

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0426/04

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to the Commission

Subject: Timetable for processing rural development projects

The official processing of rural development and enterprise projects often takes a very long time, in some cases more than a year. This causes considerable problems to project coordinators. If the processing of project applications and payment applications takes several months, projects become very difficult to manage and at the same time substantial financial losses are incurred. The flow of project ideas from the grass roots also tends to dry up because project planning is felt to be too slow and bureaucratic. If the processing of business projects takes more than a year it is possible that an entire project may become pointless.

This issue concerns horizontal rural development projects and projects in Objective 1 regions. The question is, has the Commission set a time limit for the period between submission of an application concerning a rural development project and a decision on the project? Project coordinators are set deadlines, but do any apply to the authorities? Is the Commission aware of differences in the speed with which projects are processed in different countries? It would be useful to know in order to ascertain whether speed of processing affects the results achieved in projects.