

**Question for written answer E-005991/2016
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Notis Marias (ECR)

Subject: Reduction in VAT on accommodation and catering services on the island of Lesbos

The massive influx of refugees and irregular migrants on the island of Lesbos, especially from September 2015 onwards, has caused a sharp decline in tourism there, in contrast to the increase elsewhere in Greece.

In April, May and June 2016, 9 904 visitors arrived, compared with 29 106 over the same period last year.

It is estimated that, by the end of the season, just over 20 000 tourists will have come to Lesbos, compared to over 75 000 in 2015, a shortfall of 55 000 tourists or 495 000 nights.

According to the Lesbos Hoteliers Association, each missed night is equivalent to the loss of at least one-and-a-half days' pay and a consumption shortfall of five kilogrammes of fishery and farm products. A total loss of 742 500 days' pay and a total consumption shortfall of at least 2 475 tonnes of food are the most conservative estimates.

Those employed in the Lesbos tourist industry are accordingly seeking immediate action in response to this situation and are requesting relief assistance.

In view of this:

Can the Commission, as part of the Troika, agree to an immediate reduction to the September 2015 level of VAT on accommodation and catering services on the island of Lesbos, as requested by its tourist sector?