

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2168/06
by Emanuel Fernandes (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: The 'Wider Neighbourhood Action Plan' and the future ultra-peripheral regions' sustainable development strategy

Within the framework of the Reinforced Partnership for the Ultra-Peripheral Regions (URP) - the future URP sustainable development strategy put forward by the Commission in its communications of 26 May and 6 August 2004 - one of the priority action focuses on which the strategy rests was the insertion of these regions in their regional context. With regard to the achievement of this priority, in particular, and as one of the instruments for implementing the strategy, the Commission envisaged launching a 'Wider Neighbourhood Action Plan' to facilitate cooperation between the URP and neighbouring countries, within the framework of the new programmes under the 'European Territorial Cooperation' objective of the reformed Economic and Social Cohesion Policy, to be funded by the ERDF within the 2007-2013 financial perspective.

However, both the Commission's proposal concerning the so-called 'General Regulation on Funds' and the proposal concerning the ERDF are nowhere to be found as far as the action plan in question is concerned. On the contrary, the current provisions of the General Regulation, as far as defining the 'European Territorial Cooperation' objective and geographical eligibility for finance from the Structural Funds with regard to this objective, do not appear to acknowledge any 'wider neighbourhood' action, as envisaged by the Commission.

Moreover, the proposed 'Wider Neighbourhood Action Plan' is not built into the scheduled action plans under the Union's policy on its neighbouring countries- the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) - nor in the field of assistance provide under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), set up to help implement the ENP, as a result not only of the nature and objective of the ENP but also of the neighbouring countries which, in this connection, are those for whom it is destined, the so-called 'partner countries' covered by and benefiting from the ENPI.

1. What does the Commission's proposal for a 'Wider Neighbourhood Action Plan' actually consist of?
2. What, if any, is the relationship between the action plan in question and the ENP and the ENPI which serves it?
3. Does the Commission intend to submit proposals on implementing the 'Wider Neighbourhood Action Plan' and its funding? When, how much, and how?