

The process of society integration continues to be closely followed and has been supported by the Commission since 1996 through Phare funding, including more recently through assistance to organisations acting in favour notably of the Russian speaking minorities (since 2000).

Finally, the Commission has a general policy of promoting regional and minority languages and their use in both current and future Member States. As a result it has recently published the Action Plan on 'Promoting language learning and linguistic diversity'. Language diversity is one of the components of the overall objective of cultural diversity<sup>(2)</sup>, enshrined in the EC Treaty (Article 151).

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<sup>(1)</sup> COM(2002) 700 final.

<sup>(2)</sup> COM(2003) 449 final.

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(2004/C 88 E/0442)

**WRITTEN QUESTION P-2727/03**

**by Antonio Tajani (PPE-DE) to the Commission**

(10 September 2003)

*Subject:* Telekom Serbia

Piero Fassino, formerly Italian Under-secretary for Foreign Affairs and currently Secretary of the Democrats of the Left party, has claimed that the European Union encouraged investment in Serbia during the leadership of the dictator Milosevic.

Can the Commission confirm this claim?

Which Community institution encouraged European businesses to invest in Serbia, and how did it do so?

Which Community institution is authorised to give the 'go-ahead' to investments outside the frontiers of the Union, in this case in the former Yugoslavia?

Is the Commission aware that the papers relating to the UN's investigations into the hidden wealth of Slobodan Milosevic, handed over to the court in The Hague, contain references to sums amounting to around EUR 500 million being paid by Italy to off-shore companies based in Cyprus?

Does the Commission know that the UN investigators think that these sums were part of the payment for the share in Telekom Serbia (29 %) purchased by Telecom Italia?

Is the Commission in possession of any data which might be of use to the investigations into the financial sources of Milosevic's secret wealth?

What steps will the Commission take to help to shed light on these matters?

**Answer given by Mr Patten on behalf of the Commission**

(10 October 2003)

In the absence of economic and financial sanctions imposed by the European Community in line with a common EU position on a third state, European businesses are free to invest in that country. It is worth noting that in the period to which the Honourable Member seems to refer the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was not subject to an investment ban under Community law. Generally, there is no specific 'go-ahead' or 'authorisation' or 'encouragement' by Union institutions for investments made outside the Union.

Although liaising closely with the respective institutions, the Commission is not in a position to comment on specific details of investigations undertaken by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and other law enforcement bodies on this matter.

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