

**Question for written answer E-003405/2019
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Apulia Region Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

EUR 1.7 from the 2014-2020 RDP for Apulia has been earmarked for the support and development of the agricultural and agri-food sector.

According to official data published by the Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies, take-up of funding in Apulia is only 21 %, a level of spending lower than in any other region.

The assessment report also indicates that around EUR 157 million could be decommitted by 31 December 2019.

In recent years, Apulia has been extremely inefficient in the programming, management and implementation of the RDP, generating massive litigation, particularly with regard to investment under Priority Axis 4, which is alone worth over EUR 553 million. On 15 July 2019, the Apulian authorities finally withdrew the second invitation to tender and, to date, have not completed the proceedings or commenced payments for previous tenders.

In view of this:

1. What action does the Commission propose to take in response to the failure by Apulia to meet its spending targets?
2. What action will it take to ensure immediate take-up and more rapid deployment of funding from the 2014-2020 PDR for Apulia?