

Question for written answer E-8062/2010
to the Commission
Rule 117
Jim Higgins (PPE)

Subject: Threat to close shipyards in Italy

I understand that, according to a secret plan developed by Fincantieri in Italy, this state-owned shipyard company wanted to close three of the eight shipyards in the group, namely Castellamare di Stabia (Naples) and Sestri Ponente and Riva Trigoso (Genoa). At the moment, after an Italian newspaper revealed that plan and the unions reacted very strongly, it seems to have been withdrawn. But, as the OECD has said: 'The economic downturn has hit shipbuilding hard. New orders have contracted by up to 90% and cancellations have increased, which is likely to result in significant excess shipbuilding.' This requires the implementation of European policies if a social disaster is to be prevented.

Was the Commission aware of Fincantieri's proposals? Is it aware of the fact that, a few months ago, the Italian Government promised it would intervene (providing new orders) to support Fincantieri but is now not keeping that promise? Does the Commission intend to implement policies on a Europe-wide basis to support the shipbuilding sector, preventing social dumping and encouraging new state investments?