There are two main sources of Community funding for water supply projects in Spain: the Cohesion Fund and the Structural Funds. The point of departure is that all assisted projects, whether co-financed by the Union under the Cohesion Fund or the Structural Funds, must comply with Community legislation, including environmental requirements. In both cases, there is no obligation for the Commission to be informed of any relationship between individual projects and the existence of a national framework such as the Spanish National Hydrological Plan.

Under the Cohesion Fund, the Commission appraises and approves projects or groups of projects submitted by the Spanish authorities according to their individual merits and in conformity with the regulations in force. A number of such projects have been approved to-date. Information on such projects is published on a regular basis by the Commission. Some of the projects may be related to the National Hydrological Plan but it is only the Spanish authorities who can confirm this. The same applies to any project currently subject to appraisal by the Commission and for which final approval has yet to be given.

As far as the Structural funds are concerned, interventions are organised around broad strategic priorities set out in programming documents agreed between the national authorities and the Commission, and formally approved by the latter. The selection of individual projects for the realisation of the agreed strategy is the responsibility that is decentralised to the authorities on the ground in the Member States. The strategy for Spanish Objective 1 regions, the so-called ‘Community Support Framework (CSF) 2000-2006’, which was agreed in October 2000, contains a priority under the heading ‘Environment, Natural Environment and Water Resources’. This, together with more detailed operational programmes, provide the basis for the Spanish authorities to select projects for Community aid relating, for example, to water supply. The Commission is informed of the selected projects in the context of the monitoring system set up under the CSF. The Commission is also informed by the national authorities of any major projects (€50 million or more) that are proposed for assistance under the programmes, and these in turn are subject to an appraisal by the former in conformity with the regulations in force before assistance is approved. In all cases, it is only the Spanish authorities who can confirm whether or not selected projects have been included in the National Hydrological Plan.

(2002/C 93 E/116)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2289/01

by Alexander de Roo (Verts/ALE), Miquel Mayol i Raynal (Verts/ALE), María Sornosa Martínez (PSE) and Laura González Álvarez (GUE/NGL)

to the Commission

(31 July 2001)

Subject: Spain’s National Hydrological Plan: river basin management plans, pressure and impact analysis and Community funding

In its reply to Question E-0003/01 (1) of 6 April 2001 the Commission stated the following in connection with the information supplied by the Spanish Government concerning Spain’s National Hydrological Plan: The Plan encompasses the analyses and elements related to the different river basins, but it also constitutes a global framework for national water policies and actions which goes beyond the meaning of River Basin Management of the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC of the Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (2).

With regard to the latter Directive, the implementation of the Plan should comply with the following mandatory obligations:

(a) the elaboration of detailed river basin management plans for each entire individual river basin in Spain by 2009,

(b) the elaboration of an analysis of pressures and impacts including an economic analysis by 2004.
Has the Spanish Government therefore submitted the river basin management plans and an analysis of pressures and impacts, including the relevant economic analysis?

If the Spanish Government has not complied with these requirements, will the EU providing funding for the projects contained in the National Hydrological Plan, including the projects designed to increase the size of the Yesa, Santaliestra and Biscarrués reservoirs?

(1) OJ C 261 E, 18.9.2001, p. 27.

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

(23 October 2001)

The Spanish authorities have sent the Commission their management plans for river basins ('planes hidrológicos de cuenca') under the infringement procedure relating to the implementation of Council Directive 76/464/EEC of 4 May 1976 on pollution caused by certain dangerous substances discharged into the aquatic environment of the Community(1). The plans were adopted by the Spanish Government in 1998, as a result of developments announced in the the Spanish Water Management Law 29/1985.

The Commission would point out that, as mentioned in the answer to written question E-0003/01 (2), the river basin management provisions of the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC of the Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (3) are not yet applicable in the Member States.

Under Council Regulation (EC) No 1164/94 of 16 May 1994 establishing a Cohesion Fund (4) and Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 of 21 June 1999 laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds (5), any project granted part-financing must comply with Community legislation, including environmental provisions. The Commission will examine in the light of this rule each individual project under Spain's national hydrological plan put forward for part-financing.

It is perhaps worth pointing out that, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, both the plan itself and the choice of projects put forward for Community part-financing are matters for the Spanish authorities.

(2) OJ C 261 E, 18.9.2001, p. 27.

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-2291/01**

by Erik Meijer (GUE/NGL) to the Commission

(31 July 2001)

Subject: Declining support for the accession of applicant countries and possible repercussions of referenda

1. Is the Commission aware that in those East European countries with which the negotiations on accession to the European Union are the most advanced public support for accession is declining, now that it is becoming increasingly evident what obligations accession entails and that accession will not necessarily bring about a rapid rise in the standard of living, greater socio-economic security or unlimited disbursement of European structural and cohesion funds?

2. In which applicant countries is there a possibility of a referendum being held on accession and in which countries is it already likely that this will happen after completion of the negotiations?