

WRITTEN QUESTION P-4714/07
by Alessandro Battilocchio (NI)
to the Commission

Subject: Rehabilitation of drug addicts

The purpose of the community 'Mondo Nuovo' is to rehabilitate and reintegrate drug addicts, and its methods include 'ergotherapy', a reintegration method based on providing work for patients to help them reacquire self-esteem and dignity. The work entails the use of 'new-generation' equipment, which raises the costs of both modernising machinery and making it safe, as well as social protection for the workers. The use of machinery which is never obsolete is the only way of ensuring that patients are kept up-to-date with developments, so that they may be properly reintegrated in society after their therapy is completed, and be allowed to exploit the skills they have acquired and thus be immediately reintegrated into the labour market as 'specialised' manual workers. The Italian State lays down strict rules on social security, but does not provide any exemptions or concessions for non-profit-making organisations or those involved in reintegrating drug addicts.

With regard to safety costs, the above-mentioned organisation and others operating in this sector are treated as equivalent to profit-making companies as far as taxation is concerned, and for this reason they are on the brink of bankruptcy because the fees they receive are derisory. In the context of the European Union Drugs Strategy it was stressed that one of the EU's priorities is to prevent and reduce drug use and addiction and the attendant risks for society. The EMCDDA (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction) has pointed out that in Italy last year the demand for treatment of drug addiction fell by 1%, one of the reasons being the excessive medicalisation of the problem and probably also because it is difficult to find effective forms of treatment such as ergotherapy. Furthermore, the Strategy calls on the Member States to improve access to social rehabilitation programmes and to improve financial cover for them, since they constitute the best strategy for achieving the objective of rehabilitating addicts.

In view of all this, can the Commission:

1. say what measures it will adopt to induce the Member States to increase the use of such organisations for the rehabilitation of drug addicts and, more specifically, ergotherapy to enable users to regain their dignity, equilibrium, a job and a healthy life;
2. ensure that the fees are increased appropriately and that non-profit-making organisations involved in the rehabilitation of drug addicts are granted tax concessions in respect of the equipment they use and safety costs?