

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2628/99

by Francesco Speroni (TDI), Umberto Bossi (TDI) and Gian Gobbo (TDI)  
to the Commission

Subject: Participation of the President of the Commission, Romano Prodi, in the Italian election campaign

On Friday, 26 November 1999, the President of the Commission, Romano Prodi, participated in the final meeting of the election campaign of the Olive Tree (centre-left) candidate for the Chamber of Deputies by-election.

Other well-known members of the Italian coalition government, such as the Secretary of the Democratic Left, Walter Veltroni, also took part in what was a political event forming part of an election campaign during which Mr Prodi made statements supporting the Olive Tree candidate, Mr Parisi.

1. Does the Commission not believe that the participation of its members (and particularly its President, Mr Prodi) in events which are clearly part of an election campaign, as in the above case, is inappropriate?
2. Does it not consider this conduct to be in breach of the letter and the spirit of Article 213(2) of the Amsterdam Treaty, which stipulates that 'the Members of the Commission shall, in the general interest of the Community, be completely independent in the performance of their duties'?
3. Does Mr Prodi plan to participate in future election meetings of this kind in Italy, maybe of the other two coalitions?