It is recalled that according to Article 290 of the EC Treaty, the rules governing the languages of the institutions of the Community shall be determined by the Council acting unanimously. These rules are laid down in Regulation No 1 of the Council of 15 April 1958, last amended when new Member States joined the Community in 1995, which enumerates the official languages of the EU. The question of Maltese as a future official language of the Union has not yet been addressed in the framework of the ongoing accession negotiations with Malta. As for all the candidate countries with which negotiations have been started, the negotiating chapter ‘Institutions’ still remains to be opened.

Answer given by Ms de Palacio on behalf of the Commission

(19 October 2001)

The Commission maintains its intention to promote the use of biofuels in transport.

A communication is being prepared on a medium- and long-term strategy for alternative fuels, together with two proposals for Directives, one on a minimum level of biofuels in the total in the total volume of fuels sold on the European market, and the other on the possibility of a tax reduction for biofuels.

According to its work programme for 2001, the communication should be adopted by the Commission by the end of October 2001.

Can the Commission indicate why it has not, to date, adopted a specific proposal on the promotion of the use of biomass fuels?

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past it ignored a similar judgment by the same court condemning it in the Loizidou case of 1996, can the Council say:

1. What direct action it intends to take to ensure respect for the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights by Turkey?

2. What will be the consequences of Turkey's behaviour in violating its commitments to the European institutions in respect of its prospects of accession to the European Union, and what specific form will these consequences take in the European Union's political and economic relations with Turkey?

Reply

(29 November 2001)

The EU has no authority to take direct action to enforce judgments by the European Court of Human Rights. But it does take every opportunity, not least in its enhanced political dialogue with Turkey, to press on it the need to respect all its international commitments, not least on human rights, including decisions by the European Court of Human Rights.

Turkey is well aware that compliance with the Copenhagen political criteria is a prerequisite for the opening of accession negotiations and that membership of the Union requires compliance with all the Copenhagen criteria. The EU has set out its priorities in this regard in the Accession Partnership for Turkey (1), which includes the guaranteeing of rights and freedoms laid down in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and ensuring their implementation, as an integral part of the acquis communautaire.

The Accession Partnership has also a conditionality clause on the basis of which Community assistance for financing projects through the pre-accession instruments for Turkey is conditional on respect by Turkey of its commitments under the Association Agreement, customs union and related decisions of the EC-Turkey Association Council, for example on the trade regime for agricultural products. At this stage, further steps towards satisfying the Copenhagen criteria and in particular progress in meeting the specific priorities of this Accession Partnership in 2001 need to be taken.


(2002/C 81 E/054) WRITTEN QUESTION E-1636/01
by Juan Naranjo Escobar (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(12 June 2001)

Subject: Single market in mortgages

The standardisation of rules on mortgages which will take place when the new European code of conduct on loans is adopted will significantly alter the European market in mortgages.

This code, already endorsed by financial institutions and consumers, is now awaiting adoption by the Fifteen, who may submit their comments or amendments.

Can the Commission explain the present state of play on the matter and state whether Member States will be expected to give their approval by a given date, so that we can finally have a single market in mortgages despite the excessive protectionism concerning internal markets being exhibited by some Member States?