

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0208/04  
by Ioannis Averoff (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Practical problems with town-twinning scheme

In keeping with the spirit of the Commission's White Paper on Governance, the town-twinning scheme forms part of the EU's endeavours to enhance European awareness through dialogue with its citizens with a view to their active participation in developments in Europe.

However, at a time when there is increasing emphasis on the importance of this process, particularly at this historic moment ahead of enlargement of the Union when there is a need to heighten the public's awareness of the significance of a European identity, the town-twinning scheme is running into problems. In breach of the procedure for the payment of subsidies in this connection, the programmes which were approved and carried out in March 2003 remain unsubsidised without any official notification or justification on the part of the responsible Commission department. Not only does this state of affairs negate the very objectives of the scheme, it also puts the local authorities in a very difficult position as they have borne the financial brunt of organising the scheme and are, obviously, accountable to their citizens.

Will the Commission state the reasons for the delays in paying the subsidies? What will it do henceforth to ensure that the twinning scheme operates as it should?