

**Question for written answer E-006127/2016  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Marie-Christine Arnautu (ENF)**

Subject: Copernicus space programme

On 28 April 2016, the French Court of Auditors sent to the Prime Minister of France an interim ruling on the Copernicus space programme. Although the Court does not call into question the European dimension of the project, in which France is one of the key players, it does make a number of criticisms of the division of competences between the European Commission and the European Space Agency, of the failure to take sufficient account of what is at stake for industries involved and of the policy on data access.

On the industrial stakes, the Court noted that 'the application of a principle of European preference, where necessary, would merely be the equivalent of the practices adopted for similar supplies by all the European Union's major competitors'.

Concerning the data supplied by the Copernicus satellites, the Court queries the 'full, open and free-of-charge' access to data, which, it says, will ultimately benefit the major digital players, such as Google, rather than European SMEs, which do not have the resources to handle data on such a rapid and massive scale.

In the light of these reservations, does the Commission intend:

1. to clarify the division of tasks with the European Space Agency?
2. to put in place protective measures beneficial to European industry?
3. to review the policy on open and free-of-charge access to the data?