacts were given equal weight in the impact assessment as far as is possible and relevant to this policy area?