

WRITTEN QUESTION E-5677/06  
by Karin Jöns (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Community Programme PROGRESS

On 13 October 2006, the Commission launched a call for the award of a financial contribution towards the operating costs of European level networks active in the field of combating discrimination, promoting gender equality and promoting the integration of disabled people in society under the Community programme for employment and social solidarity Progress.

Action I (Combating discrimination) and Action II (Promoting gender equality) of the call relate to the funding of European organisations which have as their primary objectives and activities the representation and defense of and access to the rights of people potentially exposed to discrimination, or of women. Inversely Action III (Promoting the integration of disabled people into society) targets in addition to organisations that have as their primary objectives the representation of the interests of disabled people, organisations which are active in promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities. Could the Commission explain why this distinction between the representation of interests and the promotion of equal opportunities is made and how it will apply it in the selection criteria?

Could the Commission clarify why this distinction has been made only for organisations in the area of disability and not for organisations in the area of non-discrimination and gender, creating therefore a difference of treatment in the possibility for organisations to be recognised as the Community's main contacts in the implementation of policies covered by this call? Does not this create a backward-looking approach in relation to disability policies, which does not exist in other areas?

Could the Commission also clarify whether organisations which are active in promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities cover organisations providing services for disabled people, and whether this is not in contradiction with the purpose of the call, as well as with the eligibility criteria which state that organisations funded must be independent of commercial, business or other conflicting interests? Has the Commission considered whether the representation of providers of services might not be in contradiction with the defence of the rights of users?