

**Question for written answer E-003691/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Re-establishing a protectionist framework in the aviation sector to benefit European airlines

At the most recent Dubai airshow, the European Commissioner for Transport stated that Gulf airlines were major investors in need of a market. In other words, the Commissioner believes that inviting these companies – which are known to receive vast public subsidies, something that is off limits to their European counterparts under EU rules – on to the EU market is in Europe's best interests. We are therefore expected to welcome European airlines' losing market share on the grounds that our industries sell aircraft to the Gulf carriers, aircraft that our long-established airlines can no longer afford.

In his article 'Unlevel playing field? Ah yes, you mean protectionism', Jaap de Wit, a professor at the University of Amsterdam, aptly demonstrates how the EU is primarily responsible for the lack of competitiveness of European companies. Indeed, Europe's airlines have been put at a serious disadvantage in respect of their international competitors, and even sent to the wall, by successive waves of deregulation.

There is an urgent need to re-establish a protective framework for our airlines, as the Gulf countries have done for theirs. Does the Commission intend to rethink its strategy in this regard?