

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2432/08
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to the Commission

Subject: High cereal prices

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the UN World Food Program (WFP) are calling for joint action against high food prices (13 April 2008). Rises in food prices have already led to riots in Egypt, Haiti and the Philippines. The higher world food prices could have 'terrible' consequences and even lead to war, according to the IMF. The Netherlands is therefore giving an extra € 8 m to the World Food Program. The Commission ought to emulate the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation, Bert Koenders, and take action as a matter of urgency.

1. Food prices are rising rapidly and to such an extent that many inhabitants of poor countries can no longer afford the most basic foods. Will the Commission ask Member States to make extra contributions without delay in order to adjust the food aid budget to the new situation?
2. In view of the rapid rise in food prices, does the Commission consider it appropriate to review part of development policy in the near future in order to invest more in agriculture in developing countries, and also to promote transfers of know-how from the European Union?
3. The progress which has been made in a wide range of fields in the poorest countries in recent years is in danger of being wiped out by the food crisis. Will the Commission organise at short notice a European summit on the food crisis to debate a structural approach to food prices?