Question for written answer E-001353/2013
to the Commission
Rule 117
Struan Stevenson (ECR)

Subject: Invoking the precautionary principle for the health impacts of wind turbines

The precautionary principle is detailed in Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and 'may be invoked when a phenomenon, product or process may have a dangerous effect, identified by a scientific and objective evaluation, if this evaluation does not allow the risk to be determined with sufficient certainty.'

Accordingly, the Commission states that the precautionary principle may only be invoked when the following three preliminary conditions have been met:

1.   identification of potentially adverse effects;

2.   evaluation of the scientific data available;

3.   the extent of scientific uncertainty.

In its answer to Written Question E-010250/2012, the Commission highlighted that uncertainty still exists over the impacts of industrial wind turbines on human health. The Commission also stated that it was evaluating the potentially adverse effects in conjunction with the WHO, with a particular focus on a recent peer-reviewed report, which found that wind turbines do have a negative impact on human health. Therefore, all three of the preliminary conditions needed to invoke the precautionary principle have been met.

However, the Commission website states that 'in most cases, European consumers and the associations which represent them must demonstrate the danger associated with a procedure or a product placed on the market, except for medicines, pesticides and food additives.'

1.   In the light of this information, can the Commission clarify how European consumers can demonstrate the danger associated with a procedure or product?

2.   Given that those citizens whose health is affected by living close to industrial wind turbines are rarely, if ever, represented by associations, how does an individual inform the Commission that the product is having a negative impact on their health?