

**Question for written answer E-002871/2013  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

**Paweł Robert Kowal (ECR) and Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)**

**Subject:** Public consultation by the Commission on the extraction of shale gas

In late December 2012, the Commission launched a public consultation on the extraction of shale gas, with a view to amending legislation on the exploration for and extraction of hydrocarbons from unconventional sources in the European Union. However, the structure of the questionnaire on the extraction of shale gas does not meet the standards of objectivity and reliability required for sociological research: the use of the phrase 'unconventional fossil fuels' in the title could suggest that shale gas is an unconventional gas, although it is the same as other natural gases, just extracted from different deposits; this may make respondents suspicious and put them off the research in general. The questions relating to the benefits and risks of the extraction of shale gas have not been worded in the balanced way which is obligatory for such questionnaires: 11 of them relate to positive aspects, whereas 18 relate to negative aspects.

The content of the questions requires specialist knowledge from respondents on the area in question, although the aim of the research is to identify the opinions of the public, not experts. In addition, for the first 30 days of the consultation the survey was only available in three European languages, which significantly limited the opportunity for many EU citizens to take part in the consultation.

It is also hard to understand why respondents from all EU Member States have been asked to give their general opinion on shale extraction throughout Europe, rather than in their specific home countries.

It is worth highlighting the fact that the development of this sector would benefit from regulations on the extraction of shale gas being examined at the level of the countries involved, taking local factors into account and using an individualised approach, rather than examining regulations at European level. The relevant legislative provisions are already in place in many countries, for example Poland, and the supremacy of national legislation in the area of fossil fuels was confirmed by the Treaty of Lisbon, which means that there is no need for supranational solutions.

1. What aims did the Commission wish to achieve by publishing this survey?
2. Were experts in the field of sociology asked to review the draft questionnaire, and if so who were they?
3. Are there any plans to issue a revised questionnaire which complies with sociological principles?