

**Question for written answer E-005534/2013
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)

Subject: Forest fires

Forest fire season is approaching and once again we need to emphasise the need to take effective and consistent preventative measures that are grounded in solidarity. The situation has not improved. Furthermore, the number of fires in Europe has increased over the last 10 years. Every year in the EU, on average, an area equivalent to over 500 000 football stadiums burns.

Cantabria is the Spanish region with the fourth-largest number of forest fires. In 2012, 612 fires were recorded, which burned over 12 000 hectares, 9 600 of which were in heavily wooded areas. We are talking about the disappearance of 3.5% of the region's total woodland and 0.49% of its trees.

The Cantabrian Regional Government's sole response was a cut, making a quarter of the staff previously available for slowing the spread of fires and combating other emergencies redundant.

In view of the foregoing, can the Commission state what prevention strategies it intends to adopt to combat a phenomenon that ravages Europe every year?