**Question for written answer E-007853/2017**

**to the Commission**

Rule 130

**Pirkko Ruohonen-Lerner (ECR)**

Subject: Placement of gaming machines and gambling advertising

In the European Union, the Member States are free to set the objectives of their gambling policy and, where appropriate, to define the level of protection sought by the Member State.

In Finland, gambling revenue is used to support work in the arts, sciences and various research projects, as well as to promote social work and to support horse breeding. When examining how gaming companies’ profits are used, we should also look at where the money comes from. According to a study (Salonen et al., 2017), the majority of the money spent on gambling in Finland comes from those playing on a weekly basis and those with a gambling problem. Veikkaus Oy, which has a monopoly on gambling in Finland, estimates that the number of people with gambling problems in Finland is above the European average. Gaming machines are the cause of more than 60 % of gambling problems in Finland. People with low incomes spend more money on gambling in relation to their net income than those earning a higher income. Poor health and heavy use of intoxicating substances also correlate with higher spending on gambling. If we generalise heavily, we could say that gambling is transferring revenue from the poor to the rich.

In Finland today, gaming machines in supermarkets are usually placed near the cashiers, or in other spaces where they cannot be supervised in practice. In the current situation, people with gambling problems are exposed directly to gambling. Placing the gaming machines in a separate, supervised space would be a significant part of the solution in reducing the harmful effects of gambling. The Audiovisual Media Services Directive is currently being revised. The advertising of gambling is also envisaged to be included in the directive. It would be necessary to define whether the placement of gaming machines is included in gambling advertising.

Does the Commission consider the placement of gaming machines to be a part of gambling advertising? Is the Commission planning to look into the social and economic disadvantages gaming machines are causing for EU citizens, and how these problems could be reduced?