

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3548/03  
by Antonios Trakatellis (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Public works in Greece: shortcomings and defects regarding the Port of Igoumenitsa and the Egnatia highway

Many projects receiving funding from the second and third Community support frameworks in Greece are characterised by major shortcomings and numerous defects. Aside from the risk to personal safety, inadequate planning, incomplete surveys and defective workmanship can also cause major geological and infrastructural damage. One example of this is the new Port of Igoumenitsa, recently inaugurated by the Prime Minister. Concerns are now being expressed in the Greek Parliament that this is a classic example of an engineering project being dogged by delays, overspending and failure to meet basic preconditions such as rainwater drainage. The same applies to the Egnatia highway project which is being affected by flooding, causing a build up of debris around bridges in Igoumenitsa, thereby obstructing the normal flow of the watercourse towards the sea. As a result, the heavy rains of 19 October 2003 caused extensive damage to the road network and to farmland in Thesprotia.

1. What view does the Commission take of engineering methods in Greece and to what extent is it acceptable for Community funding to be provided for projects which are substandard in terms of planning, surveying and workmanship?
2. Who bears responsibility for inadequate planning, incomplete surveys and substandard workmanship and to what extent can the Community be considered contractually liable under the terms of Article 288 of the EC Treaty?
3. Will the Commission request information from the special quality control adviser (ESPEL) concerning this particular case (Port of Igoumenitsa and Egnatia highway) and investigate the reasons for the shortcomings and defects which have occurred, and what measures will it take to avoid substandard workmanship on future projects?
4. Is it possible to provide direct funding, in response to an application made through the appropriate channels, for the planning and implementation of a rainwater drainage project near the new Port of Igoumenitsa and for efforts to resolve problems arising in connection with the Egnatia highway project?