

WRITTEN QUESTION P-4140/06
by Zsolt Becsey (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Role of Commissioner Almunia in the evaluation of Hungary's convergence situation

Commissioner, the following statement by János Veres, the Hungarian Finance Minister, was made public in connection with the internal political scandal which broke out in Hungary on 17 September 2006: "...on the international financial markets, basically since last summer, we were given to understand that by putting political pressure here and there it had been possible to arrange, by a phone call from Feri [PM Ferenc Gyurcsány], that Mr Almunia and his colleagues, in spite of what we have regrettably heard and been told many times, that in spite of this they would give us the chance to complete the convergence programme by 1 September...".

In the light of the above, do you consider it compatible with your mandate as Commissioner that, taking account of the Hungarian internal political timetable (the Spring 2006 general elections), you bowed to political pressure from a Member State government (in this case the Social-Liberal Hungarian cabinet) in that you and your colleagues, contrary to your repeatedly, but not publicly expressed negative expert opinion, gave the Gyurcsány government an 8-month extension to bring about an acceptable update to the Hungarian convergence programme, and that departing from the 4-month period customary for such procedures you did a political favour to that government at the expense of the Community's economic interests, thus undermining the credibility of that convergence effort for which you are officially responsible?