

**Question for written answer P-007702/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Commission plan to replace current General Block Exemptions Regulation (EC) No 800/2008 of 6 August 2008 (GBER)

The Commission has published a proposal, intended to replace current General Block Exemptions Regulation (EC) No 800/2008 of 6 August 2008 (GBER), which would introduce an upper limit on aid of 0.01% of GDP. Above this threshold, support programmes for disabled persons would be subject to compulsory notification.

This regulation is an attack on the interests of disabled persons and deepens the divergences between Member States. In effect, it will mean a significant reduction in access to support for people from countries with lower GDP. The upper limit – adjusted for Polish conditions – would mean that instead of PLN 3 billion being earmarked for a programme to supplement the salaries of the disabled, only PLN 150 million would be available without notification. In Poland's case, this would result in a twentyfold reduction in the provision of support.

A limit formulated in such a way is not a good means of avoiding distortions of competition, since it is not the value of the programme, but the amount of support paid to the beneficiaries or projects which reflects its impact on the market. This restriction is therefore in violation of the principle of equal treatment for all Member States in the internal market, as it discriminates against countries with lower GDP.

In Poland there are more than 2 million disabled persons of productive age. However, only 240 000 of them receive support in the form of salary supplements. This support is dispersed among more than 18 000 different companies.

- Is the Commission aware that uncertainty surrounding whether support will be authorised, or whether there will be delays in the payment of salary supplements, is resulting in mass lay-offs of disabled persons?
- How does the Commission intend to improve the professional prospects of disabled persons and increase their employment rate?