

**Question for written answer E-003370/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Laura Ferrara (NI), Tiziana Beghin (NI), Sabrina Pignedoli (NI), Fabio Massimo Castaldo (NI),
Mario Furore (NI)**

Subject: State aid rules and Germany's 200-billion-euro defence shield against energy prices

Chancellor Scholz recently announced that his government had put in place a 'large protective umbrella' against rising energy prices to shield companies and households in the energy war.

More specifically, the German Government said that the Economic Stabilisation Fund it set up in March 2020 for the pandemic would be reactivated in the coming weeks with a budget of EUR 200 billion to help meet soaring energy costs. It will be used to ease the burden of high gas prices on companies, SMEs, artisans, families and pensioners by directly compensating producers/distributors and reducing the spread between market and retail prices.

The Fund effectively introduces a national price cap on gas. Although the specifics of how the scheme will work in practice have not been disclosed, there is clearly a risk that it could infringe State aid and competition rules.

In view of this:

1. Does the Commission consider the scheme to be compatible with State aid and competition rules?
2. Does it not think that a common, coordinated European response is needed, perhaps in the form of an energy recovery fund, so as to not undermine the single market?
3. Would it be feasible to set a universal price cap on all EU gas imports?