

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2635/07
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to the Commission

Subject: Losses caused by frost in Poland

In April and early May temperatures fell sharply to below zero in Poland, with catastrophic effects – on a hitherto unprecedented scale – for top-fruit and soft-fruit growers. The extremely fierce and sudden temperature changes destroyed the buds on the trees and most of the fruit bushes. The parts of the country that specialise in top-fruit growing and market gardening were hardest hit. The losses throughout the country as a whole are estimated to have been extremely severe and significantly higher than those caused by last year's drought in Poland. Detailed figures should be provided by Poland once a comprehensive assessment has been made of the damage caused, but appropriate aid measures need to be implemented as soon as possible.

I would propose that the Commission consider sending a delegation of EU experts to assess the situation in the country.

I would stress that hundreds of thousands of top-fruit and soft-fruit and vegetable growers are facing severe problems; some of them have taken out large loans and will find it difficult to survive until next year. What is more, it is already clear that the processing industry will incur major financial losses owing to a shortage of inputs (apples, cherries and some soft fruits).

People may well ask why the farmers did not insure their orchards and fields. There is a simple answer to that question: insurance that provides adequate cover is extremely expensive and farmers simply cannot afford it.

In view of this catastrophic situation, will the Commission be putting forward appropriate measures to assist the top-fruit and soft-fruit growers and processors affected?