

**Question for written answer P-013307/2013**  
**to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Diogo Feio (PPE)**

**Subject:** Statements by Vice-President Olli Rehn on EU consolidation and growth

The media have given ample coverage to remarks made on 21 November 2013 by Commission Vice-President Olli Rehn at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, particularly his assertion that Europe has reduced its deficits by half in the last two to three years and can now allow itself to slow down the pace of consolidation, and that Europe should focus on the quality of growth-friendly measures.

At the moment a number of Member States, specifically those subject to adjustment plans, are preparing to present and implement extremely austere budgets largely determined by strict budgetary control measures imposed by the European institutions. Attempts by the governments concerned to put forward measures which would make the deficit goals more flexible and slow down the pace of budgetary consolidation to allow adoption of effective measures to encourage growth have been categorically rejected by technical experts from the Commission, European Central Bank (ECB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

1. How does the Commission view Vice-President Olli Rehn's comments, bearing in mind that the budgets of several Member States are currently in the process of being presented, negotiated and approved?
2. Does the Commission not consider the political declarations made by the leaders of the Commission and the IMF to be clearly at odds with the rigid positions adopted by the same institutions' technical teams when addressing the budgetary and economic decisions required to be taken by Member States subject to adjustment programmes?
3. Does it not feel that this discrepancy and the delay on the part of the technical teams in adopting these political guidelines have unfairly prejudiced Member States, particularly those which have tried to properly comply with adjustment programmes and are bound by them? Does it not feel that such compliance merits, in return, greater flexibility in the rate of budgetary consolidation so that growth friendly measures can be put into effect? Would it not be reasonable to establish a permanent system of incentives to reward compliance?
4. What is the Commission's assessment of the latest data concerning the European economy? To what extent are Vice-President Olli Rehn's comments compatible with said data?