WRITTEN QUESTION E-0156/02
by Graham Watson (ELDR) to the Commission
(31 January 2002)

Subject: African children orphaned by AIDS

Could the Commission estimate how many African children are believed to be orphaned by AIDS and in what countries they are living?

Also, how many of those orphaned are housed or receiving other relief and how many have education available?

Answer given by Mr Nielson on behalf of the Commission
(26 February 2002)

The Joint United Nations Programme on Aids (UNAIDS) estimates that 10.4 million children currently under 15 years have been orphaned by the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), that is these children have lost their mother or both parents to the epidemic. 13.2 million children have been orphaned since the start of the epidemic and this number is forecast to more than double by 2010. In 2000 AIDS related deaths led to an additional 2.3 million orphans with one third under five years old.

Before the advent of AIDS about 2% of all children in developing countries were orphans but by 1999 in some African countries more than 10% were orphans. The orphan crisis is located mainly in Africa, however, countries in the Caribbean and Asia will see large increases in AIDS orphans. At the end of 1999 the worst affected countries and estimated numbers of orphans were: Burkina Faso (211 000), Ethiopia (900 000), Namibia (53 000), Nigeria (970 000), South Africa (371 000), Zambia (447 000) and Zimbabwe (623 000).

It is very difficult to quantify how many are housed or receiving education and relief. The epidemic has forced large numbers of children into precarious circumstances, exposing them to exploitation and abuse and putting them at high risk of becoming infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Research shows that orphans living with extended families or in foster care are prone to discrimination including limited access to health, education and social services. Children suffer the trauma of caring for ill family members and seeing parents or caregivers die. They also suffer the stigma so often associated with HIV/AIDS. Many children are struggling to survive in child-headed households while others are forced to fend for themselves on the streets. Consequently, there are increasing numbers of unprotected, poorly socialised and undereducated young people. It is a reasonable assumption that most orphans warrant greater social support.

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0179/02
by Geoffrey Van Orden (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(29 January 2002)

Subject: Cyprus

How much pre-accession financial assistance has been provided for Cyprus?

What elements of this financial assistance have been made available for the preparation of northern Cyprus? Has any amount of assistance been earmarked for future projects focusing on northern Cyprus in the event of a settlement of the Cyprus question?

Answer given by Mr Verheugen on behalf of the Commission
(15 March 2002)

After the expiry of the 4th Financial Protocol at the end of 1999, the Council adopted the Regulation No 555/2000 of 13 March 2000 on the implementation of operations in the framework of the pre-accession strategy for the Republic of Cyprus and the Republic of Malta, followed by the first Accession Partnership
for Cyprus in May 2000. The total pre-accession budget allocated to Cyprus for the period 2000-2004 adds up to €57 million. These pre-accession funds will finance co-operation projects and activities which are a priority to prepare for accession. One third of the funds should be used to finance bi-communal projects (activities to contribute to the reconciliation of the two Cypriot communities).

The 2000 pre-accession allocation (€9 million) has been programmed to support activities in the following sectors: taxation, customs, Schengen Information System, administrative cooperation, bi-communal projects, and participation in the Community programmes in the sector of education (Socrates, Leonardo, Youth).

The main projects foreseen under the 2001 allocation (€11.5 million) include the following activities: bi-communal projects, VAT and customs harmonisation, upgrading of the state laboratories, urban wastewater, and participation in Community programmes. The implementation of these projects is expected to start in 2002.

As mentioned above, several bi-communal projects have been programmed under the 2000 and 2001 budget. The Union will contribute €6.3 million to the urban revitalisation schemes and historical preservation as part of the Nicosia Master Plan. This Plan is aiming to preserve the cultural and historical heritage of the walled city, so as to provide a new impetus for private investments and to improve the urban fabric. The Community project will be implemented through the executing agency of the United Nations Development Programme called UNOPS (United Nations Office for Project Services), which has been active with the Nicosia Master Plan since 1998. The Union is also providing €0.3 million of support for trade unions to improve the links between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot unions and to develop shared interests in the light of accession to the Union. A Communication Strategy (€0.2 million) is designed to increase public awareness and interest in the Community for both Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities.

As regards participation in Community Programmes, Cyprus is currently participating in Media II, Life II, the 5th Programme for Research and Technological Development (R & D), Socrates, Leonardo, Youth, and the 3rd Multiannual Programme for small and medium-sized enterprises. In order to streamline Community legal procedures and thereby facilitate future participation of Cyprus in Community programmes, an Agreement is in the process of being concluded between the Community and Cyprus establishing the general principles for such participation.

In the event of a settlement between the two Communities in Cyprus, additional Community assistance will be required in 2003 to help the northern part of Cyprus prepare for membership of the country by transposing and implementing the acquis communautaire. This assistance will also allow to kick-start the needed reconstruction efforts. In the event of a settlement the Commission will propose to use the appropriate budgetary instrument to assure the mobilisation of the necessary funds.

Finally, such a peace package will also allow a smooth preparation for the measures, for an amount in the range of €200 million, identified by the Commission in its Common financial framework for the accession negotiations (1) to help the northern part of Cyprus to catch up in its development after accession.