WRITTEN QUESTION E-0593/02
by Graham Watson (ELDR) to the Commission
(6 March 2002)

Subject: 1991 Nitrates Directive

What has been the Commission's experience of the 1991 Nitrates Directive with regard to compliance with and the success of the measure? Has any new scientific evidence emerged? Does the Commission intend to review and, perhaps amend, the provisions thereof?

Answer given by Mrs Wallström on behalf of the Commission
(30 April 2002)

The experience of the Commission with regard to the implementation of the 'Nitrates' Directive, Council Directive 91/676/EEC of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources (1), has been addressed in a number of documents including:

- A synthetic report (in two parts) to the Parliament and Council, published in 1998 (2);

In addition, a second Commission report synthesising the results of the second water quality monitoring period (1996-1998), the issue of vulnerable zones designation (up to 2001), a review of the first national action programmes contents and the actions of the Commission for a better implementation, will be presented officially to the Parliament and Council in the course of 2002.

A general statement can be made that, the first Action Programmes were published too late by Member States and that their mandatory measures were generally insufficient. A significant improvement can be noticed in the second Action Programmes and in the extent of designated vulnerable zones (which now cover 40% of the Community area).

Some measures have already given positive results in different Community regions, although a delay of several years is necessary between application of measures at soil level and real impact in neighbouring waters. It is clear from the progress made by some Member States such as Denmark that it is perfectly achievable to reconcile intensive livestock production with respect of the Nitrates Directive. The Commission intends to continue working with the Member States to promote best practice and to ensure the effective implementation of the Directive across the Community. At present, the Commission does not consider it necessary or appropriate to bring forward proposals for amending the directive.

(2) COM(98)16 final.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0602/02
by Concepció Ferrer (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(6 March 2002)

Subject: EU-Algeria negotiations for an association agreement

The EU is currently in process of negotiation with Algeria with a view to establishing an association agreement with that southern Mediterranean country.

The Barcelona Declaration of 1995 underlined the need to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, to be treated as key criteria in international negotiations.
In Algeria, approximately 200 people are killed every month in conflict-related incidents, while there are thousands of cases of kidnapping and disappearance and restrictions on civil liberties are the order of the day.

In the framework of the negotiations for an association agreement, how does the Commission intend to monitor the human rights situation in Algeria, in implementation of the Barcelona commitments?

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

*(3 April 2002)*

The human rights situation in Algeria was carefully monitored by the Commission during the negotiations on Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement with that country and this will continue. Concerning the victims of the horrific violence that has scarred Algeria over the last ten years, the Commission believes that a distinction has to be made between the acts of terrorist groups, which are rightly put down by the Algerian authorities, and acts that, under cover of fighting terrorism, violate human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The only way to stop the spiral of violence is to open a broad dialogue with all the democratic forces in Algeria and implement political, economic and social reforms.

Article 2 of the Association Agreement initialled on 19 December 2001 lays down that respect for democratic principles and fundamental human rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should inspire the domestic and international policies of the parties and is an essential element of the Agreement.

The manner in which the two parties keep to this commitment will be discussed in the political dialogue that will be established once the Agreement comes into force. The dialogue will take place at two levels: ministerial, usually in the Association Council, and that of senior officials, through the usual diplomatic channels or any other means. The Commission will make full use of the dialogue to pursue the objectives set by Article 2.

Pending the entry into force of the Agreement, a regular political dialogue is taking place between the EU Troika and the Algerian government on an ad hoc basis. Human rights are always raised at these meetings.

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**WRITTEN QUESTION E-0613/02**

by Rosa Miguélez Ramos (PSE) to the Council

*(6 March 2002)*

**Subject:** Training for fishermen

On 4 April 2001 the Commission submitted a communication to the Council and the European Parliament on the training and recruitment of seafarers *(1)*. That communication aimed to provide a comprehensive study into the current situation as regards maritime education and training, describe the legislative and other measures already taken by the Commission and encourage the adoption of further measures to improve the situation both by the social partners in maritime transport and providers of maritime education and training.

Despite its title, this communication refers exclusively to people working in maritime transport and excludes the entire European fishing industry, despite the high number of workers it employs, the difficult conditions in which they work and their high accident rate.