

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3198/00
by Vitaliano Gemelli (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Violence in Colombia and continual oppression of its rural and indigenous communities

The serious, ten-year internal conflict in Colombia between drug traffickers and the military, with the occasional backing of the paramilitary, has, over time led to a depopulation of the areas concerned by the fighting on account of the repeated threats, air attacks, murders and massacres to which the local and indigenous communities are being subjected. The areas most directly involved are those which, for economic and political reasons, are of greater strategic importance and which the combatants have an interest in owning or controlling.

Furthermore, forced displacement is on the increase: in 1999, 288 000 people were forced to flee their homes and from 1985 to 1999 over 1 700 000 people were forcibly evacuated.

1. Can the Commission say whether any aid is being granted to the Colombian Government to tackle and overcome this grave social instability?
2. What proposals for social stability is the European Union putting forward in Colombia and which NGOs is it using to do so?
3. What is the Commission's view of the 'returning communities' that are attempting to return people to their homelands?
4. What is the EU's relationship with the 'Peace Communities' in Colombia and to which projects does the Commission plan to give financial support in order to promote development and solidarity and protect communities at risk of displacement?