

**Question for written answer P-009125/2012
to the Commission**

Rule 117

María do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)

Subject: EU role in the reduction of seismic risk

There is a significant seismic risk in several Member States. Earthquakes are unavoidable and recurrent. Science can determine with a high degree of confidence the zones where future earthquakes are likely to occur. Although the probability of earthquakes occurring is cyclical, what is not predictable is when exactly they will occur.

There is no doubt that earthquakes pose a risk to human life and can destroy economic infrastructure and devastate our historic heritage. However, these risks can be minimised as modern earthquake engineering has the capacity to strengthen buildings and other facilities to enable them to withstand very intense earthquakes.

At present, several Member States, hit hard by the crisis, are tending to limit their investments to immediate needs, neglecting preventive strategies to mitigate seismic risk, even though this element is a complex but indispensable factor in ensuring resilient and sustainable economic development, for which a pan-European approach is absolutely vital.

I share the view of the European Association for Earthquake Engineering that the Commission should take the lead on this issue at two different levels: legislative, creating a framework with minimum earthquake safety standards for important facilities and public and other buildings in seismic areas; and budgetary, providing financial support to ensure adequate safety conditions in existing structures.

With this in mind:

1. Does the Commission intend to put forward any legislative framework under which Member States will be called upon to ensure minimum earthquake safety standards for the critical infrastructure identified in Council Directive 2008/114/EC?
2. Does the Commission intend to provide financial support for the Member States for the pursuing of this task? Will these proposed measures be included in the new legislative framework for the post-2014 Structural Funds?
3. Will civil society be involved in prioritising the need to increase the seismic resistance of existing buildings? If so, how?