and how these problems could be solved. Honourable Members as well as representatives from civil society have been invited to attend some meetings with European investors. Reports of its meetings are available on the Commission website (http://www.cc.cc.c:8082/comm/trade/miti/invest/civil.htm).

The services information system (SIS) is part of the information system of the Commission. Through its website (http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/trade/misc/register.htm), any interested person can receive information about trade policy and trade issues from the viewpoint of the Commission. It also provides specific issue groups to facilitate discussion between Commission officials and interested parties on different aspects of trade policy.

Far from being evidence that ‘the Commission is in the service of multinationals and the lobbies representing them’, the Honourable Member will see how interested parties and civil society are actively involved in European policy making. The allegations made regarding the Commission are not such as to warrant investigation. The Commission suggests that the Honourable Member addresses her questions concerning the World Trade Organisation and the Food and Agriculture Organisation to the bodies in question.

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(2001/C 103 E/204)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2552/00
by Sebastiano Musumeci (UEN) to the Commission
(28 July 2000)

Subject: Construction of a bridge over the Straits of Messina

After decades of pointless and unproductive debate, the Italian Government has still not decided formally on the construction of a bridge over the Straits of Messina to provide a fixed link between Sicily and the European mainland.

Because of its nature and function, this project is not merely in the interests of the Italian State.

1. Does the Commission not consider that the building of a fixed link across the Straits of Messina should be included as one of the projects forming part of the network of transport infrastructures of Community interest?

2. Does the Commission not think that a bridge between Sicily and Calabria would be a logical extension of the trans-European road network which should cross the Union, stretching from the Baltic Sea to the tip of Sicily?

3. What studies does the Commission have available concerning the Community interest of this infrastructure?

4. Are there obstacles or objections of any kind remaining on the part of the Commission that might stand in the way of this important project?

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Answer given by Mrs de Palacio on behalf of the Commission
(11 September 2000)

The Commission is aware of a project to build a bridge across the Straits of Messina between Sicily and Calabria. However, this project is not one of the links shown on the maps in Annex I to Decision No 1692/96/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 1996 on Community guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network (1).

As part of its examination of economic and technological changes which might justify reviewing the guidelines, the Commission has asked the Member States which projects they think should appear on the maps of the trans-European network. If the Italian Government asks the Commission to examine the project for a bridge across the Straits of Messina, the Commission will give it all due attention, though it has yet to receive any studies relating to the project.
Should the results of this general examination prompt the Commission to propose a review of the guidelines, it will of course bear in mind that the trans-European transport network must help spread the benefits of the internal market while also contributing to the economic and social cohesion of the Community.

New projects could therefore be put forward which contribute to greater economic and social cohesion, such as those aiming at greater territorial continuity, provided they meet the other criteria pertaining to projects of Community interest.


(2001/C 103 E/205)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2553/00
by Antonio Di Pietro (ELDR) to the Commission
(28 July 2000)

Subject: Belgian legislation on clinical biology laboratories

In his answer of 10 May 2000 to Written Question E-0939/00 (1), Commissioner Bolkestein confirmed that the Commission also believed that case law on the freedom of establishment had changed following the Court’s judgment of 12 February 1987, which rejected a case brought by the Commission against Belgian legislation restricting the management of medical analysis laboratories.

The Commission has also confirmed that it is undertaking a detailed review of this legislation on the basis of new elements.

As part of this review, the Commission apparently submitted various questions to Belgium, which replied at the end of May. The matter is still being considered, since the replies provided by Belgium have apparently failed to clear up all the questions raised by the Commission concerning the compatibility of the legislation in question with the EC Treaty.

Is the Commission not concerned that, in the meantime, a national court may adopt a decision without being fully informed of the examination being conducted by the Commission and is there not a danger that contradictory decisions may be taken since the national courts are not required to refer the matter to the Court of Justice or to seek the Commission’s opinion?

Under these circumstances, how does the Commission intend to fulfil its duty to cooperate fairly with the Member States in accordance with the provisions of Article 10 of the EC Treaty, with reference to the interpretation of Community case law? (In particular, see the Judgment of 28 February 1991, Case C-234/89, Delimitis v. Henninger Bräu, ECR 1991, p. I-935, paragraph 53.)


Answer by Mr Bolkestein on behalf of the Commission
(6 October 2000)

As the honourable Member has pointed out, the compatibility of Belgian legislation on clinical biology laboratories with certain provisions of Community law is currently under review.

According to the information available to the Commission, the Belgian authorities empowered to take a decision before the Commission takes a stance on the matter are aware of the review in process. They therefore have the opportunity, as allowed by the rules of the relevant national procedures, to ask the Commission for information on the progress of any procedure that is under way, in accordance with the case law quoted by the honourable Member. The Commission has not so far received any such request for information.