

Question for written answer E-014548/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Salvatore Cicu (PPE)

Subject: Financial assistance for hoteliers in Sardinia

In 1998 Sardinia Regional Council adopted Regional Act No 9, Article 2 of which provided for the disbursement of initial investment assistance in the form of grants and subsidised loans. In November 1998 the Commission found the aid scheme to be in keeping with EU law and formally approved it. In April 1999 Sardinia Regional Council adopted Decree No 285 giving effect to Regional Act No 9. In 2002 aid was disbursed to 28 Sardinian hoteliers, but in 2004 the Commission initiated proceedings to determine whether the aid scheme had been misused, stating that aid could not be granted to anyone who had already started work on an investment project before applying for assistance.

Owing to procedural errors and omissions on the part of the regional council, the hoteliers concerned were not aware of this requirement. On the basis of a Commission decision of 2 July 2008, the hoteliers who had started the work before applying for the aid are now being required to pay back the aid received – totalling some EUR 35 million – to the regional authorities.

In view of the legitimate expectation to which the call for applications issued by the Sardinian regional authorities gave rise among the hoteliers concerned, can the Commission say which of the two parties (authorities and hoteliers) is actually responsible?