

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3631/05
by Pierre Schapira (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: External audit of EuropeAid's funding system

Small and medium-sized NGOs think that the funding system for non-State actors in development is too cumbersome and complex. The administrative costs involved in responding to calls for proposals are often off-putting. For that reason, it would be useful to identify within the system of funding procedures the bottlenecks and overly complex areas with respect to the need to protect the Community's financial interests.

In order to make it easier for small and medium-sized NGOs to obtain European funding, could the Commission take the step of having an external audit carried out on the procedures it uses to provide funding for development and on the organisation of the services involved?

Such an audit could focus on the following areas:

- the description of the work programme and the general policy direction as presented in different calls for proposals, highlighting the added value provided thus far by States, the European Parliament and NGOs;
- the procedures for explaining and answering calls for proposals, focusing on briefings given by Commission officials, the justification for hiring private companies that 'decipher' calls for proposals to help NGOs with their replies, the probability of an NGO that is not yet on the Commission's list having its proposal accepted, the number of replies received in English compared with those received in other authorised languages;
- receipt of responses to calls for proposals, with a particular focus on the number of original documents and certified copies requested, and on the reasons for requesting such a long list of documents;
- assessment by consultants outside the Commission of responses to calls for proposals;
- harmonisation of the assessment of proposals, the shortlist of organisations from which the final choice will be made, the casting vote in the event of a tie between two proposals.