

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0807/00
by Elizabeth Montfort (UEN)
to the Commission

Subject: Financial assistance to disaster areas in the Auvergne region of France

Further to the statement by Mr Michel Barnier, Member of the Commission, in plenary in January 2000 concerning the damage caused by the storms and the note from Mr Romano Prodi, President of the Commission, to Mr Lionel Jospin, Prime Minister, what practical measures can Auvergne expect from the Commission,

1. as a matter of urgency, on account of the risks of phytosanitary and water pollution?
2. financial measures
 - under the EAGGF-Guarantee Section (Article 33 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/99¹ which provides for measures in the event of a natural disaster) and the use of aid to forestry areas eligible under Objective 2 (flexible application of criteria)
 - outside areas
 - LIFE programme
 - to complement national or local aid, will the Commission adopt a more flexible approach to State aid to enterprises?
3. fiscal measures; for how long will the Commission grant an exemption from the principle of free competition by authorising France to reduce the VAT rate from 20.6% to 5.5% for numerous forestry activities?
4. logistic measures
 - what coordination is to be anticipated under the Community action programme for civil protection adopted by the Council on 9 December 1999?

¹ OJ L 160, 26.6.1999, p. 80