

WRITTEN QUESTION E-7000/08
by Pierre Pribetich (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Level of funding allocated to Croatia under the 'MED' territorial cooperation programme

The European 'Mediterranean' (MED) territorial cooperation programme covers regions in nine Member States (Cyprus, Spain, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, the United Kingdom and Slovenia) and two applicant countries (Croatia and Montenegro). Its main objectives are to improve the region's competitiveness so as to ensure growth and employment for future generations, and to promote territorial cohesion and protection of the environment with a view to achieving sustainable development. The countries concerned participate in numerous transnational projects designed to achieve these objectives, such as the setting up and development of institutional networks or the dissemination of technologies and know-how between partners (companies, universities, regions, etc).

Whilst the European Union Member States receive ERDF funding in order to participate in these projects, Croatia and Montenegro are only able to participate by using their own IPA (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance) funds. Accordingly, the former have € 51 312 447 at their disposal for 2007 and 2008, whilst the European Community has granted Croatia only € 53 020 for 2007 and € 106 080 for 2008 to participate in these projects.

Croatia's economic development and the success of its future accession depend in part on its capacity to participate in projects of this kind. The importance of effective participation by Croatia in the MED programme both for its own growth and for the territorial cohesion of the European Union should be stressed. However, the small budget available to the country seriously jeopardises its contribution to the MED programme.

In the light of this information, could the Commission indicate whether it intends to allow Croatia a higher level of funding in order to fully participate in projects carried out within the framework of the MED programme?

In the affirmative, could the Commission give details of the measures proposed?