

**Question for written answer E-010826/2013  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Sajjad Karim (ECR)**

Subject: Portuguese coastal property law

It has been brought to my attention that the Portuguese government plans retroactively to repossess private properties situated along its coastline and return ownership to the state.

The applicable ruling, under Law N° 54/2005, dates back to 1864 and includes all properties on land located within 50 metres from the sea or within 30 metres of a riverbank. The owners of property within these 'Domínio Público Hídrico' areas must now prove, before 1 January 2014, that their property has been in private ownership for at least 150 years.

Property owners, which include a number of my constituents, say that it is extremely difficult to demonstrate ownership of the land in question as records dating back over a century are scarce.

I would therefore like to ask the Commission whether it is aware of the enforcement of this law by the Portuguese government and whether it feels that this law is compatible with the right to private property, as laid down in Article 17 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights?

In addition, and given that the Portuguese government's actions appear to be in contravention of EU laws governing legal certainty and the prohibition of retroactive laws, I would ask the Commission what action it could take to prevent the enforcement of this law which could adversely affect thousands of EU citizens?