

**Question for written answer E-006288/2018  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Richard Sulík (ECR)**

Subject: Increased mining in the Upper Nitra region

The Nováky power plants in Slovakia obtain their lignite from the Hornonitrianske Bane Prievidza (HBP) mining company as a service of general economic interest, and electricity customers contribute some EUR 100 million per year for the operation of the system.

The technical lifespan of the Nováky power plants, which are practically the HBP mining company's only client, is coming to an end in 2021. Nonetheless, the mines have announced plans to extend their activities to a twelfth mining field, which will operate until 2034 and cost EUR 30 million. These new mining activities will also require additional investments: the diversion of the river Nitra, a railway track, a high-pressure natural gas pipeline, fibre cables and power lines.

At the same time, a plan was put forward in November 2018 to transform the Upper Nitra region, which provided for the closure of the mines but made no mention of the possible opening of a twelfth mining site. At the end of the service of general interest in 2023, funding for the mines is set to continue, with the new objective of helping with the phasing out and diversification of activities. What is more, Slovakia is depending on EU funding.

1. Is the Commission, in the context of the Paris Agreement and the EU energy strategies, monitoring the plan to open another mining area?
2. In the Commission's view, given that the technical lifespan of the electrical power plant is coming to an end and there is a general shift away from coal mining, would authorising further mining be consistent with these objectives?
3. Could the expansion of mining activities affect the EU's financial contribution to the transformation of the region?