Question for written answer E-007559/2011
to the Commission
Rule 117
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Subject: Commission response to new figures on future output of canning factories in Papua New Guinea

The Director-General of the Papua New Guinea (PNG) National Fisheries Authority, Sylvester Pokajam, has recently been quoted in the press as saying that the three tuna canning companies now based in Papua New Guinea have a daily production capacity of 480 tonnes. He also pointed out that in the near future, when four new tuna processing firms were set up, Papua New Guinea would be able to produce 1 330 tonnes a day. In addition, he considered 257 production days a year to be a level within the sustainability limits of Papua New Guinea's tuna and other fish stocks.

Taken together, these figures indicate that Papua New Guinea will produce 341 810 tonnes annually of canned tuna, the bulk of which would be sold in the EU market on account of the advantages offered by the Interim Partnership Agreement and the highly competitive prices resulting from low costs.

Total canned tuna consumption in the EU amounts to 710 000 tonnes and is covered by the Community production marketed in the EU (331 000 tonnes) and imports from non-Community countries (379 000 tonnes).

Consequently, Papua New Guinea would be in an unbeatable position to provide about 50% of the canned tuna supplied to the Community market.

The economic and social impact of the Interim Partnership Agreement would thus be such as to severely jeopardise the employment generated by the tuna industry in the EU, that is to say, 80 000 jobs in the industry itself and 554 000 in related sectors. Within the EU, those most seriously affected would be canned tuna producers in Spain (67%), Italy (18%), France (10%), and Portugal (4%). In Spain the business circles concerned have already been expressing alarm, especially in the Autonomous Community of Galicia, where the workforce of 12 000 produces 80% of Spanish canned tuna.

To sum up, the agreement would have an adverse socio-economic impact on the EU canning industry and destabilise the Community tuna market; the effects would also extend to GSP+ and ACP countries, major suppliers of canned tuna to the EU.

Does the Commission know that Papua New Guinea's total canned tuna output could rise as high as 341 800 tonnes and hence account for 50% of the canned tuna supplied to the Community market?

Is it aware of the economic and social implications that the agreement might have in Europe?

Will it allow for the above figures on future PNG tuna production in the impact study which it is drawing up?