

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2996/08
by Markus Ferber (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Loss of Commission funds in connection with the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights

In a recent court case in Vienna, an accountant for the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights admitted to having misappropriated funds belonging to the NGO over a number of years, spending the money in casinos and on cosmetic surgery for his girlfriend.

Reports claim that this also led to the loss of EUR 800 000 of Commission funds – earmarked for the promotion of democracy and gypsy projects in Eastern Europe – after the NGO was forced to file for bankruptcy as a result of its mismanagement. Are these reports true?

Why were no controls carried out?

Who was responsible for project allocation?

What possibilities are there of reclaiming at least part of the funds?

Has this been attempted, and with what result?