

WRITTEN QUESTION P-5988/08
by Pierre Schapira (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Commission Communication dated 8 October 2008 on 'Local authorities: actors for development'

In its resolution P6_TA(2007)0083 of 15 March 2007 on local authorities and development cooperation, Parliament stressed the importance of setting up a structured dialogue between local authorities and Community institutions in order to establish a permanent consultation between the EU and local authorities and their representative associations at all levels: national, regional and global.

In its Communication COM(2008)0626 of 8 October 2008 on 'Local authorities: actors for development', the Commission suggests establishing 'a structured dialogue (...) under the aegis of the Committee of the Regions (CoR)'. It goes on to say that this should be a 'privileged' dialogue with the CoR but does not exclude 'holding a bilateral ad hoc dialogue with local authorities or their associations'. The Commission also recommends establishing, 'under the aegis of the CoR', a 'stock exchange' for the exchange of information, enabling North-South cooperation partnerships to be set up at local and regional level. These proposals appear to disregard the contributions and experience of other actors on this matter. For this reason the initiative met with a lukewarm reception from local authority representative associations.

Will the Commission confirm its commitment to the wealth and diversity of experience gathered by local authorities and their representative associations in the field of development cooperation, and to the initiatives launched by local authority associations, such as the platform of associations of which the CoR is itself a member, and the stock exchange and partnership creation platform which the Commission was instrumental in creating?

Does the Commission really intend to jeopardise the development of a direct partnership relationship with local authorities and their voluntary membership associations, and does it wish to hamper the free development of decentralised cooperation relationships between regional authorities globally?

In the light of the foregoing, does the Commission plan to alter its position in order to set up a dialogue involving itself, the CoR and active and representative local authority associations on an equal basis?