

**Question for written answer E-006001/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Herbert Reul (PPE) and Sabine Verheyen (PPE)

Subject: EU support for town twinning schemes

In view of the growing Euroscepticism in many Member States, which culminated in June in the sad result of the Brexit referendum, regular interaction and exchange between Europeans is becoming increasingly important. An effective basis for this can be provided by the many town twinning arrangements between the most varied municipalities and regions in Europe. For some years there has been a budget item for the 'Europe for Citizens' programme.

In budget reviews the appropriations for this have been reduced in the 2014-2020 budgetary period and the disbursement of funds has often, perhaps unintentionally, become unduly complicated as a result of new requirements (e.g. for partners from three countries). This serves as a big deterrent for the often voluntary associations involved.

1. Is the Commission considering simplifying and expanding the Europe for Citizens programme in order to facilitate the exchange of experience amongst citizens and to strengthen and promote the whole idea of Europe? This does not necessarily require injection of new money; it would be possible to fund it by redeploying funds from programmes that are less in demand.
2. What progress has been made in implementing the measures to simplify the application procedure announced in the Commission's answer to a similar question posed to it in 2014 (P-007246/2014)?