

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1333/09

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to the Commission

Subject: Commission proposals on combating unemployment

In accordance with the Commission's recommendations adopted by the ECOFIN Council on 10 February 2009, with a view to combating both the escalation of unemployment and the mass redundancies which are being seen throughout the euro zone, a number of non-binding measures have been proposed to the Member States. These measures include more flexible working hours to fit in with production needs, and implementation of the system of provisional (artificial) unemployment. In Greece and in the other EU countries these recommendations have provoked apprehensive reactions from trade unions and the world of work in general, their main fear being a generalised reduction of their incomes and consolidation of these measures after the end of the crisis.

Recognising the need to take steps to support employment, and also the justified concerns expressed by workers, can the Commission respond to the following questions?

Does it intend – and if so, how – to protect workers' incomes, so that their purchasing power is not affected, which could lead to deflation?

Will it ensure – and if so, how – that the provisional unemployment measures will really be only temporary in practice?

How will it ensure that undertakings, whether they have problems or not, will not implement 'partial unemployment' simply to reduce further their labour costs?