

ORAL QUESTION H-0721/07
for Question Time at the part-session in October 2007
pursuant to Rule 109 of the Rules of Procedure
by Jacky Henin
to the Commission

Subject: Pooling of services among municipalities and intermunicipal organisations

Under French law, it is possible for municipalities and public establishments for cooperation between local authorities to pool their services in order to achieve economies of scale (Article L. 5211-4-1 II of the General Code governing Local and Regional Authorities). However, the Commission considers that the agreements on pooling services come under public procurement law and, as a result, has launched infringement proceedings against France. This position is contrary to the thinking behind the Stability and Growth Pact adopted by the European Council, which applies to the Member States and their local authorities. The pooling of services complies with the objectives of the Stability and Growth Pact in avoiding the creation of departments with duplicate roles, which results in higher costs and the scattering of resources. In this respect, the pooling of services pursues an aim of general and Community interest: better operational management and careful public spending.

Can the Commission explain why it is taking action that will deprive local authorities in France of a legal instrument that allows them to keep public spending in check and ensures more efficient public services?

Tabled: 26.09.2007
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