

**Question for written answer E-001228/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: European aid for under-populated areas in Spain

Article 174 of the Treaty establishes that, in order to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion, the Union shall make proposals to restrict regression in regions suffering from serious, permanent under-population.

A number of Autonomous Communities in Spain (Asturias, Galicia, Aragon, Castile-La Mancha and Castile-Leon) have recorded a decrease in population and under-population in a large number of areas within their territories. This demographic crisis is being felt most keenly in cities (e.g. Teruel, Cuenca and Soria, the latter of which having a population density of less than eight inhabitants per square kilometre) and municipal districts (e.g. those in the Tierras Altas, which has the distinction of being one of the most under-populated in all of Europe, with 0.9 inhabitants per square kilometre).

This territorial challenge requires joint action from all parties concerned: the regional authorities, the national authorities and the European Union.

The European Union has set aside a portion of the budget for the upcoming 2014-2020 financial period for underprivileged regions, and it is up to the various Member States to decide how it will be distributed. However, in the past, these funds have unfortunately not reached the most underprivileged areas.

Could the Commission tell us how much of the amount set aside by the ERDF for under-populated regions Spain is set to receive, and how this amount is planned to be distributed among its various regions? How can the Commission ensure that the money that Spain distributes among its regions is given to the territories with the most pressing need?