

**Question for written answer E-008997/2012
to the Council**

Rule 117

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Subject: Continuation of the European programme of food aid for the most deprived persons

The serious and lasting financial and economic crisis currently affecting large sections of the population, coupled with policies curtailing people's rights in the fields of health, education and social policy, have increased the number of people in vulnerable situations.

At a time when poverty in Europe is on the increase, it is absolutely vital that the European programme of food aid continues beyond 2013.

In the current economic and social climate, it is essential that this programme continues and that a framework of budgetary stability is established. However, since 2011, these two things have been under threat owing to pressure from some members of the European Council.

Eventually, after pressure from the European Parliament, uncertainty over the programme's continued existence was dispelled until 2014.

Regardless of the budget heading that this programme comes under, it is crucial that we carry on fighting to ensure that it continues beyond 2014 and that it receives adequate funding.

It is vital that funding for the European programme of food aid is maintained in the next multiannual financial framework so that Member States can increase national budgets allocated to food banks; both of these mechanisms are of the utmost importance in order to respond to the urgent situation facing a growing proportion of European society.

In the light of this, what initiatives are being taken within the Council to guarantee the continued existence of the European programme of food aid for the most deprived persons beyond 2014, whatever the legal basis?