

**Priority question for written answer P-000277/2020  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Rural mafia in Europe

Follow-up to E-002344/2019 – rural mafia in Europe

On 15 January 2020, Messina's District Anti-Mafia Prosecutor's Office (DDA) carried out the biggest anti-mafia operation in history. A mafia group is accused of having siphoned off some EUR 10 million in common agricultural policy (CAP) funds by illegally buying up land with the complicity of officials of the Agricultural Payments Agency (AGEA) and agricultural advisory centres.

CAP funds ended up in the hands of mafia bosses and were mostly reinvested in drug trafficking. Sums were often transferred to accounts in Member States such as Bulgaria, Lithuania and Cyprus before 'returning to Italy, through ... transactions intended to cover up the criminals' tracks'.

Italy is at the forefront of efforts to counter this form of crime and has unearthed evidence showing that the 'CAP mafia' is the latest manifestation of the mafia in Europe.

Problems with the mafia are barely acknowledged at EU level and there is little understanding of how these groups work. Laws are needed which enable the Member States to work together to prevent and counter this phenomenon.

In the light of the above:

1. Does the Commission plan to meet the Italian authorities who are dedicating their time to tackling this problem?
2. Would it make sense to set up a task force to prevent the problem from spreading elsewhere in Europe?
3. Does the Commission plan to introduce laws and penalties to tackle the rural mafia?

**Supporters<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> This question is supported by Members other than the authors: Daniela Rondinelli (NI), Chiara Gemma (NI)