

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3481/02
by Michiel van Hulten (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Belgian government contract for the development of the European district

The Rem Koolhaas Office for Metropolitan Architecture was recently excluded from taking part in a design competition for an overall urban development concept for the European district in Brussels.

According to the 'reasoned decision' of the Prime Minister's chancellery the practice was excluded because of 'a formal irregularity' (the absence of a signature on one of the documents submitted) and 'weaknesses regarding the multidisciplinary approach and the necessary references'.

According to press reports, only four Belgian architectural practices have been admitted to the second round and yet the government decision says that the Koolhaas proposal was one of the four best schemes.

1. Was Commission involved in the invitation to tender for the competition, as the main 'resident' of the European district, or otherwise?
2. Does the Commission consider that the competition complied with European rules on public procurement? What does the Commission consider to be the financial value of the contract?
3. The notice of competition was published on 19 July 2002 in the Belgian Invitations to tender bulletin and the deadline for submitting bids was 7 August 2002. Does the Commission consider that such a short deadline in the middle of the summer holidays is acceptable from the point of view of fair competition?
4. Is the Commission prepared to raise the question of the invitation to tender with the Belgian government and to press for a reopening of the tender procedure?