WRITTEN QUESTION E-0616/01
by Lord Inglewood (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(1 March 2001)

Subject: Prices paid by supermarkets

Does the Commission consider it improper for supermarkets to purchase food products for less than the cost of production?

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission
(26 April 2001)

The Community competition rules address the matter to which the Honourable Member refers, namely that of prices that are below the cost of production, only in the specific case of a purchaser in a dominant position imposing unfair purchase prices within the meaning of indent (a) of the second paragraph of Article 82 (formerly Article 86) of the EC Treaty.

In order to determine whether the purchaser, in this case the supermarket, is a purchaser in a dominant position, the relevant product and geographic markets and their structures would have to be analysed in detail.

Given the national or even regional, rather than Community, nature of the relevant markets, such issues are primarily dealt with by national competition authorities, such as the Office of Fair Trading in the United Kingdom. In some cases, these authorities have developed specific rules on the state of economic dependence, which do not exist as such at Community level.

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0624/01
by Theresa Villiers (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(22 February 2001)

Subject: Lisbon European Council and financial services

The 2000 Lisbon European Council invited ‘the Council to step up work on structural performance indicators and to report by the end of 2000.’ Was this goal achieved?

The 2000 Lisbon European Council Council stated that steps should be taken ‘to set a tight timetable so that the Financial Services Action Plan is implemented by 2005.’ What steps have been taken?

The 2000 Lisbon European Council Council stated that steps should be taken to facilitate ‘the widest possible access to investment capital on an EU-wide basis, including for SMEs, by means of a “single passport” for issuers.’ What steps have been taken in this regard?

Answer given by Mr Solbes Mira on behalf of the Commission
(24 April 2001)

The Commission published a Communication on structural indicators on 27 September 2000 (1). The Ecofin Council approved on 7 November 2000 a report by the Economic Policy Committee entitled ‘Structural Indicators: an instrument for Better Structural Policies’ which included a set of structural performance indicators. The Ecofin Council also agreed on 7 November 2000 a list of structural indicators with the Commission to be used for the Commission’s synthesis report to the Stockholm European Council. The agreed list was based on the Commission Communication and the Economic Policy Committee’s report. The French Presidency of the Ecofin Council sent the list of indicators to the European Council in Nice at the end of 2000 meeting the remit set in paragraph 18 of the Lisbon European Council conclusions that called on ‘the Council to step up work on structural performance indicators and to report by the end of 2000’. These indicators have now been used in the Commission’s synthesis report to the Stockholm European Council.
The Commission monitors progress on the Action Plan(2) via the Financial Services Policy Group. The Group is comprised of personal representatives of finance ministers and chaired by the member of the Commission responsible for the internal market. Since the Lisbon Council, the meeting frequency has been stepped up from three to four meetings per year. The Group reports twice a year on progress to Ecofin. The latest report, presented to Ecofin on 27 November 2000, stated that progress is satisfactory, but with important qualifications. In the report, the Commission sets out a 'critical path' for the Action Plan priority measures with a view to meeting the 2005 deadline. The next progress report will be presented to Ecofin on 5 June 2001.

Furthermore, the Commission has initiated enhanced co-operation between the Parliament, the Council and the Commission within the '2005 Group'. This is an informal working group aimed at speeding up the implementation of the Action Plan by aligning the agendas of the three institutions and identifying strategic problems at an early stage.

As provided for in the Financial Services Action Plan and required by the Lisbon European Council, the Commission will adopt a proposal for a directive introducing the single passport for issuers. In the latest progress report to Ecofin on 27 November 2000, this measure was identified as a key priority in the Action Plan. The importance of this measure has been confirmed in the final Lamfalussy report of 15 February 2001. A draft directive has now been prepared and sent for inter-service consultation.


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(2001/C 318 E/092)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0627/01
by Graham Watson (ELDR) to the Commission
(1 March 2001)

Subject: Money laundering — casinos

In drawing up its Directives to amend Council Directive 91/308/EEC (1) on money laundering — casinos, what consultations did the Commission enter into with representatives of casinos in the EU?


Answer given by Mr Bolkestein on behalf of the Commission
(22 May 2001)


This extension was a response to the wishes expressed by the Member States and the Parliament for urgent action to reinforce the Community anti-money laundering defences.

Given the priority attached to this new initiative, the Commission did not issue any green paper or other consultative document prior to launching its proposal. However, following the publication of its proposal, the Commission received and held discussions with representatives of any of the above-mentioned professions and activities that sought a meeting.

As far as the casino sector is concerned, the Commission has in recent months been in contact with the European Casino Forum, representatives of casinos from one Member State and trade union officials representing casino workers.