

**Question for written answer P-001767/2019
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Marco Valli (EFDD) and Marco Zanni (ENF)

Subject: Violation of the deficit rules by France

The 2019 stability programme published this Wednesday by the French government provides for an increase in the deficit-to-GDP ratio to 3.1% following the adoption of urgent measures to support household income announced in December. This is above the threshold set by European rules. The Commission has so far expressed no objection to the impact of these measures on the budget and has even indicated that it is prepared to accept a possible breach of the deficit ceiling in the framework of the forthcoming evaluation of national programmes. By contrast, it adopted an extremely inflexible approach in negotiating with Italy, considering a 2.4% deficit to be unacceptable. Moreover, since 2008 France has breached the 3% deficit ceiling 9 times, without any sanctions ever being imposed on it. President Juncker has in the past justified the exceptions granted to France by stating 'because it is France', an attitude that has reinforced the perception that the Commission is guilty of double standards in implementing the budget rules.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

- 1) Will it initiate a corrective procedure against France for excessive deficits?
- 2) Does it not consider that it should seek to tackle the increasingly unsustainable and unfeasible budgetary deficits as part of a thorough overhaul of the budgetary rules applicable to all Member States?