

**Question for written answer E-003319/2011
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Viktor Uspaskich (ALDE)

Subject: EU direct aid to businesses

EU direct aid to businesses in the new Member States often distorts fair competition. The world is developing very rapidly today, particularly where technology is concerned. Businesses that are currently receiving EU support and investing in new technologies will not be able to receive any further such aid for five years, or might never be able to receive it again. After two years, the technology and equipment become less effective and eventually obsolete. As a result, competitors in similar businesses receiving EU aid two to three years later are able to purchase more recent, better quality technology and equipment. This amounts to unfair competition. Does the Commission not take the view that the most effective form of EU direct aid to businesses in the new Member States (and which would not result in unfair competition) would be to invest in public and business infrastructure? Would it not be a good idea for the Commission to suggest some changes to the ways this aid is granted? This would give both large and small businesses the same access to EU aid, particularly since education, further training and recycling can be made part of the state's infrastructure.