

Question for oral answer O-00000/2011

to the Commission

Rule 115

Pervenche Berès, Marije Cornelissen

on behalf of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

Subject: Scheme for food distribution to the most deprived persons in the Union

The Scheme for food distribution to the most deprived persons in the Union, set up in 1987, provides currently food-aid for 13 million people suffering from poverty in 19 Member States and involves some 240 food banks and charities in the distribution chains. The Scheme is established by Article 27 of Regulation 1234/2007 and is governed by Regulation 983/2008.

The recent judgment of the European Court of Justice T-576/08, which deems purchasing food on the market for the Scheme illegal, puts EU food-aid for the most deprived in peril, given the increased dependency of the Scheme on market purchases. The increased reliance on the market is a consequence of the reframed Common Agricultural Policy and, thus, reduced levels of intervention stocks, which traditionally provided food for the Scheme.

The annulment by the ECJ of Article 2 of Regulation 983/2008 seems to have an immediate negative impact on the Scheme in 2012 and the years to come, leading to an abrupt end of food-aid for the most deprived citizens in 19 Member States. This has to be seen in the backdrop of increasing poverty in the EU, currently aggravated by the economic and financial crisis and soaring food prices in the context of almost inexistent food surpluses in the EU.

The Commission estimates that 43 million people in the EU are at risk of food poverty.

- 1) How does the Commission intend to address the urgent problem of food delivery for the Scheme in years 2012 and 2013 on which currently 13 million people are dependent?
- 2) Does the Commission, in the light of the ECJ Ruling, intend to withdraw its proposal COM(2010)0486 currently under consideration by the Council and replace it by a new one?

Tabled:

Forwarded:

Deadline for reply: