Subject: Missions by OLAF officials

Can the Commission provide statistics showing the number of days spent on mission by each individual OLAF official since 1 January 2001?

Can the Commission also provide a list of all missions to countries outside the EU and state the duration and purpose of each of these missions, together with the costs incurred?

Answer given by Mrs Schreyer on behalf of the Commission
(2 July 2002)

Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999 of the Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 1999 concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) (1) and Council Regulation (Euratom) No 1074/1999 of 25 May 1999 (2) provide in Article 12, paragraph 3 that the Director of OLAF shall report regularly to the Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Court of Auditors on the findings of investigations carried out by the Office, whilst respecting the confidentiality of those investigations, the legitimate rights of the persons involved and, where appropriate, national provisions applicable to judicial proceedings.

With respect to the Honourable Member’s request for statistics showing the number of days spent on mission by each individual OLAF official since 1 January 2001, the Commission is unable to provide such information as it might risk compromising ongoing investigations or prejudice the rights of economic operators and/or individuals, who have been or are being investigated for the detection of irregularities.

The Commission is also unable to provide a list of all missions to countries outside the Union and state the duration and purpose of these missions, together with the costs incurred as the Honourable Member has requested, for the same reasons given above.

The Commission is however able to inform the Honourable Member that officials of OLAF have spent a total amount of 2,244.50 days on missions during 2001 and that the total costs of these missions was EUR 743,690.84. The average amount of days spent by each OLAF official on mission during 2001 is therefore equal to 15 days. This amount includes the number of days spent on missions in countries outside the Union.


Subject: Honouring the commitments made to women in connection with the Afghanistan reconstruction process

What action has the Commission taken (or is it intending to take) in order to ensure that Afghan women are involved in the decision-making process and in determining the use of the financial aid granted by the EU to Afghanistan for reconstruction purposes, and that they are the direct beneficiaries of between 25% and 30% of that aid, as called for by the European Parliament on 13 December 2001?

Answer given by Mr Patten on behalf of the Commission
(4 June 2002)

As the Honourable Member will be aware, the factions in Afghanistan agreed on 5 December 2001 in Bonn/Petersberg an Agreement on provisional arrangements in Afghanistan pending the reestablishment of permanent government institutions.
This Agreement contains numerous specific references to the role and participation of women in the Interim Administration and the Emergency Loya Jirga and recognises that the interim arrangements set out in the Agreement are intended as ‘a first step towards the establishment of a broad-based, gender sensitive ... and fully representative government ...’.

In its dealings with the Interim Administration, the Commission has consistently made clear to the authorities that compliance with the terms of the Bonn/Petersberg Agreement is a fundamental conditionality of its support to the reconstruction process in Afghanistan. To this end, the Commission has committed up to EUR 2 million to set up the Emergency Loya Jirga in conformity with the Bonn principles. The work of the Emergency Loya Jirga Commission is being closely monitored by the Commission and the other international community representations present in Afghanistan.

As the Commission has made clear in response to previous questions from Members of the Parliament on this subject, the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan has been a specific concern over many years and its humanitarian aid programme has implemented health, education, nutrition and employment projects aimed at refugees, internally displaced persons and other vulnerable groups have consistently contained significant components which addressed the plight of Afghan women.

With regard to its own current interventions in the reconstruction phase in Afghanistan, the Commission has sent expert missions into the field to make proposals for initial quick impact projects in the areas of education, rural development/food security, urban regeneration. A health sector mission is still in the field. A gender specialist accompanied these missions, with the specific objective of ensuring that gender issues and the need to improve social conditions and opportunities were fully taken into account from the earliest stage of the project cycle.

The expert’s proposal are now being incorporated into programme design. For example, one of the interventions for urban recovery — under the already approved Initial Recovery Programme — foresees the rehabilitation of a number of hammans in several cities. This will provide women with — often the only — possibility to wash and with the opportunity to meet with other women outside of their direct family. Another project includes a health education and community-based sanitation component, through the establishment of a network of women to work as health and sanitation educators and community mobilisers to work in a number of urban districts.

The Commission is also intent on mainstreaming a number of gender concerns into the second Recovery Programme (EUR 70 million) expected to be approved in the fourth quarter of 2002. Specifically, interventions in health and provision of infrastructure will address constraints faced by women in urban and rural areas.

Regarding emergency humanitarian aid provided by the Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), women have always been implicated in various types of projects, even in the Taliban era: all medical and nutritional projects funded by ECHO aim to treat malnutrition among children under five years of age, as well as monitor the health status of women, in particular lactating and pregnant women. Usually, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) organise elementary hygiene education for women.

NGOs have access to all beneficiaries, women included, and can employ women as local NGO personnel in medical related programmes, in spite of the fact that separation between the two genders has to be strictly observed. Medical NGOs play a great role in the medical training of women.

Furthermore, for two years, income generating activities for women, have started to encourage their self-sufficiency, and are increasingly being supported by ECHO. ECHO has financed ‘Food For Work’ (FFW) projects for men and women through various partners. While men are occupied in land recovery works and city drain cleaning, women are given raw material and knit quilts and sweaters to be distributed to
other beneficiaries. This operation implies that some educated women will first conduct a survey to identify the most vulnerable women, among the widows, handicapped and internally displaced people. This kind of programme ensures the participation of women coming from a variety of socio-economic classes, from educated to illiterate women, each of them using their knowledge and/or manual ability. The programmes have proved successful and will be continued as they provide an immediate impact on people's livelihood.

(2003/C92E/038) WRITTEN QUESTION P-1012/02
by Daniel Hannan (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(4 April 2002)

Subject: Delay in answering question on funding of the Convention

I have received no answer from the Commission to my questions concerning the funding of the Convention on the Future of Europe within the six-week timescale laid down in the rules (Written Question E-0337/02). Bearing in mind the importance of accountability in the Commission, shouldn't regard be paid to these rules?

To repeat my questions therefore: What is the attendance allowance for members of the Convention on the Future of Europe? What basis is it calculated on and by whom?

Answer given by Mrs Schreyer on behalf of the Commission
(15 May 2002)

The written question E-0337/02 by the Honourable Member(1) was answered late by the Commission, because it was considered adequate to draft a common reply to this question and to the written questions E-0139/02 by Mr Garriga Polledo(1) and E-0419/02 by Mr Sjöstedt(1), and to update it following the procedural developments after the adoption of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 28 February 2002 on the financing of the Convention on the future of the Union.


Concerning the attendance allowance of the Convention, the understanding of the Commission is that no attendance allowance is foreseen in the Convention's budget, except for the members of the Convention's Praesidium. The General Secretariat of the Convention is responsible for drafting and proposing the Convention's budget, and may therefore complete this information or provide further details if requested by the Honourable Member.

(1) OJC 28 E, 6.2.2003, p. 15.

(2003/C92E/039) WRITTEN QUESTION E-1077/02
by Erik Meijer (GUE/NGL) to the Commission
(18 April 2002)

Subject: US pressure on the EU to restrict human rights by making changes to Criminal law and law enforcement

1. Can the Commission confirm the report by the British NGO ‘Statewatch’ that there is not only talk of coordination between the Member States of the EU in the area of integration of criminal law and law enforcement?