

**Question for written answer E-002583/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Jutta Steinruck (S&D), Knut Fleckenstein (S&D), Jörg Leichtfried (S&D) and Ole Christensen (S&D)

Subject: Social dumping: business model of Norwegian Air Shuttle (NAS)

The US Department of Transportation is currently examining the application by Norwegian Air International (NAI), a subsidiary of the company Norwegian Air Shuttle (NAS), to obtain a foreign air carrier permit under the EU-US Open Skies Agreement. At the January 2014 EU-US Joint Committee meeting, DG MOVE adopted a favourable position on this application and welcomed NAI's business model as being good for consumers, competition and companies.

1. Can the Commission explain its grounds for supporting a business model that builds on social dumping by moving NAI to Ireland, which will enable the company to bypass Norwegian social and labour legislation and costs by basing cabin crew and pilots in Asia, with temporary work contracts governed by Asian countries' law?
2. Can the Commission confirm that it considers it legitimate behaviour for NAI deliberately to set up a company structure that will force its pilots to be falsely based in Thailand, thereby allowing the airline to avoid paying tax and social security contributions in Europe, where the majority of the pilots actually live?
3. Can the Commission confirm that its support for NAI – as expressed by DG MOVE on behalf of the European delegation – is backed by Member States and that DG MOVE had a mandate to give such support? Did DG MOVE establish its position beforehand with DG EMPL, and did the latter support it?
4. Can the Commission detail the steps it is taking to counter the emergence of harmful business and contractual practices in the aviation sector, such as bogus self-employment, the bogus basing of crew outside Europe, and forum shopping?