The text of the draft Council decision adopting a specific programme for research, technological development and demonstration: 'Integrating and strengthening the European Research Area' (2002-2006), adopted on 30 September 2002, states, with regard to combating major diseases, that the strategic objective of this line is to develop improved strategies for the prevention and management - using also advanced technologies for health - of human disease and for living and ageing healthily. It will concentrate exclusively on integrating genomic approaches through all relevant organisms into more established medical approaches for investigating disease and health determinants. The emphasis will be put on transnational research aimed at bringing basic knowledge through to clinical application. Research actions in the field of combating diabetes will focus on integrating clinical expertise with relevant model systems and advanced tools in functional genomics to generate breakthroughs in the prevention and management of this disease.

In addition, diabetes research activities in Europe will also be supported under Section 3 of the Framework Programme 'Strengthening the foundations of the European Research Area'. This section will provide funds for fellowships as well as for networking of national diabetes research activities. This aspect is considered particularly important in order to contribute to the creation of a European Research Area.

Thus, the Sixth Framework Programme will certainly make an important contribution to the fight against diabetes, reflecting the common intention of the European Parliament and the Council. The Council would also point out to the Honourable Member that Member States are responsible for the organisation and delivery of their own health services. Furthermore, whilst Article 152(4) allows for ‘incentive measures designed to protect and improve human health’, ‘harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States’ is excluded. There is therefore no scope for the Council to harmonise regulations in the area of diabetes. However, as described above the Council has taken action where it is legitimately entitled to do so.

(1) Footnote: See also Section 1.2.1. ‘Policy support and anticipating scientific and technological needs’ and Heading III (Strengthening the foundations of the European Research Area) for other health-related topics.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2102/02
by Paulo Casaca (PSE) to the Commission
(16 July 2002)

Subject: Portuguese version of proposal for a regulation COM(2001) 83 final, 14 February 2001

Gratefully taking the Commission up on its invitation in reply 1616/02 (1), I would like to specify that the two central terms around which the Commission's proposal revolves are 'breakdown' translated by 'discriminaçao', which is used seven times, and 'size' translated as 'densidade', which is used thirteen times, with variations such as 'densidade demográfica das regiões', 'densidade média (en termos demográficos)', 'densidade média das unidades' and 'desvio-padrão da densidade em termos demográficos'.

It is not literally impossible to translate 'breakdown' by 'discriminaçao', but this is not the appropriate translation for referring to territorial division or breakdown, not only because this is not the expression used in this context (and this issue was actually the subject of a referendum in Portugal, which means that it is one with which people are fully familiar in our country), but because it suggests discrimination in the usual sense, i.e. segregation, with highly negative connotations, particularly in the context of a text like the proposal on territorial nomenclature.

As for 'densidade', in all the forms deployed, this is a concept which has nothing to do with the subject dealt with by the Regulation, which is the territorial breakdown of the territory by population size categories, and never by 'densidades'.

Population density represents the quotient which gives the average number of individuals per surface unit of a territorial unit, and is a totally different concept from 'size', which means that the repeated deployment of 'densidade', with the added aggravation of the adjectival forms used, renders the text incomprehensible.
However, over and above the fact that these central terms of reference in the Regulation have been mistranslated, the entire text uses and abuses expressions such as ‘a nível de’, ‘no que diz respeito’ and ‘neste âmbito’ which I think could usefully be avoided, and strings of terms and definitions which do not hang together in Portuguese (e.g. ‘existência jurídica na prática administrativa’).

Does the Commission therefore not think that it would be appropriate to establish an interinstitutional dialogue on terminological and linguistic issues?

(1) OJC92E, 17.4.2003, p. 71.

Answer given by Mr Kinnock on behalf of the Commission

(11 September 2002)

The Commission has conferred with the translation unit that produced the Portuguese version of proposal for a Regulation (1) referred to in the Honourable Member’s question and, with the necessary information now available, cannot agree with the suggestion made by the Honourable Member that the central terms around which the proposal revolves have been ‘mistranslated’. The Commission invites the Honourable Member to consider the following:

Concerning the first term whose translation is questioned (‘regional breakdown’, translated in Portuguese as ‘discriminação regional’), the Honourable Member states that this is not the proper translation for referring to territorial division. In fact, the text in question is not referring at this point to territorial division. This concept does appear at the very beginning of the proposal, as ‘geographical division of the territory’, where it is translated of course as ‘repartição geográfica do território’. The geographical division of the territory is one thing and the breakdown/discrimination of data by regions is, obviously, another. Conversely, the choice of the word ‘discriminação’/’discrimination’ in the specific context of statistical data (context being paramount in any lexical choice) is a long-standing one and does not incur any risk whatsoever of disparaging connotation. The Commission is informed that any dictionary of the Portuguese language (Porto Editora, Lello, Dicionário da Academia) will give as the primary meaning of the word ‘discriminação’: the act of differentiating, distinguishing, telling apart, specifying, detailing, and the derogatory meaning ‘segregação’/’segregation’ which the word can have in expressions such as ‘discriminação racial’/’racial discrimination’ will be given as a secondary reference.

The second term whose translation is questioned is ‘the size of the region’s population’, translated in Portuguese as ‘densidade demográfica das regiões’. The Commission does acknowledge that this term (‘densidade’/’density’) corresponds to an average value, as stated by the Honourable Member, and that in more literal translation one should have opted for ‘dimensão populacional/demográfica’. On the other hand, considering that the concept is clearly defined in the text of the proposal, ‘densidade demográfica das regiões’ may well be seen as a more linguistically correct translation and one that does not clash with any other concept in the proposal.

As to the frequency of use of those terms in the Portuguese version, it is strictly identical to the frequency of use of the corresponding terms in the English version — the basis for the said translation — and in a text of this nature it is advisable that a single concept be translated by the same term every time that it occurs, simply for reasons of intelligibility.

The Honourable Member also refers to the expression ‘existência jurídica na prática administrativa’, which appears in the Portuguese version as the translation for ‘statutory existence in the administrative practice’, whenever it refers to the fact that the regions are legally accepted in the administrative practice. The alternative option of translation would be ‘existência legal’, as the word ‘statutory’ means literally ‘enacted by law’. Using the terms ‘jurídico/legal’ (‘juridical/legal’) as synonyms in many contexts may be less systematic in Portugal than in the Community but, here again, there is no translation error whatsoever.

The ‘use and overuse’ of options such as the expression ‘a nível de’ is dictated by the content of the proposal itself (the nomenclature in question being divided into levels/níveis).
In answer to the question in the last paragraph, the Commission considers that it is undoubtedly useful for there to be an interinstitutional dialogue on matters of terminology and linguistics and consistently seeks to ensure such mutually useful exchanges. One example of this cooperation is the inter-institutional codecision database (eCODB), recently set up by the Commission Translation Service, which provides for exchange of information on terminology between Commission, Council and Parliament translators. All the institutions will stand to gain from such a dialogue.

The Commission respects the Honourable Member’s close interest in terminological references and issues and will continue to readily respond to any resulting questions that the Honourable Member may wish to submit.

It may, however, be more convenient for the Honourable Member, and more economical in the use of resources, if he makes direct contact with the unit which has direct responsibility and expertise in Portuguese language translation in order to obtain more speedy responses to linguistic questions. The Commission will happily assist the Honourable Member in making such contact if he would like to use such a facility.


WRITTEN QUESTION E-2106/02
by Hubert Pirker (PPE-DE) to the Council
(17 July 2002)

Subject: Temporary admission of a number of Palestinians to EU Member States

When 12 suspected Palestinian terrorists were admitted to certain Member States of the European Union, neither the European Parliament — despite urgent inquiries — nor the general public in Europe were informed properly about the matter. Moreover, recent reports in the press suggest that the presence of a number of suspected terrorists constitutes a growing risk to the citizens of the Union.

Was the Council aware of the identity of the suspected Palestinian terrorists before it took its decision?

Did the Council know how serious the offences were of which they were suspected in Israel, and what did the Council do to check whether the suspicions against them were well-founded?

What status was granted to the 12 Palestinians admitted to the European Union and how is the Council ensuring that they do not endanger public safety and order?

How are the Council and the receiving states ensuring that the suspected Palestinian terrorists do not evade the requisite supervision and travel to other Member States, and that they do not constitute a long-term security risk to the citizens of the European Union?

Reply
(6 February 2003)

The Honourable Member is certainly aware of the difficult circumstances under which a solution for the besieged Nativity Church in Bethlehem had to be found in May of this year. For purely humanitarian reasons, the European Union helped to bring about that temporary solution, acting in accordance with the terms of an understanding reached between the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel. Thirteen Palestinians were therefore able to be transferred abroad rapidly.

In order to contribute to that effort, several Member States declared themselves willing to receive some of them on a temporary basis and exclusively on humanitarian grounds. While being fully aware of the urgency of the matter, Member States discussed the modalities and implications of receiving these individuals thoroughly. A common EU approach to certain aspects was adopted on 21 May 2002 in the form of a Common Position (1), which spells out a number of practical aspects. This also implies that every Member State must take appropriate measures within its legal system to protect the personal security of Palestinians received by it and to avoid them compromising the public order or internal security of the