

Question for written answer E-001912/2016
to the Commission
Rule 130
Zoltán Balczó (NI)

Subject: Preventive measures by the Commission to protect EU citizens in connection with the Olympic Games in Brazil this year

At the beginning of last year, in Hawaii, which is US territory, and also in Brazil and Colombia, the Zika virus infected many people. According to the WHO, the virus, which entails a major risk of an epidemic, is spreading at enormous speed in Brazil, where the local authorities have already declared a state of emergency in that connection. The latest medical research has shown that conditions caused by the virus are not confined to microcephaly in fetuses but also include wasting of brain tissue and, in more serious cases, Guillain-Barré syndrome, and that the virus can even cause still birth.

Aedes mosquitoes, which carry the virus, are primarily found in large numbers in tropical climates in wooded, wet or damp areas. This year, the 31st Summer Olympics are being held in the city of Rio de Janeiro, where the third largest area of rainforest in the inhabited world is located. At the same time, the protected rain forest is Aedes mosquito habitat. Bearing in mind that more than 11 000 athletes took part in the London Olympics in 2012 and that they were attended by 350 000 spectators from 200 countries around the world:

- could the Olympic Games in Brazil in August this year endanger European athletes and sports fans?
- does the Commission consider the remaining six months to be sufficient to prevent this sports event, which will draw large crowds, from triggering a global epidemic as a result of the spread of the virus?