

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1385/05
by István Pálfi (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Pre-accession funds cannot reach the local governments in Romania

Representatives of local authorities in Romania state that they cannot participate in pre-accession funded projects inasmuch as they are not independent from the central authorities. They also point out that they have no independence from the central administration because they do not possess their own bank accounts, therefore they cannot submit their own application without the authorisation of Bucharest, which alone has the power to co-finance the EU projects. Problems also arise when the local authorities apply for SAPARD funds as there is no register of title deeds in the country, which is necessary.

The European Commission on page 19 in the 2004 Regular Report on Romania states that the law on decentralisation was adopted in July 2004. However in spring 2005 we can state that the principles of decentralisation and also the philosophy behind the additionality principle have been totally undermined.

Knowing this, the European Court of Auditors in its 2005 work programme states that 'the volume of pre-accession aid is rapidly increasing, when (...) the decentralised implementing (...) are still weak.'

How is it possible that the European Union is increasing the amount of funding when the basic institutional, legal and administrative background does not exist in Romania one year before accession? How is possible that the local governments which are ready to submit their request for EU pre-accession projects are not able to take further steps because their freedom to participate in projects is impaired?

What is the Commission's strategy to prevent the late receipt of pre-accession funds, as happened in the new Member States? How will the Commission make sure that funds do reach local levels to support communities which really need basic development?