

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3593/07  
by Sergio Berlato (UEN)  
to the Commission

Subject: Anti-Italian and racially inflammatory propaganda on the website of the Austrian party FPOE

A video that anyone can download and view has for some weeks now been available on the Internet site ([www.fpo.e.at](http://www.fpo.e.at)) of the Austrian Liberal-National party (Die Freiheitlichen - FPOE). It is a type of manifesto for the secession from Italy of the province of Bolzano (Alto Adige). The filmette, entitled 'Freiheit für Südtirol', contains a series of images, some of which are very hard-hitting and emotionally-charged, with a superimposed written commentary containing messages that are equally strong, and violent in meaning. The aim is to strike a specious and slanderous blow at Italy for its policy in Alto Adige. The filmette starts by showing events associated with the Fascist period and then conceptually links those images to the period from the post-war years to the present, thereby creating a continuum - which in fact does not exist - that ends with the claim that civil rights are not being recognised in Alto Adige. It goes without saying that this is a vile and preposterous claim which is given the lie by a long series of criminal trials and lengthy investigations by the judiciary and police. The video published on the FPOE website laments the fact that certain terrorists (though the site calls them 'freedom fighters') sentenced to life imprisonment and now in hiding in Austria cannot today cross the Brenner Pass because they are still wanted for the killings they committed. This initiative is clearly defamatory in intent, and calls for a firm stance to be taken by the Institutions. In exploiting the very basest populism, this slanderous campaign is helping to spread a dangerous sense of false impunity among the local population, fuelling hate and racism in a region of Italy and Europe that is fragilely balanced.

That being so, can the European Commission state:

- whether it is possible to tolerate, at a political level, not to mention a moral one, the actions of a party that is represented in the European Parliament (ITS Group) and which has been conspicuous in conducting such a slanderous campaign against an entire Member State - in this case Italy - gratuitously accusing it of vile deeds, torture and political killings;
- whether it does not consider that - in the light of the above - there has been a violation of the principles of the EU laid down in the Treaty and reaffirmed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights;
- what tangible action it will take to safeguard the good name of Italy, as a founding State of the EU, against such vile calumnies emanating from a political group that sits in the European Parliament itself?