

**Question for written answer E-001816/2019  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Demetris Papadakis (S&D)**

Subject: Low birth rate in Cyprus

Cyprus has a birth rate 1.32, the third lowest in the EU, where the average is 1.59.

The four possible root causes of this decline are the lower wages of workers, the relatively short duration of parental leave and the low maternity and paternity benefits compared to other EU countries, and the very low government spending on health.

European Statistical Office data put the annual earnings of Cypriot workers at EUR 24 249, compared to an EU average of EUR 37 085. According to a European Parliament report, Cyprus is lagging far behind regarding both the duration of parental leave and the level of maternity and paternity benefits. In Cyprus, the mother is entitled to paid leave of 18 weeks, of which one week is compulsory, while the father is entitled to two weeks' paid leave.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

- What measures will it take to achieve a work-life balance for European workers and to avoid such discrepancies between EU Member States?