

**Question for written answer E-000444/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Harald Vilimsky (ID), Georg Mayer (ID)

Subject: EU bureaucracy – a major climate culprit

Recent media reports have revealed that Brussels Airlines has been forced to operate 3 000 flights without passengers so far this winter. Its parent company, Lufthansa, subsequently confirmed that there have been some 18 000 'empty flights' to date. This has been made necessary as a result of EU rules requiring airlines to operate a certain percentage of scheduled flights in order not to lose their 'slots', i.e. take-off and landing rights, at major airports. The coronavirus pandemic has made travelling more and more difficult so that this percentage was lowered to 50 %. However, airlines are still finding it difficult to meet this target.

1. Do such bureaucratic rules not undermine the EU's ambitious climate targets for a greener and more sustainable Europe?
2. Is the Commission planning further relaxations to allow take-off and landing rights to be retained during the coronavirus pandemic?
3. Will the Commission promote a uniform exemption so as to avoid unnecessary flights and to make it possible for airlines to plan ahead?