

**Question for written answer E-003723/2018
to the Commission**
Rule 130
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Subject: Wood pellet exports to northern Europe

Many coal power stations, for example, Drax power station in the north of England, are converting to biomass. As a result of the conversions, intense pressure has been put on the wood pellet market, as vast volumes of pellets are being exported from southern European countries (such as Portugal) to northern ones, particularly the UK. Under that process, power stations receive CO₂ reduction certificates.

However, studies have been published which call into question the CO₂ reduction certification system for biomass which has travelled more than 40 km to a power station. Thus, the carbon footprint of the pellets travelling from southern to northern Europe may be worse than the footprint generated by burning coal. What is more, that practice could result in forests in southern Europe becoming even barer, contributing to the desertification of the interior regions, which are already severely socially and economically depressed.

What is the Commission's assessment of this situation? Do mechanisms exist which could make the issuing of CO₂ reduction certificates conditional on the distances between the biomass extraction site and the power plant?