The proposal for a regulation adopted by the Commission on 26 January 2000 (1) implementing Article 255 (ex Article 191a) of the EC Treaty does not exclude a priori from the scope of the regulation classified documents relating to defence issues but stipulates that the institutions should refuse access to any document whose disclosure could seriously undermine the public interest and, in particular, public safety and defence.

At the Coreper meeting of 26 July 2000, when the draft decision was approved, the Commission declared that it would undertake to examine its own provisions on public access to documents in order to ensure the same level of protection for ESDP documents. Where necessary, it would investigate the need for an amendment of its proposal for a regulation with regard to public access to documents produced by the Parliament, Council and Commission pursuant to Article 255(2) of the EC Treaty.

The Commission is currently exploring the possibility of follow-up measures to the Council Decision.


(2001/C 136 E/124) WRITTEN QUESTION E-2848/00
by Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) to the Commission
(8 September 2000)

Subject: Recognition of typical products from Emilia-Romana and policy on the recognition of typical products

The Italian Minister for Agriculture, Alfonso Pecoraro Scanio, recently extended recognition to more than 2000 typical local products and asked the European Union to grant them the status of products of registered and protected designation of origin. 73 of these are typical products from Emilia-Romagna, including the traditional 'spongata' cake, which was the subject of a previous question.

Bearing in mind that food is an element in the culture of peoples, nations and regions and that enhancing the value of typical products is of vital importance in the interests of safeguarding cultural diversity in Europe to encourage peaceful cooperation between different peoples:

− will the Commission grant all the products from Emilia-Romagna listed by the Italian Ministry for Agriculture and all those from other regions of Italy the status of typical products of protected designation of origin?

− will it draw up a European policy giving the various regions and local communities responsibility for safeguarding and enhancing typical products, so as to ensure greater respect for cultural diversity within the Member States?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission
(17 October 2000)

The Commission is not aware of the request by the Italian Minister for Agriculture concerning the registration of more than 2 000 local products as protected designations of origin, including a product named 'Spongata' for which the reply to Written Question E-2631/99 (1) by the Honourable Member is still applicable.

The Honourable Member is reminded that, since 1992, the cultural characteristics of the various regions of the Community are already highlighted and protected at Community level by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 of 14 July 1992 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs (2).
To date, it must be noted, more than 540 protected designations of origin (PDOs) and protected geographical indications (PGIs) in the Member States have been registered under the abovementioned Regulation.

In particular with regard to the recognition of Emilia — Romagna products as PDOs or PGIs, the Commission is ready to examine any applications for registration sent by the Italian Ministry under Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92.


(2001/C 136 E/125)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2850/00

by Sylvia-Yvonne Kaufmann (GUE/NGL) to the Commission

(4 September 2000)

Subject: Situation in Turkish prisons

Is the Commission aware of the situation of prisoners in Buca prison and of the fate of Mr Ali Aslan who is in a critical condition after being tortured by the police?

In the Commission's opinion, which of the Copenhagen criteria has Turkey fulfilled hitherto?

In this respect, how does the Commission assess the situation in Turkish prisons?

Answer given by Mr Verheugen on behalf of the Commission

(26 September 2000)

The Commission is aware of the events that took place recently in Turkish prisons and is deeply concerned by the gravity of the facts reported. Concerning the specific case mentioned by the Honourable Member, the Commission has received the following information.

On 26 July 2000, security forces launched an important operation in the Bergama prison after the discovery of a tunnel. Violent clashes between security forces and inmates lasted four days. The events ended when 77 detainees and convicts (excluding those detained or convicted under the workers party Kurdistan (PKK) cases) were transferred to the Buca prison. The transferred prisoners stated that they had been maltreated and battered during the transfer and after arriving at the Buca prison. According to a report made by the Izmir Bar Association, traces of battery were indeed found on the heads and bodies of several inmates, including Mr Aslan mentioned by the Honourable Member. Three prisoners had apparently been more severely battered than the others and one of them had his jaw broken. The Human Rights Foundation of Turkey also confirmed that the health condition of seven of the prisoners (including Ali Aslan) was severe. So far, there has been no official statement made, nor any investigation launched on these incidents.

As far as the accession conditions are concerned, the Commission in its 1999 regular report confirmed that Turkey was not fulfilling the so-called political Copenhagen criteria.

As far as prison conditions are concerned, the situation remains worrying as overpopulation and lack of medical care are still major problems and violent clashes between detainees and security forces, mutinies, and hostage taking are still occurring. It is however noted that the authorities are currently embarking on a reform of the whole prison system.

A delegation of the Council of Europe committee for the prevention of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (CPT) completed a nine-day visit to Turkey in July 2000. One of the main purposes of the visit was to examine the steps being taken by the Turkish authorities to introduce smaller living units for prisoners and, more specifically, the F-type project. The CPT delegation also reviewed the treatment of those deprived of their liberty by the police.