

**Question for written answer E-002323/2014
to the Commission
Rule 117
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)**

Subject: Plans for the Jessica-funded construction of a second rowing channel in Plovdiv, Bulgaria

The Commission and the European Investment Bank have developed an initiative to support urban development. Thanks to the Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas (Jessica) financial engineering instrument, Bulgaria can allocate part of its EU structural funding to investments in projects forming part of the relevant integrated plans for sustainable urban development and regeneration.

The municipality of Plovdiv plans to use Jessica funds to construct a second rowing channel parallel to the existing one. This decision was taken without any public consultation, despite strong opposition from local people, who argue that the construction will destroy an existing forest that is part of the Natura 2000 network. Furthermore, local citizens' groups argue that the city of Plovdiv has greater urban and social needs than the construction of a second rowing channel parallel to the existing one. In their view, one such need is to repair the pavements on several of the city's streets, which will improve ambient air quality. Plovdiv is one of the European cities in which the PM10 limit of 50 µg/m³ was exceeded on a very high number of days. However, the municipality of Plovdiv is not discussing alternative uses of the Jessica funds with its citizens.

1. Does the Commission agree that the use of Jessica funds should be decided after proper public consultation with citizens so as to identify sustainable solutions and satisfy urban and social needs?
2. What measures will the Commission take to urge the Bulgarian authorities to use the Jessica funds in accordance with the principles of this programme?