

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2547/08

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to the Commission

Subject: Implementation of preparatory actions 21 05 01 06 and 21 05 01 07

Following the vote of the Resolution on TRIPS and access to medicines (P6\_TA(2007)0353), approved by a large majority of the European Parliament on 12 July 2007, the European Parliament voted an addition to the 2008 budget including two preparatory actions: the first one regarding the 'pharmaceutical-related transfer of technology in favour of developing countries' (21 05 01 06), and the second one regarding 'research and development on poverty-related, tropical and neglected diseases' (21 05 01 07).

In its first interim report on the implementation of pilot projects and preparatory actions 2008, the Commission set up a timetable indicating that studies would be launched in March 2008, for analysis in September 2008, before deciding on further steps to be taken.

We are now already mid-April, and these studies still have not been launched. Can the Commission ensure that it will respect the deadlines it fixed itself?

Moreover, the interim report describes the study on the pharmaceutical-related transfer of technology as having to determine the 'appropriateness and feasibility of technology transfer for medicines'. This wording is both surprising and objectionable. The vote of the European Parliament (both in the above-mentioned resolution and for the budget) justifies the appropriateness of technology transfer; there is no need of a study to confirm or undermine it. Moreover, the issue of feasibility should not be questioned as such, and should be replaced by a study focusing on how to carry out an action in favour of technology transfer.

Besides, following the inter-institutional discussions that took place between the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament before the vote in October 2007 on the addition of a protocol to the TRIPS agreement, the Council made a statement in plenary to reaffirm the commitment of the EU to support the transfer of technology and the action of the EP in that sense (see last two paragraphs of the statement).

Since the study still has not been launched, can the Commission guarantee that it will stick to its commitments and that the terms of reference will exclusively focus on defining the best modalities to implement an action on technology transfer?