

**Major interpellation for written answer G-001002/2020  
to the Commission**

Rule 139

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on behalf of the ID Group

**Subject:** The Commission's assessment of the quality of its answers to questions for written answer

According to Rule 138(3) of Parliament's Rules of Procedure, questions for written answer by the Commission must be answered within six weeks, or three weeks in the case of priority questions.

In its reply of 14 November 2019 to question P-002856/2019, which once again far exceeded the deadline for replying to a written question, tabled in this case on 18 September 2019, the Commission stated that: 'Democratic change is one of the ten priorities which guide this Commission's mandate. Written questions are an integral part of the Commission's special partnership with the European Parliament and are an important scrutiny tool to which the Commission gives the due priority and necessary political attention'.

It was further explained that: 'During the last parliamentary term (2014–2019), the Commission received 43 249 parliamentary questions, of which 4 464 were priority questions. Out of the 43 249 questions, 13 882 were transmitted within the timelines set by the European Parliament'.

Firstly, according to these numbers, only one third of questions were answered within the six-week time limit laid down in the Rules of Procedure. This, in turn, would drastically reduce the chances of the press taking an interest in the answers, thereby reducing the Commission's democratic accountability. Furthermore, the quality of the answers provided is often poor. They are usually presented as continuous text in the form of a statement. Specifically numbered sub-questions are often not answered at all. This may then necessitate a new question, which is processed again, with a considerable delay.

While fully aware of the extraordinary situation brought about by COVID-19, which is doubtless taking up an unprecedented amount of the Commission's time, but confident that the situation will return to normality in due course, we wish to ask:

1. How many written questions has the Commission received since the start of the current legislative term (priority and non-priority), and how many of these has it answered in time?
2. Has the Commission conducted an internal assessment of the quality of its answers, and how does it plan to improve its response time and the quality of its answers?
3. Is the Commission aware that poor-quality and late answers are having an adverse effect on parliamentary oversight and thus reducing the Commission's democratic accountability?