

**Question for written answer E-010769/2010  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Competition policy and its impact on the competitiveness of European enterprises

Compliance with the rules laid down by EU competition policy remains an imperative. Nevertheless, by fining certain airlines almost EUR 800 million for fixing the amount of fuel and security surcharges on freight transport, the Commission has clearly prioritised compliance with competition rules over maintaining jobs and the competitiveness of those enterprises.

Now that the Commission has published a new industrial policy strategy to stimulate growth and job creation, imposing astronomical fines on several airlines, calculated according to rules which are not transparent and which have a very unequal impact on the enterprises involved, calls the consistency of the Commission's policy into question.

Can the Commission clarify how these fines are calculated and the reasons why European enterprises seem to be fined more heavily than other, non-European enterprises, even though the latter were found guilty of the same offences in their countries of origin?

Can the Commission explain the considerable differences between the amount of the fines imposed for infringement of competition policy, and those imposed for other reasons, such as environmental pollution?

How does the Commission intend to reconcile the objectives of its new industrial policy with a competition policy that heavily penalises European enterprises, when other world economic powers are reducing the sanctions against their national enterprises?

Does the Commission not think there is a need to assess the impact of its policy of financial sanctions for competition infringements in terms of effectiveness and of economic and social consequences?