Galicia coast, but was subsequently arrested with his colleagues in June and now faces criminal and civil proceedings in Galicia for activities authorised by the national government?

Has the Commission made representations to the Spanish national authorities and the Galician Government at what appears to be a clear breach of the Treaty of Rome's provisions on the free movement of goods, services, capital and people?

Does it feel that Mr Devlin and his team may have a claim for compensation if it turns out that this is merely an internal Spanish quarrel?

Answer given by Mr Bolkestein on behalf of the Commission

(26 November 2002)

The Commission is not aware of the case involving criminal and civil proceedings in Spain to which the honourable Member's question refers.

It should be noted that it is not possible, on the basis of the information given in the written question, to judge the substance of the case. In particular, the question does not point to any factors that could constitute a manifest infringement of the provisions on free movement laid down in the Treaty of Rome.

(2003/C 137 E/168) WRITTEN QUESTION E-3032/02
by Albert Maat (PPE-DE), Herman Vermeer (ELDR), Brigitte Langenhagen (PPE-DE), Niels Busk (ELDR) and Struan Stevenson (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(23 October 2002)

Subject: Negotiations with Norway, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Russia on the international distribution of blue whiting catch quotas

When will the next round of negotiations take place between the Community and non-member countries, such as Norway, Iceland and the Faroe Islands, on the distribution of catch quotas for blue whiting in the North-East Atlantic? Has the Commission made any progress in the negotiations with the non-member countries concerned during and since the last round of negotiations and, if so, what progress?

Does the Commission realise that the Community decision of July 1999 unilaterally to restrict blue whiting catch quotas for its own fishermen has resulted in the EU share of the catch (i.e. catches in EU waters plus EU catches in international waters) falling from approximately 65% in the period 1993 to 1997 to less than 20% today?

Is the Commission aware that the approach it has adopted hitherto has caused serious economic hardship to Community fishermen, whereas no progress whatsoever has been made in terms of the responsible management of blue whiting stocks and the Community's negotiating position has been seriously weakened by the drastic fall in its share of the catch?

Is the Commission aware that its attitude sends out the wrong signal to Community fishermen and will undermine the basis for responsible management? Does the Commission not also consider that the policy of unilaterally responsible fishing adopted by the Community may in fact be achieving quite the opposite of what is intended?

Will the Commission ensure in the near future that the historical fishing rights of the Community continue to be honoured?

Does the Commission not also believe that in the current situation other measures should be considered (additional catch quotas for Community fishermen, trade measures, etc), in order to reach an agreement that is consistent with the Community's historical fishing rights?
How does the Commission think that the evidently irresponsible approach taken by non-member countries to fishing for blue whiting in the negotiations on the sharing out of blue whiting catch quotas can be remedied, so that Community fishermen are no longer being let down?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission

(3 December 2002)

The latest Coastal State meeting on blue whiting has taken place in Oslo on 7 and 8 November 2002. Blue whiting has also been discussed at the annual meeting of North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) in London 12 to 15 November 2002.

No progress has been made since the Coastal State meeting in December 2001. At that meeting a long-term management plan was agreed. The plan specifies how to set the total allowable catches (TAC). The Parties could, however, not agree on an allocation of the TAC.

Allocation is the most important outstanding question. The long-term management plan is worthless without an agreement on the distribution of the TAC and the Commission is giving the highest priority to this issue. The Commission is fully aware of the development in the catches by the Parties. The reduction in the Community's share of the total international landings is not a consequence of the Community's management of the blue whiting fishery but of the other Parties' lack of responsible management.

The Commission does not agree that the Community's negotiating position has been weakened by the fall in its share of the catch. The Commission will not accept that the irresponsible behaviour of some of the other Parties results in them obtaining larger shares of this fishery in any agreement on allocation. The Commission will in the coming negotiations continue to put pressure on the other Parties and will consider all possible measures, aiming for an overall agreement.

(2003/C 137 E/169)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3034/02
by Daniela Raschhofer (NI) to the Commission

(24 October 2002)

Subject: EU aid for Objective 1 regions

It emerges from Jörg Beutel's study for the Commission entitled 'The economic impact of Objective 1 interventions for the period 2000-2006' that 24.2% of EU aid for Objective 1 regions does not benefit those regions themselves, but other EU regions. The study also makes it clear that the lasting effects of EU funding in the region concerned are insufficient.

1. What reasons does the Commission see for the misdirected funding?

2. What steps has the Commission taken or does it propose to take to remedy this state of affairs?

3. Does the Commission intend to withdraw this funding?

4. How does the Commission view the study's findings about EU funding's lack of lasting effects?

5. What steps does the Commission suggest to enhance the effectiveness of EU aid?