

**Question for written answer E-013207/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Fortification of the Melilla border fence

The Spanish Ministry of the Interior has decided to reintroduce concertina wire on the double fence system that surrounds Melilla. This barbed wire had been removed in 2007 in response to social pressure, due to the deep cuts inflicted on the hands and legs of those who tried to enter. Instead, a 'three-dimensional rope maze' was installed, known as the third fence, which consists of a criss-cross of cables situated between the two fences, the objective of which is to impede transit between them. The fence was presented as the only one of its kind in the world. The installation of the fence and the extension of its height from three to six metres cost some 30 million euros.

Despite the European crisis, the migratory pressure on Melilla and Ceuta has remained at similar levels to those seen in 2005, and the Government Delegation in Melilla now asserts that this rope maze is not sufficient. Consequently, the Government has decided to reinforce the fence and reintroduce the razor wire, which will be placed along a third of the 9 km long perimeter fence.

Furthermore, a metallic mesh will be installed through which migrants will not be able to insert their fingers to climb the fence. The Spanish Civil Guard will be provided with a second helicopter, while the first has been equipped with a thermal imaging camera and a powerful search light. The Civil Guard also has two rapid response units at its disposal that are deployed to repel the assaults. In Ceuta, where the sea is a popular entry point for migrants, there are plans to extend the breakwater to make access to the beach more difficult when trying to swim in.

Eurosur is supposedly introducing a secure and less harmful border control to Europe. Eurosur was put forward as a new, technologically advanced and highly sophisticated, border surveillance system; however, it appears also to include the reintroduction of razor wire around the Melilla perimeter fence.

Does the Commission have any details regarding the fortification of the borders in Melilla? Does it have a detailed budget for the cost of this to the Spanish State? Will the EU, via Eurosur or any other programme, be contributing funding to this project? Does it believe that the reintroduction of razor wire is an attack on the safety of migrants and their right to apply for asylum in European territory?