WRITTEN QUESTION E-0403/07
by Pierre Schapira (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Future of development cooperation programmes for local authorities

In the previous financial programming period the Commission set up aid programmes for local authorities in the developing countries. Each geographical area had its own regional programme, with AsiaUrbs for Asia, UrbAl for Latin America, Med'Act or Pact for the Mediterranean and TACIS programmes for eastern Europe and central Asia. These cooperation programmes, which were decentralised on a town-by-town basis, enabled partnerships to be developed, capacities to be enhanced, decentralised cooperation programmes to be built and development projects to be carried through in sectors as varied as water, education, transport, housing, health etc. These programmes yielded excellent results, with extremely concrete local successes which benefited disadvantaged communities directly on a participative basis and contributed to improving local democracy. The partnership networks thus created are now well established at local level and have launched themselves into long-term projects with local communities.

These programmes have now reached their closing dates and come to an end. The Commission has not yet sent us its new proposals for regional programmes in the framework of the new procedure relating to Parliament's right of scrutiny provided for by the Development Cooperation Financial Instrument (DCI), .

What are the Commission's intentions as regards the future of this regional cooperation for towns? Does it plan to renew these geographical programmes, to change them or to abandon them?

At a time when the European Consensus on Development is calling for 'active participation by local authorities' and the DCI mentions the latter as partners in the political dialogue, does the Commission envisage raising the budgets for these programmes in order to provide itself with the means to meet the new challenges of a policy of cooperation with local authorities?