studies on extensions to the line, compulsory purchases and all associated works, the cost amounts to 705 billion, and if interest on loans and VAT are added to the above, the cost totals 952.7 billion drachmas.

The Commission:
- Does it agree with these figures? If not, what are its own figures?
- Does the EU believe that there have been any contraventions, shortcomings in transparency or instances of maladministration in the Athens underground railway company’s handling of the project?

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

(29 July 2002)

On the basis of information received from the Greek authorities, the cost of the basic project of the Athens Metro is EUR 2,066 million, VAT and interest excluded. This amount covers the two lines, Sepolia-Dafni and National Defense-Monastiraki, including 19 stations, the Sepolia depot, the rolling stock, the parallel and additional works, the expropriations and the cost for the management of the project by the company Attiko Metro.

European Regional Development Fund contribution to the financing of the basic project amounted to EUR 200 million under the 1989-1993 Community Support Framework (CSF) for Greece. An additional EUR 733 million under the 1994-1999 CSF and EUR 750 million under the 2000-2006 CSF were also allocated to the project.

As for any payment request presented to the Commission by the Member States for operations cofinanced by the Structural Funds, those presented for the Athens Metro project must include expenditure incurred in conformity with Community and national legislation. Controls executed by both the national and the community competent authorities aim to ensure the respect of this principle. In case of irregularities, financial corrections are applied, as provided by the regulations relating to the Structural Funds. No such corrections have been applied in relation to the Athens metro.

(2003/C 28 E/183)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-1951/02**

by Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) and Alexander de Roo (Verts/ALE) to the Commission

(3 July 2002)

Subject: ‘Forgotten’ pesticides

The recent German food scandal can be attributed partly to carelessness and a serious error: wheat and barley were stored in a warehouse in the former East Germany which under the communist regime had been used to store pesticides that are now banned. On the other hand, this food scandal makes it clear that more attention needs to be paid to the problem of ‘obsolete pesticides’, i.e. pesticides which are out of date or have been ‘forgotten’.

Tons of these pesticides, the vast majority of which are completely banned in Europe, still linger on, inter alia in the former Eastern Bloc. They are seeping into the ground, with disastrous consequences. It is suspected that the sites where the pesticides were produced are also seriously polluted. Although no complete inventory of these pesticides exists, it is known for example that in the applicant country Poland between 50,000 and 60,000 tonnes of such pesticides remain in storage without proper management. Worldwide, it has been estimated that one million tonnes of POPs, dioxins and PCBs are in a similar situation.

Does the Commission recognise the risk to public health which these pesticides represent?

What measures will it take to solve this problem?

Has the Commission urged the applicant countries to draw up an inventory of ‘forgotten’ pesticides? How will the Commission help the applicant countries to destroy their ‘forgotten’ pesticides in a safe, proper and environmentally sound manner?

What is the Commission doing to help tackle and solve this problem elsewhere in the world as well?
Answer given by Mrs Wallström on behalf of the Commission

(13 September 2002)

The Commission recognises that there is a risk to human health and the environment from the inadequate storage or disposal of obsolete and banned pesticides and is very committed to supporting and promoting the environmentally sound disposal of all such existing stocks.

Existing Community legislation concerning hazardous waste is in place to ensure that these stockpiles of pesticides are disposed of in an adequate manner. Central and Eastern European candidate countries are now in the process of adopting the acquis that will establish in their territories the legal framework for the environmentally sound disposal of these obsolete pesticides. This includes provisions such as the obligation to set a management plan for hazardous wastes, permitting and collection requirements and record keeping obligations among others.

The Food and Veterinary Office of the Commission addresses the issue of stored pesticides when conducting inspections in Candidate Countries. In addition, in preparing proposals to amend existing Community legislation on pesticides use and on the setting of maximum residue levels for pesticides in food and feed, the Commission is analysing what measures, if any, may be necessary to manage the risks posed by such stocks to consumers.

Although there may indeed be very large quantities of obsolete pesticides in Central and Eastern Europe, requests for Community financial assistance for the destruction of obsolete pesticides have been very limited. None of the candidate countries has so far during the accession negotiations raised the destruction of obsolete pesticides as an issue. In fact, it is the Accession Countries who have to take the initiative.

Nevertheless, when the need is expressed, the Commission can apply several instruments to promote and fund the disposal of this type of waste in these countries. Just to give an example, through the PHARE funding channel, the Commission intends to co-finance the collection, repackaging, transport and destruction of 1130 tonnes of obsolete pesticides in Romania. From countries of the new independent states (NIS) no explicit requests for funding projects related to the problem of obsolete pesticides has reached the Commission.

As most of the Central and Eastern European countries, all but two (Estonia and Cyprus) of the Candidate Countries have signed the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). The Convention obliges the Parties to identify stockpiles consisting of substances listed in the Annexes of the Convention, most of which are pesticides. The Parties are also obliged to manage the stockpiles, upon becoming waste, in an environmentally sound manner. Developed countries will provide technical and financial assistance for developing country parties and parties with economies in transition to assist them to implement their obligation under the Convention.

Within this context — and in the general framework of supporting developing countries to integrate the environmental dimension in their development process — the Community provides financial assistance and expertise to developing countries for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on POPs.

(2003/C 28 E/184)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1967/02

by Chris Davies (ELDR) to the Commission

(8 July 2002)

Subject: Ozone-Depleting Substances Regulation (EC) 2037/2000

Which Member States have informed the Commission that they are now complying with the requirements of Regulation (EC) 2037/2000(1) insofar as they relate to the removal of CFCs both from the coolant circuits and from the insulating material used in refrigerators, and which have not done so?