

WRITTEN QUESTION P-6519/07
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to the Commission

Subject: Discrepancy between the statistics on GDP per inhabitant published by Eurostat in different sources

On 17 December 2007, Eurostat issued a news release (179/2007) with statistics on the GDP per inhabitant in terms of purchasing power parities for each Member State, in relation to the average for the EU-27, for the year 2006. In the case of Spain, these indicate a two percentage point increase in respect of that average, from 103% in 2005 to 105% in 2006.

However, in November 2007, the European Commission published the same statistic in the statistical annex to its half-yearly review 'European Economy' (page 46), but in relation to the EU-15. According to that publication, there was a 0,9 percentage point change in Spain's convergence with the EU-15, from 90,3% in 2005 to 91,2% in 2006.

It follows from a comparison of these results that the change in Spain's GDP was lower in respect of the EU-15 than in respect of the EU-27. Bearing in mind that Spain is one of the countries in the EU-15 group to have registered most growth, and that the new Member States (EU-12) registered the highest growth rates over the years in question, it would seem more logical to expect Spain's convergence to have been greater in respect of the average for the EU-15 than in respect of the average for the EU-27. The European Commission's statistics nonetheless state the opposite.

Besides this, according to the 'Growth rate of real GDP per capita' indicator (for the years 1997-2008), which is one of the 'Economic Development' indicators on Eurostat's own website, real growth per head of population in Spain, which could roughly be equated with the progress made in terms of real convergence, was below the average both for the EU-15 and for the EU-27 in 2004 and 2006. This would lead one to assume that the statistics published in 'European Economy' are more realistic than the statistics published in News Release 179/2007.

Could the European Commission explain this discrepancy between the convergence figures for Spain and state why the two sets of statistics differ?