Question for written answer E-001131/2017
to the Commission
Rule 130
Barbara Kappel (ENF)

Subject: ECB low interest rates policy

The eurozone is currently facing low, zero or even negative interest rates. We have reached a point where a country like Italy can issue bonds at a negative interest rate, meaning they get a premium for creating more debt. In addition to that, the ECB is buying up bonds. It would appear, therefore, that the ECB is encouraging the creation of public debt in two ways: by setting zero interest rates and by buying up bonds.

1. What is the Commission's assessment of both of these policies? Does it consider them to fall within the mandate of the ECB, which is to ensure price stability? If so, how?

2. Does the Commission consider the solving of balance sheet problems to fall within the remit of price stability policy?

3. How does the Commission reconcile Member States receiving premiums for creating more debt with their obligations under the Maastricht Treaty and the Growth and Stability Pact, especially their obligations in relation to public debt?