

**Question for written answer E-003860/2018
to the Commission**
Rule 130
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Subject: Risks posed by Chinese investments in the Western Balkans

In May 2018, the EU-Western Balkans summit was held for the first time in 15 years. Its main objective was to enhance the EU accession perspective for the countries of the region. A number of specific actions were identified by the summit that should help integrate the region both within the Community and internally. For example, the Union pledged to co-finance strategic infrastructural investments in the region.

Unfortunately, complicated and lengthy tendering procedures make the governments of Western Balkan countries more eager to use credit lines provided by China. For example, Chinese funds have already been used to finance the following construction/upgrade projects: the Bar-Boljare motorway in Montenegro, the airport in Tirana, Mihajl Pupin Bridge in Belgrade, the Belgrade-Bar railway line and the Stanari power plant in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

These investments stimulate local economic growth to a large extent, yet the issue of their completion sparks many controversies with regard to legal clarity and transparency (in particular with respect to public procurement). A large number of high-level corruption charges were also brought in connection with these projects. Furthermore, and which is of particular concern, Chinese investments undermine the political determination of individual countries to pursue EU integration efforts.

What actions does the Commission plan to take, under the strategy for the Western Balkans which was presented in February, in order to react to the risks posed by Chinese activity, including Chinese investments, in the region?