

**Question for written answer E-007124/2013
to the Commission
Rule 117
Thijs Berman (S&D)**

Subject: EU cooperation with Egypt in the field of governance

On 18 June 2013, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) published a special report (No 4) on 'EU cooperation with Egypt in the field of governance'. In this report, the ECA made several highly critical observations on the way in which approximately EUR 1 billion in aid had been spent.

The report stated that a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) programme on human rights and civil society had not been based on lessons learned and that it had been implemented by, among others, organisations linked to the Mubarak regime. The Commission merely replied that it was too early to change the approach by incorporating lessons learned. Is the Commission improving the way in which it designs its programmes, such that lessons learned will be taken on board?

A number of civil society organisation (CSO) projects have not achieved their objectives due to interference by or lack of agreement with Egyptian authorities. For example, in April 2012, a CSO programme under ENPI had to be cancelled. Even though democracy and human rights are EU policy priorities, very limited funding has been made available under other financial instruments, such as the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), which would not require strong cooperation and agreement from the Egyptian authorities. Why has the Commission not made more funding available through those channels?

The ECA has highlighted the fact that the Commission has not carried out a mapping exercise of Egyptian NGOs. In its reply, the Commission said that the mapping was to take place in 2013. Why is this being done at such a late stage?

Why did the Commission not decide to follow up on its severe criticisms of human rights violations with a suspension of aid, even partially and/or temporarily?

The Commission has not asked the Egyptian authorities to establish a public finance management (PFM) plan, even though 60 % of the EU's assistance is channelled through sectoral budget support (SBS). Why has the Commission not used the existence of SBS, which is, in general, much easier to control, so as to address the lack of a PFM?

The ECA also criticised the fact that the Commission did not establish clear criteria for PFM reform. Why did the Commission stick to its 'dynamic' approach even though clear benchmarks were needed according to the ECA? Furthermore, why did the Commission continue with the disbursement of budget support even though the Egyptian authorities did not want to put PFM reform on the agenda of the Informal Economic Dialogue?