

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001479/26
to the Commission
Fabio De Masi (NI)
(13 April 2026)**

Subject: Commission investigation into the sale of HHLA shares to MSC

In reply to my question for written answer E-002992/2025 ⁽¹⁾, the Commission stated that it had closed the case regarding the sale price of shares in Hamburger Hafen und Logistik Aktiengesellschaft (HHLA) to the shipping company MSC without a formal decision, as no interested party within the meaning of Article 1(h) of Regulation (EU) 2015/1589 had submitted an admissible formal complaint. During a meeting with a team from the European Ombudsman (case 3118/2025/MAS), the Commission then also stated that it had looked into the need for an ex officio investigation into the sale. It was determined that such an investigation was not necessary.

1. How did the Commission justify this?
2. Was the Commission aware that the City of Hamburg had not obtained an independent valuation prior to the sale of the shares and that no competitive tendering had taken place?

Submitted: 13.4.2026

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Ribera on behalf of the European Commission
(26 June 2026)**

1. The Commission has received market information alleging the existence of state aid in the sale of the shares of Hamburger Hafen und Logistik Aktiengesellschaft to the Mediterranean Shipping Company. The Commission services have carefully examined all the submissions and have taken the view that they did not provide sufficient ground to show the existence of an unlawful aid.
2. The Commission is aware of these facts and would like to remind the Honourable Member that the lack of independent evaluation and of a competitive tender procedure does not automatically mean that there was state aid involved in the sale of shares transaction, nor does it mean that the sale of shares happened at a price below the market.

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-002992_EN.html.