

**Question for written answer E-006011/2012  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Earthquake in Emilia-Romagna: European Union Solidarity Fund

The agri-food industry is the sector which has suffered the greatest damage after the earthquakes that have struck north-eastern Italy over the past few weeks.

The most heavily affected areas have been Emilia-Romagna and Lombardy in particular – one of the main arteries of the Italian agri-food system, which accounts for nearly 50% of the entire turnover of the sector, for a total value of nearly EUR 60 billion out of the EUR 127 billion turnover of the entire national sector.

The damage has not been to infrastructure alone, but also to products. More specifically, the most economically significant damage has been to products which are fermented and aged for a long time, primarily Parmigiano Reggiano (parmesan) and Grana Padano cheeses, balsamic vinegar of Modena and quality wines.

It has been estimated that damage of between EUR 150 million and EUR 200 million has been done to stocks and to products which were being aged or fermented.

The European Union Solidarity Fund, established by Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 of 11 November 2002, intervenes to deal with damage to the economy of one or more regions of a Member State caused by a major natural disaster.

Italy is currently finalising its dossier for submission to the Commission within the time frame laid down by Article 4 of the above regulation, to apply for assistance from the European Union Solidarity Fund.

In view of the exceptional nature and seriousness of the situation, can the Commission say whether some of these resources from the European Union Solidarity Fund for natural disasters can be used to compensate damage to product stocks, in addition to damage to infrastructure?