

**Question for written answer E-001722/2014  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: SGL Carbon - closure of Narni plant

SGL Carbon, one of the world's largest producers of carbon-based products, has in recent years been implementing a harsh restructuring programme targeting its Italian plants (in Ascoli and Narni).

The Ascoli plant was closed down in 2007, and a temporary total shutdown affected the Narni plant for the whole of 2009. A staff mobility plan was launched at the Narni plant in 2010 and has led to a significant reduction in the size of the workforce.

Now, citing reasons such as overheads, excess production capacity and poor competitiveness at the Narni site, the Group's Management Board has announced the possible closure of the plant. Adopting an approach that is both dilatory and lacking in clarity, the Board is refusing either to provide the further information requested by the trade unions, local industry organisations and the local and national authorities, or to communicate its final decision.

Given that Italy has until now been Europe's second largest steel producer – after Germany – and that the production system not only in Italy but in the whole of Europe is largely dependent on electric furnaces that require the particular graphite electrodes manufactured at the Narni plant, closure of the site would have extremely negative implications.

In fact, in addition to being a severe blow to the local economy by leading to significant job losses and the huge cost of reclaiming an industrial site that might be abandoned, closure of the plant would also imply serious difficulties for the markets and industrial fabric linked to it. The output of many Italian and European companies is dependent on the electrodes manufactured at the Narni plant, and their withdrawal from the market could lead to serious production difficulties for these companies. It might also lead to an increase in the price of circulating materials, with serious implications for the import/export market and the risk of increased dependence on imports from countries outside the EU.

In the light of this, and in view of the plans to relaunch and support the European iron and steel industry, could the European Commission clarify the following:

1. what scope does it have to make the Group's Management Board respond to the requests for further information and provide a clear answer as regards its intention to close the Narni plant?
2. What scope does it have to prevent the company from making a final decision without notifying local and national institutions in due time?
3. What is its strategy for tackling emergencies such as this that have heavy economic and social implications for the industrialisation of Italy and Europe?