

**Question for written answer E-011168/2012  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Frieda Brepoels (Verts/ALE)**

Subject: Unfair competition between Zaventem and Charleroi

Zaventem airport is reeling under the impact of unfair competition from Ryanair, operating from Charleroi airport. Ryanair is able to operate under different wage regulations (Ireland's) and receives substantial subsidies from Wallonia. One direct consequence is that the Belgian airlines operating from Zaventem are experiencing difficulties and are even considering leaving Zaventem, which would naturally have a disastrous impact on employment.

I have already repeatedly tabled questions to the Commission regarding this matter (cf. my questions E-004658/2012, P-007253/2011, E-005038/2011 and E-1087/2010).

On 5 December a confidential memorandum from the Belgian State Secretary for Mobility concerning an emergency plan for the aviation industry was leaked to the Flemish press. According to this information, the Belgian Federal Government seems to clearly acknowledge that there are indeed competition problems between Zaventem and Charleroi airports.

1. Is the Commission aware of the Belgian Government's plans for the aviation industry?
2. In June 2012, the State Secretary received a mandate to ask the Commission whether such measures as reducing social insurance contributions or exemption from the requirement to transfer income tax levied at source on wages and salaries would be compatible with European law. Has the State Secretary submitted these issues to the Commission? Which measures did the State Secretary submit to the Commission and what feedback did the Commission provide?
3. Can the Commission indicate the state of play with regard to possible European measures, *inter alia* to combat unfair competition with foreign airlines, as announced on 27 September 2012?
4. Can the Commission indicate the state of play with regard to the current investigation into State aid? In July 2012, Commissioner Kallas stated that the Commission would seek to complete its consideration of the issue during the next few months.