WRITTEN QUESTION P-5388/07
by Marian-Jean Marinescu (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Commission's investigation into the privatisation of the Romanian car producer 'Automobile Craiova' SA

The European Commission has opened a formal investigation under EC Treaty state aid rules into possible aid granted in the context of the privatisation of SC 'Automobile Craiova' SA (ACSA) Romania through the share sale - purchase agreement No 61/12.09.2007 concluded between the Authority for State Assets Recovery and Ford Motor Company.

It should be noted that SC 'Automobile Craiova' SA is located in Oltenia Region, which is second last in Romania in economic development terms. Its current privatisation is the major achievement for many years, for the company, its employees and the entire region, not only in itself, but in view of all the potential new companies and the job creating environment that goes along with such a massive investment.

However, there is growing concern that the Commission's investigation is in fact delaying the whole privatisation process, and consequently all local and regional growth, as the buyer might be discouraged. Many citizens feel this approach threatens their economic development and their well-being, as well as the well-being of the entire community, as SC 'Automobile Craiova' SA is not only one of the major industries in the region, but also the major taxpayer for the local budget.

The Commission should conduct the investigation as an urgent procedure, with regard to all aspects, by visits on site if necessary, in order to reach its conclusions as soon as possible, providing a clear perspective for the Authority for State Assets Recovery and for SC 'Automobile Craiova' SA as well, thus preventing the initially devastating impact of economic losses and decreasing labour market opportunities for this region.

In the light of the above, I would like to know if there is a plan set up by the Commission in order to conduct this investigation and, in this respect, when is the deadline for the conclusion of the procedure?