

**Question for written answer E-004949/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Relations between the European Union and the European Patent Office

According to reports in the German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, the administration of the European Patent Office has adopted internal operating rules that, inter alia, call into question basic democratic and trade union rights, such as the right to strike and the right to union representation. More specifically, according to the newspaper, workers' right to strike is subject to the approval of the head of the European Patent Office, an arrangement that essentially abolishes any union freedom.

Given that the European Patent Office has a special and unique legal status and also has specific institutional relations with the European Union, will the Commission say:

1. Can it confirm these reports?
2. What is the regime governing relations between the European Patent Office and the European Union? What opportunities does it have to ensure that this unacceptable anti-labour regime finally ceases?