

**Question for written answer E-000127/2017  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Bus services in local public transport

The population of the Federal Republic of Germany wishes to have a modern local public transport system. In order to improve local public transport and the protection of the environment, Lower Saxony intends to pay fixed subsidies of up to 33% to transport undertakings operating local public transport services if they purchase new buses for local public transport. The new buses must comply with certain minimum requirements. In addition, a special payment of up to 10% may be made if the bus thereby taken out of service fulfils certain negative criteria.

The amount of funding is to be defined in advance for each vehicle size. Certain framework conditions must be fulfilled: standards are defined for minimum environmental performance, disabled facilities, minimum comfort levels, minimum service levels for local public transport and passenger information systems. The funds are earmarked for a period of ten years.

1. Does the provision of such subsidies raise state aid issues, where the aid is granted to all undertakings irrespective of their ownership?
2. Are there concerns about the fact that undertakings having a public service contract, with in-house procurement, providing the transport service for profit or as a subcontractor are eligible for such funding on an equal basis, provided that these buses are operated for public transport services in Lower Saxony?
3. Can the amount of funding for the buses differ according to their environmental performance, standard of comfort or other specific equipment features, and is it admissible for an operator who loses a contract to repay only a proportion of the funding received depending on how many years of the ten-year commitment period remain?