

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3122/09  
by Nikolaos Vakalis (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Research in the EU into seismic activity and earthquake protection

The recent devastating earthquake in Italy has confirmed yet again that earthquakes are particularly complex natural phenomena with numerous parameters and aspects which must be taken into account if they are to be tackled effectively.

Whereas:

- (a) a large part of the EU is threatened by earthquakes, while most of the applicant countries for accession, the countries covered by the European neighbourhood policy and countries in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership have a high level of seismicity,
- (b) between 2002 and 2007, earthquakes were the fourth most frequent cause of natural disaster in the Member States and the applicant countries,
- (c) the EU invests far less in research and development of new technologies, particularly in comparison with Japan, the USA and even China,
- (d) the national, regional and local authorities which are intensely affected by earthquakes, the research community, engineers and large sections of society are of the opinion that the EU should play a greater role in earthquake protection,
- (e) it is very important to increase the EU's know-how in relation to earthquakes, which could become a successful and profitable export, while earthquake zones could be transformed into natural laboratories, thereby turning their disadvantage to account,

will the Commission say:

- 1, what research and development measures it has already financed or intends to finance in relation to new technologies, and
2. what the level of funding is for those measures?