

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3051/09
by Marcello Vernola (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Funds for mine clearance for humanitarian purposes

The Member States of the European Union have always paid particular attention to humanitarian missions, including operations to clear areas of mines, as in Bosnia for example. Since 1996 the Council of the European Union has taken a keen interest in this subject through joint actions in which the Member States have played an important role. As stressed in joint action 96/588/CFSP¹, the European Community has intensified its activity in the field of mine clearance in the context of humanitarian aid and the Commission supports the Community's activities. The Member States have undertaken to improve the effectiveness of their national contribution to mine clearance accordingly, and these objectives have also been confirmed subsequently, for example in joint action 97/817/CFSP².

Italy set up a humanitarian mine clearance fund in 2001 on the basis of Law No. 58 of 7 March 2001, which could be regarded as following on from the undertakings made at Community level. Since 2001, these resources have made it possible to make many people's lives more bearable, partly by funding research into new techniques which make mine clearance operations easier and safer.

Sadly, however, this year Law 58/2001 has had its funding withdrawn, thus making it impossible to finance any such operations from 2010 onwards.

Does the Commission agree that this development will significantly restrict the undertakings made by Italy at Community and international level in relation to humanitarian aid and funding for humanitarian mine clearance operations?

¹ OJ L 260 of 12.10.1996, p. 1

² OJ L 338 of 9.12.1997, p. 1