

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4217/08  
by Daniel Dăianu (ALDE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Deteriorating economic conditions must not lead to the erosion of democracy's values and institutions

The author of this question shares the indignation of other MEPs at the measures adopted by the Italian government as regards the treatment of Roma citizens, and hopes that in future intelligence and reason will prevail. These internal policy measures in Italy need to be judged in a wider context. Irrespective of political tendencies and national conditions, this story shows that when economic circumstances deteriorate, there is an increasing temptation on the part of government(s) to adopt measures that are liable to encourage xenophobic, demagogic and populist attitudes. The author of this question shares and understands the concerns of the EU governments in the sense of responding to the anxieties and frustrations of the public against a background of economic downturn, rising inflation and other factors of insecurity, given that globalisation has both an upside and a downside. However, things being as they are, it is essential to avoid quick fixes or measures which could erode belief in the ability of democratic institutions to handle complex situations. The Commission must exercise all vigilance in the face of what could prove to be more than an isolated case, in a context of deteriorating economic conditions in a growing number of Member States.

Is the Commission envisaging an action programme with a view to preventing a 'snowball effect' or authoritarianism syndrome that would be dangerous for the Union?