In response to a previous written question (January 2005) from myself on outlining steps to strengthen employee ownership throughout the European Union as a significant contribution to the Lisbon Objectives, the Commission indicated that there were many research possibilities under the 5th and 6th Framework Programmes. These included a benchmarking study to be conducted by the Dublin Foundation and the establishment of a High Level Group of independent experts to drive the process forward.

Can the Commission now confirm what employee ownership specific research embracing the social dialogue aspects, as opposed to work focussed on financial participation, have been undertaken within the Framework Programmes? What were the findings of the benchmarking study relating to social dialogue aspects (as opposed to financial participation) and how have they been disseminated? Further, can the Commission confirm exactly what actions (other than the financial barriers work) have been or will be initiated by the Expert Group, the level of participation in this group from Member States, and that the participants appointed to this group are in fact both independent and expert in the field of employee ownership?