

**Question for written answer P-001513/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Merja Kyllönen (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Incorporation of the Finnish State's Metsähallitus (Forestry Board), which operates as a commercial enterprise

The Finnish State's Metsähallitus (Forestry Board), which operates as a commercial enterprise, administers one third of the forests in Finland, taking responsibility in this way for 12.6 million hectares. This represents a substantial national asset, which it has been possible to manage well and in a balanced manner using a commercial enterprise model.

In the Forestry Board's forestry operations, all other operations, such as short- and long-distance transport and logging, have been put out to tender, with the exception of planning of logging. There has been no criticism of the existing system on the market, nor has it been suggested that it distorts competition or competitive neutrality. The particular strength of the way in which things are currently organised is that it involves multipurpose administration of natural resources viewed as a totality.

Now, however, Finland's national legislation is being amended on the alleged grounds that the EU compels the State to carry out forestry operations in company form.

In the autumn of 2015, I already put a question on this subject to Commissioner Vestager (E-012977/15), to which indeed I received a satisfactory reply. Now I should like to receive from the Commission a broader overall assessment of the situation, as the Finnish Government is persisting with its incorporation plans, claiming that they are justified because of the necessity for change arising precisely from EU regulation.

Does the Commission acknowledge that EU legislation to some extent requires changes in the organisation of Finland's Forestry Board to transform it precisely into a company? Are other EU Member States, such as Austria, where state ownership of forests is organised in much the same way as in Finland, amending their national legislation in accordance with requirements laid down by the Commission so that state-administered forestry can only be carried out by a company? Does the Commission consider the current mode of organisation of the Forestry Board to be in conflict, for example, with the directive on public procurement?