

**Question for written answer E-010284/2014  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Merja Kyllönen (GUE/NGL)**

Subject: Secure employment and a livelihood in place of zero-hours contracts

EU labour law lays down the rights and obligations of both employees and employers in all Member States. It does not, however, cover every point related to employment protection legislation. There is, for example, no specific legislation at EU level to regulate what are called zero-hours contracts.

The Commission set out its thinking on insecure employment contracts in its Green Paper COM(2006)0708 entitled 'Modernising labour law to meet the challenges of the 21st century'. The Member States have failed to reach a consensus, and that is why no new legislation has been proposed. EU judicial practice (Case C-313/02 (Wippel)) implies that the directive on part-time work working should be adapted as and where necessary to take account of employees on call.

The purpose of work is to guarantee a livelihood, but zero-hours contracts do not do that. Zero-hours contracts are a form of employment contract contrary to the whole labour market model on which collective agreements are based and they also pass on the business risk to the employee. Workers employed on zero-hours contracts are not protected against dismissal and not entitled to sickness benefits. One effective way to deal with zero-hours contracts would be to create more secure jobs and a future for young Europeans and restore their confidence in work. Because more flexible working may sometimes be justified in exceptional cases, the changes in working patterns should be viewed globally and a programme of measures put in place to make work human and guarantee fair competition among businesses. Will the Commission raise this matter again and propose that regulation – covering employment contracts in all their different forms – be brought to bear in order to bring about more decent working conditions, rule out a pernicious race to the bottom, and prevent risk from being shifted from companies to employees?