

**Question for written answer E-011252/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Contributions to chambers of commerce in Greece and Europe

Under the December 2012 “Memorandum of Understanding on Specific Economic Policy Conditionality”¹, the registration of enterprises with chambers of commerce will become voluntary in Greece from January 2015. However, under recent legislation², chambers of commerce have been burdened with additional and important roles, as there is a need to intensify efforts focusing on the competitiveness of Greek enterprises and absorption of European funds. This requires permanent resources. Under Greek law³, subscriptions to chambers vary, as it falls within the competence of the governing body of each chamber to determine the level of members’ subscriptions. In practice, annual subscriptions to chambers average EUR 40-50 for sole traders, EUR 75-100 for private companies, EUR 250-450 for limited companies and EUR 750-950 for banks. Given the existence of European decisions⁴⁵ according to which the mandatory subscription of enterprises to chambers is compatible with European legislation and not regarded as a type of tax in favour of third parties, and given that, from this perspective, subscription is not a barrier to the establishment of a business, but, on the contrary, a compensatory levy, will the Commission say:

- 1) What is its view on the aforementioned Memorandum obligation? Does it consider that the change to the funding regime of the Greek chambers is necessary and justified, and if so, for what reasons?
- 2) Does it not consider that the expected funding cuts for the chambers, along with the simultaneous assignment of additional roles, will result difficulties in terms of their operations, and also in terms of the objectives of market development? Does it have a relevant study on this sector?
- 3) What is the corresponding regime in the other Member States? Are there any similar systems in the EU to the one selected for the Greek chambers, and if so, what can we learn from them?

¹ <http://goo.gl/QalDri>

² Laws 3898/2010, 3982/2011, 4155/2013

³ <http://goo.gl/TE8yMs>

⁴ Decision of the European Court of 19.4.2012

⁵ Opinion No 0169/2012 of the Committee on Petitions of the European Parliament