

Question for written answer E-002195/2024

to the Commission

Rule 144

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Subject: Urgent measures to protect Apulia's monumental olive trees threatened by *Xylella fastidiosa*

The bacteria *Xylella fastidiosa* is devastating Apulia's traditional olive groves; already more than 21 million olive trees have been lost. Among the most endangered specimens are around 350 000 monumental olive trees, some of which are thousands of years old, which represent an incomparable source of wealth not only for Italy but also for Europe as a whole. Their loss would cause irreparable damage to the environment, the economy and Europe's cultural heritage. Although early grafting has proven to be an effective solution for preserving these trees, significant financial support will be needed we wish to carry it out.

Given the existing EU legislation, such as Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 on Invasive Alien Species and Directive (EU) 2019/782 on harmonised risk indicators, coordinated action is needed to address this emergency.

In view of the above:

1. What action does the Commission intend to take, under Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 and Directive (EU) 2019/782, to combat the spread of *Xylella* and protect Puglia's monumental olive trees?
2. Is there any special or emergency EU funding to support local, regional and national initiatives to conserve these olive trees, with particular emphasis on early grafting?
3. Does the Commission intend to launch a Europe-wide research and innovation plan to find lasting solutions to deal with *Xylella fastidiosa*?

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