Answer given by Mr Bolkestein on behalf of the Commission

(19 July 2002)

As Council Directive 89/48/EEC of 21 December 1988 on a general system for the recognition of higher-education diplomas awarded on completion of professional education and training of at least three years' duration (1) was not transposed by Greece within the specified time, the Court of Justice ruled on the failure to comply in a judgment of 23 March 1995 (case C-365/93 'Commission versus Greece'). When Greece failed to comply with this judgment by informing the Commission of the measures for transposing the Directive, the latter initiated new infringement proceedings on the basis of Article 228 of the EC Treaty with a request for the fixing of penalty payments. After a Court hearing on the matter, Greece gave notification of Presidential Decree No 165 of 23 June 2000 transposing Directive 89/48/EEC. Since Greece had thus responded to the complaint about failure to transpose the Directive, the Commission was prompted to stop the Court proceedings.

The Commission's examination of Presidential Decree No 165 of 23 June 2000, together with the complaints which it had received, nevertheless showed that the directive had not been correctly transposed and that it had not been properly applied. New infringement proceedings against Greece were thus opened, this time for non-compliance of Presidential Decree No 165/2000 with Directive 89/48/EEC and for wrong application of the latter.

Greece was given notification of a letter of formal notice on 27 July 2001, and this was followed on 21 December 2001 by a supplementary letter of formal notice in the light of further information from complainants.

The Greek authorities gave their comments to the Commission in letters on 12 October 2001, 13 March 2002 and 17 April 2002. The last two letters contained draft versions of texts which would apparently remedy certain complaints in connection with the non-compliance of Greek law with Directive 89/48/EEC. However, inasmuch as these texts have not been adopted and since there still remain some important complaints with regard in particular to the wrong application of the Directive, the Commission decided on 26 June 2002 to send Greece a reasoned opinion.


(2002/C 301 E/223) WRITTEN QUESTION E-1693/02

by Concepció Ferrer (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(12 June 2002)

Subject: Barcelona-Vic-Ripoll-Puigcerdà-La Tour de Carol-Toulouse railway line

The December 2001 Commission White Paper on transport in the period up to 2010 establishes three priorities for the railways: to revitalise railways as a strategic sector, to eliminate railway 'bottlenecks' (involving the development of a secondary network to counter the risk of congestion on main lines), and to promote Structural Fund investment in order to improve access to the trans-European network by means of an amendment to the financing rules so as to allow maximum Community participation (up to 20% in the case of cross-border rail projects which cross natural barriers or eliminate railway bottlenecks).

It should be pointed out that the White Paper acknowledges trans-Pyrenean communications within the trans-European network to be highly restricted (two road passes and two rail ones), particularly by comparison with the situation in the Alps (six road and seven rail passes).

In any event, it would seem that the proposal put forward by the French and Spanish Governments includes only (as regards rail transport) the Zaragoza-Canfanc-Pau line; there is no mention whatsoever of the Barcelona-Puigcerdà-La Tour de Carol-Toulouse line.

In December 2001 the Spanish Parliament's Joint Committee on the European Union adopted a resolution on the White Paper in which it calls for the list of major projects to include more than one rail crossing in the Pyrenees, in order to ensure that the latter remain passable.
Does the Commission not consider that the Barcelona-Vic-Ripoll-Puigcerdà-La Tour de Carol-Toulouse line meets all the eligibility criteria laid down in the White Paper?

Has the Commission considered the possibility of including more than one rail crossing through the Pyrenees amongst the major projects?

**Answer given by Ms de Palacio on behalf of the Commission**

(11 July 2002)

The existing Barcelona-Vic-Ripoll-Puigcerdà-La tour de Carol-Toulouse railway line does not appear on the maps of the trans-European network in Annex I to Decision 1962/96/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 1996 on Community guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network (1). This single-track mountain line which runs along ridges at high altitude does not appear to be suitable for development as a major rail link.

On the other hand, in order to facilitate rail traffic across the Pyrenees, the Commission considers it a priority to continue with the specific TGV South project endorsed by the Essen European Council in 1994 and including the Madrid-Barcelona-Montpellier and Madrid-Vitoria-Dax lines. It also believes that given the substantial growth in road traffic between the Iberian peninsula and the rest of Europe, a new high-capacity rail route across the Pyrenees will eventually need to be developed, although the route it will take is not yet known.


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(2002/C 301 E/224)

**WRITTEN QUESTION P-1700/02**

by Alexandros Baltas (PSE) to the Commission

(6 June 2002)

Subject: Implementation in Greece of the Community scheme for production aid for cotton in the 2001-2002 marketing year in accordance with Regulation 1051/2001

Some cotton producers have ignored or infringed Community regulations on cotton production, thereby compromising and jeopardising producers who comply with the regulations.

Furthermore, the reform of the Community regulatory framework governing the cotton aid scheme was completed much later than the production period and, in any case, after the fields had been prepared and the cotton seed sown.

The Commission’s proposal for a regulation also differed in many substantive respects from the text finally adopted by the Council — Regulation (EC) 1051/2001 (3) — causing confusion and problems for producers.

In view of the above, what measures will the Commission take to protect law-abiding producers from the damage they may suffer as a result of the conduct of producers who do not comply with the rules or try to commit fraud?

How will it ensure that the legitimate expectations of producers are not cruelly frustrated by the late publication of the reformed regulatory framework for the cotton aid scheme?

Will the Commission take measures either of a corrective nature (changes to those points in the regulations which are unclear) or of a transitional nature (adoption of transitional arrangements for the 2001 harvest where the late publication of the regulations caused problems for producers)?

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