

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3088/03
by Bruno Gollnisch (NI)
to the Commission

Subject: Pechiney-Alcan merger

Recently, the Commission decided, without further investigation, to authorise the merger of Alcan and Pechiney, which now form the world's leading aluminium group, while concentrating their decision-making structures in North America. Whatever the press may say, this is a hostile takeover.

Three years ago a similar merger between the two companies failed after Alcan refused to give up its plant in Norf. However, the Commission is now authorising it to choose between Norf and three of Pechiney's French sites (Neuf-Brisach, Annecy and Rugles). It seems clear that the latter sites will be sold off.

Will the Commission provide the names of the potential buyers of the units to be sold off, specifying in particular whether they are European or non-European?

Will the Commission explain what other fundamental changes have been made to the situation to allow it to alter its opinion on an Alcan-Pechiney merger?

Will it also explain what the condition regarding 'removal of duplication' between the two companies' activities means in terms of jobs?

Given that, if Pechiney had taken over Alcan rather than the reverse, it would have come up against the Canadian legal principle of 'benefit to the country', does the Commission consider that this operation is of economic benefit to the European Union and to the European aluminium sector?