

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1101/08
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to the Commission

Subject: Discrimination against certain municipalities applying for Structural Funds in Slovakia

This is to inform the European Commission about the recent issues in Slovakia concerning transparent and fair access to the Structural Funds for certain target groups of applicants. Specifically, there is clear evidence of discrimination in connection with a significant number of municipalities – especially and paradoxically in the most under-developed regions. Recently, the Slovak Government has solved low personal and financial capacity for implementation of the Structural Funds by a systematic reduction of potential applicants, which is against the principle of solidarity and fair access to structural aid. The most visible example of such discrimination concerns the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development, which has come up with a provision on classifying municipalities for the so-called growth poles according to unjust criteria.

The structure of the classification relating to growth poles is hardly justified. As an example, in the Prešov Region, which is the most under-developed region in Slovakia, the ratio of municipalities belonging to growth poles to those which do not is 24:76 (in other regions it is approximately 50:50). That means that 76% municipalities are ex ante excluded from the possibility of applying for Structural Funds, and have no opportunity to compete with individual or joint projects.

How will the European Commission deal with the problem of discrimination against those municipalities in terms of their classification to particular growth poles, and their having no opportunity to apply for Structural Funds?