

**Question for written answer E-004648/2011
to the Commission**
Rule 117
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Subject: Risk of poverty in the EU

The well-being of European citizens is the best indicator for gauging the effectiveness of the European social model. In 2009, 16.3% of the European population were at risk of poverty, with worrying at-risk rates in the Member States which joined the EU in 2007 (21.8% in Bulgaria and 22.4% in Romania, according to centralised Eurostat data). After Latvia, Romania is the Member State with the highest risk of poverty. Regrettably, it has not been possible to reduce the social inequalities that arose after the fall of the Communist regime, and the European social model that has helped states with a precarious economic situation in the past has been unable to produce the same effects today.

The European social model can be said to be in crisis. The Europe 2020 Strategy is a powerful instrument aimed at reforming the European social model. The European platform against poverty and social exclusion created within the framework of this strategy sets out to improve access to the labour market and social protection and make more efficient use of European funds. Given that the Commission proposal was to enter into force at the start of 2011, can the Commission say what practical steps have been taken to date? In the Commission's view, what measures need to be taken in the long term at both European and national level in order to reach an optimum level of social well-being and reduce social inequalities?