

**Priority question for written answer P-003028/2021
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Radan Kanev (PPE)

Subject: Eligibility for European funding of a heavily-indebted municipal company's financially and environmentally controversial project

Toplofikatsia Sofia EAD municipal heating company was EUR 500 million in debt at the end of 2020. While on the verge of bankruptcy, the company announced a public call for tenders on 11 January 2021 worth approximately EUR 150 million for the construction of a household waste incinerator, the bulk of which will come from European funding. The facility is due to be constructed adjacent to residential districts, just 2 km from the centre of Sofia.

Besides being extremely controversial financially-speaking, the project has been fiercely opposed by a large proportion of Sofians, who have been experiencing air pollution problems for years (Sofia is invariably ranked among Europe's most polluted cities). Despite all the above, Sofia City Council has refused to hold a referendum asking Sofians whether they agree to such a facility being constructed in their city.

Can the Commission please state, in this connection:

1. Whether a heavily-indebted municipal company's controversial project, which is expected to have a very adverse financial and environmental impact, is eligible for European funding?
2. Should an EIA and a public consultation not form part of the procedure for applying for European funding when constructing such a facility adjacent to residential districts and just 2 km from the city centre, especially given that a number of political formations will request that the project be halted if they win a majority in the 2021 local elections?