

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0278/01  
by Jean-Charles Marchiani (UEN)  
to the Commission

Subject: European Union subsidies to twinned towns

In 1989, the European Parliament took the initiative of creating a budget heading designed to support town-twinning in Europe; as well as promoting relations between citizens of EU countries, this European Union aid is more crucial than ever both for regular endeavours at a local level and for exchanges between people of different countries, areas and cultures.

In an announcement made at the end of summer 2000, the Commission indicated that because of a lack of budget appropriations the programme for 2000 would be brought to a close sooner than had been planned. Additionally, it seems that a more selective and discouraging procedure is being introduced, to reduce the number of applications the Commission has to handle.

In view of the success of the vast town-twinning movement in Europe, does the Commission not, on the contrary, consider it vital to propose a significant increase in the appropriations granted for European town-twinning as part of the next preliminary draft budget for 2002?

Will the Commission also confirm its intention to take pains to ensure that the procedure for submitting applications remains accessible to the largest possible number of local authorities, and in particular to the smallest ones, and to this end to ensure it has adequate means to make the procedure better, more flexible and faster?

Finally, will the Commission say what criteria it considered relevant in taking the decision to propose measures which will clearly have an adverse impact on European town-twinning?