

**Question for written answer E-004031/2014  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Sergio Berlato (PPE)**

Subject: Eco-terrorism: EU definition and countermeasures

The EU has adopted an effective strategy to counteract major terrorist attacks, but has made no specific provision to deal with terrorist attacks of other kinds, which, though on a smaller scale, are no less disquieting and harmful from the point of view of security, freedom, and the values espoused by the EU and its citizens. This latter category includes attacks perpetrated by environmental or animal rights organisations for political reasons linked to environmentalism or animal rights, or stemming from the desire to raise their profile by singling out what is often a symbolic target. Like underground political organisations, these organisations generally have both a non-violent wing, which exerts pressure on decision-makers and the media through lobbying and protest in an attempt to win over the public, and a violent extremist wing, which carries out direct action by increasingly more radical methods amounting to nothing short of an environmentalist/animal rights 'jihad'. In the United States, the FBI has coined a definition of 'eco-terrorism', and there are federal laws (the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act) expressly directed against any act that targets animal-related facilities, businesses and otherwise, by damaging or causing the loss of real or personal property or placing persons in reasonable fear of injury. In Europe, on the other hand, although business and Member States are gradually becoming aware of these new forms of terrorism, they are still ill prepared to cope: there is not even a clear legal definition of 'eco-terrorism'. Because there is no legal frame of reference, the Member States' judicial systems tend to underestimate the seriousness of offences that should be classed as terrorism of this sort. This means not only that sentences have little deterrent value, but also – and rather worryingly – that the public are given the impression that offenders are in a way 'untouchable' when they commit crimes for political reasons linked to environmentalism or animal rights.

In the light of the foregoing:

- What steps will the Commission take, as a matter of urgency, to provide Member States with a clear-cut specific frame of reference regarding eco-terrorism and the related countermeasures?
- Will it provide a means of assisting businesses that have been damaged or threatened?
- Will it make measures to combat eco-terrorism a priority on the EU's justice and security policy agenda?