

WRITTEN QUESTION P-5381/08  
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to the Commission

Subject: Initiating European Donation Day

For centuries, Europeans lived with the state playing no part – or only a limited role – in social welfare. The task of caring for the sick and the elderly fell primarily to the family, with the Church taking care of the poor: activities which were made possible largely through generous donors.

Over the course of recent decades – partly as a result of strong secularisation – the role of the state has increased, until it is now virtually the only player. Europe's wealthy citizens might justifiably have thought that they were fulfilling their obligations towards their fellow human beings by paying taxes. Today, however, the situation is such that the state cannot cope with its increased number of tasks, and doing so would mean imposing such a level of taxation that the competitiveness of the economy would be seriously compromised. Poverty is increasing, as a result of a decline in social welfare and high unemployment, among other factors. At the same time, an increasing number of civil initiatives are targeting the poor, the homeless, people suffering from addiction, orphans and others reliant on assistance. Few such organisations receive state aid, funding their activities by means of membership fees and donations.

Once again, then, there is a need for a sense of solidarity and responsibility towards each other to be awakened in society.

I therefore ask the Commission if it considers possible, or is prepared to initiate, a European Donation Day in order to promote social awareness of these issues. The world recently remembered Saint Elizabeth, an event which showed that her memory and the example she set have not paled in the European consciousness over the centuries. 19 November would therefore seem an appropriate date for the European Day, otherwise any Sunday before Christmas.