

Question for written answer E-002707/2013
to the Commission
Rule 117
Ivailo Kalfin (S&D)

Subject: Unfair commercial practices in the retail sector

The big food chains are restricting small and medium-sized producers' access to the market. Recent research carried out in Bulgaria reveals that less than 20% of the products on sale in the big food chains are of Bulgarian origin. The 'Made in Bulgaria' Union, the employers' association that conducted the research, points to unfair commercial practices as a major cause of this imbalance. In particular, the commercial discounts applied for food importers are substantially different from those for Bulgarian producers: 5-15% for the former, as opposed to 20-60% for the Bulgarian producers, almost all of whom are micro-enterprises or SMEs. Small producers and suppliers are thus deprived up front of more than half their profit.

Since the great majority of the big chains are registered in other EU Member States and are major players in the European single market, I should like to know:

- whether the Commission plans to take steps to secure market access on equal terms for small and medium-sized producers who are part of the big groups' supply chain?
- whether the Commission intends to bring forward a proposal for a general regulation on this problem, as it concerns more than one Member State; and what is the thrust of the Commission's efforts to that end?