

**Question for written answer E-004560/2018
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Miguel Viegas (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Support measures to counter drought in the Azores

The archipelago of the Azores is currently suffering a drought that has afflicted the area since March of this year, and it could potentially threaten the water supply to the population. The islands of Saint Michael, Terceira and Graciosa are those which have been most affected by the drought. Farmers are suffering an approximate loss of 25% of fodder maize and vegetables. These have varying impacts, but it could lead to a total loss of crops. The situation compromises animal feed and will be exacerbated throughout the year as silage and hay becomes scarce. On the island of Terceira, farmers estimate that there has been a 30-40% drop in milk production over the course of the three-month drought, and this has affected fodder production. The measures announced by the European Commission to bring forward direct payments or to derogate from certain greening rules, if they are positive, will have a reduced and clearly insufficient effect in a region where small and medium-sized agriculture predominates.

What additional measures are currently in place, or could be actioned, in order to compensate for the lower yields that might lead to holdings being closed? What substantive measures are planned, in particular with regard to public insurance, in order to safeguard against storms?