

**Question for written answer E-002661/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 117
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Subject: Usability of disused buildings

According to the most recent data there are at least 11 million empty properties in Europe. In Spain there are more than 3.4 million, the next highest figures being recorded by France and Italy (over 2 million) and Germany (1.8 million). There are also considerable numbers of empty homes in the United Kingdom, Greece, Portugal, Ireland, and other European countries. Many of these properties are situated in popular tourist centres and were erected during the building boom that ended with the financial crash in 2008.

Current EU policy initiatives in the area of building-related environmental protection are intended primarily to promote energy efficiency, and, to date, only a limited number of Member States have taken initiatives aimed at utilising resources in the building sector for purposes other than energy efficiency.

One of the general aims of the Commission's 'sustainable buildings' initiative is to reduce the environmental impact of buildings by improving resource efficiency overall and, through this greater efficiency, boost the competitiveness of building firms. That notwithstanding, the number of disused buildings in individual Member States is rising.

Following the announcement that it is drawing up a communication on sustainable buildings and an accompanying impact assessment, and taking into account the data on the exceptionally high number of empty properties as well as the initiatives and strategies already under way, what measures will the Commission implement to enable more intensive use to be made of existing buildings, thereby reducing the need to add to the built environment?