WRITTEN QUESTION E-2735/00

by Ioannis Soulandakis (PSE) to the Commission

(1 September 2000)

Subject: Opening of negotiations between the EU and Bulgaria

In line with the work programme of the French Presidency as regards the opening of negotiations with the applicant countries, talks between the European Union and Bulgaria are initially expected to address only five areas of EU legislation, which will lead to a further delay in the country's accession process.

Does the Commission believe that the number of areas to be covered in the negotiations is sufficient, or should more areas be addressed, with a view to speeding up the process of Bulgaria's accession to the EU?

Answer given by Mr Verheugen on behalf of the Commission

(26 September 2000)

The Member States have decided to open accession negotiations with Bulgaria on five additional chapters under the French Presidency, on top of the six that were opened under the Portuguese Presidency. This was in line with suggestions by the Commission. It brings the total number of chapters on the negotiating table to eleven (free movement of capital, company law, statistics, small and medium-sized enterprises, science and research, education and training, telecommunications, culture and audiovisual policy, consumers and health protection, external relations and common foreign and security policy). Of these, four chapters have already been provisionally closed during the Portuguese Presidency (small and medium-sized enterprises, science and research, education and training, and common foreign and security policy).

Given the fact that negotiations with Bulgaria started only in March 2000, the Commission considers that the progress achieved so far constitutes rapid progress.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2742/00

by Monica Frassoni (Verts/ALE) to the Commission

(1 September 2000)

Subject: Possibility of investment in Sardinia in conjunction with the regional development programme 2000-2006 and overhead high tension power lines in the vicinity of Lake Molentergius, Sardinia

The energy and gas authority has described the quality of Sardinia's electricity service as the worst in the country. Both the number and duration of the power cuts are among the highest for all Italian regions. Measures in the energy policy sector are planned under the regional development programme 2000-2006.

What investments does the Commission intend to promote in Sardinia to remedy the shortcomings there (lack of main stations, 15 000 volt medium-voltage lines, low-voltage stations and lines), without damaging the landscape and environment of Sardinia? What percentage of energy policy resources will be allocated to renewable sources of energy? What percentage of energy needs should be met from renewable energy sources by the end of the regional development programme 2000-2006?

The Lake of Molentergius, which is a protected area under the Ramsar Convention, lies in the path of two 150 000-volt high-voltage power lines which, as pointed out in protests by environmental groups, represent a threat to local bird life, particularly pink flamingoes. In other parts of Sardinia, overhead power lines of the same kind run through residential areas, in particular the districts of Pitze Serra, Quartu (S. Elena) and Serra Secca, Sassari.