

**Question for written answer E-008205/2012  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

**Dominique Riquet (PPE)**

**Subject:** Revision of Community guidelines on funding of airports and start-up state aid to airlines flying from regional airports

The Commission White Paper 'A roadmap to a single European transport area - towards a competitive and resource-efficient transport system' (COM(2011) 0144) stresses the importance of transport and mobility for the European economy. In addition, the White Paper highlights the positive effects of investment in transport infrastructure on economic growth and job creation.

In its Communication on 'Airport policy in the European Union – addressing capacity and quality to promote growth, connectivity and sustainable mobility' (COM(2011) 0823), which substantiates the case for the Airport Package, the Commission highlights the capacity crunch in the main EU airports. In particular, the Communication refers to 'The Challenges of Growth', a study carried out by Eurocontrol, which claims that two million flights – equivalent to 10% of the expected demand – will not be accommodated in 2030 because of the lack of airport capacities, and therefore calls for existing capacities to be optimised.

The Commission is preparing to review in 2012 the Community guidelines on funding of airports and start-up state aid to airlines flying from regional airports. According to early indications from the Commission, the review will lead to the establishment of more rigorous rules on public funding for regional airports. The new rules could lead to the closure of dozens of regional airports throughout Europe, with extremely damaging consequences for the economy, employment and regional development of the regions concerned.

Given the difficulties of expanding airport infrastructure in the Member States, how does the Commission intend to reconcile the potential closure of numerous airports with the infrastructure requirements at European level?