Question for written answer E-013705/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
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Subject: State aid for culture and heritage conservation

Pursuant to Article 53 of Regulation No 651/2014, State funding in the culture and heritage conservation sector has for the first time been explicitly included among activities which could potentially be seen as constituting State aid.

This measure risks causing a significant reduction in public funding for this sector, which is so vital to European identity and cultural diversity, due to doubts concerning application of the new legislation. Moreover, in many cases these activities could, under careful analysis, in no way be defined as State aid, and yet could be subjected to the same rules.

The adoption of this regulation also places an increased administrative burden on public authorities on a national, regional and local level. Due to uncertainty surrounding the law and in order to err on the side of caution, these bodies have resorted to regularly reporting funding in this sector to the European Commission as if it were all State aid, even though aid in this category is generally considered to be automatically compatible with the rules and does not require notification to the Commission.

It has also been noted that several Member States, including Italy, France and Greece, have repeatedly stressed to the Commission the need for greater legal certainty, including in view of its adoption of the communication concerning the issue of State aid.

How does the Commission intend to address this situation?