

**Question for written answer P-000396/2015
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Keith Taylor (Verts/ALE) and Molly Scott Cato (Verts/ALE)

Subject: England's use of European Structural and Investment Funds and its obligations under Directive 2001/42/EC, the Aarhus Convention and Article 5 of Common Provisions Regulation No 1303/2013

Thirty-nine local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) have been created, covering all of England. Each LEP prepared a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for its area without public participation and without the SEP undergoing a strategic environmental assessment.

On the basis of the development proposals contained in the SEPs, the Government agreed to 39 Growth Deals for each LEP area, again without public participation or an environmental assessment of the Growth Deals. The agreement included funding from UK sources and European Structural and Investment Funds.

Local authorities are obliged under law to cooperate with LEP activities (i.e. SEPs and Growth Deals) by s.39A(9) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

1. Is it permissible for European Structural and Investment Funds to be used by a Member State (such as the UK is doing) to circumvent the requirement for ensuring that plans and programmes with significant environmental effects are subjected to an environmental assessment and public participation at the strategic level under Directive 2001/42/EC, the Aarhus Convention and Article 5 of Common Provisions Regulation No 1303/2013?
2. Is it true that European Structural and Investment Funds are being granted to the UK to fund the preparation of plans by LEPs, which do not allow public participation as required by the Aarhus Convention?