

**Question for written answer E-001945/2012
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Markus Pieper (PPE)

Subject: Labour market participation among women - policies in Germany

The Commission has complained to the German Government about the planned introduction of a carer's allowance and the existing income tax rate for married couples ('Ehegattensplitting'). It held that both of these provisions would discourage women from seeking employment.

- What is the EU Commission's legal basis for its complaint to the German Government?
- Is the Commission aware that the employment rate among women in the 20 to 64 age bracket in Germany (69.6 %) is significantly higher than the EU average of 62.1 %? Is the Commission aware that the target identified by the Lisbon strategy was 60 %?
- Every person in employment makes a valuable contribution to society and social progress. A question to the Commission: do spouses who decide to stay at home in order to raise their children also make a valuable contribution to society?
- Men and women who make the choice to be stay-at-home parents are also more than averagely active in the voluntary sector, working in development associations, community politics, parents' associations, social clubs or churches. Does the Commission not think that it would be better for this voluntary activity in private and public institutions to be taken over by the state, so as to increase the labour market participation?