

**Question for written answer E-000098/2020  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Rescue of the Banca Popolare di Bari

It seemed as if the Banca Popolare di Bari could be the first to benefit from the rule introduced in Article 44a of the Crescita Decree (Decree-law No 34/2019) of April 2019. Under this rule, businesses in Southern Italy that merged would be able to change their deferred taxes (DTA) into tax credits, subject to a ceiling of EUR 500 million and this being implemented within 18 months of the rule entering into force.

Press reconstructions would seem to suggest that this solution was rejected on account of fears it might infringe state-aid legislation, without Brussels having even been informed about any of this.

The Italian Government has therefore chosen to go down another path after the Banca Popolare di Bari was placed in extraordinary administration on 13 December 2019 by the Bank of Italy.

Given that this solution would also have permitted the start of a plan to merge the 'popolare' cooperative banks as a means of strengthening the banking system in Southern Italy:

1. Has the Commission been approached in recent months or has it initiated discussions, even unofficially, with Italy's Ministry of the Economy and Finance on the aforesaid hypothesis?
2. Has the rule in Article 44a of the Crescita Decree been referred officially to the Commission by the Ministry of the Economy and Finance for clarification regarding any possible infringement of state-aid legislation?