

**Question for written answer E-006863/2016
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Hugues Bayet (S&D)

Subject: Repossession by the state of the Caterpillar factory site in Gosselies

The US management of the Caterpillar company announced on Friday, 2 September 2016 that it plans to close its factory in Gosselies, leading to the loss of 2200 jobs at the site.

This sudden and scandalous announcement is a huge blow to thousands of families and leaves the public authorities facing some very urgent issues.

One of these issues is the future of the 98-hectare site itself, which is in a location of strategic importance for the economic development of the whole region.

It is therefore vital that the Belgian public authorities take control of the site as quickly as possible so that it can be sold or converted for other uses.

Can the Commission use legal instruments or forms of aid – or does it plan to take specific action – to enable public authorities to take control of strategic industrial sites following the sudden closure of factories or plants by the companies that own them?

As things stand, does the Commission plan to make funds available for the purchase of the site? EDRF funds, for example, are not always used up. Could they be mobilised for this purpose?