

Question for written answer E-003742/2017
to the Commission
Rule 130
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Subject: Uniform application of EU competition rules for all Member States and companies

EU competition rules are intended to ensure fair and equal conditions for businesses, whilst leaving room for innovation and SME development. As a result, large firms cannot use their dominant position on the market to stamp out competition.

An increasing number of reports and studies, however, suggest that the 15 'old' Member States, and those that joined the EU after 2004 – as well as companies from countries that have subsequently joined the EU – are being treated in an unequal manner. There are differences, for example, in the application of state aid law and competition law (abuse of dominant position).

As regards state aid, there is a feeling that the subsidies granted by the 15 'old' Member States are much less likely to be disputed by the Commission than those granted by the 'new' EU countries, in term of both the amounts and the number of decisions involved. In the area of antitrust law, however, companies in the countries that joined the EU after 2004 are actually exercising their rights under that law more often in order to prevent their competitors from abusing a dominant position. The number of cases rejected by the Commission nevertheless seems to be disproportionate.

In the light of the foregoing, could the Commission address concerns that are being expressed as to the uniform application of competition rules for all countries and companies in the EU?