

WRITTEN QUESTION E-7043/08
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to the Commission

Subject: Applications for funding proposals from the Regional Operational Programme for the Voivoidship of Lower Silesia 2007-2013

There have been numerous complaints regarding the questionable nature of the procedure for the submission of applications for funding from the Regional Operational Programme for the Voivoidship of Lower Silesia (Poland) 2007-2013, under priority 1, improving the competitiveness of Lower Silesian enterprises, which relates to investment to assist SME supporting innovation in products and processes.

Funding applications could be lodged only online, on 1 December 2008, for a period of barely five minutes and many potential applicants were unable to submit proposals in the short time available, not least because of the technical problems they encountered (not to mention the fact that not all applicants have Internet access and even those who had made proper preparations and had their applications ready were unable to register them within the limited timeframe because of an error which occurred with Internet Explorer).

It should not be for a computer to determine which applications are accepted. The aim of the procedure is to select the best proposals. It should not be a 'race' and the value of a project should not be judged on the speed with which it is submitted. Not all those wanting to submit applications have had the chance to do so. Such cases give people the wrong image of the European Union and its incomprehensible procedures. Those who might benefit draw up their applications but are then unable to submit them. There are grounds for believing that this selection procedure has seriously breached the principles of equal opportunities and equal access to structural fund resources.

Will the Commission confirm that the intermediary agency in Lower Silesia has broken the law in this case, particularly as regards equal access to European funds for potential beneficiaries? How can the Commission intervene in such cases if serious infringements have actually been committed?