

**Question for written answer E-010514/2012
to the Commission**
Rule 117
James Elles (ECR)

Subject: UK High Speed 2 (HS2) rail link - Habitats Directive

With reference to the Habitats Directive, could the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Does the Commission believe that the UK Government has complied with its obligations under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive in coming to its decision to proceed with HS2 and in choosing a route for this new line? Can the Commission review whether the UK has ensured that its national legal regime precludes the risk that activities undertaken in connection with the construction of HS2 could cause deterioration of a protected habitat in a manner that is likely to have significant effects on the site's conservation objectives?
2. Does the Commission consider that the UK Government has discharged its obligation to carry out a screening exercise before deciding to proceed with HS2, as required by the Habitats Directive ?
3. Does the Commission consider that the UK Government has complied with its obligation to undertake a screening exercise at the plan and project stage of HS2, as required by the Habitats Directive?
4. Can the Commission review whether the UK Government has carried out an appropriate assessment for the whole plan for HS2, including Phase 2, as required under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive?
5. Does the Commission consider that the UK Government, in assessing the sustainability of the route for HS2, has complied with its obligation to take into account 'in-combination' effects when deciding whether a plan or project is likely to have a significant impact on a Natura 2000 site?