

**Question for written answer E-006528/2011
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Commission slashes aid to the most deprived

The Commission has drastically reduced the amount of Community funding to be allocated to the 2012 'Food Distribution Programme for the Most Deprived Persons of the Community'. On 15 June it decided on a figure of EUR 113.5 million, even though a budget of EUR 500 million had been set in September 2010. Given that more than 13 million people living in poverty benefited from the programme last year, this decision will have disastrous social consequences. Europe's image as a moral arbiter is in tatters. We should practise what we preach!

The Court of Justice, finding in favour of Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and the Czech Republic, ruled that the EUR 500 million CAP aid package served to provide purely social assistance, that it 'no longer had any link with' the CAP and that it consequently violated WTO principles. According to the Member States which brought the action, the aid programme can no longer be regarded as part of the CAP, since the level of public stocks has fallen sharply, but instead must be seen as an aspect of social policy, which is the responsibility of each individual Member State. Taking this stance is tantamount to promoting a Europe which supports the 'haves' to the detriment of the 'have nots'.

In failing to appeal against this judgment, the Commission is making itself complicit in a terrible injustice that will have disastrous consequences for millions of Europeans, and one which is being committed in blatant disregard for the principles of democracy, given that the European Parliament has thrown its full weight behind a budget of EUR 500 million for the food distribution programme.

Does the Commission plan to reconsider its position and appeal against the judgment of the Court, in keeping with its aim of fighting poverty and social exclusion and in the interests of honouring its commitment to reduce poverty by 2020?