

WRITTEN QUESTION P-6785/08  
by Gabriele Albertini (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: De minimis state aid in the transport sector

Regulation (EC) No 1998/2006<sup>1</sup> of 15 December 2006 increased from EUR 100 000 to EUR 200 000 over a three-year period the threshold below which state aids are deemed to be of minor importance (de minimis) and therefore do not come under the notification procedure provided for in Article 88(3) of the Treaty establishing the European Community.

The regulation also retroactively extends the scope of the de minimis rules to the transport sector, which they previously did not cover, on the grounds that, as is stated in Recital 3 of the regulation, *'given the evolution of the transport sector, in particular the restructuring of many transport activities following their liberalisation, it is no longer appropriate to exclude the transport sector from the scope of the de minimis Regulation'*.

Furthermore, the total de minimis aid granted to a road transport undertaking may not be above the lower threshold of EUR 100 000 over any period of three fiscal years (Article 2(2) of the regulation) in view of the *'average small size of undertakings active in the road freight and passengers transport sector'* (Recital 3).

Road transport undertakings are, however, in a serious state of crisis owing to the major increase in oil prices in the first half of this year, as acknowledged by two recent legislative acts in Italy (Law 133/2008 and Decree Law 162/2008).

The current recession will result in much lower levels of consumption by individuals, households and undertakings, and no one can reasonably predict how long it will last. Furthermore, it will have a greater and earlier adverse impact on the economic and financial situation in the transport sector than on that in other sectors.

Given the above, would the Commission state:

1. why the road transport sector is being discriminated against as regards the granting of de minimis aid when compared with all the other sectors eligible for such aid;
2. whether it would not agree that the higher threshold of EUR 200 000 for de minimis aid over a period of three fiscal years should apply to the road transport sector as well?

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 379, 28.12.2006, p. 5.