

**Question for written answer E-000995/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Shale gas - public consultation

We wish to draw the Commission's attention to our concern about the way in which the public consultations on shale gas are being conducted. The questionnaire does not meet the basic criteria for public opinion surveys of objectivity and accuracy.

The first question already contains two mistakes. Describing shale gas (which is a normal gas, just extracted using a different method) as an 'unconventional fossil fuel' and the use of the word 'anyway' immediately makes the respondent feel negative towards it, or at least creates an air of suspicion. The list of potential 'challenges' has 18 points, whereas the list of benefits has only 11. In addition, the list of 'challenges' repeats the same aspects, which suggests bias and may affect the response and create a negative climate around the exploitation of shale gas in Europe.

The suggestions offered in the questionnaire concerning a lack of transparency and public information on licenses, permits, the use of chemical additives and 'new' problems related to water quality and quantity – which do not apply and have not been proven – in areas where operations are carried out are an indication that the survey was drawn up on the basis of preconceptions and also of a wish to indirectly influence respondents' attitudes and their opinions on the extraction of shale gas.

In this regard we would like to ask why the survey was formulated in this way.

Who personally was responsible for the content and layout of the questionnaire?

What action does the Commission intend to take at this stage and what corrective mechanisms does it intend to apply to ensure that the results of the consultation exercise are objective?