

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1817/09  
by Sérgio Marques (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: The Commission's economic forecasts for Portugal

The tenth anniversary of EMU is to be welcomed, as are all the achievements thanks to which the euro is now a stable currency for 16 EU Member States. Nonetheless, it is important to stress the Member States' responsibility for implementing the necessary structural reforms, whose absence undermines the advantages of belonging to a bloc with a strong currency.

In its publication 'ECFIN Country Focus' (Vol. 3, Issue 16, 22 December 2006), the Commission refers to Portugal as an example not to be followed by the new members of the eurozone. Portugal is seen as characterised by low productivity growth and declining competitiveness. After joining the euro, the country registered unbalanced economic growth based on high consumption levels. In the absence of structural supply-side reforms, consumption was import-led: this generated severe external imbalances, especially as regards the debt.

The Commission's latest forecasts for Portugal are quite dramatic and point up a series of structural weaknesses.

In view of the above and given that the pressures of eurozone membership have proved manifestly insufficient for the creation of the basic conditions permitting a strong productive fabric more able to resist adverse cyclical factors, what measures will the Commission take in order to exercise the necessary pressure on Portugal with a view to its implementing the structural reforms which are needed for adjustment to adverse shocks, for the promotion of growth and productivity, and for creating jobs and boosting competitiveness?