

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1986/06
by Jean-Claude Fruteau (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: OCT access to horizontal programmes

Article 58 of the association arrangements applicable to Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) enables them to qualify for the Community programmes listed in Annex II F to the Council Decision of 27 November 2001 (2001/822/EC¹).

However, certain shortcomings are currently being noted concerning access to programmes, and in particular horizontal programmes, with this being somewhat prejudicial to the economic and social development of the regions concerned.

A straightforward and at times over-rigid and over-restrictive interpretation of the rules might sometimes lie at the root of these problems. For example, the Commission has blocked some of the projects prepared by Mayotte under the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Development (FPRD) on the grounds that the OCT association arrangements as set out in the Council Decision adopted in 2001 only refer to the 5th FPRD, which was in force at the time.

While today ACP countries are eligible for numerous horizontal programmes, the restrictions applied to the OCTs (despite their being a sovereign part of certain Member States) gives one the impression that the latter are not receiving equal treatment, when they have real needs that call for a rapid and effective response from the European Union, honouring its undertakings.

How, therefore, does the Commission intend to respond to these problems:

- from an administrative standpoint, in order to swiftly unblock the projects currently under examination;
- from a legislative standpoint, in the context of the review of the OCT association arrangements?

¹ OJ L 314, 30.11.2001, p. 1