

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0747/09  
by Margaritis Schinas (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Provocation by FYROM - infringement of interim agreement

On 8 October 2008 the authorities of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) applied to the Commission for Community funding for the road section of the pan-European Corridor X running through the country (Demir Kapija - Smokvica). I have been informed that the application is being examined by the Commission and that a formal reply is expected.

On 29 December 2008, an announcement appeared in the FYROM official journal that the Government intended to rename the section of Corridor X crossing the country as 'Alexander the Great of Macedonia'. This has been compounded by a number of recent provocative actions by this country, for example renaming the stadium situated in the capital Skopje 'Philip II of Macedonia', together with government-funded broadcasts on national and international television networks provocatively making use of the 'Star of Vergina' symbol.

Such acts of provocation constitute a direct infringement of the interim agreement between Greece and FYROM specifically requiring parties to refrain from government propaganda and the use of symbols inciting hatred, hostility and violence. At the same time, they constitute a direct infringement of UN Security Council Resolutions 817/93 and 845/93 and are undermining the UN-sponsored negotiations seeking to find a mutually acceptable solution regarding the question of nomenclature. The European Union has frequently reiterated its endorsement of the UN's efforts to find a solution and called for the avoidance of such nationalistic, irredentist and intolerant gestures on the part of a country seeking EU membership.

In view of this can the Commission provide the following information:

- what view does it take of the renaming of Corridor X as 'Alexander the Great of Macedonia' and the recent acts of provocation by the FYROM Government?
- will it take these acts of provocation into account in considering the application for Community funding for Corridor X which is currently pending?
- will it include references to these gestures of provocation in the forthcoming progress report for FYROM?
- does it agree that the European taxpayer should not be required to contribute directly or indirectly to encouraging nationalist and irredentist gestures in a sensitive area such as the Balkans?