

**Question for written answer E-003766/2019
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Guido Reil (ID)

Subject: Index-linking mechanism for family benefits

According to the Commission, the Austrian index-linking mechanism for family benefits and family tax credits is discriminatory because it brings about a reduction in those benefits and credits for workers in Austria if their children live in another Member State. In late July 2019, the Commission took the next step in the infringement proceedings against Austria.

The opinion issued is not logical, however, since the Commission itself offered such index-linking to the Cameron UK Government as part of the 2016 EU-UK agreement. In February 2016, the Commission announced an amendment to the relevant regulation, No 883/2004, 'in order to give Member States, with regard to the exportation of child benefits to a Member State other than that where the worker resides, an option to index such benefits to the standard of living in the Member State where the child resides'.

What precisely is the substantive difference between Austria's current index-linking mechanism for family benefits and the Commission's 2016 proposal?

How does the Commission explain and view the apparent contradiction between its opinion today and its then proposal, which was incorporated into the February 2016 European Council conclusions?