

**Question for written answer P-012247/2013  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

**Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D)**

Subject: European Social Fund assistance for the Canaries

Measures to combat unemployment are currently the EU's principal objective and concern. To this end, the European Social Fund (ESF) is earmarking appropriations for active employment policies to be administered by the recipient Member States, including Spain.

As part of its strategy of providing firm support to contain unemployment, the EU has created a social pillar for the period 2014-2020, from which Spain is to receive EUR 1 100 for each unemployed person.

In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, it is the responsibility of the Member States (or the autonomous communities in Spain), as final recipients, to administer the funding. In other words, the EU delegates responsibility to the Member States and the regional and local authorities. This does not, however, exempt the Commission from involvement should the funds fail to reach their intended recipients.

In this instance, the Government of Spain, one of the Member States with the highest levels of unemployment, has, almost at the end of the financial year, unjustifiably failed to release ESF appropriations for distribution.

The Canaries have the second highest unemployment rate in Spain, that is to say 35% or almost 400 000, rising to an alarming level of just under 70% among young people. Given the particular situation of the Canary Islands as an outermost EU region, their labour market also suffers the consequences of structural difficulties, as recognised under Spanish legal and constitutional provisions, as well as the EU Treaty (Article 349 TFEU). This does not, however, appear to have been taken into account by the Spanish Government.

Such high rates of unemployment are creating an unprecedented social divide in the Canaries, where it is therefore particularly urgent to distribute the funding and implement the active employment policies badly needed throughout Spain. The Commission must therefore monitor more effectively the allocation of funding within Spain, particularly ESF appropriations, ensuring that they reach their intended recipients effectively and without delay.

Is the Commission aware that ESF appropriations earmarked for active employment policies are still being withheld by the Spanish Government from their intended recipients?

Will the Commission take action to remedy matters?