

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2432/06
by Matteo Salvini (NI)
to the Commission

Subject: Transparency in the JEV Programme

In November 2004, the firms Tecnote Srl of Verona (VR), Berloni International Srl of Pesaro (PS), Eurocomponenti SpA of Portobuffole (TV), A.C.R. di Romano Livio & C. Snc of Pavia del Friuli (UD), Schema Consulting of San Mauro Torinese (TO) and Tessilcom Srl of Padova (PD) forwarded project applications for the JEV (Joint European Venture) Programme to the relevant Directorate-General, by way of the Banca Popolare di Sondrio, in its capacity as the Commission's financial intermediary, which checked the formal aspects and content of the dossiers and issued a favourable opinion.

It has come to our attention that one of the applications filed by the Directorate-General was immediately declared ineligible for reasons that are still unclear except for the phrase: 'activity of the proposed Joint Venture project is considered of being primarily of consulting/advisory nature, which is not eligible according to the JEV framework agreement, art. 5.1.'

Prudently, however, the persons concerned had asked for an opinion on this matter, in a letter sent to the Commission enquiring as to the eligibility of a partner providing professional (advisory) services - i.e. those of a chartered accountant, to which they received a reply in the affirmative. The motives for this exclusion are therefore irrelevant in the light of the framework agreement in question, while the requests for an explanation made by the Banca popolare di Sondrio have never been answered, despite the opinions, reasoning and demands it has put forward.

The five other proposals were rejected en bloc, without any possibility of objection, following a request for information to which the Italian companies provided suitable replies. The Banca popolare di Sondrio has on several occasions asked to speak with the heads of the DG concerned, and in particular the unit head Javier Garcia Lon, at least by telephone, in order to obtain explanations that it can then pass on to its customers, but has seen its requests for a meeting flatly refused.

Can the Commission explain this conduct, which ill befits cooperation between a principal and its financial intermediary in a Member State, and in particular the motivations for the decisions and assessments made by the Commission, so that a suitable response can be provided to the applicant companies that vouches for transparency in the workings of the Institutions and ensures trust in them.