

**Question for written answer E-007922/2013
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Evelyn Regner (S&D)

Subject: Making public consultations/online surveys conducted by the European Commission more user-friendly

In the course of its 'Interactive Policy Making' (IPM) initiative launched in 2001, the European Commission makes regular use of public consultations and online surveys to seek the opinions of citizens and stakeholders before it develops new policies and legislation. These public consultations are, in principle, a very good tool for bringing Europe closer to its citizens.

There has, however, been recent criticism about the user-friendliness of the public consultations, and more specifically the public consultation on the new EU occupational safety and health policy framework. It normally takes a bit of time to be able to answer all the questions carefully. When the questionnaire is completed online, however, and the respondent goes over the time limit of around 90 minutes, the answers are deleted before the questionnaire can be submitted. While it is possible to download the questionnaire as a pdf document, it is not mentioned anywhere on the website that the answers can only be saved for around 90 minutes and that it would therefore be advisable for respondents to save the whole document on their own PC in order to avoid losing data when the time limit is exceeded.

Since it cannot be assumed that all citizens fill out the questionnaire at the same speed and need no longer than 90 minutes to do so, the consultation does not appear to be very user-friendly. One of the features of a citizen-friendly Europe should, however, be that it takes the diversity of its citizens into account.

1. What does the Commission intend to do about this lack of user-friendliness in its public consultations?
2. What could be done to ensure that all citizens are able to take part in such online surveys?
3. How would the Commission envisage taking the diversity of European citizens into account? Would it be possible, for example, to make use of other survey instruments for IPM exercises so as to reach people who are less computer savvy and/or have no Internet access?