

**Question for written answer E-010406/2013  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

**Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto (S&D), María Muñoz De Urquiza (S&D), Eider Gardiazábal Rubial (S&D),  
Iratxe García Pérez (S&D) and Emilio Menéndez del Valle (S&D)**

Subject: The impact of austerity policies on education

The economic austerity strategies agreed within the European economic organisations are being applied unevenly by the various Member States.

For example, according to a study by the University of Jaen and the University of Valencia, 35 000 students have lost their scholarships due to the tough budgetary adjustments imposed by the Spanish Government, and they expect this figure to rise to 85 000 students next year. This means that barely 16 % of students will have scholarships, thereby resulting in a rise in the university dropout rate which already sits at 30 %.

Other difficult aspects include the dismissal of thousands of teachers (the student/teacher ratio was already lower than the European average), the elimination of review programmes and tutorials and, ultimately, the decline in quality of public education.

As part of the European Semester, in early 2011 Spain was given a specific recommendation to improve employment opportunities for young people, to closely monitor the effectiveness of the measures in the national reform programme with a view to reducing dropout rates – this also being done through prevention policies – and to facilitate the transition to vocational training and education.

In the Annual Growth Survey 2011 and in its communication at the end of the first European Semester for coordinating economic policies, the Commission clearly established that the Member States should give priority to spending that promotes sustainable growth in areas such as education. The Annual Growth Survey 2012 reiterated that fiscal consolidation should not be at the expense of spending that supports growth, but that it must ensure the efficiency of this spending. In education, this means focusing on policies to reduce early school leaving and to strengthen the ability to adapt to various labour market conditions.

Does the Commission believe that Spain meets these recommendations regarding education policy?