The Commission has already expressed concern about the access to the ‘Eleftherios Venizelos’ International Airport and asked the Greek Government to inform it about the measures that are taken in order to improve the accessibility of airport.

Minister Laliotis and Minister Verelis have provided the Commission with a thorough presentation of the works and measures that the Greek authorities are envisaging. The Greek Government has also presented future plans (e.g. completion of ATTIKI ODOS by end 2002, rail connection by the year 2004). The Commission will continue to insist upon the Greek Government to increase its efforts to provide efficient and environmentally sustainable access to the airport.

The Commission is unable to confirm suggestions that airfares are expected to rise significantly as by-product of opening the new airport. In case, however, that there are clear indications suggesting that airport charges are not cost-related or set in a discriminatory way the Commission would use its powers to rectify the situation. Up to now, substantiated complaints in this regard have not been put forward.

(2002/C 40 E/022)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1185/01
by Concepció Ferrer (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(19 April 2001)

Subject: Assessment of Community projects

There is currently a degree of concern regarding the procedures for assessing Community development programmes, in particular programmes aimed at countries which have emerged from a recent armed conflict or countries which are in the process of emerging and which still have numbers of displaced persons and refugees.

A point to be considered is that peace agreements such as the Arusha agreements do not include non-structural measures, in particular ones relating to education.

A further consideration is that non-structural measures aimed at reconciliation processes are regarded by conflict-settlement specialists as essential to the successful achievement of a lasting peace, in that they help to overcome the ethnic prejudices and the hatred and rancour which lead to and fuel any armed conflict.

In view of the above, could the Commission state how, in its project and programme assessment procedures, it takes into account and evaluates the impact of Community initiatives in the field of non-structural measures relating to peace consolidation, in particular issues relating to peace education within the camps set up for displaced persons and refugees?

Answer given by Mr Patten on behalf of the Commission
(13 July 2001)

As underlined in the Commission’s communication of 11 April 2001 on conflict prevention (1), the EU seeks to project stability both among its immediate neighbours and throughout the world, by supporting regional integration and by building trade links. Direct support to regional structures in Africa and autonomous trade concessions to the Western Balkans are examples of instruments with a long-term stabilisation perspective.

For the Commission, the key to dealing with conflict is reacting quickly and promoting active prevention via effective implementation of targeted measures. It has several instruments for non-military crisis management at its disposal, including technical and financial aid to regional and international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), official national, regional and local authorities and agencies, community-based organisations and private-sector institutes and operators. These actors in crisis management also receive support from other geographical cooperation instruments such as the European Development Fund for the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, and other major instruments in Chapter B7 of the Community budget such as the regulations on human rights.
Furthermore, the reformed programming process for external assistance, set in train over the last year with the production of Country Strategy Papers for all recipients of EC assistance, requires a systematic analysis of the political situation in the partner country including those factors which could impact on development such as the issues needing to be addressed to promote peace and reconciliation.

In the Balkans, most of the measures taken by the Commission are geared to the process of reconciliation. The Commission gives very substantial support to the transitional civil administrations, such as the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the missions of the United Nations in Kosovo (MINUK) (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY)). The purpose of these transitional administrations is to shoulder much of the administration of the country and to support local administrations and governments until they can administer the region in a context of lasting peace.

As regards reconciliation itself, the Commission assists programmes in support of non-nationalist and independent media, in the knowledge that the media have had a major role in the Balkan conflict. Among other measures, the SENSE programme supports information on the activities of the International Tribunal in The Hague.

In assessing these measures, the Commission specifically tries to find out whether its support has achieved the expected results. The ways in which it does this depend on the nature of the programmes; often surveys are undertaken among the beneficiaries, both before a programme is designed and to assess its impact, for example among groups of displaced persons and refugees. The issues referred to, awareness campaigns and education to reject prejudice, violence and intolerance, are included in such surveys, as are other issues such as people's capacity to develop activities enabling them to meet their basic needs.

The evaluations conducted by the Commission also cover activities relating to voter education. While the EU's activities in the field of support for elections is still a crucial (though not sufficient) factor for democratisation, voter education ensures that citizens understand their democratic rights and therefore increases their ability to exercise them. Voter education is important, particularly for those population groups which have little or no experience of democratic procedures and traditions.


(2002/C 40 E/023)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1212/01
by Jean-Charles Marchiani (UEN) to the Council
(24 April 2001)

Subject: Languages used in the defence sector in the European Union

Can the Council state what languages are used in Eurocorps and the Standing Military Committee?

In view of the fact that French and German are by virtue of demographic realities by far the most widely spoken mother tongues in the European Union, does it not feel that they ought to be retained — both for historical and political reasons — as priority languages within European military structures?

Can it explain the reasons behind the use of English within such structures?

Does it believe, both in the interests of efficiency in time of crisis and in the light of the prevailing cultural realities in Europe (existence of three major language branches, i.e. Latin and Gallo-Latin, Germanic and Anglo-Saxon), that it would be appropriate at the very least to limit oneself to the use of French, German and English?

Given the prospect of the establishment of a genuinely independent European defence policy, does it not believe that the unjustified and excessive use of English sends out, by analogy, a very poor message to Europeans?