Question for written answer P-002316/2019
to the Commission
Rule 138
Guido Reil (ID)

Subject: Redundancies at RAG

In June 2019, 200 employees of RAG, a German coal-mining company, were made redundant. Many of them had worked for up to 29 years underground and had been left with health problems and, in some cases, serious disabilities.

Although mining stopped on 31 December 2018, decommissioning work is set to continue until at least 2022. Staff are needed to carry out this work and long-term post-mining tasks, such as mine drainage and groundwater management. No social criteria apply in that connection.

The 200 redundancies constitute a breach of EU subsidy rules and the procedure for authorising subsidies. Billions of euros in subsidies were approved subject to the proviso that ‘employees made redundant by RAG could take early retirement, be retrained or found new jobs’[1].

Subsidies to cover exceptional costs can still be paid if this serves to alleviate the social and environmental consequences of pit closures.

In that light of the official statements made by the authorities and the subsidy authorisation procedure, what view does the Commission take of the redundancies and RAG’s actions?

Will subsidies to cover exceptional costs continue to be authorised and paid to RAG?

What steps is the Commission taking to guarantee the social sustainability of the pit closure process?

[1] Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, answers to the questions put in the Commission consultation paper on the impact of the expiry of Regulation (EC) No 1407/2002 on State aid to the coal industry, p. 3.