

**Question for written answer E-006999/2012
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Rio+20: EU environmental strategy

There is general consensus that Rio+20 has marked the end of international practices that have predominated for several decades in the field of the environment. These media jamborees, at which the entire international community agrees on a minimum, have shown their limitations. While the topics on the agenda, whether on the green economy or marine protection, were relevant, the deadlock on concrete progress and the noted absence of national political leaders leave us with mixed feelings about the summit outcome and invite us to rethink our approach.

In the light of the above, the Commission is asked to answer the following questions.

1. The concept of natural capital could not be defined in Rio. How does the Commission wish to give content to this concept at EU level?
2. The green economy is one of the keys to hauling ourselves out of the crisis that continues to batter our economic equilibrium. Despite the first encouraging decisions (the energy/climate package), does the Commission intend to give renewed impetus to its environmental policy in the short term?
3. Lastly, when we in the European Union are binding ourselves, correctly, to ever higher environmental standards, Europeans often feel – quite rightly, in my view – that they are suffering from distortions of competition due to ever increasing environmental dumping by third countries. The weakness, or indeed the complete absence, of controls at the EU's external borders on compliance with environmental standards by third countries raises the issue of reciprocity in trade. What is the Commission's goal as far as securing greater reciprocity in international trade?