

**Priority question for written answer P-006532/2020
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Niels Fuglsang (S&D)

Subject: National tax increases for online betting that risk hitting local operators unduly because of EU rules on illegal state aid

Under the 2020 budget agreement, the Danish Government increased the online-betting tax rate from 20% to 28%. That is a very sensible move with a view to preventing gambling addiction among young people under 25, since in 2018 they accounted for 30% of all those undergoing treatment for gambling addiction as opposed to 7% in 2009. However, the budget will also inadvertently affect SIFA TV Bingo, which is the only remaining televised-bingo concept in Denmark.

The SIFA TV Bingo programme has been offering local viewers televised bingo for 35 years and will either have to close down or increase prices significantly for the 220 000 typically older viewers. Televised bingo also plays a major social and local role, unlike recent online gambling offerings, since Danish gaming operators traditionally donate profits to sports associations and for voluntary assistance purposes, which is what SIFA has done for 212 associations and their 60 000 members.

However, it is thought that any derogation for televised bingo, and thus exemption from tax, may be contrary to the Commission's rules on state aid. Will the Commission say whether EU rules classify telephone and televised bingo as online gambling, whether reclassification would denote illegal state aid, and, if so, whether consideration could be given to a legislative proposal providing for such a derogation?