

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0807/07
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to the Commission

Subject: Structural Funds 2007-2013

Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006¹ of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999² defines the objectives to which the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund (hereinafter referred to as the Funds) are to contribute, the criteria for Member States and regions to be eligible under those Funds, the financial resources available and the criteria for their allocation. The Funds shall contribute, each in accordance with the specific provisions governing it, towards achieving three objectives: the Convergence objective: the ERDF, the ESF and the Cohesion Fund; the Regional competitiveness and employment objective: the ERDF and the ESF; and the European territorial cooperation objective: the ERDF.

Article 5 states that 'The regions eligible for funding from the Structural Funds under the Convergence objective shall be regions corresponding to level 2 of the common classification of territorial units for statistics within the meaning of Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 whose gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, measured in purchasing power parities and calculated on the basis of Community figures for the period 2000 to 2002, is less than 75 % of the average GDP of the EU-25 for the same reference period.' In Paragraph 2 of the same Article are stated the eligibility criteria for the Member States under the Cohesion Fund.

Following the rules of this Regulation it is obvious that the measuring units used, in the indicative financial allocation for the period 2007-2013 are the GDP per capita and the population of the countries. The Republic of Bulgaria has a 7.9 million population and a GDP per capita for the period 2000-2002 around 5.0%. The indicative financial allocations for the Cohesion policy for Bulgaria are envisaged to be €6 853 000 000. (For example some Member States that have similar population and a GDP per capita for the period 2000-2002 around 5.1% have got financial allocations for the Cohesion policy of about 3-4 times more.)

Why, having similar population and little difference in its GDP from some Member States, and being a country that is lagging behind in its development has Bulgaria received almost 3-4 times less money from the Structural Funds than these Member States, and how, will the Commission make up the gap arising from this?

¹ OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 25.

² OJ L 161, 26.6.1999, p. 1.