Question for written answer E-003021/2012
to the Commission
Rule 117
Miguel Portas (GUE/NGL), Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL) and Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union

The recently approved intergovernmental Treaty provides for the introduction of a limit for structural balance net of one-off and temporary measures. As the Commission is aware, there is a great deal of scientific controversy in the economic debate surrounding this concept, its definition and the methodologies for calculating it, making it clearly a fundamentally political issue. The concept of structural balance does not arise naturally from national Accountancy Standards. In light of this, and because there is a clear need for economic governance criteria to be applied equally to all Member States, we ask the Commission to clarify the following:

1. Will the concept of structural balance be defined in relation to the GDP trend or to potential GDP?

2. If the GDP trend is to be used, what 'smoothing' method will be applied?

3. If the method is the deviation from potential GDP, will this be based on the calculation of the Non-Accelerating Inflation Rate of Unemployment (NAIRU)? If so, what methodology will be used?

4. Which institution will be responsible for defining what constitutes an 'unusual event outside the control of the Contracting Party concerned'?

5. Which institution will be responsible for monitoring the application of the criteria and the consistency with which they are applied?