

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001848/26
to the Commission
Kostas Papadakis (NI)
(6 May 2026)**

Subject: Labour inspection: Now even more favourable to big business and its unaccountability

The Greek Government (N.5297/20261 ⁽¹⁾) and the EU recently passed a law promoting a commercialised labour inspection system that is even friendlier towards big business and its unaccountability.

By focusing on business profitability it will never fulfil its duty of protecting the lives and safety of workers.

In view of the above, where does the Commission stand on the following:

1. The fact that the guidelines for ‘simplification’ in the name of competitiveness and the reduction of the ‘administrative burden’ lead to employers being informed in advance about inspections, as well as to additional obstacles which hinder inspectors from carrying out their work, the involvement of private individuals against even the 81st Labour Inspection Convention and the dismantling of required health and safety measures, putting workers’ lives at risk?
2. The fact that employers’ so-called self-compliance and staff cuts in inspection systems — practices which are based on the strategy of ‘independent’ authorities and mechanisms such as the European Labour Authority, and which are being implemented by the governments of the Member States — are contributing to a surge in the number of accidents at work and instances of criminal negligence by employers?
3. The fact that in the name of competitiveness and the ‘flexibility’ of the 13-hour working day, which only gives workers 11 hours of rest between shifts, as required by EU directives, intensification of work is escalating, retirement age is rising, pensioners are returning to work, the employment of minors is increasing, and explosive conditions are being created, leading to a systematic deterioration in the protection of workers’ lives and health, resulting in an increase in accidents at work and fatal incidents at work?

Submitted: 6.5.2026

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(8 July 2026)**

The EU has not passed a law promoting commercialised labour inspection system.

The framework Directive 89/391/EEC ⁽¹⁾ and the EU occupational safety and health (OSH) directives ⁽²⁾ set minimum requirements for the protection of workers.

They require that the employer safeguards the health and safety of workers in every aspect related to their work, assessing all occupational risks and putting in place the necessary preventive and protective measures. The responsibility for transposing directives and enforcing national legislation lies with Member States.

Member States must ensure adequate controls and supervision of the application of the national provisions transposing the EU OSH directives. Member States are competent to decide on the organisation of labour inspectorates and on the nature, frequency, and procedures of such controls.

The Commission has not issued guidelines encouraging advance notice of inspection or self-compliance.

The Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC) ⁽³⁾ supports the effective implementation and enforcement of EU OSH legislation at national level. SLIC established a set of EU common principles for OSH labour inspection and produces materials to facilitate the activities of labour inspectors, such as enforcement and awareness raising.

¹ <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-epikheireseis/nomos-5297-2026.html>.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 89/391/EEC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work, OJ L 183, 29.6.1989, pp. 1-8, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1989/391/oj/eng>.

⁽²⁾ https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/rights-work/health-and-safety-work_en.

⁽³⁾ Established by Commission Decision 95/319/EC in 1995 and amended in 2008 (Commission Decision 2008/823/EC).

Directive 2003/88/EC ⁽⁴⁾ sets out minimum requirements for the protection of the health and safety of workers, including limits to average weekly working time (not more than 48 hours), a right to rest breaks, minimum daily rest (at least 11 consecutive hours) and weekly rest, paid annual leave and extra protection for night workers. It allows a 13-hour working day, under the condition that the average maximum weekly working time of 48 hours is respected.

⁽⁴⁾ Directive 2003/88/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 November 2003 concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2003/88/oj/eng>.