

**Question for written answer E-015642/2015
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Nessa Childers (S&D)

Subject: Environmental impact assessment of cable undergrounding

The Irish Government has indicated that it intends to install a North-South 400kV energy interconnection project, with overground energy lines.

An alternative proposal is that the lines be placed underground to reduce the impact on health and damage to heritage, the landscape, land values and agricultural practices.

It is also claimed that this underground option would not require an environmental impact assessment (EIA) pursuant to Directive 2011/92/EU, on the grounds that this practice does not entail a significant impact on the environment and nor is it included in the Annexes, particularly Annex II.

1. With reference in particular to Annex II, point 3(b) of the Directive, could the Commission advise as to whether the interpretation above is correct?
2. If no EIA is required, does the Commission believe it is in the interests of sound environmental policymaking to exempt such works from the scope of the Directive?
3. If an EIA is necessary, however, could the Commission elaborate on the legal framework and requirements to be met?