

Answer given by Mr Nielson on behalf of the Commission

(10 April 2000)

The Commission's Humanitarian Office (ECHO) intervenes in the Moluccas in order to ease the welfare of the inhabitants. In 1999, € 1 million were committed for two projects, covering medical supplies, water and sanitation, and food. At present, an aid project covering the same areas is under way for an amount of € 900 000. The Commission is examining the continuation of these projects for another six months for food, medical and water and sanitation assistance to the displaced people. It is expected that further funds will be committed for this purpose.

The Commission has not received any project proposals for humanitarian assistance to Moluccas' displaced people from Dutch non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The Commission is also particularly attentive regarding the tens of thousands of displaced people in northern Molucca.

As to the question whether unused funds for previous or continuing projects can be re-directed to support reconciliation and preventive action, it is clear that such a re-attribution exceeding the objectives of the original project is not possible, according to the legal basis of the Commission's action.

The recently published communication on developing closer relations with Indonesia⁽¹⁾, outlines the Commission's pro-active development strategy, understood as a long-term and comprehensive approach. It includes contributions, through the available co-operation instruments, to the social and economic development of Indonesia. Particular attention is paid to poverty alleviation and to the sustainable management of natural resources (forestry-co-operation is already one of the key areas). It also includes the establishment of a comprehensive political dialogue to support the anchoring of democracy, the promotion of human rights, the rule of law, good governance, internal dialogue and reconciliation within the country, and the intensification of Community trade and investment relations with Indonesia. The document calls on all the Community's partners to support the process of restructuring Indonesia's economy.

For the 1995-1999 period, Community funding for Indonesia – from the general Asia development budget line – amounted to less than € 20 million a year, to which some funding for human rights projects should be added, available through the Asia human rights budget line. The Commission is committed to increase its financial input for Indonesia, in line with the above priorities.

⁽¹⁾ COM(2000) 50.

(2001/C 46 E/021)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0605/00

by Salvador Garriga Polledo (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(3 March 2000)

Subject: Possibility of granting the outermost regions permanent Objective 1 status

The outermost regions of the European Union face particularly severe difficulties because of their geographical remoteness and the distances separating them from the nerve centres of the respective Community countries to which they belong.

Because of this, and the fact that some of the outermost regions of the EU may exceed the ceiling of 75 % of average Community income, which would exclude them from the group of regions covered by Objective 1, with the risk that they would end up rejoining that group as a result of lack of assistance, it has been suggested that the outermost regions should be considered as belonging by definition to Objective 1.

Will the Commission examine the idea that the outermost regions should be included by definition under Objective 1, without taking into account their level of income, in order to alleviate the problems posed by their extreme geographical remoteness from their respective metropolitan centres?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission

(26 April 2000)

When it adopted the regulations on the Structural Funds⁽¹⁾, the Council decided that the seven outermost regions of the Community were eligible under Objective 1 under the criterion of 75 % of average gross domestic product (GDP). At that time, the statistical data available showed that all these regions satisfied that criterion. They remain eligible throughout the 2000-2006 programming period.

As regards the period from 2007, the Commission stated in the report⁽²⁾ that it has just forwarded to the Council on the implementation of Article 299 (former Article 227)(2) of the EC treaty that it intends to consider how best to reflect the individual situations of these regions recognised by Article 299(2) in eligibility for the Structural Funds.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 161, 26.6.1999.

⁽²⁾ COM(2000) 147 final.

(2001/C 46 E/022)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0608/00

by Jorge Hernández Mollar (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(3 March 2000)

Subject: Lack of a left-luggage facility at Malaga airport

The airport at Malaga (Spain), which has received EU funding from the ERDF, has helped to boost the tourist (and, hence, the economic) development of Andalusia's entire Costa del Sol and it provides convenient facilities for all its users, who currently number 8,5 million per year.

However, those facilities do not include storage for left luggage, an essential service which many transit passengers would like to be able to use at airports, railway stations and other transport termini.

Does the Commission think that such a service can be denied to passengers on safety or other grounds (which is the reason given by the Malaga airport authorities), thus inconveniencing passengers who may need such a facility?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission

(6 April 2000)

From a technical point of view, projects part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund are designed and developed by a Member State's competent authority in the context of an approved economic development strategy as agreed with the Commission. As a result, the Commission is not in a position to impose conditions for the use of the part-financed infrastructure other than those that ensure compliance with the legal framework for their operation.
