

**Question for written answer E-009074/2015
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Julie Girling (ECR)

Subject: Voluntary coupled support for sugar beet

According to the latest DG AGRI information, ten Member States are seeking to apply voluntary coupled support for sugar beet under the new Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) rules. This is in spite of the decision taken under the CAP's single Common Market Organisation (CMO) Regulation to abolish sugar beet production quotas from 2017 onwards.

Abolishing the sugar quota regime whilst permitting voluntary coupled support for sugar beet appears to be a contradictory policy. Furthermore, it sends a negative signal that the EU is rowing back on the previous reforms to liberalise the EU sugar sector.

1. Has the Commission analysed the effect voluntary coupled support for beet sugar will have on cane refiners and beet producers in countries where the payment is not made?
2. How can the Commission justify to taxpayers this expenditure, particularly when
 - a. half of the expenditure appears to be on subsidising the Polish sugar sector, which is one of the lowest-cost producers in the EU, and
 - b. the payments are meant to be for exceptional circumstances, but are to be applied in 10 of the 19 EU sugar beet producing countries?