

**Question for written answer E-001988/2016
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Miguel Viegas (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Palm tree disease

Since it arrived in Portugal, red palm weevil (*Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*) has already decimated thousands of palm trees, many of them more than one hundred years old, in nearly all of the continental region and even in the Madeira archipelago. Many of the trees have a high value: one palm tree 12 or 13 metres tall can be worth EUR 30 000-40 000.

Several research projects are underway to study new biological treatments to combat the plague, as the insect tends to be resistant to chemicals and predatory eelworm. A policy to control the disease through sanitary felling is also in place. The average cost of felling and removing infested waste (not including the cost of incineration) ranges between EUR 350 and 1 500.

In accordance with information from the Portuguese Government, the Commission made eradication of the plague mandatory in 2007.

Does the Commission know about the situation in Portugal? What information does it have about that plague at European Union level? What measures are in place to stop it spreading between Member States? Lastly, what aid exists to support the vital control and eradication plans?