

**Question for written answer E-003445/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Laura Ferrara (NI), Mario Furore (NI)

Subject: Expensive flights during the Christmas holidays

In the run-up to Christmas, airfares for flights to Italy's southern and island regions have leapt up for the umpteenth time, as they do every year. The astronomic prices make journeys of that kind either a luxury that few can afford or a major sacrifice.

It is a real problem that always erupts in the run-up to peak season and routinely affects people working or studying away from home.

Commissioner Valean has indicated that the EU is looking into this 'anomaly', which could undermine connectivity between EU regions, especially its islands and peripheral areas.

In the light of the above:

1. Does the Commission believe that air carriers' use of pricing algorithms is compatible with the smooth functioning of the market, and is this practice not distorting competition?
2. Will the Commission allow for greater flexibility in the use of State aid and public service obligations (PSOs) in order to ensure basic connectivity for the EU's remote and island regions?
3. Will it allow for greater flexibility as regards the provision of social aid for air transport services for final consumers¹ in order to protect the right to mobility of residents of island (Sicily, Sardinia) and peripheral regions (Calabria, Molise)?

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¹ Communication from the Commission (2014/C 99/03) on guidelines on State aid to airports and airlines.