

**Question for written answer E-000306/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)

Subject: Mining in Costa Rica

1. Is the Commission aware of the legal action that has been launched to the tune of over USD 1 billion by the Canadian mining company Infinito Gold against the Costa Rican Government because it rejected the company's plan to build an open-pit gold mine in a tropical rain forest? A mine of this kind could lead to the clearance of 190 hectares of rainforest, which is home to many already endangered species, such as the green macaw.
2. Part of the basis for this legal action is an investor state dispute settlement mechanism provided for in a trade agreement to which Costa Rica is party. The Commission may be aware of misgivings about such mechanisms, for example those expressed by parts of the British press, in light of ongoing negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. Whilst it is important that a balance be struck between preventing abuses (such as discrimination and unfair practices) against business investors and protecting investments, what steps is the Commission taking to ensure democratic prerogatives are fully enshrined in EU trade agreements?