between Rosyth and Zeebrugge. The Commission has knowledge that this company was chosen by an open and non-discriminatory tender procedure organised by the competent authorities. According to the information of the Commission, Superfast Ferries has not received any State aid.

2. Concerning the aid given by the British Government under the ‘Freight Facilities Grant Scheme’, the adaptation of the Port of Rosyth constitutes a public policy action in line with the common transport policy and intends to facilitate the development of the maritime infrastructure within the United Kingdom. This project includes handling freight facilities, which will be open to any interested operators on non-discriminatory conditions and its capital grant amounts to £10.96 million, and not to £20 million, while the environmental benefit is calculated at £35 million. Therefore, this action is in the wider public interest.

3. and 4. Regarding the selection of the Port of Rosyth, the Commission verified the studies showing that it was the most suitable location from an environmental and economic point of view. As mentioned before, these facilities will be suitable and open to all potential operators.

5. In relation with a possible Community grant for the adaptation of the Port of Leith, there will be no obstacle for this in the context of the European programmes, but it must be clear that the updating of the Port of Rosyth will be mainly done with governmental money. It is up to the UK authorities to decide its infrastructure priorities.

6. The current Scottish trailer traffic amounts to only a small percentage of the total United Kingdom’s international trailer traffic and according to some studies there will be an increase in demand for shipping services to and from the United Kingdom within the next few years. Therefore and considering the open and non-discriminatory nature of the facilities the inclusion of new operators in the market may be expected. Consequently, the Commission judges that the competitive impact is acceptable in the light of the very significant environmental benefit and that the grant for the Port of Rosyth does not affect Community trade to such an extent as would be contrary to the interest of the Community. Finally, the Commission would like to stress that no preferential treatment has been agreed and that the Commission’s assessment on State aids takes always into account all relevant information available.

(2002/C 301 E/017) WRITTEN QUESTION E-3670/01
by Marjo Matikainen-Kallström (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(14 January 2002)

Subject: Budgetary status of the northern dimension in 2002

The northern dimension is an important political initiative.

What steps has the Commission taken with a view to creating a special heading for the northern dimension in the EU budget for 2003?

How will it cover the northern dimension when it draws up the 2003 budget?

Answer given by Mr Patten on behalf of the Commission
(26 February 2002)

The Commission strongly supports the Northern Dimension initiative. It aims at enhancing cooperation between the Union and the countries of Europe's northern region through, inter alia, better coordination of the Community programmes operating in the region. It has been clear from the beginning that the Northern Dimension initiative would not involve creation of new specific sources of Community funding.
The Commission believes that more is to be gained by improved coordination of existing programmes than could be made available by another small budget line and, therefore, the Commission does not foresee proposing a separate heading for the Northern Dimension. The Commission is in general against the creation of small thematic or specialised small budget lines, which hinder effective management of the Community budget.

Activities within the Northern Dimension continue to benefit from the existing budget lines, the TACIS programme for actions in Russia, from the PHARE and ISPA programmes for the candidate countries and from Interreg in the Member States concerned. For example, the budget line (B7-521) for Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) is used predominantly in the Northern Dimension area; its subsidiary line for the Baltic Sea (B7-5211) is of course entirely aimed at the Northern Dimension area. This is also the case as regards the PHARE CBC programme in the region (B7-0311). In addition, the Commission intends to be a major contributor to the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership Support Fund once this Fund is set up.

(2002/C 301 E/018)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3687/01
by Rosa Miguélez Ramos (PSE) to the Commission
(16 January 2002)

Subject: Community funding for regasification plant at the bay of Ferrol (Spain)

The company Regasificadora del Norte S.A. (Reganosa) is promoting a project for the creation of a liquefied natural gas plant at Punta Promontorio, on the inner side of the narrow bay of Ferrol (Ría de Ferrol) in Spain. This major project would entail the construction of four tanks of 150 000 cubic metres, and would also mean the entry each year of over 40 methane tankers (dimensions: 280 m x 42 m x 12-13 m).

Reganosa is in receipt of financing from the Galician regional government as well as from the companies Unión Fenosa, Endesa and Mugardesa de Energía, S.A.

The project has met with widespread rejection from the local community, and the Ferrol city council has declared itself against. A number of citizens’ organisations have filed complaints with the Commission’s DG Environment and DG Transport and Energy, in view of the severe risks of such an industrial development in this area. The Ferrol city council believes the plant could be located within Ferrol’s projected outer port complex (this was in fact the original option). Nonetheless, the location currently proposed, i.e. the inner side of the bay, is a densely populated area which is only one kilometre from the built-up area of Mugardos and Ferrol. This location means that the plant could become a real accident trap: displacement would be virtually impossible, and the methane tankers could only put to sea at high tide. The proposed site of the regasification plant would border on such existing installations as fuel tanks, military vessels and a military arsenal, and there could be a domino effect in case of accident, with unforeseeable consequences.

Is this project, or has it ever been, in receipt of Community funding of any kind? Has any request for funding been received? If so, what amounts were asked for, and from which of the Community Funds?

Supplementary answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(10 June 2002)

During the 1994-1999 programming period the Structural Funds provided no part-finance for the installation referred to by the Honourable Member. The Spanish authorities have told the Commission that they do not currently intend to seek part-finance for this project during the current period 2000-2006.

Those authorities have not so far made any application for part-finance.