

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1335/03
by Freddy Blak (GUE/NGL)
to the Commission

Subject: Danish packaging tax

A large proportion of beer and carbonated drink bottles on the Danish market arrive in Denmark by way of organised imports from Germany. Consumers and enterprising businesspeople collect hundreds of crates in Germany and sell them from drinks machines in Danish shops, because the deposit is higher in Denmark.

Thanks to these extensive 'private' imports, Danish breweries obtain bottles brought into Denmark without the intervention of the tax authorities. The breweries thus avoid paying the packaging tax which they would normally have to pay on empty bottles from Germany.

At the same time the breweries are refunded the packaging tax on the bottles they export.

The Danish Treasury estimates that this trade costs the Danish state some DKR 15 m per year, while the canning industry reckons it is losing some DKR 50 m per year.

In the Commission's view, does the Danish packaging tax constitute an indirect State aid to breweries and the cross-border trade? If so, what does the Commission propose to do to stop it?

Could the Commission also state its opinion of the fact that Danish nationals are not required to pay a deposit on cans purchased in Germany provided they sign a declaration that they are taking the cans with them to Denmark?