

ORAL QUESTION H-0795/00
for Question Time at the part-session in November 2000
pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure
by Pedro Aparicio Sánchez
to the Commission

Subject: Educational resources in the countryside

Rural areas account for 80% of the EU's territory and 25% of its population. Rural depopulation is continuing, and, despite the Union's efforts to support rural development, the countryside remains at a severe disadvantage in terms of social, labour and human indicators by comparison with urban areas.

The closure of rural schools is in many cases not a consequence but a cause of depopulation. However, the successive rural development programmes have not used existing rural educational resources as dynamising agents: the Community programmes aimed at redressing imbalances in less-developed and more isolated areas have not interacted sufficiently with those aimed at improving the education and training levels of their inhabitants. By contrast, the use of the human and material resources of rural schools would require the mobilisation of key strategic factors for the realisation of EDRF and ESF objectives and, in general, those of all the various policies for regional cohesion in the Community.

Does the Commission consider, in this context, that the SOCRATES programme should be linked to the existing rural development programmes?

Tabled: 02.10.2000
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