

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2465/10
by Edward Scicluna (S&D)
to the Commission

Subject: Energy tariffs in Malta

Is the Commission aware that utility tariffs in Malta have risen by 29% since December 2009, a figure which, according to Eurostat, means that energy prices in Malta have seen the steepest increases in the EU?

The average increase across the EU during the same period was 1%. These increases are on top of significant increases in 2008. According to figures released by the Maltese Government earlier this year, 2148 households were disconnected from the electricity supply between January and October 2009 because they were unable to pay. On an annual basis this figure represents 1.8% of all Maltese households.

In view of the fact that the households disconnected include vulnerable groups such as families in receipt of social assistance benefits, does the Commission agree that this is in direct contravention of Directive 2009/72/EC, and in particular Article 3(7), which states that "*Member States shall take appropriate measures to protect final customers, and shall, in particular, ensure that there are adequate safeguards to protect vulnerable customers. In this context, each Member State shall define the concept of vulnerable customers which may refer to energy poverty and, inter alia, to the prohibition of disconnection of electricity to such customers in critical times*"?

Does the Commission accept that Malta is acting in contravention of European law in this regard and, if so, what action does it plan to take?