

**Question for written answer E-002375/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Privatisation of Chania airport

Under the Memoranda, Greece has, inter alia, assumed specific obligations regarding the use of its public assets in order to be able to achieve, firstly, a primary surplus and, secondly, the long-term rehabilitation of public finances on the basis of growth with jobs and investment in innovation, while fully respecting the institutional framework of competition, consumer rights and sound terms of employment. In this context, the issue has been raised of privatising a highly profitable airport, that of Chania, which is a central pillar of the local economy. This airport posts annual profits in excess of EUR 10 million – thereby making a decisive contribution to efforts to restore the fiscal balance in Greece, and has been selected as a centre of activities by major airlines. It also plays an important role in national defence and security. It is clear that the privatisation of a profitable public company, which is a driver of growth for the local community and has received EU funding to expand – the project is still in progress – raises questions regarding the expediency and effectiveness of such a move.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Given that Chania airport has received EU funding for its expansion and the five-year period is not yet over, is it permissible to initiate a process of privatisation? If so, will the funds have to be repaid?
2. How does it, as a member of the Troika, view such a privatisation process, given the airport's contribution to the national and local economy? Since the local bodies and the social partners – representatives of workers and enterprises – have already come to the conclusion that privatisation may be disastrous for tourism as a key local activity, what is the Commission's view on the lack of social dialogue in planning the reforms?
3. Will the smooth functioning of the market be an issue, since nearby airports will remain in public hands?