

**Question for oral answer O-000146/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 128

Curzio Maltese, Eleonora Forenza, Barbara Spinelli
on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

Subject: Situation in Italy after the earthquakes

On 24 August 2016 a devastating earthquake hit central Italy. Three more major quakes, as well as a flurry of tremors, subsequently struck central Italian regions, respectively on 26 October with a magnitude of 5.5 and 6.1, and on 30 October with a magnitude of 6.5. More than 400 people were injured and 290 killed in these earthquakes, while a possible 'domino effect' resulting from the cumulative damage caused by other natural disasters could lead to 100 000 residents being displaced.

Regulation (EU) No 661/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 established the European Union Solidarity Fund ('the Fund'), while repeated natural disasters of various kinds hit Europe every year, some of them less than a year apart, recent cases having occurred in Italy and in other Member States such as Portugal, Greece and Cyprus.

Has the Commission taken all necessary measures to provide support and help to the Italian national and regional authorities involved in relief efforts following the disaster, including by simplifying procedures and shortening the time for approval and disbursement of monies from the Fund under Regulation (EU) No 661/2014?

Given that Regulation (EU) No 661/2014 provides that a region may benefit from the Fund only when a natural disaster results in direct damage in excess of 1.5 % of the GDP of the affected region, can the Commission confirm that the GDP reference threshold is calculated on an annual basis drawing on Eurostat data given by the Member States?

Can the Commission envisage a waiver to the existing regulation, at present based on the effects of damage caused by a single catastrophic event, and consider extending this calculation to a cumulative computation of damage in excess of the aforementioned GDP threshold caused by several natural disasters occurring in the same region, taking into account the high frequency of those events in some regions?

Could the Commission clarify the basis on which it assesses the effectiveness of implementing the Solidarity Fund in the affected Member States, and also consider a specific type of assessment for cases of repeated natural disasters?

Tabled: 23.11.2016

Forwarded: 25.11.2016

Deadline for reply: 2.12.2016