

**Question for written answer P-004490/2015
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Xylella fastidiosa crisis

The appearance of *Xylella fastidiosa* in olive groves in the Salento region of Italy has resulted in a plant health emergency of unprecedented proportions.

The Commission has said it intends to require all infected plants to be grubbed up and to ban the replanting of olive trees.

Any such grubbing up needs to be as limited in scope as possible, and, on the basis of sound agronomic and phytosanitary practices, help to prevent diseased plants from spreading the bacterium still further.

According to the European Food Safety Authority, simply grubbing up olive groves is not an effective strategy in contaminated areas where the bacterium has clearly gained a foothold, not least in view of the fact that other tree species may be infected.

Moreover, the grubbing up programme fails to take into account either the fact that the plants in question are hundreds of years old or the considerable cost of removing them.

In the light of the huge losses which the olive growers have already suffered and the responsibility the EU bears for this situation, given its failure to prevent infected plants from entering its borders (it has been established that the *Xylella* subspecies *pauca* was brought into Europe by ornamental plants originating in Costa Rica):

1. how will the Commission cover the additional costs which olive growers will have to bear if the grubbing up programme goes ahead;
2. is it promoting efforts to analyse the bacterium and the infection, with a view to finding an alternative arrangement that will not involve grubbing up olive groves?