

**Question for written answer E-003557/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Sotirios Zarianopoulos (NI)

Subject: Inadmissible exemption for manufacturers from provisions of EU directive concerning excise duty on natural gas

While the working classes in Greece have seen their incomes steadily eroded, especially as a result of energy prices, leaving households without power or unable to pay their electricity bills, and with further benefit cuts and further taxes in the legislative pipeline, the Syriza-Anel Government is now adding insult to injury following an amendment tabled by party members seeking to introduce concessions for manufacturers, exempting them from excise duty on natural gas with retroactive effect from 1 January 2016.

This exemption, provided for in Directive 2003/96/EC, is in line with current EU policy. At the same time, according to a survey carried out in 2014 by the Buildings Performance Research Institute Europe, around 125 million people in the EU are unable to afford heating.

Given that the exemption in question is provided for under EU law, what view does the Commission take of the favouritism being shown to the business sector in the name of competitiveness, while hard-pressed working class households unable to afford power or heating will once more be unfairly called upon to foot the bill?