

**Question for written answer E-009491/2011  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Kyriakos Mavronikolas (S&D)**

Subject: EU trade and relations with third countries

External trade and exchanges between the Member States and countries outside the EU are two key elements of the European economy. The challenges of commercial policy and EU relations with third countries are important topics that urgently need to be addressed, and a strategy needs to be defined to meet these challenges.

The EU is the world's largest exporter and its exports are vital for growth and employment. The Commission communication (9 November 2010) is inadequate since it does not make any provision for a genuine long-term strategy that would make it possible to bring together trade policy, external policy and development policy in the best possible way. The Commission's primary aim should be to boost the EU's trade policy so as to help strengthen its international influence and external policy. Consequently, the Commission's analyses and forecasts should take account of current factors in the world economy and their likely development in the future.

This future strategy should, among other things, take account of the needs and priorities of all European policies from environment and human rights to labour law, as well as the need to implement free-trade agreements with third countries. At the same time, it should also take account of the need to intensify the dialogue with its main trade partners such as the US, China and Japan with a view to overcoming the current obstacles to international trade, issues that were raised by the recently debated Caspary (PPE) report.

Does the Commission intend to define a genuinely innovative European trade strategy that takes account of the above factors and makes provision for coordinated EU action in third countries given that, as pointed out above, EU trade and external policy can and must reinforce each other?