

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0564/09
by Claudio Fava (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Siremar

The group Tirrenia, which includes the company Siremar, is in process of being privatised despite the criteria required by the Commission under competition law.

Siremar provides an essential public service in the form of maritime cabotage for the small islands in the Aeolian sea.

Article 158 of the Treaty of Amsterdam seeks to reduce the inequalities affecting the less-favoured regions, including island regions, while Declaration 30 attached to the same Treaty recognises the possibility of adopting specific Community rules for such regions in the context of the structural disadvantages arising from island status.

The Community guidelines on state aid to maritime transport state that a public service obligation may be imposed in order to guarantee regular services to ports linking outlying regions of the Community or routes with low levels of traffic which are considered essential for the economic development of the regions concerned, in cases where the free play of market forces does not guarantee a sufficient level of service.

Does the Commission not believe that the conditions exist to permit the immediate separation of Siremar from the Tirrenia group and the suspension of the privatisation of Siremar, given that company's role in ensuring essential public services for an outlying area, namely the small Sicilian islands, in a fashion fully compatible with the EU legislation in force?

Does the Commission not also believe that if the privatisation is stopped Siremar could become a nationally or regionally funded company?