

**Question for written answer E-006865/2011
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Basic banking services

As stated in the report by Mario Monti, 'A new strategy for the single market', today having a bank account has become a precondition for accessing a number of services and for fully benefiting from the single market. Nevertheless, according to a study conducted for the European Commission in 2008, 20% of adults in the EU-15 and almost half in the EU-10 (47%) still do not have a bank account, and policy responses vary widely. Moreover, the Commission itself, in the Communication 'Towards a Single Market Act' notes that citizens face problems when opening a bank account or obtaining a payment card in a Member State to which they have recently moved or in which they are not resident.

It is therefore crucial that the Commission integrates rights to a bank account and to basic banking services as the two main pillars of the European system regarding access to banking services in the new initiative.

The Commission committed to proposing in the course of 2011 draft legislation on access to certain basic banking services and made this a cornerstone of the Single Market Act. But the Commission has surprisingly changed its mind and decided that there would not be any legislation, and instead a non-binding recommendation would be published.

- On what grounds did the Commission take the decision that a recommendation was the best way to go forward? Has the Commission conducted any impact study, and if so, would it publish the methodology and the results?
- How does the Commission plan to ensure that the recommendation will accurately fulfil these objectives? If the recommendation does not fulfil its intended objectives, what action will it take? If necessary, will the Commission be proposing – possibly on the basis of Article 14 TFE – a regulation or directive in the course of 2012, ensuring that all citizens are legally entitled to a number of basic banking services?