

**Question for written answer E-008200/2016  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

**Xabier Benito Ziluaga (GUE/NGL)**

Subject: The end of the 'social bonus'

The Spanish Supreme Court has issued a ruling recognising the right of electricity companies to be compensated for amounts spent on providing a discount to consumers known as the 'social bonus' under Royal Decree 968/2014, which the electricity companies concerned had challenged in court. To comply with the ruling, the Spanish state will have to provide the electricity companies with compensation that could amount to EUR 500 million.

The ruling referred to EU legislation in the shape of Directive 2009/72/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 concerning common rules for the internal market in electricity.

1. Does the Commission take the view that the social bonus, the aim of which was to combat energy poverty, really does infringe the directive concerned, given that it fulfils the requirements as regards legal certainty, transparency, non-discrimination and verifiability, and that it is proportionate given that we are in the grip of an energy crisis?
2. Having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 14 April 2016 on meeting the anti-poverty target in the light of increasing household costs (2015/2223(INI)), and Directive 2012/27/EU on energy efficiency, is the Commission considering taking any action to ensure that poor regulation in Spain does not affect consumers, as was the case in the wake of the Supreme Court's first ruling in 2013?
3. What alternative steps does the Commission propose in order to help families who cannot afford energy and do not have a decent standard of living?