

**Question for written answer E-003993/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Mitro Repo (S&D)

Subject: The EU's strategy for the Arctic region and the scope for improving transport links to the Arctic Ocean

Northern Lapland and the Barents Sea region have enormous natural resources. The race for the Arctic has begun, but the European Union still lacks vision and a sense of mission as to how the region should be exploited.

At present, the transport links of the European Union and of Finland to the oil and gas fields of Norway and North-eastern Russia and to the European end of the Northern sea route operate purely overland. The rapidly increasing needs for transport require a cost-effective and ecologically sustainable transport system to be developed for the region. A way must be found of improving sea and particularly rail links with the Arctic region.

The European Parliament has asked the Commission and Council to propose a clear political view, priorities and objectives and practical measures with a view to establishing a comprehensive EU strategy for the Arctic region.

In view of this and of parliamentary questions that have been tabled previously on the subject:

- When will the Commission put forward a comprehensive strategy and action plan for the Arctic region?
- How will the Commission support the three EU Member States with territory in the Arctic – Finland, Sweden and Denmark –, which cannot act by themselves in the region?
- Does the Commission have any plans for improving and supporting sea and rail transport links with the Arctic Ocean through Member States with Arctic territory, particularly Finland? Would it be possible to improve sea and rail transport links with the Arctic Ocean, drawing on the Connecting Europe Facility which the Commission has launched with EUR 50 bn in funding?
- How will the Commission/the External Action Service make use of the existing and effective Northern Dimension in the Arctic region?
- What kind of cross-border cooperation has the Commission planned with Norway and Russia, in whose territorial waters most of the possible energy resources are located?