

**Question for written answer E-000151/2019  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Konstantinos Papadakis (NI)**

Subject: Further offensive in the move to abolish Sunday closing

In response to demands from the big business, hotel, manufacturing and banking sectors, the Council of State has extended the (already unacceptable) business closing exemption from eight Sundays to the entire six-month period from May to October, ratifying the decision of the SYRIZA-ANEL Government that has been endorsed by regional and municipal leaders in the name of 'growth'. This opens the gates to a temporal and geographical extension of the measure in other sectors (such as office workers) also, as provided for under the provisions of ILO Convention C106, which run counter to workers' interests.

Such a move comes in response to constant pressure from business interests and is in line with general policy followed by the EU with its flexible interpretation of work and life under the 'Pillar of Social Rights', sacrificing the intended 'work-life balance' to the capitalist dictates of profitability. It is also being used to justify measures such as a twelve-hour day in Austria and the 'slave law' in Hungary.

The purpose of the new arrangements for such deregulation is to undermine the system of fixed daily working hours. Ten or twelve-hour days, seven-day weeks, hourly rates, flexible arrangements and the abolition of Sunday as a day of rest for all workers, are playing havoc with their personal, family and social lives, while the Government continues to brandish deceptive promises of a 'return to post-memorandum normality'. As a result, self-employed business people operating on a small scale are succumbing to their larger competitors.

In view of this:

- How does the Commission respond to calls for the statutory protection of Sunday closing, the overturning of any laws 'deregulating' working hours and the signature of sectoral collective agreements embodying substantial pay increases?