

Question for written answer E-005485/2021
to the Commission
Rule 138
Rosanna Conte (ID)

Subject: Costly bills: impact on swimming pools and sports facilities

Ongoing electricity price rises are leading to substantial increases in utility bills for households and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

In September, the Italian government was forced to intervene by allocating three billion euro to mitigate – and only partially – increasing bills for the fourth quarter of 2021. Unfortunately, the trend appears likely to be ever upward, given the imminent cold season and peak gas prices.

This situation, which is becoming unsustainable for all energy-intensive SMEs and low-income households, is also exacerbating the financial situation of swimming pool operators, which have already been severely affected by the months of forced closure caused by the pandemic.

Swimming pools and sports/fitness facilities are also important places for socialising. Their closure would therefore have a worrying negative impact on physical health and mental well-being, at an already delicate moment in time from that point of view.

In view of this:

1. Will the Commission take prompt action to help Member States curb the impact of costly utility bills on SMEs and households?
2. Does it agree that there is an urgent need to exhort the Council of Energy Ministers to reach a definitive agreement in order to resolve the current difficulties?