

Question for written answer E-008737/2016
to the Commission
Rule 130
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Subject: Enforcing State aid rules in the EU

State aid in the EU is, in principle, forbidden, as it disrupts the functioning of the single market. There are a number of exceptions to that rule, but they must all be announced by the Member States to the European Commission.

According to the report presented in October 2016 by the European Court of Auditors (ECA), irregularities were found in 50 of the 220 cases scrutinised in which EU funding was linked to State aid. What is more, the report makes it clear that the Commission was aware of those irregularities. Auditing bodies in the Member States also found far fewer violations of state aid rules than the Commission and the ECA did, which shows that they have not been paying enough attention to this issue in their audits.

The ECA auditors recommended that the Commission take corrective action if funds are provided in a way that is not compatible with EU law. They also suggested that the Commission should approve major projects only after internal state aid clearance, and ask Member States to notify aid where needed.

Given that more than one-fifth of projects were found to be in breach of EU rules governing support for companies within the framework of cohesion policy, what corrective measures will the Commission take to tackle the numerous violations of the rules that apply in this area?