

WRITTEN QUESTION P-5401/07
by Antonio De Blasio (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Formation of LEADER groups in Hungary.

Local government representatives and mayors in Hungary have recently made a direct approach to Hungarian MEPs, in the form of a letter, in order to draw our attention to an instance of organised misuse which was reported in the press.

The LEADER action groups will be authorised to withdraw and distribute the assistance allocated by the European Union for sub-regions in Hungary. Since the assistance will come from European funds, the LEADER groups may not, as a consequence, serve to represent party interests. In a number of sub-regions in Hungary, LEADER groups were set up in such a way that, prior to the date published for their formation, members of the Hungarian Socialist Party established the action groups arbitrarily, to the exclusion of members of other parties, and in doing so, ignored the basic requirements of democracy. In spite of the protests of those excluded, the LEADER groups – which had been set up illegally – were approved by the competent ministry, thereby effectively sanctioning a practice which clearly contravenes the fundamental principles of European law.

The inaugural meetings of the action groups followed the same pattern throughout the country, thus inviting the conclusion that this was an instance of pre-planned misuse which was coordinated at government level and was intended for one group of the Socialists to use European Union money allocated for sub-regions for their own purposes, free from all scrutiny and in an improper way.

In the light of the above information, we would respectfully ask the European Commission whether it plans to investigate the illegal formation of LEADER groups in Hungary. We would also ask by what means it intends to ensure that they are reestablished and operated legally.