

**Question for written answer E-008985/2015  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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**Subject:** Drilling in the Ionian Sea and breach of Directive 2013/30/EU and the Aarhus Convention on public participation in the decision-making process

The Italian Ministry of Economic Development has granted a 'a liquid and gaseous hydrocarbon exploration permit under reference DR74AP'. As can be seen from the authorisation, the Ministry previously sought the opinion of interested local entities who, with the exception of two who did not respond, all expressed negative views.

Despite this, the permit was granted just the same. No other form of participation was undertaken.

With regard to offshore operations in the hydrocarbon sector, Directive 2013/30/EU seeks to ensure that 'the public is given early and effective opportunity to participate in the decision-making' in line with the Aarhus Convention (recital 15).

For offshore exploratory operations, Article 5 of that Directive provides for 'early and effective public participation' (para 1). 'Where public participation has not been undertaken' (para 2), the Member States should give the public the opportunity to express comments and opinions 'before decisions to allow exploration are taken' (subparagraph d) and in that case 'due account is taken of the results of the public participation' (subparagraph e).

In the light of the above, does the Commission think that issue of permit 'DR74AP' is in accordance with the letter and spirit of the European directives and complies with the Aarhus Convention, particularly Article 6?

Does the Commission intend to undertake any initiatives in this regard?