

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1036/01

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to the Commission

Subject: Payments arising from the Enschede firework disaster

Serious problems have arisen in obtaining payments due on account of the Enschede firework disaster, particularly those due to the entrepreneurs affected by it. These are people whose businesses have been destroyed and who will not be able to start new businesses for some time, for example tradespeople, because their whole district no longer exists.

A scheme has been introduced to enable businesses to survive ('no one should be bankrupted by the disaster') by paying compensation for four types of damage:

- material damage
- loss of earnings
- erosion of assets following the cessation of business activity
- guidance costs.

The maximum total compensation payable per business is EUR 100 000 for a maximum period of three years.

Is it true that the payment of any larger sum by way of support to enterprises would require the approval of the Commission pursuant to Article 87(2)(b) of the EC Treaty?

Is it true that a decision to grant such approval could take between a year and 18 months to reach, which in the case of a disaster like this one would undoubtedly be too late to prevent the entrepreneurs concerned from going bankrupt?

What will the Commission do to speed up decision-making in the aftermath of such disasters and particularly in the case of the Enschede disaster?