

**Question for written answer E-009121/2011  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**

Subject: Volunteering

On 20 September 2011 the Commission issued a communication full of good ideas, entitled 'Communication on EU Policies and Volunteering: Recognising and Promoting Cross-border Voluntary Activities in the EU'.

The communication makes the point that one of the greatest challenges and opportunities lies in 'sustainable funding'.

Although voluntary services are performed free of charge, the lack of funding for voluntary organisations is one of the biggest current problems, as are the tax policies applied in this area.

Bearing in mind that the added value of volunteering, described in the opening paragraph and in point 1.3 of the communication, is increasingly being recognised, how will the Commission boost funding for voluntary activities? The communication states that 'EU funding programmes in different policy areas will further target volunteers'. How will that commitment be translated into practice?

To ensure that funding opportunities are fully exploited, by what means will the Commission give more and better publicity to existing funding programmes and those which might be set up?

Is the Commission considering any action on the forms of tax treatment applied to volunteers' income or allowances or the expenses that they incur? As regards employee volunteering, for example, will it draw up guidelines whereby tax concessions could be granted to companies with volunteers on their staff?

Instead of just making recommendations, would it be possible to do more to strengthen the Member States' involvement in the voluntary sector?