

**Question for written answer E-000184/2022  
to the Commission**  
Rule 138  
**Vera Tax (S&D)**

Subject: Disruption of maritime supply chains

Due to disturbed supply and demand, shipping capacity was withdrawn until mid-2020 from various trade lines, which caused bottlenecks when demand grew rapidly again. What is more, a number of stakeholders reported that carriers have been extremely selective in picking up EU cargo, shipping empty containers to Asia as fast as they can to use them for higher inbound rates, which is putting the EU's reputation as a trusted trading partner at risk.

While schedule reliability diminished over the last year, transportation costs have sky-rocketed and carriers have been making record-high profits in 2021.

1. Can the Commission explain what it is doing to monitor competition in the container shipping sector, the selective picking of cargo and routes, and surging freight rates? Is it aware of the long-term ramifications for European businesses, in particular SMEs, if the current situation does not improve?
2. Is it planning to follow the US approach to intensify inquiries and efforts, notably by challenging alliances between carriers if they 'produce an unreasonable reduction in transportation service or an unreasonable increase in transportation cost or substantially lessen competition'?