

**Question for written answer E-005719/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Andrew Henry William Brons (NI)

Subject: Renegotiation of EU membership by the UK

Writing in the UK's *The Times* newspaper on 7 May 2013, a previous Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Lawson, stated:

'The Prime Minister has embarked on a series of preliminary talks with our EU partners, hoping to be able to renegotiate improved terms for the UK within the Union, which he can then put to the people in a referendum in 2017.

'I have no doubt that any changes that Mr Cameron (or Ed Miliband) is able to secure will be inconsequential. The theology of the *acquis communautaire*, the principle that any powers ceded by the member states to the EU are ceded irrevocably, is absolute. It is the rock on which the Union is built, and – through the so-called Passerelle Clause of the Lisbon Treaty – effectively an explicit part of the EU constitution. Moreover, to make exceptions for one member state would inevitably lead to similar demands from others and threaten a general unravelling.

'The doctrine that "more Europe" must *ipso facto* be a good thing is sacrosanct. My friends among the eurocracy assure me, too, that a precondition for any renegotiation would be that we agree to give up the UK rebate secured with such difficulty by Margaret Thatcher some 30 years ago.'

Does the Commission agree with Lord Lawson's view that substantial renegotiation of the UK's relationship with the EU would not be possible?