

**Question for written answer E-010978/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Terni steelworks

Acciai Speciali Terni (AST) is a leading global manufacturer of rolled stainless steel plate. On 7 November 2012, the Commission approved Outokumpu's acquisition of Inoxum provided that certain assets, including AST, were sold to third parties. The divestment should have taken place, in accordance with the procedures laid down in Regulation (EC) No 139/2004, by May 2013. The purpose of the divestment requested by the Commission is to ensure that there is effective competition on the European cold-rolled steel plate market. To date, the procedure has still not been completed and AST remains one of Outokumpu's industrial assets.

This situation is in danger of harming the competitiveness of the Terni site, which is causing serious concern to workers as well as national and local authorities, not least given the risk of reduced production volumes which will affect AST's market positioning, and given increased competition pressure owing to a lack of investment in technology and in the business organisation. The Commission pledged to be attentive to AST's economic sustainability and competitiveness, including during the transition phase.

According to recent press reports, however, the Commission has given Outokumpu until the first quarter of 2014 to finalise the divestment of the Terni steelworks.

1. What are the reasons behind the Commission granting this additional extension when it is necessary to complete the divestment procedure rapidly in order to safeguard the value of the company and the conditions for its future development?
2. What guarantees can the Commission provide that the buyer will be a European industrial investor in the sector, with a suitable business plan capable of ensuring that the site's production and employment levels will be maintained?
3. What action will it take to ensure that this uncertainty over AST's future will be resolved quickly to enable production to start again?
4. Do the Commission's EU industrial policy objectives, set out in its communication of 12 October 2012 and the Action Plan for the European Steel Industry presented on 11 June 2013, identify an essential role for steel production and the steel industry?
5. What assurances can it provide that special steel production in Terni will continue to remain a key part of EU industry and that AST will not be bought by a non-European buyer for purposes other than the prospect of enhancing and developing the site?