
Beyond the references to the legislation cited above, the Honourable Member will agree that is not the role of the Council to interpret its own acts or to monitor their application by the Member States, these being powers which the Treaty confers on the Court of Justice and the Commission respectively.


WRITTEN QUESTION E-1648/99
by Glenys Kinnock (PSE) to the Commission
(22 September 1999)

Subject: Programmes for the street children of Guatemala

Could the Commission provide an update on its programme of assistance for the street children of Guatemala in the final two years of its operation?

Now that the programme has come to an end, how and through what funding channels will the Commission continue to offer support to the street children of Guatemala?

Answer given by Mr Patten on behalf of the Commission
(19 October 1999)

The programme of assistance for the street children of Guatemala ran from January 1996 to July 1999. The purpose of the project was to see that children at risk socially in Guatemala were protected, respected and kept safe.

For this purpose, Commission aid centred on three areas of intervention: offering protection and direct assistance to street children to help reintegrate them into society; promoting prevention campaigns to stop youngsters becoming street children, and institution-building among public bodies responsible for protecting minors and applying child protection legislation.

On the first two points, the project team worked not just with the children but with their families and communities to devise strategies to prevent children ending up on the streets or becoming delinquents. Literacy and vocational training campaigns and income-generating schemes were set up and are still running today.

On the third point, there were activities to promote child protection, for example by setting up a joint database for the various bodies that deal with children in trouble with the law, to enable their cases to be dealt with more effectively.

Campaigns have been run to encourage Guatemala to implement the International Convention on Protection of Children, which it ratified in 1989, pending the implementation of a new children's code which has already been published with Community support. Additionally, there were projects to train staff and to prepare the institutions concerned (the judiciary, the national children's agency and the secretariat for social welfare).

The project was successful. The government agencies and also the non-governmental organisations involved in it incorporated the running costs into their ordinary budgets, so that the project activities could continue after the Community withdrew.

In view of the results, the Community proposes to devise a new project to support street children which will carry on the prevention strategy put into place by the project which has just finished.