transmissible spongiform encephalopathies and amending Decision 94/474/EC(1) and 2000/764 of 29 November 2000 on the testing of bovine animals for the presence of bovine spongiform encephalopathy and amending Decision 98/272/EC on epidemiosurveillance for transmissible spongiform encephalopathies(2) (as amended). These decisions provide, apart from the rules for surveillance and monitoring of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE), for the destruction of BSE-positive animals. They do not impose any rules as regard the treatment of other animals in the herd.

However, the Commission proposed in 1998 a Regulation of the Council and Parliament on transmissible spongiform encephalopathies(3), providing inter alia for the measures to be taken after confirmation of a BSE case. Following a Parliamentary amendment in first reading, whole-herd slaughter was added to the two eradication measures proposed by the Commission, i.e. slaughter of birth/rearing cohorts and of offspring cohorts. The Parliament adopted an opinion in second reading on this proposal recently and it will enter into force on 1 July 2001.

An opinion on BSE related culling of cattle was adopted by the Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) on 15 September 2000. This opinion states that culling of the cohort is more efficient than whole herd culling. However, it also states that if tracing of cohorts is not reliable, whole herd culling is a second best option.

The precautionary measures of the Member States aim, by killing cattle in herds where BSE cases have been detected, at eliminating otherwise not identified BSE cases and preventing future BSE cases from appearing. The institutions are in the process of adopting permanent Community legislation on the basis of Article 95 (ex Article 100A) of the EC Treaty, based on scientific advice and the precautionary principle. This Regulation will replace the existing Community safeguard measures on BSE as well as the national eradication measures.

It is the intention of the Commission, with a view to implementing the SSC opinion on culling strategies adopted after its initial proposal, to evaluate the need for more detailed rules for the application in practice of the provisions on eradication set out in the Regulation before it enters into force. A proposal to the Standing Veterinary Committee for its opinion is expected shortly in this respect.


(2001/C 350 E/026)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0665/01
by Philip Bushill-Matthews (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(6 March 2001)

Subject: Lisbon European Council and the promotion of inclusion

The 2000 Lisbon European Council invited ‘the Council and the Commission to mainstream the promotion of inclusion in Member States’ employment, education and training, health and housing policies.’ What specific steps have been taken in this regard and what action has been taken at Community level by action under the Structural Funds?

Answer given by Mrs Diamantopoulou on behalf of the Commission
(6 June 2001)

The promotion of social inclusion is an underlying objective in the Employment Guidelines (4). The new Guideline No 7 calls for measures to combat all forms of discrimination in access to the labour market and to education and training; it advocates the development of pathways consisting of effective preventive and active policy measures to promote the integration into the labour market of groups and individuals at risk
or with a disadvantage, in order to avoid marginalisation, the emergence of 'working poor' and a drift into exclusion; it also calls for the implementation of appropriate measures to meet the needs of the disabled, ethnic minorities and migrant workers as regards their integration into the labour market and to set national targets where appropriate for this purpose.

In addition, a number of other Employment Guidelines — notably on the prevention of long term unemployment, on life long learning, on the tax/benefits systems and on equal opportunities — have a close link with the objective of fighting social exclusion.

Member States have been invited by the Commission to ensure consistency and complementarity between their national reports on, respectively, employment policy and social inclusion policies.

Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999 of the Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 1999 on the European Social Fund (2) (ESF) outlines the five policy fields through which the ESF will support the development of the labour market and human resources. One of those policy fields aims to 'promote equal opportunities for all in accessing the labour market, with particular emphasis on those exposed to social exclusion'. This provided a good starting point to promote, within Structural Fund programmes, the inclusion agenda set out at the Lisbon European Council.

Between 2000-2006, the ESF will make an investment in people of around € 60 billions as part of the modernisation and reform of European labour markets (1). They will give particular attention to integrating marginalised groups into the economy and society. Negotiations between the Commission and Member States resulted in plans to allocate over € 9 billions of ESF to promote social inclusion across the Community. This support will come via action to widen access to learning and employment opportunities including clear commitments to tackle the digital divide.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) can make a contribution to promoting improvements in health within regions covered by Objective 1 where this investment is beneficial to the region's structural adjustment (4).

The commitment to social inclusion will be reviewed over the lifetime of Structural Fund programmes including an evaluation in 2003 of the impact of the ESF (including the Community Initiative EQUAL) in promoting social inclusion (5).

(3) In many Structural Fund programmes, ESF will work alongside other Community funds e.g. ERDF.

(2001/C 350 E/027) WRITTEN QUESTION E-0683/01
by Michl Ebner (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(8 March 2001)

Subject: Increased funding for cross-border co-operation

Can the Commission state whether it is planning to increase the budget currently available for the Interreg III programme for the programming period up to 2006 for the purposes of cross-border co-operation with particular reference to areas adjoining what will then be the new Central and East European Member States?