

**Question for written answer E-006859/2012
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Christa Klaß (PPE)

Subject: Reduction in the use of plastic bags

The German environmental organization *Deutsche Umwelthilfe* has noted in a background paper on biodegradable plastic bags:

'Biodegradable plastic bags do not constitute a more environmentally friendly alternative to plastic bags made of fossil raw materials. They still consist chiefly [70%] of crude oil, are not recycled owing to the mixture of plastics with different material properties and are not composted in spite of their alleged compostability. At the same time, owing to their fossil and renewable raw material components, biodegradable plastic bags combine the disadvantages of both materials. On the one hand, they do not lead to a complete replacement of fossil raw materials, and on the other hand they have an increased environmental impact in growing the raw materials (e.g. land use, eutrophication, acidification, ecotoxicity, and higher energy and water consumption).'

The German Federal Environmental Agency has also taken a very critical stance on biodegradable plastics. It therefore awards the environmental label 'Blue Angel' in Germany only to bags which consist of at least 80% recycled plastic material, but no other bags. The objectives of the 'Blue Angel' label are to protect the environment, health, the climate, water and natural resources.

1. Is the Commission aware of the negative environmental impacts and properties of biodegradable plastics?
2. Is the Commission aware of the background, objectives and *modus operandi* of the German environmental label 'Blue Angel'?
3. Has the Commission sufficiently taken into account the above information above in the debate on possible measures to reduce the use of plastic bags?