

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2357/02

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to the Commission

Subject: EU information policy in the republics of eastern Europe

Knowledge and, therefore, an understanding of the projects and policies pursued by the European Union is gaining ground on a daily basis and in the field through the Union's information and documentation networks in the Member States, the applicant countries and third countries. These information networks comprise Info-Points Europe¹, European documentation centres², the rural information carrefours³, the Euro Info Centres⁴ and the Team Europe conference speakers⁵ situated in towns and cities.

These Union showcases and databases are efficient and effective sources of information for the general public and other players in European societies, drawing their attention to and facilitating their participation in programmes, projects and debates launched by the Union

In the short term, the enlargement of the Union to include the central European countries will mean a shift in its eastern borders. This enlargement will produce a new EU perceived in a different light by countries such as Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, which have common links with European history and civilisation, even though they are not at present officially recognised as candidates for participation in the process of European integration. Although the Ukrainian Government has confirmed its willingness to forge closer links with and take its place in the European Community, sentiments also previously expressed by the leaders of Belarus and Moldova, Community information sources are at present confined to two European documentation centres in Ukraine (population 50 million), one in Belarus (population 10 million) and none in Moldova (population 4.5 million), whereas neighbouring Poland has some forty EU information centres for its population of 40 million.

- Is it not appropriate, in the Commission's view, to continue with its information campaign on our institutions, our values and our policies, targeting the citizens of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova - in their official national languages - who will, in the short term, also be our immediate neighbours in an enlarged EU?

- Within what time-frame is the Commission prepared to increase the number of information offices and networks in these three European countries and to how many?

¹ http://europa.eu.int/comm/relays/ipe/index_en.htm

² http://europa.eu.int/comm/relays/edc/index_en.htm

³ http://europa.eu.int/comm/relays/carrefours/index_en.htm

⁴ <http://bre.cec.eu.int>

⁵ http://europa.eu.int/comm/relays/teameurope/index_en.htm