

**Question for written answer E-003717/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Hannu Takkula (ALDE)

Subject: Emphasising Sunday as a weekly day of rest

The European Sunday Alliance has recently made an appeal for legislation to enhance respect for Sunday and to promote its preservation as a work-free day and a common day of rest. Although a weekly day of rest is useful and advisable for many reasons, this initiative is problematic from the viewpoint of general freedom of religion or belief. Strengthening the position of Sunday as a day of rest would place a number of EU citizens at a disadvantage, because many religious traditions call for the celebration of other weekly days of rest. Jews, Seventh-Day Adventists and Seventh Day Baptists, for example, have their day of rest, the Sabbath, on Saturday. The freedom of religion or belief of Muslims will also be negatively affected by the prioritisation of Sunday. In fact, rather than setting one religious day of rest above others, it would be more appropriate, from the viewpoint of parity and equality, to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to celebrate the day of rest called for by each religious tradition and each individual believer's conscience. Also, from the viewpoint of those citizens with no religious affiliation or belief, it would be preferable not to dictate that everyone must arrange their lives around a day of rest promoted for religious reasons.

1. Given that celebrating a day of rest is an inseparable part of observance in many religious traditions, is it in any way appropriate for the EU to legislate in this area, making laws which would place some citizens at a disadvantage for religious reasons?
2. Does the Commission currently have plans to initiate legislation to promote the role of Sunday as a general day of rest, or is it foreseeable that such an initiative could be expected at some later date?
3. What will the Commission do to ensure equal opportunity to celebrate the day of rest called for by each religious tradition and each individual believer's conscience?