

**Question for written answer E-012183/2013  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Jürgen Klute (GUE/NGL)**

Subject: Crisis in the refining sector in Italy and Europe

In December 2012, the Italian Parliament's Lower House produced a report on 'The crisis in Italy's refining sector'. At the time the report was drafted, the sector in Italy consisted of at least 16 refineries, some of which have now been shut down and/or converted into terminals (e.g. the Tamoil refinery in Cremona and the Total-ERG refinery in Rome). The sector employed more than 10 000 people directly and approximately 12 000 indirectly through contractors involved in routine maintenance and thousands more involved in non-routine maintenance and operations following investments and the introduction of new technologies. Some of the report's claims are extremely worrying from both an industrial and a social point of view. The *Unione Petrolifera Italiana*, Italy's trade association for oil refiners and distributors, reports excess capacity in the region of 15–20 million tonnes (of the approximately 100 million tonne installed capacity), equivalent to 20% of total capacity or the production capacity of four 5 million-tonne refineries combined. The plants are currently operating at around 70% of their installed capacity. The difficult situation in the European and Italian refining sector is being made worse by lower consumption (partly as a result of the international economic crisis), but more importantly by aggressive competition from non-European producers, who can rely on lower production costs primarily due to the absence of social and environmental regulation, which gives them a significant advantage in terms of lower costs. This critical situation is also causing difficulties at other Italian plants (Mol refinery in Mantua, ENI refineries in Marghera and Livorno).

1. Does the Commission not think that it should acknowledge the crisis situation in Europe's refining sector?
2. What decisions does the Commission envisage taking in order to protect a sector as strategic as this, which is important both from the point of view of security of energy supply and from the social point of view, given that thousands of workers are involved?
3. What action does the Commission envisage taking to promote a policy of research and investment in the refining industry, aimed at improving plants and productivity and boosting energy efficiency?