

WRITTEN QUESTION E-5946/08

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Subject: Antonio Merloni Spa - company crisis and the future of its factories

According to recent surveys the tendency in Italy to resort to the wage guarantee fund has increased by 25% since 2007: 700 out of around 1200 Italian businesses have turned to the fund owing to 'company crises'.

Of these, Antonio Merloni Spa group, with headquarters at Fabriano (Ancona), proves to be the most urgent case, since more than 3000 workers are being paid by the special wage guarantee fund. Meanwhile, the owners have not yet produced the industrial plan that the Italian Government and the workers have been waiting for since July 2008.

The Antonio Merloni Spa group, like other Italian companies, has been able to benefit over the last few years from a considerable amount of public investment, including EU funds allocated in connection with the region's Objective 2 status under the ESF for the development of local systems and of infrastructure, and for vocational training.

Does the Commission intend to set up immediate initiatives in order to allay the European and Italian industrial crisis, in particular the crisis of the Antonio Merloni Spa group's factories in the regions of Umbria and Marche, as well as in the Reggio Emilia area?

Does the Commission intend to adopt a specific strategy in order to combat the negative repercussions the crisis is having on employment, work conditions and regional government in areas suffering a severe recession?