

According to the provisions of the Europe agreements, associated countries from Central Europe have to pay themselves the cost of their participation, with the possibility to part-finance their own contribution from their national Phare allocation. Financial contributions are defined in association council decisions. They are calculated by the Commission on the basis of objective parameters such as gross domestic product (GDP), population, distances (for mobility schemes) and other parameters inherent to the programme concerned (e.g. health standards, energy consumption etc.). Financial contributions are defined in Association Council decisions. The amounts mentioned in these decisions are maximum amounts, their actual use will merely depend on the quality of the applications of the country concerned. At this stage, it is not possible to assess the rate of success of these applications.

All eligible Central Europe candidates (CECs) used the possibility to earmark part of their Phare allocations for supplementing their own financial contributions, be it in different degrees. While remaining within the 10% limit of their national allocations, some countries relied heavily on Phare during the initial phase of participation (Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania), but are committed to make a steadily increasing effort of their own. Others (Hungary, Estonia, Czech Republic, Slovakia) followed a more balanced approach from the outset, and pay more than 50% from their own budgets.

Ten countries from Central Europe signed association agreements (or Europe agreements) with the Community. These agreements are all in force, except for Slovenia.

(98/C 323/183)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1259/98

by Edith Müller (V) to the Council

(28 April 1998)

Subject: Raising of a loan to purchase the D3 building in Brussels

On 28 January 1998 the Bureau of the European Parliament decided to raise a loan of more than ECU 500 million, with the assistance of Société Espace Léopold, in order to be able to purchase the D3 building in Brussels.

Can the Council say whether this is in line with the outcome of the discussions held last year in this connection between Parliament, the Council and the Commission?

(98/C 323/184)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1519/98

by Thierry Jean-Pierre (I-EDN) to the Council

(15 May 1998)

Subject: Purchase of D3 – Loan

The Bureau of the European Parliament has recently decided to ask Société Espace Léopold (SEL) – a legal shell safeguarding the interests of Belgian and French banks – to take out a loan of ECU 525 million and BF 7 billion on the European Parliament's behalf, to enable the latter to purchase the D3 building complex from SEL itself.

1. Given its responsibilities in this regard, has the Council authorized what could at best be described as a surprising arrangement to that effect?
2. Considering the capital involved and the unique nature of the operation envisaged by Parliament's authorities, does the Council not take the view that Community law on public contracts ought to be strictly adhered to and a notice of invitation to tender issued, thereby guaranteeing protection for Community taxpayers' interests, as well as compliance with the basic rules of competition?
3. Is the Council aware of the inquiry by the Belgian legal authorities into acts of corruption linked to the construction of D3?