

**Question for written answer E-014467/2015
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Richard Howitt (S&D)

Subject: The Essex Estuaries SAC (UK0013690) and the Blackwater Estuary SPA (UK9009245)

The UK Environment Agency has given permission to the decommissioning operator Magnox to continue to make nuclear fuel element debris (FED) discharges into the estuaries despite the permit to do so having expired.

The UK Environment Agency did not screen nor require an appropriate assessment prior to deciding 'not to enforce' the lack of a valid permit while Magnox applies for a variation and appropriate process is conducted.

With reference to the above points:

1. Is this action consistent with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive?
2. Does the UK Government decision breach Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive?
3. Will the Commission ask the UK Government to halt these potentially unlawful discharges pending the outcome of an appropriate process, with appropriate screening and assessment under the Habitats Directive?