

**Question for written answer E-010511/2012
to the Commission**
Rule 117
James Elles (ECR)

Subject: UK High Speed 2 (HS2) rail link - environmental impact assessment (EIA)

The UK Government has declared that its proposals for HS2 will be approved using the 'hybrid bill' procedure (a British legislative procedure pursuant to which acts of legislation are adopted by Parliament). HS2 Ltd proposes to undertake an environmental impact assessment (EIA) in the period leading up to the placing of the hybrid bill before Parliament, and to have the EIA presented to Parliament at the same time as the hybrid bill process begins. It is intended that this will enable the required outcome of the EIA process – an environmental statement (ES) – to be considered by Parliament within its deliberations.

There are concerns as to whether the parliamentary process will truly allow the ES to be taken into account before the development is allowed to go ahead, as the EIA Directive requires, particularly given that the UK Government has confirmed that MPs from the governing coalition will be instructed to vote in favour of the HS2 bill.

In light of this approach, does the Commission:

1. consider that the hybrid bill process provides an adequate mechanism for defining or constraining the development of the project, or proposing mitigation measures, as required by the EIA Directive?
2. consider that the hybrid bill process provides sufficiently for possible review of the decision as required by Article 9 of the EIA Directive?