

**Question for oral answer O-000051/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 115

Alain Lamassoure

on behalf of the Committee on Budgets

Subject: Alarming shortage of payments for financing EU external aid

According to information provided recently by the Commission, there is a severe shortage of payments in 2014 for humanitarian aid. One third of all available payments for 2014 for humanitarian aid have already been spent, and the expected shortage of payments in the field of humanitarian aid in 2014 amounts to EUR 400 million, of which EUR 150 million was already lacking in July 2013.

Not only does this prevent the EU from paying existing bills, but it will impede the programming and launch of new actions planned for 2014 in the Commission's work programme.

The cash-flow crisis is affecting other external financing instruments (such as the Instrument for Stability and Peace and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights), which according to some sources will require at least an extra EUR 100 million in payment appropriations, as they will already have reached crisis point in June 2014. The situation may be further aggravated if it is confirmed that the aid package for Ukraine, endorsed by the European Council on 6 March 2014 on the basis of a Commission proposal, requires the mobilisation of additional funds on top of those already voted in the 2014 budget.

1. What concrete proposals will the Commission submit in order to ensure that there are enough payment appropriations to cover all external aid needs (including any additional needs for possible new crises requiring immediate action), and when will these proposals be submitted? In this connection, does the Commission plan to propose new transfers and/or an amending budget (and, if so, when)?
2. Given that the shortage of payments severely affects humanitarian aid and a number of other EU policies, can the Commission confirm its readiness to mobilise any flexibility mechanism enshrined in the new regulation on the multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020 and the interinstitutional agreement, including the contingency margin, to address this situation?

Tabled: 21.3.2014

Forwarded: 25.3.2014

Deadline for reply: 1.4.2014