In determining total expenditure in the case of Portugal, the Commission took account in particular of the penalties provided for in Article 39 of Regulation (EC) No 1750/1999(4) in the area of rural development, corrections for failure to meet the payment deadlines laid down for the various common market organisations and the annual expenditure declared by the Portuguese authorities.

The Commission would point out to the Honourable Member that the net financial impact on Portugal of the accounts clearance Decision for the 2002 financial year is in fact an amount of EUR 483 840.10 payable to that Member State.

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(2004/C 33 E/217)  
WRITTEN QUESTION E-2098/03  
by Sebastiano Musumeci (UEN) to the Commission  
(25 June 2003)

Subject: SARS emergency: preventive measures

SARS, or atypical pneumonia, a disease whose origins have not yet been established and for which there is so far no cure, has become the new plague of the third millennium, thanks to the ease with which it spreads. By reason of its contagiousness it is affecting dozens of new victims every day, mostly in China and South-East Asia.

Effective preventive measures against the spread of SARS must meet a number of minimum joint criteria in all countries, and even more so in the EU Member States, given the urgent need to implement preventive measures to combat this disease.

1. Can the Commission state whether it believes it is necessary to promote and cofinance a large-scale, Europe-wide information campaign (e.g. on the lines followed in Singapore and Taiwan) with a view to establishing how SARS is transmitted and determining the precautions needed to prevent contagion?

2. Does the Commission consider it necessary to propose introducing checks (e.g. temperature controls) at all the EU’s external borders, in view of the speed and apparent ease of transmission of SARS and the circumstances of its presence in a number of third countries?

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Answer given by Mr Byrne on behalf of the Commission  
(15 July 2003)

The public health measures put in place by the Member States, facilitated through the Union’s network for the epidemiological surveillance and control of communicable diseases in the Community working under Decision No 2119/98/EC of the Parliament and of the Council of 24 September 1998(5), have already been able to contain the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in the Union. As there is no local transmission an information campaign based on those countries where the disease was rampant was not necessary. The Commission has agreed an action plan with Health Ministries to ensure better preparedness in the future and an information campaign would be considered as part of this plan for the future (http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/phthreats/com/sars/sars_en.htm).
The Commission agrees with the World Health Organisation (WHO) that entry screening measures are not efficient in detecting new cases and create a false sense of security in the public and in the health authorities. Exit screening from affected countries is one of the best measures undertaken in containing the spread of SARS. The efficacy of such measures will be kept under review in the light of scientific evidence.


WRITTEN QUESTION E-2100/03
by José Ribeiro e Castro (UEN) to the Commission

(25 June 2003)

Subject: Fishing in the EU's western waters

Recently (on 4 June) the European Parliament voted to ensure that Regulations (EEC) No 2847/93 (1) and (EC) No 685/95 (2) would remain in force for a 10-year period, and it did so in connection with its vote on its legislative resolution on a proposal for a Council regulation on the management of the fishing effort relating to certain Community fishing areas and resources and modifying Regulation (EEC) No 2847/93.

Parliament's position was supported by an overwhelming majority of 334 to 108, with 48 abstentions.

Notwithstanding the allocation of powers and responsibilities amongst the various EU institutions, such a clear and eloquent expression of a political view by those elected to represent the people of the various EU Member States (more than an absolute majority of Parliament's total membership and over two-thirds of the votes cast) cannot be ignored either by the Commission or by the Council.

However, it continues to be reported that new rules on access to the EU's western waters (in particular those along the Portuguese coast) are being drawn up in blatant contradiction to Parliament's vote. Furthermore, the new rules would allow access in certain cases within the 12-mile limit and, in others, within the 50-mile limit. This would jeopardise not only the conservation of valuable resources in those waters but also the social and economic balances which have been preserved by means of the CFP and the objectives thereof.

The Commission:

– does it intend to ensure that the above-mentioned wishes expressed by the European Parliament are respected;
– if it does not, in what way and on what basis does it plan to ignore them?


Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission

(25 July 2003)

The Commission has taken note of the vote of the Parliament, that took place on 4 June 2003, on the Commission's proposal (1) for a Council Regulation on the management of the fishing effort relating to certain Community fishing areas and resources and modifying Regulation (EEC) 2847/93 (2), the so called Western waters Regulation.