

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1084/10
by Cristiana Muscardini (PPE)
to the Commission

Subject: Abandoned children in Romania

The case of abandoned children in Romania, whose government prevents non-Romanian citizens from adopting (Law 273/2004), is sadly known. The consequence of this insane law is that since mid-2004 no Romanian orphans have been able to be adopted by families overseas, while internal adoptions are virtually non-existent. As a result, 86 000 orphans live in orphanages or with foster families (so-called mother's assistants), who raise them in order to receive state benefits. At the age of 18 the children are expelled from the child protection system, ending up nearly always, unfortunately, in the grip of petty crime and prostitution.

In 2006, 408 MEPs signed a declaration (No 23/2006) asking for around 1000 adoption files, which had been brutally closed by Romania in 2004, to be reopened. In June 2009, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child sent a number of recommendations to the Romanian Government, saying that the Romanian law was 'against the supreme interests of Romanian children'.

On 16 October 2009 the head of the Romanian adoptions office, Bogdan Panait, sent the government a memorandum expressing the need for international adoptions to be opened up. However, Prime Minister Emil Boc disavowed Mr Panait's action, in line with our former British colleague Emma Nicholson who, since 2003, has been taking international action to block adoptions. An international conference opened in Strasbourg on 30 November 2009, organised by the Commission and the Council of Europe, concerning the topic 'Challenges in adoption procedures in Europe: ensuring the best interests of the child'. And yet again, the tragedy of Romanian orphans emerged.

In view of this unfortunate situation, can the Commission say:

1. whether it does not consider that without any action on the part of the European Union those children will be condemned to a life without a family;
2. whether it does not consider it necessary to take the initiative in respect of the government of a Member State, with a view to immediately reopening international adoptions, clearly with all the necessary safeguards regarding adoption conditions and procedures, in the 'supreme interest' of Romanian children;
3. whether it does not think that the right solution for resolving the dramatic situation of the 86 000 Romanian children is that proposed by the head of the Bucharest adoptions office himself, Mr Panait;
4. what steps it intends to take to resolve this problem?