

WRITTEN QUESTION E-6978/08
by Willy Meyer Pleite (GUE/NGL)
to the Commission

Subject: Use of EDF funds in Equatorial Guinea

In March 2007, the EU unfroze EDF funds for Equatorial Guinea and allocated EUR 10.4 million to these funds from the ninth EDF. Since then the government of that country has not provided any information at all as to the use made of this money. Political circles in Equatorial Guinea say it has been earmarked as follows: 1) institution-building; 2) modernisation of the justice system; 3) strengthening civil society.

However no improvement has been seen in any of these fields to date, nor in any other field connected with making the country more democratic, respecting human rights or enriching Equatorial Guinea's social fabric.

The atmosphere of duress and the irregularities in the municipal and legislative elections on 4 May 2008, the constant violations of the country's own legal system through the way justice is dispensed (the best-known example internationally being the trial last June of a well-known mercenary, a Lebanese citizen and six Equatorial Guineans) and the confirmation that torture is employed in Equatorial Guinean police stations and prisons on a regular basis, verified by a recent statement by a UN Rapporteur on Torture, are all examples of a political situation characterised by total social control, constant violation of human rights, arbitrary acts and corruption.

What information does the Commission have on how the Government of Equatorial Guinea is using EDF funds? What criteria were used in deciding that Equatorial Guinea should continue to be eligible for these funds? What control mechanisms does the Commission employ to check that these funds are being used for the purposes for which they are intended?