

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1779/05
by Antonio López-Istúriz White (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: ERDF and the Territorial Cooperation objective

Mrs Hübner's reply on behalf of the Commission to this author's question E-1237/05 refers to the Council Regulation of 14 July 2004 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund.

However, the Commission fails to mention that the Balearic Islands are not eligible for the aid intended to support cross-border cooperation under the Territorial Cooperation objective (to which EUR 13.2 billion has been allocated). The reason for their non-eligibility is that the distance between their maritime borders and those of the mainland exceeds the 150 kms laid down as a maximum in the Regulation concerned.

In the provision in which the 150-km criterion is laid down it is stated that the figure shall constitute a general rule, from which it may be inferred that exceptions to it may be allowed.

In view of the above and given that the Balearic Islands fulfil at least 90% of the conditions for recognition as an outermost region (relative remoteness, insularity, small size, difficult topography and climate, economic dependence), will the Commission say if it is prepared to amend the 150-km limit for the benefit of the Balearic Islands and other regions with similar geographical characteristics?