drinking water supplies. The second purpose is to improve the state of aquifers. Finally, in the third paragraph, it is stated that water can be used for existing irrigation of crops (in accordance to what is established in every river basin management plan). It is also stated that it will not be possible to create new irrigation areas or to increase the existing ones.

The Commission considers positively the fact that one of the crucial issues is that specific criteria and conditions are foreseen for authorising use of transferred water. In particular, in what refers to irrigation use, the condition stated in the National Hydrological Plan law that water transferred cannot be used for new or increased irrigation and for water demands that are not considered as for drinking water supplying. It is the understanding of the Commission that the exclusion of creating new irrigated areas with transferred water, would exclude the possibility of using the water for creating new golf courses.

In the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the National Hydrological Plan (hereinafter SEA) finalised in January 2002, the Spanish Authorities present their analysis of the situation and the expectations for water resources in Spain, specifying environmental effects and shortage problems. It also identifies the main environmental consequences of water shortages and possible improvements if the proposed water transfer were to be put in place.

The document is over 150 pages long and extremely detailed. The Commission has completed its first technical review of the SEA. Consequently, the Commission has replied to the Spanish water Director with a series of observations, comments and questions.

Therefore, the Commission intends to continue its dialogue with the Spanish Authorities in order to ensure that the relevant pieces of Community legislation are fully complied with.

(2002/C 277 E/210)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1336/02
by Giovanni Pittella (PSE) to the Commission
(8 May 2002)

Subject: Education of the children of migrant workers

Directive 77/486/EEC (1) on the education of the children of migrant workers is largely disregarded by the Member States (in Belgium it has never been transposed into national legislation, nor has it in Denmark, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Ireland or Luxembourg, whereas in the other countries it has at least been incorporated in national law, but there are no obvious examples of its being implemented).

The directive obliges the Member States to ‘promote, in coordination with normal education, teaching of the mother tongue and culture of the country of origin’ for the families of workers from other Member States, in collaboration with the countries of origin.

The action programme recently submitted by the Commission designed to promote both the mobility of workers within the EU and the creation of truly European labour markets puts a new slant on the problems linked to migration between the Member States.

Additional teaching of the language and culture of the country of origin of the families of workers who move from one Member State to another, stressed as being appropriate in Directive 77/486/EEC, must be reinforced and enhanced, all the more so in the current situation.

Does the Commission intend to acknowledge the problems inherent in teaching the children of workers who move from one Member State to another and devote particular attention to this specific section of the population in its programmes concerning education and vocational training?

Does the Commission intend to revamp the content of Directive 77/486/EEC in the light of policies intended to reduce the obstacles to the mobility of workers within the EU?

The Commission acknowledges the concern expressed by the Honourable Member about the teaching of mother tongue in the host countries for children of migrant workers, especially at a time where occupational and geographic mobility are essential elements in European policies.

Directive 77/486 referred to by the Honourable Member states in Article 3 that 'Member States shall, in accordance with their national circumstances and legal systems, and in co-operation with States of origin, take appropriate measures to promote, in co-ordination with normal education, teaching of the mother tongue and culture of the country of origin'. The lack of a specifically binding force of this article is consistent with Article 149 of the EC Treaty: ‘the Community contributes to the development of education of quality encouraging co-operation between Member States (...) respecting exclusive responsibility of Member States for the content of education and the organisation of their educational systems.’

The Commission’s approach to the implementation of Article 3 is a co-operative one, based on the identification of deficiencies and encouragement of progress through prioritisation within the Socrates Programme, thus confirming the Commission’s long-standing commitment record to support initiatives aimed at improving the education of the children of migrant workers. Under the current phase of Socrates (2000-2006), this commitment is in fact strengthened, this target group being one of the main priorities for support across all the actions.

In addition, the Commission’s recent report (1) on 'The concrete future objectives of education and training systems' mentions expressly ‘the development of society, in particular by fostering democracy, reducing the disparities and inequities among individuals and groups and promoting cultural diversity’. The report also acknowledges that ‘The learning of languages as part of education and training is important not only for the cultural enrichment of the individual but also as a contribution to mobility and European competitiveness’.

The Commission therefore fully acknowledges the problems linked to the teaching of migrant workers’ children and actively strives in co-operation with the Member States to tackle them, but has no plans to propose any revision of the Directive concerned.


Subject: Dismantling of the CAP and agricultural negotiations in the WTO

According to a report reproduced in the Portuguese press, the Guardian newspaper has had access to documents proving that the Commission had a negotiating strategy which consisted in using the agricultural sector as a bargaining counter in negotiations within the World Trade Organisation, in exchange for greater liberalisation and access to certain sectors in third countries, such as tele-communications, financial services, the energy sector and direct investments.

According to the report, the gradual dismantling of the CAP would be the price for this. It should be borne in mind that the various bilateral agreements and successive GATT rounds led to a far-reaching liberalisation of agricultural trade worldwide, calling into question the principle of Community preference and benefiting the large multinationals in the agricultural and food industries. Farming is in an ongoing state of crisis, with a drastic reduction in the number of farmers and farms, an increase in verticalisation and concentration of production and intensification, with the well-known risks as regards food safety. The latest reforms of the CAP did not manage to solve the main problems and made some forms of injustice worse, in particular as regards the distribution of aid between products, producers and countries.