

**Question for written answer P-007303/2011  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**

Subject: The most remote regions and the multiannual financial framework 2014-2020

1. There is not a single reference to the most remote regions (MRR) in the text of the Commission communication of 29 June 2011 entitled 'A budget for Europe 2020', whose provisions are to come into force between over the period 2014-2020.
2. All the signs are that the MRR, despite constituting a specific item in the proposed multiannual budget, under the rubric 'smart and inclusive growth', will suffer a substantial cut in the additional allocation per inhabitant granted in view of their specific conditions and created under cohesion policy (in the light of the ERDF), which currently stands at EUR 35 per inhabitant/per year, under the earlier framework.
3. No reason has been given for these cuts, nor has it been made clear how much will be granted to the MRR or even whether they will be able to benefit from any specific support instrument for the proposed new programmes.
4. The reduction in the allocation for the MRRs, should it take place, could substantially affect the Azores, a region whose execution rate for ERDF funds is relatively high (the figures for the heading 'additional costs' were, at 30 June, 90% for commitments and 68.5% for execution/expenditure), a circumstance which demonstrates how necessary and useful these funds are for the region.
5. The Commission advocates the introduction of a solidarity budget, the strengthening of the internal market, and the need for Europe to offer value added by means of innovative research, environmentally sustainable practices and action to fight climate change, all of them principles or commitments of evident interest for the MRR, including the Azores.
6. Account should be taken of the report of Parliament's SURE Committee on 'a new Multiannual Financial Framework for a competitive, sustainable and inclusive Europe' and of the Commission communication 'The outermost regions, an asset for Europe', which reaffirm the permanent nature of the MRRs' handicaps and call for the consolidation of the existing instruments for compensating for those handicaps, as also of the desire to derive maximum benefit from those regions' strong points and the comparative advantages they enjoy vis-à-vis the EU and the neighbouring third countries.
7. The above-mentioned communication, in the budgetary framework it presents on the last page, does not mention the cut in funding for the MRR.

Given the above, as well as the continued doubts over what type of support and budget the Commission intends to implement in the MRR, can the Commission clarify the matter and explain the reasons for the reduction in the allocation under the proposed budget submitted? Can it also clarify whether it has ignored the degressive character of the effort required in pursuit of policies calling for greater rigour and austerity in times of increased vulnerability?