

**Question for written answer E-008905/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Noise abatement measures along railway lines

Mitigating the impact of noise, in particular by measures concerning rolling stock and infrastructure, is a stated priority of the TEN-T for the construction of the railway infrastructure. In the coalition agreement, the German federal government decided to halve rail noise by 2020 and to prohibit noisy freight wagons from 2020.

To this end, freight wagons are to be refitted with noise-reducing brakes. 50% of the cost of this refitting will be subsidised by the federal government. The maintenance of the noise-reducing brakes involves higher operating costs. So that the enterprises concerned do not suffer any competitive disadvantage, they are to receive financial support for the higher maintenance costs up to 2020. This funding will accelerate the conversion process.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Is the subsidisation of operating costs up to 2020 (similar to the current German funding Directive *laTPS*), which is intended to help achieve the TEN-T priority of noise reduction along railway lines, compatible with the EU State aid rules, if the aid is intended to offset the increased maintenance costs of noise-reducing brakes both for those freight wagons which have already been converted under the *laTPS* funding Directive and for those which are to be converted by a deadline which has yet to be set and to prevent the enterprises in question suffering a competitive disadvantage?
2. Will it say - if it considers that subsidising operating costs is not compatible with the EU State aid rules - how the competitive disadvantage resulting from higher maintenance costs are to be offset and how incentives can be created for rapid conversion?