

**Question for written answer E-005417/2016
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Mireille D'Ornano (ENF)

Subject: Protection of Mediterranean olive trees

In its judgment of 9 June 2016, the Court of Justice of the European Union ratified the Commission's implementing decision of 17 December 2015, which provides for all plants infected with the bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa* to be destroyed. According to the health and environment spokesperson at the Commission, it is 'the most effective option available for fighting the bacterium'. The Italian region of Puglia, however, which has been affected by the bacterium since October 2013, has decided to suspend the cutting-down of olive trees, some of which are thousands of years old, and is requesting a six-month moratorium until research findings become available.

What is more, in legal proceedings in which the Italian Government Commissioner and scientists are accused of 'wrongly assessing the risks', the Lecce public prosecutor's office is insisting that there is no formal proof of a link between the bacterium and the drying-out of olive trees and claiming that 'even though 1600 trees have been cut down, the disease has been spreading'.

1. Given that protecting the environment is one of its responsibilities, is the Commission following the efforts to save thousand year-old olive trees?
2. Is the Commission supporting research into ways of dealing with *Xylella fastidiosa*?