

**Question for written answer E-001889/2022
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Rosanna Conte (ID)

Subject: State aid and inappropriateness of the ceilings applicable to fish processing plants

In the fisheries and aquaculture sector, just as in the agriculture sector, the granting of state aid is subject to specific rules. However, unlike the agriculture sector, all the enterprises operating in the fisheries and aquaculture sector are subject to the same rules and ceilings as ones operating in the primary sector, regardless of what they do.

The argument that even limited amounts of aid may distort competition in the fisheries and aquaculture sector does not hold true across the board, when it comes to small fishing cooperatives and to fish processing enterprises, which should be treated in the same way as processing enterprises in other sectors.

The Temporary Framework adopted to tackle the COVID-19 crisis quite clearly reflects this unequal treatment: the ceiling applicable to a fish processing plant may not exceed EUR 345 000, which is significantly lower than the ceiling of EUR 2.3 million applicable to plants operating in other sectors.

In the light of the above, can the Commission state:

1. Whether it is aware of the inequalities created by this difference in treatment between food processing enterprises, which are often in competition with one another?
2. Whether it has plans, not least in the context of the forthcoming legislative review, to end this disparity by setting the same ceilings for fish processing enterprises as for those in other food processing sectors?