

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4635/06
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to the Commission

Subject: Funding access to water from the 20% of public spending and aid earmarked for basic social services

Providing basic social services is a key component of any long-term development strategy geared to eradicating poverty. At the Social Development Summit held in Copenhagen in 1995 world leaders proposed that, as a target figure, 20% of public spending and aid should be earmarked for basic social services.

Traditionally, the OECD considers that basic social services cover basic education, primary health care, food, reproductive health, Aids prevention and access to clean water and basic sanitation, if policies in these areas are designed to eradicate poverty (OECD, DAC).

When it adopted the Millennium Development Goals, the international community set itself the objective of halving by 2015 the number of persons without access either to drinking water or sanitation.

In the declaration concerning Article 5 annexed to the Development Cooperation Instrument, the Commission gives an undertaking that 20% of the geographical aid allocated will be earmarked for primary and secondary education and for primary health care.

Does the Commission use the same definition of basic social services as the OECD, or does it prefer a more restrictive definition, with the result that the 20% target would not apply to funding which covers access to water and basic sanitation and Aids prevention?

If the Commission's definition is more restrictive, what proportion of the total geographical budget does it intend to spend in the two priority areas of education and primary health care?