

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0111/02

by Sami Naïr (PSE)

to the Commission

Subject: Usinor merger involving closure of French plant at Biache Saint-Vaast

The Usinor Group is at present embarking on a merger process which will result in the closure of an efficient production plant at Biache Saint-Vaast, France. The closure will have a particularly serious effect on employment, with the loss of 440 jobs.

Will the Commission therefore state whether the proposed merger is compatible with the administrative and competition rules in force within the EU?

Will it also state whether the Usinor Group, which is both partner and player in the deal, has received any public aid under European programmes during the last 15 years? If so, precisely how much, and under precisely what conditions?

Given that Usinor's strategy involves the closure of a major production plant in an area which is already severely affected by unemployment, what means does the Commission have for demanding that any such aid received by the company be repaid?