WRITTEN QUESTION P-1603/99
by Ioannis Marinos (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(7 September 1999)

Subject: Earthquake in Turkey and nuclear power station at Ankaya

On 16 August 1999 Turkey suffered one of the most disastrous earthquakes in the country's history, measuring approximately 7 on the Richter scale. Many thousands have been killed or injured in the earthquake and countless buildings have been destroyed in Istanbul, Izmit and Eskisehir.

It is worth pointing out that the earthquake comes in the wake of a long series of highly destructive tremors that have affected the wider region in recent years, leaving it to be classified as one of the most earthquake prone regions in the world.

What is the Commission's view on the proposed construction of a nuclear power station in the Turkish region of Ankaya which was also hit around one year ago by a destructive earthquake in which dozens of Turks lost their lives and serious damage was done to buildings and infrastructures over a radius of several kilometres?

Answer given by Mr. Verheugen on behalf of the Commission
(15 October 1999)

The information available to the Commission indicates that the Turkish authorities have not yet awarded the construction contract for the nuclear power station at Ankaya, nor does it give a date when they are likely to take such a decision.

As far as safety is concerned, the authorities have already stated that the Ankaya site was chosen after detailed seismic, geological and environmental studies. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has said that the assumptions underlying the proposed plans allow for a stronger earthquake than any ever recorded in the region, with the epicentre at the power station itself, rather than on the nearest fault line 20 kilometres away. According to the IAEA, the terrible earthquake in August in the north-west (though far away from Ankaya) would not have changed the results.

Although the Commission is following this project closely, it does not have any authority in the decision-making process regarding the construction work or the site. The Turkish authorities, especially the Turkish Atomic Energy Authority (TAEA) are solely responsible.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1615/99
by Caroline Jackson (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(15 September 1999)

Subject: Bison meat and premium payments under EU beef regime

Can the Commission state whether there is any possibility that it will agree to extend the system of premium payments under the EU beef regime to bison meat? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission
(8 October 1999)

The Commission is not competent to extend the system of premiums in the beef and veal sector to include bison. Clearly, neither the current basic regulation on beef and veal (Regulation (EEC) No 805/68) (1), nor the new common organisation of the market as set out in Council Regulation (EC) No 1254/1999 (2) under
the Agenda 2000 package, provides for the grant of premiums for bison. Indeed, in the case of live animals, the definition of bovine animals in Article 1(2) of Regulation (EEC) No 805/68 (and the corresponding Article of Regulation (EC) No 1254/1999) covers only ‘live animals of the domestic bovine species’ described in the Combined Nomenclature (CN) (1). In practice this means that aid for domestic bovine animals cannot be paid in respect of other bovine animals (including bison).

Two kinds of problem would arise if bison were to be included in the support scheme for domestic bovine animals. Firstly, a greater number of animal species would enjoy Community support. Member States have on a number of occasions been unwilling to accept such an increase. The matter was raised again during the Agenda 2000 discussions, when it was decided not to change the legal status of bison and their eligibility for beef premiums. The second problem arises in the context of the Community’s international relations. A fresh round of international trade negotiations (WTO talks — World Trade Organisation) starts in November 1999, when the Community’s partners are likely to challenge the direct aid it grants under the common agricultural policy. In these circumstances, therefore, it would not be appropriate to extend the scope of this aid to include more species.


by Olivier Dupuis (TDI) to the Commission
(15 September 1999)

Subject: Control of Internet use in Tunisia

Tunisia ranks amongst the countries in which Internet access is subject to the strictest control and censorship, the aim being to avoid the propagation of ‘subversive ideas’ and to protect ‘state security’. Such control takes the form of a state monopoly on access, checks on providers, the compulsory registration of users, and the screening and monitoring of electronic mail. As a result, Tunisian citizens seeking to exercise freedom of information and expression find themselves faced with extremely severe legal action.

Does the Commission not consider that such practices by the authorities in Tunis run counter to the spirit and the letter of the Association Agreement between Tunisia and the European Union?

What measures have been or will be taken by the Commission to induce Tunisia to abolish the state monopoly on Internet access and to eliminate firewall screening, checks on providers, the compulsory registration of users and the monitoring of electronic mail?

Answer given by Mr Patten on behalf of the Commission
(18 October 1999)

The Commission is aware of the extent to which the Tunisian authorities control use of the Internet.

All applications to subscribe to the Internet pass through the Tunisian Internet agency (ATI) which also acts as a server for the Government and some diplomatic missions. There are two private companies (Planet Tunisie and Global Tunisie) authorised as servers for private subscribers. Other institutional servers exist in several areas of the public sector (education, research institutes, etc.). The number of Internet...