

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1743/07

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to the Commission

Subject: National strategic framework for regional development policy 2007-2013

How does the Commission view a scenario in which a Member State that has agreed with the regional governments the criteria for allocating Community funds, in accordance with the directions from the European Commission, decides instead, in violation of those criteria, to divert huge proportions (over 40%) of those funds already allocated to Convergence Objective regions, towards the implementation of national and regional operational programmes, contrary to the position repeatedly and universally adopted by the Region most concerned?

What further action does the Commission intend to take after having raised, in the initial evaluation report on the NSF of that Member State, the same objections already advanced by that Region, namely that:

1. the diverted funding would be focused on national operational programmes without their specific scope being indicated and without any clear spatial distribution of funding, and on areas for which the regions have sole competence (culture, natural environment and tourism) which, as the European Commission notes, 'exposes the effectiveness of the programme to potential duplications of measures under the strategy', thereby violating the principle of subsidiarity;
2. in contrast with the agreed criteria, there has been an increase rather than the prescribed decrease in the level of Convergence Objective funding earmarked for national programmes in relation to the period 2000-2006;
3. some of the funding taken away from the regions would return in the form of ordinary state support, thereby violating the requisite principle of additionality?

How significant, in the Commission's view, is this lack of cooperation with the Region most concerned which, moreover, has special autonomous status, with the requisite regional opinion on the NSF only being obtained by a majority vote in a collegiate body?

Lastly, would the Commission consider it appropriate to promote a specific initiative based on a triangular partnership, or in other words a tripartite round table designed to settle this matter through cooperation, thereby staving off any further potential disputes?