

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1646/08
by Dushana Zdravkova (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Temporary suspension of funding for the PHARE and SAPARD programmes for Bulgaria

In view of the letter by Mr Michael Leigh, Director General of DG Enlargement at the Commission, received by the Bulgarian authorities on 28 February 2008, and the letter of 6 March 2008 by DG Agriculture and Rural Development, on temporary suspension of funding for Bulgaria under the PHARE and SAPARD programmes, I would like to express my concern at the lack of any information from the relevant Bulgarian institutions.

In this context the Commission is asked:

- In what manner, if any, has the Commission been informed by Bulgaria's government that Bulgaria may be encountering difficulties in absorbing the funds and has any assistance been sought?
- When, using the Extended Decentralised Implementation System (EDIS), were the shortcomings concerning the management and control of funds identified?
- Has the Commission sent any other letters warning that funding under the PHARE and SAPARD programmes may be suspended, and if so, when?
- Are there any mechanisms that could provide 'early warning' with regard to irregularities to ensure that citizens are informed at an early stage and adequate measures are taken in good time?

The Commission is asked, in such cases, to forward information not only to representatives of the executive authorities in Bulgaria responsible for the irregularities, but also to Bulgaria's representatives in the European Parliament. I consider it not only our privilege but also our duty to protect the interests of Europe's taxpayers and to insist on the adoption of necessary measures that will result in the timely elimination of irregularities and will contribute to the upholding of financial discipline.