

**Question for written answer E-006958/2016  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

**Josep-Maria Terricabras (Verts/ALE)**

Subject:     Modifying VAT for feminine hygiene products (II)

In its answer of 31 July 2016 to my written question on modifying VAT for feminine hygiene products (E-004689/2016), the Commission acknowledges that 'already now the VAT Directive allows Member States to levy a reduced rate to women's sanitary protection items. Nevertheless, most Member States currently do not avail themselves of this opportunity and tax such products at the standard rate'.

It should be borne in mind that women across the European Union are affected by a gender pay gap amounting to around 16.3% (2013), reaching 29.9% in some Member States such as Estonia, and standing at 21.6% in Germany and 23% in Austria<sup>1</sup>.

The Commission's action plan towards a single European VAT area aims to provide increased flexibility for Member States with respect to reduced rates of VAT.

Is the Commission not considering including in its legislative proposal a mechanism to promote reduced VAT on feminine hygiene products, given that they are essential items for such a significant proportion of the European population?

What view does the Commission take of measures such as the authorisation for Member States which already have super-reduced VAT in their legislation to include feminine hygiene products in this category, and thereby help reduce the cost of these essential items for women in Europe?

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/document/index\\_en.htm#pay](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/document/index_en.htm#pay)