

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1888/08
by Thijs Berman (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Effectiveness, coordination and ownership of EU aid to Afghanistan

European aid to Afghanistan could be much more effective. There is too little coordination between the EU Member States and this is causing unnecessary expenditure. Moreover 40 % of financial aid to Afghanistan has been returning to the donor countries. As a result the EU is not properly fulfilling its commitments. These are some of the conclusions of the report entitled 'Falling Short' which Oxfam has produced at the behest of the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR). The report is severely critical of international aid agencies. Their efforts are inadequate, lacking in efficiency and cause waste, says Oxfam. Moreover too much of the aid is being held up in Kabul.

– The report 'Falling Short', written by an Oxfam staff member for ACBAR, is fiercely critical of the quality of international aid to Afghanistan, particularly of the fact that 40 % of the aid ends up with foreign experts, organisations and businesses, meaning that a large part of the funding returns to the donor countries. Does this percentage also apply to the European Commission's aid to Afghanistan, and what is the Commission's judgement on this point?

– Can the Commission shed light on the latest assessments of the effectiveness of aid to Afghanistan, what is the Commission's judgment of the comment that international aid to Afghanistan is insufficiently coordinated, and does the Commission see any prospect of taking initiatives in the short term to at least improve the coordination between European donors among themselves and with the Commission, so as to increase the efficiency of such aid?

– Can the Commission give details of the way in which the Afghan authorities are involved in the determination of aid projects by the EU and its Member States and in controlling their implementation, and does the Commission take the view that this process properly complies with two important aims of European aid: to strengthen institutions and adapt to the demand from recipient countries?