Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission

(8 December 1999)

1. The water lost from the EYDAP network counts as 'non-recorded consumption', which mainly covers water leaks but also includes water used by firemen for fire hydrants and that used by the municipal services for cleaning purposes and for watering parks.

There is no international standard in this field. However, non-recorded consumption of around 8% to 15% is considered acceptable, with a European average at roughly 15%.

2. According to information forwarded by the Greek authorities, the level of non-recorded water consumption for the company referred to by the Honourable Member is about 23%. The authorities aim to bring back this rate down to 15% over the next eight years.

3. The Commission is aware of the problem and is closely monitoring the situation. It is willing to examine the possibility of aid from the Cohesion Fund should the Greek authorities make such a request.

Answer given by Mr Liikanen on behalf of the Commission

(2 December 1999)

The Commission agrees that the development of the European information society is important for all regions and for both private citizens and commercial businesses.

The Honourable Member is right to point out that competitive market forces in the telecommunications sector may not work as well in ultra-peripheral regions as they do in mainland or more populated regions.

This possibility is recognised in Directive 98/10/EC of the Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 1998 on the application of open network provision (ONP) to voice telephony and on universal service in a competitive environment (1). Member States are obliged to ensure that at least one designated operator provides telephone service in the whole of the national territory and the Directive also specifies the nature and quality of services to be provided, and requires that the subscriber connection supports data and facsimile services.
In most Member States, the universal service operator is obliged to provide services on a common tariff and quality basis throughout the territory. Therefore, even if the designated operator only faces competition in part of the territory, the positive impact in terms of price and quality is transferred uniformly to other areas.

In addition, the Commission is currently surveying in detail the availability and use, quality and affordability of advanced telecommunications services by residential and business users in all the regions of the Community (1).

(1) The ‘Survey study on the situation of telecommunications services in the regions of the Community’ is being undertaken by EOS Gallup. This study is currently in progress and results are expected by the end of 1999.

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WRITTEN QUESTION E-1946/99
by Daniel Varela Suanzes-Carpegna (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(4 November 1999)

Subject: Ban on unloading EU catches in Chile

Given the problems which Community fishing fleets are experiencing because of the continued Chilean ban on offloading and transferring fish in Chilean ports — a situation which constitutes a straightforward obstacle to trade violating articles V and XI.1 of the 1994 GATT — can the Commission tell me what measures it has taken to persuade the Chilean authorities to lift the ban?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission
(23 November 1999)

Following the lodging of a complaint by the Spanish long-line vessel association (ANAPA) in the framework of the Trade barriers regulation (TBR), Council Regulation (EC) No 3286/94 of 22 December 1994 laying down Community procedures in the field of common commercial policy in order to ensure the exercise of the Community’s rights under international trade rules, in particular those established under the auspices of the World trade organisation (WTO) (1), the Commission initiated an investigation. The report of this investigation indicates the Chilean legislation is not compatible with Chile’s obligations under the WTO.

The TBR report advocated several alternative courses of action. Firstly it suggested opening bilateral negotiations with Chile in order to achieve a short term agreement on the immediate question of transit, to be followed by a long term, multilateral, agreement on the conservation and management measures for swordfish in the South East Pacific area. Secondly it suggested opening a dispute settlement procedure in the framework of the WTO, or alternatively resorting to the International tribunal in Hamburg for an interpretation of the United Nations Convention of the law of the sea provisions.

Subsequently, bilateral negotiations have been initiated with Chile, without excluding resort to the WTO/Unclos alternatives. These bilateral negotiations continue but have not yet shown any major progress. The Commission is currently assessing the overall situation.