Lastly, in accordance with Article 40(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1257/1999, rural development measures financed by the EAGGF Guarantee Section have been incorporated into 20 single programming documents for areas covered by Objective 2 of the Structural Funds (including areas receiving transitional support) which the Commission is currently examining.

A more detailed breakdown by Member State has been sent to the Honourable Member direct and to Parliament's Secretariat. In addition, the documents which the Commission has approved have been forwarded to Parliament in accordance with the Code of Conduct on the implementation of structural policies by the Commission (1).

(2) OJ C 279, 1.10.1999.

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(2001/C 151 E/098) WRITTEN QUESTION P-3186/00
by Marie-Arlette Carlotti (PSE) to the Commission
(4 October 2000)

Subject: Negotiations on Turkey's accession to the European Union and acknowledgement of genocide against Armenians

In its resolution of June 1987 on a political solution to the Armenian question (1), the European Parliament most notably expressed the belief that ‘the Armenian question and the question of minorities in Turkey must be restituted within the framework of relations between Turkey and the Community' and called on the Turkish authorities to acknowledge formally that the tragic events of 1915-1917 involving Armenians living on the territory of the Ottoman Empire constituted genocide within the meaning of the convention adopted by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1948.

With Turkey's status as an applicant country having been confirmed by the Helsinki European Council in December 1999, and with institutional activities and political dialogue within the Association Council having resumed last April, will the Commission say exactly to what extent the issue of acknowledgement by the Turkish authorities of the genocide against Armenians features in the negotiations on Turkey's accession to the European Union?


Answer given by Mr Verheugen on behalf of the Commission
(30 October 2000)

The Commission considers that this issue is not covered by the Copenhagen criteria.

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(2001/C 151 E/099) WRITTEN QUESTION P-3187/00
by Carlos Costa Neves (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(4 October 2000)

Subject: Milk production in the Azores

1. As the Commission knows, milk production in Portugal exceeded the available milk quota by some 63,000 tonnes in the year 1999-2000, with the surplus occurring in the Azores autonomous region.
2. The Government of the autonomous region has systematically informed producers that there is no need to pay the supplementary charge provided for in EU legislation, and they are being led to believe that their 'reference quantities' correspond to the quantities of milk they produced in 1999-2000.

3. In August, the Portuguese Agriculture Ministry instructed milk buyers to abstain ‘from charging any commission or demanding any reduction from the producers, until further notice’.

4. The Portuguese Agriculture Ministry stated on 6 September that ‘the government is negotiating with Europe for 70 000 tonnes of milk to be exempted from penalties in the Azores’, and that if the Commission did not yield on this point, the Government would initiate litigation proceedings, ‘and instruct farmers not to pay the fines’, which might then be paid, by the Portuguese state.

5. On the following day, a Commission spokesman explained that ‘this is against Community law’ and that ‘there is no possibility’ of increasing the quotas assigned to Portugal.

6. Given the contradictory claims set out above, the situation of paralysis and confusion in the Portuguese milk sector, and the need to find a positive solution, will the Commission clarify the matter as a matter of urgency?

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**Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission**

(8 November 2000)

1. to 4. The information available to the Commission essentially tallies with that referred to by the Honourable Member. The Portuguese authorities are still checking the extent of the overrun, however.

5. and 6. The Commission confirms the statement quoted. Under Council Regulation (EEC) No 3950/92 of 28 December 1992 establishing an additional levy in the milk and milk products sector (1), an additional levy is automatically payable by all producers in excess when deliveries for a given year exceed the national reference quantities (quotas) which the Council has set for each Member State. Unused reference quantities may, however, be reallocated to other producers and deducted from their individual excesses.

Implementing the provisions referred to above is a national responsibility, and strict compliance with the rules in all Member States is essential to the balance of the common organisation of the market in milk and milk products. A Member State is in breach if it fails to ensure that the levy is passed on to producers who have exceeded their quotas, taking into account any reallocations. The Commission is not empowered to alter either the quotas or the general rules governing the levy. On the contrary, it must ensure that they are enforced and has already initiated infringement proceedings against Member States which have either not complied with the rules or not applied them with sufficient rigour. The Portuguese authorities must therefore take urgent action in compliance with the rules.

Lastly, the Portuguese authorities have drawn the Commission’s attention to the possibility of taking measures under Article 299(2) (formerly Article 227) of the EC Treaty in order to tackle the problems facing the production of milk and milk products in the Azores. The Commission is currently examining this option.

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