

**Question for written answer P-013647/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Estaleiros Nacionais de Viana do Castelo

The Portuguese Government, represented by the Minister of Defence, José Aguiar Branco, has announced that it has cancelled the privatisation of Estaleiros Nacionais de Viana do Castelo (ENVC) and opted for competitive bidding for the sale of the ferry *Atlântida* and of the shipyard materials and for subconcession of the land currently occupied by the shipyards. The Commission is already familiar with the developments – and illegalities – in the ENVC case, which was the subject of its Competition DG's procedure SA.35546. The Portuguese Government, moreover, maintains that the outcome of that procedure is the reason for its latest decision, which, in the words of the Defence Minister, has been taken not from choice, but because of the EU procedure arising from the breach of competition. The Minister also says that it is not possible at present to pay back the EUR 180 million being claimed; the return of the money would entail the closure of a company established for almost 70 years.

As a result of the government decision the present 618 workers are to be made redundant, and there is no guarantee even that the shipyard will continue to operate as it always has done under ENVC, given that the subconcession relates only to the land. Under the subconcession agreement Portugal is to receive a total of EUR 7.05 million in rent to be paid by Martifer until 2031, but by January 2014 it will have to pay out approximately EUR 30 million to finance the redundancies, as it is common knowledge that Martifer now has a debt amounting to EUR 378 million.

Furthermore, according to the Portuguese Government, work needs to begin on two asphalt ships so as to avoid defaulting on obligations to the party that has ordered them, the Venezuelan state-owned oil and natural gas company PDVSA. Clearly, without workers or shipyards, the ships cannot be built.

The arrangement in question is thus ruinous for Portugal and the ENVC workers, but highly advantageous for the company to which the land subconcession has been awarded directly, namely Martifer.

1. Has the Commission asked for the EUR 180 million to be paid back in the light of the Competition DG procedure SA.35546?
2. Does it know about the above-mentioned developments and the direct subconcession agreement concerning the ENVC land?
3. Does it know about the collective redundancy measure to be taken by the Portuguese authorities?
4. Does it intend to take any action in due course?