

**Question for written answer E-7148/2010
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: New European regulation on State aid to the coal industry

The current European regulation on State aid to the coal industry for the period 2003-2010 brought about a period of stability in the mining sector, allowing mines with limited prospects to be closed down in order to focus more on those with greater potential. The latter benefitted from research and investment aimed at reducing pollutant emissions, such as the Ciudad de la Energía de Compostilla project in Ponferrada, the Hunosa project in Asturias, the Elcogas project in Ciudad Real, the Endesa Generación project in Aragon or the CO₂ capture and storage project headed by Vattenfall in the Brandenburg region. All these were conducted within the framework of European support for clean coal production. With respect to the drafting the new regulation:

Will the Commission take the strategic role of coal in Europe into account when it approves the new regulation?

Does the Commission believe that the 2014 deadline being considered in the new regulation for the end of State aid to mining operations is propitious for a stable legal framework to promote investment in the mining sector aimed at cleaner and more efficient energy use?

Does the Commission consider coal to be of relevance as an energy source to reduce Europe's dependency on foreign energy, which is as high as 80% in some Member States and stands at 73% in Germany, for example?

Does the Commission consider that, for security of supply reasons, a certain preference should be given to power stations that use indigenous primary energy fuel sources?