

**Question for oral answer O-000088/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 128

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on behalf of the S&D Group

Subject: Competitiveness of the EU steel industry

Steel is still regarded as one of the key industrial sectors in Europe, as evidenced by the action plan for the European steel industry presented by the Commission in June 2013.

In 2011, ThyssenKrupp (TK) decided to divest itself of its stainless steel operations, transferring them to Inoxum, a separate entity set up for that purpose. In 2012, the Finnish Outokumpu steel group firmed up its bid for a 70% stake in Inoxum.

In May 2012, the Commission opened an in-depth investigation into the acquisition of Inoxum by Outokumpu, expressing serious reservations regarding the proposed measures.

On 12 February 2014, the Commission concluded that the reacquisition of Acciai speciali Terni (AST) and Outokumpu (VDM) by ThyssenKrupp (TK) was in conformity with the EU merger regulation and Commissioner Almunia stated that ThyssenKrupp had provided assurances that it would develop AST as a strong and credible competitor to Outokumpu and other market players.

On 31 October, Commissioners Almunia and Nelli Feroci wrote to the Chair of the CCMI informing him that the Commission had taken special measures to ensure that the future of AST as a major competitor in the steel sector was not compromised.

However, under the new ThyssenKrupp industrial plan, one of the two AST Terni furnaces is to be shut down and around 550 jobs are to be cut by the financial year 2015-2016.

In view of this:

1. Will the Commission verify that the plan submitted by ThyssenKrupp effectively includes AST within a market strategy designed to ensure international competitiveness, bearing in mind also the European environmental sustainability criteria established by the Commission and adopted by AST itself, ensuring that it continues to occupy a central position in the European stainless steel sector?
2. Will the Commission adopt immediately operative measures under the European Steel Plan so as to ensure that specialised steel companies remain competitive on European and international markets?
3. Given the need for AST Terni to be a 'strong and credible' competitor in the stainless steel sector, does the Commission not agree that the closure of one of the two furnaces might be undesirable in terms of competition?

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Forwarded: 24.11.2014

Deadline for reply: 1.12.2014