not Union nationals (3.41%). The non-statutory staff consisted of 190 grant holders 4 of whom were not Union nationals (2.10%); 27 national detached experts of whom 2 were not Union nationals (7.4%); 123 trainees of whom 4 were not Union nationals (3.25%); and 11 visiting scientists of whom 2 were not Union nationals (18.18%).

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2163/00
by Konstantinos Hatzidakis (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(30 June 2000)

Subject: Alarming decline in water resources in Greece

Owing to the steady decline in water resources and the phenomenon of soil erosion, Greece is facing a very real danger of desertification. Over 30% of the total arable land in Greece has been lost to agricultural production — in the Attica basin alone some 60 000 hectares can no longer be cultivated. A further consequence is internal emigration and the abandonment of agricultural occupations by the rural population, owing to the lack of suitable water for irrigation (semi-brackish, brackish or saline) or the absence of any type of water. Prospects are particularly bleak for entire regions of Greece, beginning with Thessaly, since its water table is falling at between half a metre and two metres annually. Similar problems are facing other regions such as Attica, Boeotia, Fthiotida, Corinthia, Argolida, Trizinia, Magnisia, Lakonia, Evvia, Chalkidiki and many Aegean and Ionian islands. At the same time, however, Greece has no integrated water resources management system either at local/regional or at national level.

1. Will the Commission say what information does it have about the dangers posed by the decline in water resources in Greece?

2. Are any funds still available under the second CSF for the management of water resources and, if so, why have they not been used for this purpose?

3. In the third regional development plan submitted by the Greek Government is any provision made to establish an integrated water management system for the entire country?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(9 October 2000)

Existing Community legislation on water covers qualitative matters only, hence the Commission receives no systematic information from Member States on quantative aspects. This will probably change in the future after adoption of the new framework Directive on water.

The European Environment Agency has nonetheless published, using available information and data voluntarily supplied by the Member States, a series of reports on the quality and quantity of underground water in Europe. The latest dates from 1999. These confirm the general trend of continuous reduction of underground resources in Greece to which the Honourable Member refers.

Further, the findings of research projects financed under the fourth Community framework programme for research and the fifth, now in progress, appear to confirm the diminution of water resources and the extreme susceptibility of soils and ecosystems to desertification. They also call attention to the negative impact of present water resource management in Greece and other parts of the Mediterranean and offer concrete examples and recommendations for an integrated approach to resources. These findings can be used by national and regional authorities in managing their territories.
Structural Fund resources allocated for the Community support framework for Greece for the 1994-1999 programming period have been entirely committed. Authorised payments for projects in progress will have to be made before the end of 2001.

The operational programmes for the 2000-2006 period have not yet been formally adopted but the plans presently being negotiated include action on water resource management, in priority in the most seriously affected regions.

The agri-environmental measures part-financed by the Guarantee Section of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund under the 2000-2006 rural development plan include water management in connection with pollution from nitrates of agricultural origin in Thessaly and conservation of Natura 2000 wet biotopes in Macedonia and Thrace.

(2001/C 113 E/07)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2165/00
by Ioannis Souladakis (PSE) to the Council

(30 June 2000)

Subject: Funding of the Turkish armed forces by the European Union

According to recent press reports, a Turkish general recently proposed that the new plan for the Turkish armed forces deployed in south-eastern Turkey should be funded from EU aid to Turkey. However, the aid granted to Turkey by the EU is intended to develop the country to make it a viable candidate for future membership of the EU and not to help tackle Turkey's long-term security problems in its south-eastern provinces caused by its refusal to resolve the Kurdish problem.

How confident is the Council that the appropriations allocated to Turkey with a view to promoting its bid for accession to the European Union will not end up in the budgets of the Turkish armed forces to be used to strengthen Turkey's military machine in violation of all the relevant EU legislation?

What means and procedures is the Council employing to ensure and monitor the proper use of EU funds in Turkey and to frustrate the wishes of the Turkish military?

Reply

(20 November 2000)

All projects funded out of the Community budget are decided on the basis of legislative acts of the Council and, very often, of the European Parliament. In the case of Turkey, those acts currently include the MEDA programme (1) and the Council Regulation regarding the implementation of measures to intensify the EC-Turkey customs union (2). In addition, the Council has recently forwarded to the European Parliament its common position with a view to the adoption of a Regulation regarding the implementation of measures to promote economic and social development in Turkey (3).

These three Regulations contain specific and well-defined criteria concerning the areas in which a cooperation project or measure may be implemented and also lay down the objectives and principles which govern those measures. The area referred to by the Honourable Member clearly falls outside the scope of the Regulations. The Council is certain that the Commission, which implements the financial regulations with the assistance of the MED Committee, shares this view and takes all necessary steps to ensure that funds granted by the European Community are not improperly used.