

**Question for oral answer O-000036/2020
to the Commission**

Rule 136

Christine Anderson

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 the Rules of Procedure, questions for a written answer by the Commission must be answered within six weeks, or three weeks in the case of priority questions.

In the Commission's reply to question (P-002856/2019) of 14 November 2019, which again far exceeded the deadline for replying to this question, which was tabled on 18 September 2019, the Commission stated: 'Democratic change is one of the ten priorities of this Commission. Written questions are an integral part of the Commission's special partnership with the European Parliament and are an important means of scrutiny which the Commission gives the necessary priority and 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 given priority. Of the 43 249 questions, 13 882 were answered within the timeframe set by the European Parliament'.

Firstly, according to the numbers only one third of the questions have been answered within the six week time limit laid down in the Rules of Procedure. Secondly, this drastically reduces the chance for press interest in the answers, thereby reducing the Commission's democratic accountability. Thirdly, the quality of the answers is often poor. The answers are usually presented as a continuous text in the form of a statement. Specific questions marked and numbered in the question tabled are often not answered at all. This may then require a new question, which is processed again, with considerable delay.

Fully aware of the current extraordinary situation due to coronavirus that is taking up an unprecedented and unusual amount of the Commission's time, but confident that the situation will normalise in due course, I ask the Commission:

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 negatively affecting parliamentary oversight, and therefore reducing the Commission's democratic accountability?

Submitted: 08/05/2020

Lapses: 09/08/2020