

**Question for written answer E-004664/2014
to the Commission
Rule 117
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)**

Subject: Black economy, cash payments and losses of government revenue

A few weeks ago, the Commission published a report on the fight against corruption in the EU which put at EUR 120 000 million the annual cost to the economy of corruption in the 28 Member States. The black economy which exists in every Member State serves to reduce government revenues and thus explains part of the shortfall referred to above. Four Mediterranean Member States (Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal) and Belgium are among those worst affected by the phenomenon of the black economy, which accounts for roughly 25% of their GDP. The figures for the remaining Member States are lower, although it is striking that in a country such as Germany, Europe's economic powerhouse, it should be as high as 17%.

The cash circulating in the black economy is beyond the reach of the tax authorities and therefore cannot be exploited as a source of government revenue. Likewise only a few weeks ago, Parliament adopted at first reading the legislative package on payment services, the aim of which is to encourage the use of electronic payment methods.

Does the Commission see a need for efforts to bring about a change in the attitudes of ordinary people, the authorities, self-employed persons and undertakings towards the black economy practices prevalent in Member States? Will it consider conducting campaigns to raise public awareness of the importance of paying tax?