

(2000/C 27 E/207)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1749/99
by Olivier Dupuis (NI) to the Commission

(30 September 1999)

Subject: Position of the Commission on electoral systems

According to the Financial Times (8 August 1999), Mr Ramiro Cibrian, the Commission's representative in Prague, has expressed EU criticism of the proposal to reform the electoral system in the Czech Republic, which seeks to replace the present system of proportional representation with the first-past-the-post system.

When did the Commission decide that it was, as a matter of policy, in favour of proportional representation and against the first-past-the-post system?

Will it explain why it has taken this stance in favour of proportional representation?

What steps has it taken or does it intend to take vis-à-vis those Member States which, despite the position it has adopted, still use the first-past-the-post system?

What measures has the Commission taken or does it intend to take to block political initiatives and referendum proposals in EU Member States aimed at replacing proportional representation with first-past-the-post?

Is the Commission aware that virtually all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes which appeared in Europe during the first half of this century were in countries with electoral systems based on proportional representation and that the party-dominated regimes that emerged in Europe during the second half of the century were also in countries with proportional or pseudo-proportional (mixed or two-ballot first-past-the-post) systems?

Answer given by Mr Prodi on behalf of the Commission

(22 October 1999)

The Head of the Commission Delegation in Prague did not make the comments attributed to him in the article to which the Honourable Member refers.

(2000/C 27 E/208)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1750/99
by Adriana Poli Bortone (UEN) to the Commission

(30 September 1999)

Subject: Conversion of the Apulia waterworks into a joint stock company

Over the last few days the Italian Ministry of Finance has collected a special dividend from ENEL (the Italian national electricity board) of ITL 4 422 billion, taken directly from its reserves, as well as a 'provisional' payment of 3 100 billion for the purchase of three water supply management companies in Apulia and Lucania.

This transaction has caused considerable disquiet even in government circles (it was notably criticised by the State Secretary for Public Works, Mr Mattioli). It has also caused concern amongst the regional and local authorities of Apulia and Lucania (which have been arbitrarily divested of some of their statutory functions, as well as assets of 20 000 km of water pipes), consumer associations (i.e. ADUC) and members of the Italian Parliament.

The proposed reform of the EAAP (regional authority for the Apulian water supply system) had already been found by the former Commissioner for Competition, Karel Van Miert, to be in breach of Article 92 of the Treaty.

Furthermore, in converting the EAAP into Apulia Waterworks plc., the Italian Government has acted in an authoritarian manner, disregarding the provision of Law 36/1994 which confers upon the relevant authority, in this case the local authorities acting jointly, the power to choose the appropriate form of management — be it a so-called 'special' enterprise (ex-municipal enterprise), a joint enterprise or a private franchise.