

**Question for written answer P-003999/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)

Subject: COSTA project - Atlantic routes to the Azores and Madeira

COSTA ('CO₂ & Ship Transport Emissions Abatement through LNG') is a project intended primarily to study the feasibility of using liquefied natural gas (LNG) as an alternative ship transport fuel in the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and the Atlantic, not least on routes to the Azores and Madeira. LNG reduces ships' operating range, and the geostrategic position of the Azores and Madeira therefore constitutes a potential asset as regards the LNG supply on transatlantic routes; that being the case, the COSTA project opens up considerable prospects for these outermost regions (ORs).

COSTA aims to complement the results achieved in a similar project in the North Sea and the Baltic ('LNG North Sea and Baltic project'), in which significant developments are already occurring in the field concerned. However, the only models to have been tested to date are for Mediterranean shipping lanes and not for deep-water Atlantic routes, for instance to the Azores and Madeira. That is why, given the importance and the length of these routes, and in order to prevent the ORs from being placed at a competitive disadvantage in relation to the other partners in the project, it is essential for the initiative, which ends this year, to be continued in the form of a COSTA II project designed to cover the characteristics and specific features of the Azores and Madeira routes.

In the light of the foregoing, and bearing in mind the strategic significance of the COSTA project for the environmental sustainability of the 'Motorways of the Sea':

1. Can the Commission confirm that it will support the continuation of the above initiative by financing a COSTA II project, thereby meeting the unanimous expectations of the partners in the current project?
2. Given that the Azores and Madeira lie in a particularly useful geographical position for transatlantic routes, does the Commission agree that specific studies and pilot projects should be carried out in order to assess the feasibility of setting up an LNG supply terminal and to explore points related to strategy and competition, financing, infrastructure, technology and logistics, the environment, and safety and security?