Question for written answer E-001676/2021

to the Commission

Rule 138

Jorge Buxadé Villalba (ECR)

Subject: Non-compliance of Regulation (EC) No 1008/2008 on common rules for the operation of air services in the Community

At the beginning of March, the airline Plus Ultra was bailed out by the Spanish Government with a EUR 53 million rescue package. This raises questions about links between certain members of the government and the dictatorship in Venezuela, which is where most of the airline’s shareholders are from, why there has only been one return flight so far this year – to Venezuela, no less – and about dubious banking operations in Panama. According to the latest information in the company register, 56.8% of the airline’s shares are held by Venezuelan businessmen with ties to the Chávez regime. This could constitute a violation of Regulation (EC) No 1008/2008, which requires that Member States or nationals of Member States must own more than 50% of a company and effectively control it in order to obtain a licence from a Member State.

1. Is the Commission aware of or is it investigating any irregularities in the activities of this airline?

2. Does the Commission consider the granting of an EU operating licence to this company to be lawful?