

**Question for written answer E-010943/2013
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE)

Subject: Changes to the methodology for calculating Member States' structural deficits

On 19 September 2013, the *Wall Street Journal* and several other news sources reported that EU officials in the Commission's Output Gaps Working Group had tentatively approved a change in the methodology used to calculate Member States' structural deficits¹. The *Wall Street Journal* also reported that the new methodology was expected to have a very substantial impact on the deficits of some Member States, for example halving Spain's estimated structural deficit for this year and cutting it by two thirds in 2014.

1. Is the Commission aware of the *Wall Street Journal* article?
2. Does the Commission agree that technical changes to the methodologies underpinning the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) which could have a significant impact require the full involvement not only of Member State officials, but also of the European Parliament in its capacity as co-legislator of the revised SGP ('six-pack')? If not, why not?
3. Does the Commission agree that technical changes on this scale are a risk to the credibility of the revised SGP?
4. Can the Commission clarify the reasons for the revision of the current methodology?
5. Can the Commission publish details of the estimated impact of the revised methodology on the current output gaps and deficits of all Member States?
6. Can the Commission clarify the expected impact of the revised methodology on the policy recommendations that various Member States have received under the Excessive Deficit Procedure?

¹ 'Austerity Seen Easing With Change to EU Budget Policy', Wall Street Journal, 19 September 2013.