

(2003/C 52 E/243)

**WRITTEN QUESTION P-2841/02**  
**by Roberta Angelilli (UEN) to the Commission**

(2 October 2002)

*Subject:* Use of funds from EQUAL, the ESF and the Fourth Action Programme on Equal Opportunities by the City of Rome

In September 2002, the monitoring committee of the Italian Ministry for Economic Affairs issued a report on the spending of EU funds. The report reveals the alarming slowness and inefficiency with which funds are allocated to projects by regional authorities. For example, spending commitments for the year 2000 account for only 2 % of the entire CSF.

These grave concerns about the inadequate use of European funds by local authorities have frequently been echoed by the Commission.

Bearing in mind that some local authorities, such as the City of Rome, urgently need to use European funds for vocational training and employment, equal opportunities and social integration, will the Commission say:

- whether the City of Rome has submitted projects for the EQUAL programme, the ESF and Fourth Action Programme on Equal Opportunities?
- whether the City of Rome has secured funding for these projects?
- whether this funding has been used?

**Answer given by Mrs Diamantopoulou on behalf of the Commission**

(29 October 2002)

Within the framework of the Structural Funds for the 2000-2006 period, the Commission approved the Objective 3 Operational Programme for the Lazio Region on 21 September 2000. The budget available is EUR 884 million (45 % European Social Fund, 44 % national resources and 11 % regional resources), of which EUR 90 million (or 10,3 %) are earmarked for equal opportunities.

Few projects have been selected at this early stage of the programming period, which explains the low degree of completion. Nevertheless, during the 2000-2001 period, 740 projects were submitted under the equal opportunities heading, of which 188 were approved and funded.

The EQUAL initiative, which is also funded through the European Social Fund, enables experimentation with new approaches to fighting discrimination and inequalities suffered by employed persons and jobseekers alike. EQUAL contains nine thematic fields, one of which is equal opportunities for women and men. The City of Rome, in cooperation with the Immigration Office, is taking part in two projects in the field of equal opportunities.

The City of Rome received no funding under the Fourth Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

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**WRITTEN QUESTION P-2923/02**  
**by Alexandros Alavanos (GUE/NGL) to the Commission**

(9 October 2002)

*Subject:* Reliability of debt and deficit data for Greece

The most recent Eurostat data (30 September 2002) on EU Member States' deficits and public debts includes the observation that Eurostat cannot certify the data for Greece and that certain information on government transactions is still pending or incomplete; Eurostat says that it intends to collaborate with the Greek Government to revise the data.

1. Why has Eurostat set out this proviso?
2. For which data is 'certain information pending or incomplete'?

**Answer given by Mr Solbes Mira on behalf of the Commission**

(25 October 2002)

1. Eurostat publishes twice a year a press release in occasion of the two official notifications of Member States for deficit and debt data. Eurostat inserts a footnote in its press release whenever it is not in a position to certify the figures included in the notification due to the lack of information on certain transactions or disagreement about their classification. This information arrived only after the press release and is now carefully examined.
2. Eurostat is currently investigating the background of some transactions involving general government, in co-operation with the Greek authorities. It is expected that all outstanding issues will be settled before the next official notification foreseen in February 2003.

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**WRITTEN QUESTION E-3138/02**

**by Mihail Papayannakis (GUE/NGL) to the Commission**

(4 November 2002)

*Subject:* Implementation of the Community initiative Leader+ in Greece

The newspaper Kathimerini reports that the Kozani development company, which was responsible for the Greek network of the Community's Leader initiative in the previous planning period, sent a letter to the development companies implementing the Leader+ programme for 2000-2006, requesting them to incorporate measures for the benefit of hunting associations in their programmes.

The aims of this proposal are:

- 'the development of the wildlife' of selected areas of the country,
- measures to be implemented in areas where hunting is not prohibited,
- the drawing up of integrated management plans for the forest areas concerned,
- special breeding areas for game and a register of animals caught drawn up by the hunting associations (!),
- training groups to develop skills, the aim being to inform hunters on matters relating to ecology, biology of species, ecosystem management, use of guns etc.

The proposal was put forward by the Greek Hunting Confederation and signed by its president, who is also the Director-General of the management authority for the 3rd Community Support Framework in Greece. EUR 175 000 are required to draw up the management plans and EUR 200 000 for training for each local Leader+ programme.

This top-down 'sponsorship' is contrary to the compulsory bottom-up approach required in drawing up local programmes (Commission communication on Leader+, April 2000). At the same time, hunters are given the right to draw up management plans for forests for which they have no competence, while the Ministry for Agriculture has itself announced 24 management plans for forests which are to be financed from the operational programme 'Agricultural Development' for 2000-2006.