

**Question for written answer E-000161/2012
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Commission study on the impact of austerity measures

The study published by the Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities entitled 'The distributional effects of austerity measures: a comparison of six EU countries', points out that these austerity measures have had a particularly harsh impact on low-income groups in Portugal. The study shows that it is the poorest who have suffered most from the measures introduced between 2008 and 2011, ranging from tax increases to cuts in social benefits and pensions. This is taking place in a country with extremely high levels of social inequality compared to the EU average, in which poverty, social exclusion and inequalities are increasing at an alarming rate.

However, the measures contained in the IMF-ECB-EC troika's programme (whose implementation period is not covered in this study) are even more severe than the austerity measures whose impact is highlighted in the study, causing still greater social devastation.

In the light of the conclusions of this study, the Commission is asked to answer the following:

1. To what extent will these conclusions cause the Commission to change its position in relation to Portugal, taking into account the EU-IMF joint responsibility memorandum, whose implementation would lead to disastrous social and economic consequences in Portugal?
2. Does it not consider it necessary to counter the clear social injustices resulting from the implementation of austerity measures in Portugal, as highlighted in the Commission's study?