

**Question for written answer E-001279/2014  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Isabelle Thomas (S&D)**

Subject: Effects of the Water Framework Directive on water mills with hydroelectric potential

It would seem that the way Member States are implementing the Water Framework Directive differs somewhat from one country to another, and that some provisions are consequently open to interpretation.

Water mills with hydroelectric potential raise a question requiring arbitration. Some Member States consider that they should be demolished because they are an obstacle in the way of ecological continuity. Others cite their lack of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as justification for keeping them to generate electricity. We are confronted here with two ecological demands: restoring the physical condition of watercourses and producing CO<sub>2</sub>-free hydroelectricity.

The environmental performance of water mills ought therefore to be assessed equally in the light of their capacity to produce clean energy, and even on their heritage value.

1. Can the Commission say whether, from reading the framework directive, water mills must automatically be viewed as obstacles to ecological continuity?
2. Can it clarify whether the hydroelectric potential of water mills is recognised in the EU's energy legislation or whether this is planned for the near future?