

Question for written answer E-006352/2020
to the Commission
Rule 138
Nikos Androulakis (S&D)

Subject: Transfer of payments to Greek hotels by TUI

TUI, the largest leisure and travel company in the world, is refusing to meet its obligations towards Greek hotels, pushing the country's already beleaguered tourism sector to the brink of collapse. After defaulting on its payments to Spain at the beginning of 2020, the travel company unilaterally changed its terms of payment for services already provided. It decided that it would only transfer payments due up to two months after the end of the 2020 summer season in March and April 2021 — a financial disaster for Greek hotels.

This year, as a result of the pandemic, TUI has received EUR 3 billion in emergency lending in two tranches from the German Government, taking advantage of the Temporary European Framework for State Aid. Nevertheless, the non-payment of hoteliers, when customers have already paid the travel company for their holidays, is a form of compulsory borrowing.

In view of this:

Is TUI's non-payment of debt compatible with the current framework for State aid measures and what effect will this have on its solvency when it makes its third claim for State aid as expected?

Is a retroactive and unilateral amendment to its contract legal and how can the Commission ensure that this is not an unfair transfer of commercial risk?

Are there any measures to protect and support businesses from such practices in the midst of a pandemic?