

**Question for written answer E-010459/2014  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

**Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea (ALDE)**

Subject: Irregularities in the Spanish electricity market

In 1997 the Spanish electricity market was liberalised, and at the same time a system was set up to provide electricity suppliers with compensation for the payments they had been required to make. The subsequent rise in gas and oil prices resulted in an overpayment to electricity suppliers, and they now have a combined debt of approximately EUR 2.5–3 billion which the Spanish Government has never claimed back.

In practice, the Spanish electricity market is dominated by three companies whose profit margin is twice that of other major European electricity companies. Many people who have held public office, including former presidents and ministers, now work in the electricity sector – this is the most common example of the revolving door phenomenon.

1. In the Commission's view, do the overpayment to Spanish electricity suppliers and the Spanish Government's decision not to claim back the debt it is owed contravene the EU's competition policy, and do they constitute illegal state aid?
2. Does the Commission feel that there is a lack of competition in the Spanish electricity market, as already observed in 2012 (SWD(2012) 310 final)?
3. Does the Commission believe that the Member States need to introduce legislation to regulate the sector more strictly and prevent conflicts of interest from arising?