

**Question for written answer E-006992/2012
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Involvement of the French company Vinci in Khimki motorway project

The French company Vinci is the leader of a consortium known as the North West Concession Company, which has signed a concession contract for the first section of a motorway between Moscow and St Petersburg in Russia. The road is routed through the Khimki Forest, one of the last remaining forests of important environmental value in the Moscow region. There is a strong local opposition to this route.

In 2011, an investigation carried out by the well-known NGO network CEE Bankwatch¹ showed that the North West Concession Company is made up of a complex web of offshore entities and tax havens. Suspicions of corruption have been vindicated by the fact that the Russian government changed the status of the Khimki forest illegally to allow for the chosen route. While it has been widely recognised that the route is not the most advantageous, private interests in property development and favours to those involved with close ties to President Vladimir Putin appear to have been behind the decision, rather than public interests.

At the same time, there have been serious human rights abuses. Local activists involved in peaceful campaigning to change the routing have encountered threats and physical violence by the police.

- Is the Commission aware of the involvement of this French company in this controversial project?
- What conclusions does the Commission draw from the Bankwatch report?
- Do the activities of Vinci in this project violate existing EU legislation?
- Does the Commission plan to take action with regard to Vinci's activities in this project?

¹ http://bankwatch.org/documents/Vinci_oligarchs_taxhavens_Khimki.pdf