

**Question for written answer E-005531/2013  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Inequality in Cantabria

Spanish families are feeling the pinch from the country's unemployment rate of 6 million. The latest Spanish Labour Force Survey (EPA) shows that there are over 1.9 million households with all of their members unemployed. Moreover, fewer than 67% of those registered with employment services are receiving any State benefits.

The NGO Oxfam reports that austerity policies and social cuts could increase the number of Spaniards at risk of poverty and social exclusion to 18 million by 2022; that is, 40% of the population. Spain is currently setting worrying records in unemployment figures and social-inequality statistics, and has become, for the first time, the Member State with the greatest difference between high and low incomes.

In Cantabria, inequality hits women hardest. With a difference of 27.73%, Cantabria is one of the Spanish regions with the largest gender pay gaps, second only to Asturias, with 28.67%. On average, Cantabria's working women's gross pay is between EUR 5 000 and EUR 6 000 lower than that of men, while their pensions are just under EUR 2 000 lower. These figures mean that one in four Cantabrian women is at risk of poverty; the Spanish National Statistical Institute (INE) puts the figure at 22%.

Does the Commission consider reducing inequality a key objective for emerging from the economic crisis and complying with the Europe 2020 strategy?

What recommendations has the Commission given Spain, particularly regarding the dire inequality that women experience, to prevent this situation from worsening?