

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0509/01

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to the Commission

Subject: The role of the Economic and Social Committee and the prioritising of expenditures within the European Union

Can the Commission state what role it sees the Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC) as having now that the European Parliament is directly elected, and whether it believes that the continued expenditure of hundreds of millions of euros of taxpayers' money on the Committee is justified and likely to command the support of the European taxpayer if knowledge of these levels of expenditure was better publicised?

In particular, in view of Commission President Prodi's statement last year to the effect that the European Commission needed more funds to carry out its core tasks and the Commission's refusal at the end of last year to take on certain new tasks until it had received additional funds, does the Commission feel that if it cannot find funds through elimination of wasteful expenditure within the Commission that it should suggest to the Member States that they agree to wind down the Economic and Social Committee and use part of the savings (including, where appropriate, the transfer of staff from ECOSOC) to pay for the additional tasks which the Commission may in the future be asked to carry out?