

The 2000 budget for Kosovo is targeted to immediate needs for reconstruction. The global amount finally agreed by the budgetary authorities for 2000 is € 360 million. It breaks down into € 270 million for the budget line B7-546 for the reconstruction of Kosovo (including € 30 million carried over from 1999), € 50 million for the budget line B7-210 for humanitarian emergency aid (including € 30 million committed in 1999 as reserve which has to be allocated in 2000) and € 40 million for redemployment.

<sup>(1)</sup> COM(1999) 312 final.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ L 122, 24.4.1998.

(2000/C 374 E/003)

# **WRITTEN QUESTION E-2404/99**

**by Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL) to the Commission**

(16 December 1999)

*Subject:* Uptake of funds for the RETEX Community Initiative

Under the most recent Community support framework (1993-1999) Portugal was to benefit from the RETEX Community Initiative for diversifying regions heavily dependent on the textile and clothing industry.

- What were the amounts allocated to Portugal and the other Member States and what are the figures for funds actually paid out, broken down by Member State, under the RETEX initiative in 1993-1999?
- What projects were funded in Portugal during this period under RETEX? What was their duration and what funding did they receive?

## **Supplementary answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission**

(7 April 2000)

In respect of the 1994-1999 programming period, the amounts allocated and paid out to each Member State under the RETEX Community Initiative are as follows:

(in million euro)

Member State	Community Financing	Payments carried out
Belgium	6	2
Denmark	—	—
Germany	76	37
Greece	79	53
Spain	107	36
France	28	10
Ireland	9	6
Italy	59	29
Luxembourg	—	—
Netherlands	1	1
Portugal	176	107
United Kingdom	41	4
Austria	3	2
Finland	—	—
Sweden	—	—

In the case of Portugal, an additional amount of EUR 30 million was granted under RETEX in 1993, a sum already paid out in its entirety.

A list of projects part-financed in Portugal under RETEX is being sent to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's General Secretariat.

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(2000/C 374 E/004)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-2485/99**

**by Karin Riis-Jørgensen (ELDR) to the Commission**

(16 December 1999)

*Subject:* Aid in connection with the permanent link across the Øresund Strait

In connection with the opening of the permanent link across the Øresund Strait, will the Commission say whether the Danish and/or Swedish authorities have notified it of any government aid granted to their respective rail administrations designed to reduce the price of train fares to the level of the current bridge toll, i.e. a form of operational aid?

Will the Commission also say whether, in its view, national aid to cover a bridge toll for national rail authorities distorts competition for shipping lines carrying passengers across the Øresund Strait? Does the Commission believe that the above arrangements are consistent with the Treaty's provisions on the granting of government aid?

**Answer given by Mrs de Palacio on behalf of the Commission**

(9 February 2000)

On 30 September 1998 the Danish authorities notified to the Commission a state aid scheme concerning an environmental subsidy for the transport of goods by rail. The legal basis of the scheme is Danish Law 289 of 18 May 1998 laying down a legal framework for railway operations in Denmark and contains inter alia provisions on payment of infrastructure charges for the use of the railway infrastructure and on the provision of subsidies to railway undertakings for environmental reasons.

On 21 April 1999 the Commission found the notified aid scheme to be compatible with the common market. In its decision the Commission took into account that the subsidy is significantly smaller than the estimated unpaid external costs of road transport, that the aid scheme is open to any undertaking transporting goods by rail and that it excludes transit traffic to safeguard the interests of maritime transport, another environmentally friendly transport mode.

Any national measure relieving transport companies from charges in any form whatsoever can in principle distort competition between transport modes and may fall under the state aid rules of the EC Treaty in so far as it affects trade between Member States. More specifically, state support in favour of railways may distort competition with ships or vice versa, when such support is granted on a market segment (on a route) where rail and shipping are competing with each other.

In order to be able to evaluate the compatibility of such subsidy with the EC Treaty, the Commission must be duly notified of such measures in accordance with Article 88(3) (ex Article 93) of the EC Treaty. It is however not possible to provide an appropriate answer to this point without previous provision of all the information necessary for such an assessment.

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