

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4025/08  
by Cătălin-Ioan Nechifor (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Payments for projects financed in the framework of the SAPARD Programme in Romania

The SAPARD Programme was intended to create the necessary financial and technical basis for the accession of Romania's agriculture and rural area to the European Union. Thus funds run by the SAPARD Agency, and later the Payments Agency for Rural Development and Fisheries, were supposed to directly contribute to the economic and social development of the rural areas, by supporting the local authorities in their efforts to improve the infrastructure and the living conditions of citizens, and to sustain individuals and associations developing activities in the agricultural sphere.

There have been reports, following recent checks carried out by the Commission in Romania, that deficiencies have been discovered with regard to the implementation of some projects. Some of these deficiencies were even exposed and reported to the Commission by the Romanian Court of Auditors. These kinds of situations, bearing in mind similar cases in other countries, might lead to different sanctions like delays and even a temporary suspension of the payments.

1. Can the Commission inform Parliament about the number of projects presented by Romania under the SAPARD Programme? Can the Commission inform Parliament about the total amount already committed for these projects? What is the situation as regards the execution of payments to beneficiaries?
2. Can the Commission inform Parliament how many and which projects submitted for payments are subjects of the subject of suspicions concerning deficiencies in implementation and execution?
3. Can the Commission indicate what the next steps will be with regard to the above-mentioned deficiencies? Is it the case that the Commission intends to apply similar sanctions and/or monitoring mechanisms as it has done recently in another Member State?
4. Does the Commission appreciate that delays in payments are to be expected that might even influence the expected closure of the SAPARD Programme? Has the Commission evaluated this and could it present to us the institutional and social impact in such a case?