Question for written answer E-011489/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Barbara Kappel (ENF)

Subject: Splitting of energy price zones

The German-Austrian energy price zone is a prime example of successful cross-border cooperation in the energy market. In the energy market summer package announced on 15 July 2015, the Commission once again expresses its support for the concept of large, cross-border energy price zones, to be established by means of market coupling, improved cross-border electricity flows, demand elasticity and a stronger intraday market. In the German-Austrian energy price zone, all these instruments already work extremely well. The coupled markets are closely interlinked, liquid and make for more efficient resource use and lower energy prices. The calls from neighbouring countries to split this price zone, a move which the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) is considering, are linked to the desire to overcome border bottlenecks. More specifically, Poland and the Czech Republic are insisting that electricity transport between Germany and Austria should not impose a burden on their networks. At the same time, however, they show no signs of wishing to join what is an open energy price zone.

1. Does the Commission agree that splitting a successful energy price zone, such as that established between Germany and Austria, or redrawing the boundaries of that price zone would be at odds with the thinking behind the energy union project and counterproductive for producers, network operators, traders and consumers?

2. Does the Commission plan to broaden the remit of the ACER so that it can address bottlenecks in Member States, and not only at borders?

3. How does it plan to resolve the problem of contradictory regulatory approaches to price zones, with a view to establishing an effective energy union?