Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission

(8 December 1999)

The town-planning study for the town of Rio is not part-financed under the Community Support Framework for Greece for the period 1994-1999. The Commission has no information on any seismicity studies of the region.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1885/99
by Esko Seppänen (GUE/NGL) to the Commission

(29 October 1999)

Subject: The Commission's information material

The Commission has produced a press release dated June 1999 entitled 'Four years of the structural funds in Finland 1995-1999'. This document is full of inaccuracies and contains many factual errors. How does the Commission propose to correct the content of this material, and does it intend to produce more reliable press releases in future?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission

(6 December 1999)

The Honourable Member complains of inaccuracies in the figures quoted in the 'Infopress' and of misleading comparisons between the budgets for the current and new periods of the structural funds in Finland.

The Directorate general for regional policy publishes 'Infopress' brochures on the structural funds for each Member State holding the Union presidency. They are meant as short guides for the general public. Although one mistake was made in the figures quoted in the Finnish brochure — that of € 2 200 million for the approximate expenditure by the structural funds in Finland in the new period, instead of the actual figure which was nearer € 2 100 million — this was largely due to the unclear situation at the time the brochure was written about the allocation for Community initiatives. The Commission does not accept that the comparisons made between the current and new periods were misleading for the general reader for whom such brochures are intended.

All regulations, decisions and guidelines concerning the structural funds and their finances in the new period are published in extenso on the Commission's Internet websites. In 2000, after the structural fund programmes have been adopted, it will publish more detailed brochures on the various programmes.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1886/99
by Alexander de Roo (Verts/ALE) to the Commission

(29 October 1999)

Subject: Commercial fishing problems

Overfishing and the need to preserve dwindling fish stocks are matters of great concern to the European Union.

Virtually no concern is expressed about the welfare of fish being caught and, in particular, the method by which they are killed. Scientific studies in both the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have shown that fish possess the physiological, anatomical and biochemical structures which, in mammals, are identified with pain sensitivity.
What steps has the Commission take to review the killing methods used in commercial fishing in the light of this scientific evidence and when will it be making proposals to minimise the suffering which is certainly being caused?

**Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission**

*(23 November 1999)*

Processes involved in fishing are rather different from those applied to domestic animals bred for food. While the latter need specific slaughtering methods, and these are well covered by legislation, fishing generally involves the direct killing of fish without any resort to specific slaughtering methods.

It is generally accepted, therefore, that there is very little room for cruelty against fish during the fishing process.

The Commission is unaware of any behaviour of fishermen leading to unnecessary suffering of fish and therefore has not taken any initiative in this area.

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**(2000/C 203 E/101)**

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-1898/99**

by Raffaele Costa (PPE-DE) to the Commission

*(29 October 1999)*

**Subject:** PESCA (1994-1999)

The Community budget allocated to the PESCA Community initiative for the restructuring of the fishery sector for the period 1994-1999 amounts to ECU 36.5 million (equal to approximately LIT 70 billion).

Will the Commission state what agencies (public or private), institutions, companies, cooperatives and individuals have been allocated funding under PESCA (specifying whether payments have already been made) and how much each of them has been granted?

Has it checked how the amounts have actually been used and whether the proposed measures have been successfully implemented?

**Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission**

*(23 November 1999)*

The Community initiative (CI) PESCA in Italy benefits from a Community grant of € 37.8 million, from the Financial instrument for fisheries guidance (FIFG), European regional development fund (ERDF) and European social fund (ESF). Funds are split between creation of enterprise services centres (€ 11.9 million), productive investments (€ 4.6 million), practical projects (€ 10.1 million), diversification of activities in eligible zones (€ 9.9 million), job creation (€ 0.7 million), financial engineering (€ 0.4 million) and technical assistance (€ 0.2 million). According to the most recent information available, the engagements of Community contribution to date correspond to 38% of the total, and payments to 8%.

Even if the programme was formally approved in May 1995, a number of organisational problems deferred its start until very recently.

Most actions, as a matter of fact, have been engaged only at the end of 1998 or in 1999 by the national authorities executing the plan. The administrations in charge of the implementation of CI PESCA are the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and some regions.

Having regard to the low rate of implementation of measures under the programme, the Commission has not so far undertaken on the spot inspections. A programme of inspections, however, is planned to take place during the next weeks.