

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4539/05
by Klaus Hänsch (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Justification for the rejection of a project for the Asia-Link Programme

The Asia-Link Programme includes Laos and Vietnam. In the decision to reject project EUROAID/120517/C/G intended to develop an international MA programme entitled 'Social Transformation and Economic Development in Comparative Perspective: South East Asia and Europe', the Commission justifies the rejection not only on technical and financial grounds but also with the general political consideration that the partner countries Vietnam and Laos, as 'socialist systems which exercise state dominance and control over education programmes, [...] may not tolerate teaching of critical thinking of their country's development issues'. Referring to 'historical experience in Europe', the Commission doubts whether 'a centralised state-controlled economic system' is capable of leading to 'sustained economic and social development'.

1. Is this justification for rejecting the project in line with official EU policy?
2. Does the Commission intend to exclude Laos and Vietnam from the Asia-Link Programme for higher education cooperation?
3. How is the view put forward in the rejection compatible with the Commission Communication 'European values in the globalised world', which calls for all foreign policy instruments to be used to promote the EU's values in the wider world, that is, in the very countries in which those values have yet to be put into practice?