

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2731/07
by Aldo Patriciello (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Use of funds from the Daphne programme in Romania

In 2001 Child Focus, with the backing of the Commission, launched the Childscope directory, which contains a list of NGOs providing assistance for children who are victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation. The European Union's aim was to enable the organisations to gain access to funds to set up centres that could provide information on missing children with a view to finding them.

The Daphne programme, which comes under the responsibility of the Commission's Justice and Home Affairs directorate, has subsidised Child Focus' European partners to bring together local NGOs working in this field and clarify their structures, working methods, working relations with local authorities and means of information.

In Romania this task was entrusted to Salvati Copiii (Save the Children - Romania), which became the Childscope contact in November 2001, with four other Romanian organisations – the International Foundation for Child and Family, Help and Relief for the Young, Feed the Children - Romania and Saint Dumitru, a youth care centre.

According to a survey conducted by journalists working for the daily newspaper 'National Jurnalul', the main aim of these organisations was to help and care for street children, place orphans in Romanian families, and provide medicine, food and clothes for those in need, including gypsy families. These were vital tasks, involving a huge amount of work. The organisations had neither the means nor the resources to add to this work the tracking down of missing and sexually exploited children.

Given that the funds made available by the EU were intended to finance activities aimed at tracking down missing children and that these associations used the funds for purposes other than those for which the resources had been earmarked, does the Commission not consider that an inspection should be carried out to establish who was responsible for this misuse of funds?

Does the Commission not consider that it should take immediate action to check how European funds for the provision of the necessary assistance in tracking down missing and sexually exploited children are being used?