

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2616/09

by Catherine Guy-Quint (PSE) and Costas Botopoulos (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Monitoring the implementation of the European Union Solidarity Fund in the Peloponnese

In April 2008, the Commission decided that Greece should be paid a sum of EUR 89.7 million in aid from the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF), as partial compensation for costs arising from the catastrophic forest fires in the summer of 2007. The budgetary authority agreed to this. The sum of money thereby allocated must be used to offset the costs of emergency measures. It was the west of the country, the Peloponnese and mainland Greece that suffered the most widespread and serious damage. This catastrophe dealt a severe blow to the economy, to basic infrastructure and to the environment.

On 14 and 15 March 2008, I, together with other members of the Committee on Budgets, visited the regions most affected by the fires to meet the local populations. We were able to see for ourselves that the aid promised from EU funds had not yet reached these areas. We would, therefore, like to draw officially the attention of the Commissioner to this fact and invite her to answer the following questions:

1. At what point is implementation of the decisions taken by the budgetary authority being blocked?
2. The aid was granted a year ago. Why has it not yet had any significant effect in these regions where the need for European solidarity is more and more evident every day?
3. Apart from the Commission's ex post monitoring, are there any plans to require that the Greek Government explain its use of this EU aid?