

**Question for written answer E-000185/2022
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Vera Tax (S&D)

Subject: European carriers flying empty aircraft

Airlines are expecting to make thousands of flights with empty aircraft this winter, being currently required to operate around 50% of their flights. It has been agreed that, in March 2022, this will be increased to 64%. In this way, airline companies are seeking to prevent expensive landing rights from being transferred to competitors. However, the arrangement makes no economic or ecological sense at all.

In order not to lose take-off and landing rights, Brussels Airlines will be making 3 000 empty flights over the next months, while the Lufthansa Group has announced that it will be making no fewer than 18 000 'unnecessary' flights. The ghost flights, which were already an issue before the COVID-19 outbreak, have become a much bigger problem during the pandemic.

1. What action is the Commission taking to prevent ghost flights in European airspace?
2. What is it doing to keep the problem under control during the exceptional circumstances occasioned by the pandemic?
3. Is it envisaging a review of the rules governing airport slots and the introduction of introducing new post-pandemic criteria?