

**Question for written answer P-006308/2017
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Albert Deß (PPE), Peter Jahr (PPE), Norbert Lins (PPE) and Jens Gieseke (PPE)

Subject: Granting of coupled payments in the sugar sector

Ten Member States of the European Union have availed themselves of the possibility of paying coupled premiums for sugar beet cultivation, introducing them for the first time in the financial year 2015/16.

The relevant rules are laid down in Regulations (EU) No 1307/2013 and (EU) No 639/2014. It follows from EU legislation that an expansion of the production level in a sector is incompatible with the granting of a coupled premium. Rather, the respective quantitative limits must be set in such a way as to exclude an overshoot of the current production level. In view of the potential impact on the competitive situation of intra-Community beet and sugar production, urgent measures are needed to ensure that the said conditions are complied with.

1. Does the Commission have any indications that an increase in cultivation areas will occur from the 2017/18 sugar marketing year in those Member States which have introduced coupled premiums, and how does it determine whether the sugar beet sector in a given country or region is in difficulty? How are the reports sent by Member States monitored?
2. By which standard does the Commission measure the development of the production level, and how does it ensure that, in the case of a constantly and continuously subsidised cultivation area, this does not lead to the production level being exceeded by increases in yields?
3. What are the consequences of exceeding the historical production level for the Member State concerned and what steps are being taken to ensure that penalties are applied and the premiums reimbursed?