The Commission has recently proposed a new way to organise the contract with universities for cooperation within Erasmus, from the Institutional Contract approach to the Erasmus University Charter. In this context universities will be required to make sure that studies will be recognised and students will be informed about their rights and obligations through an Erasmus Student Charter. These measures together with a closer monitoring of the implementation of ECTS will improve the situation in the future.

There are no rules stipulating which exams can be taken abroad and must be recognised by the home university.

Within ECTS there is a Learning Agreement to be agreed between the sending and receiving universities and the student. This Learning Agreement contains the courses to be followed by the student at the host institution which will be recognised by the host institution after the student's return.

It is a matter for the sending and receiving universities to decide which exams can be recognised for an Austrian student going to Spain.

The monitoring is done through ECTS. The reports will be collected and made available in the future.

(2004/C 58 E/007)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1320/02

by Roberta Angelilli (UEN) to the Commission

(29 April 2002)

Subject: Funds for the building of monumental church organs

Many European cities comprise a wealth of religious buildings of major historical significance in religious, cultural and artistic terms, containing various forms of figurative art carried out by master-craftsmen, including church organs. The European Union has a special interest in protecting the cultural heritage handed down by craft traditions. There is a project to build, in the recently restored church of San Domenico in Rieti, a 'Dom Bedos de Celles — Formentelli' organ, detailed plans for which were drawn up in 1780 but which was never built.

The Commission:

– will it state whether there are any programmes relating to artistic craftsmanship and especially to the building of church organs;

– are there any pilot projects which might apply to this type of funding;

– what is it’s view on the matter?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission

(4 June 2002)

The Commission supports initiatives for cooperation in the cultural sector, including the protection, preservation and enhancement of the cultural heritage as part of, and in accordance with the selection criteria for, the 'Culture 2000' programme, which is the only financing and programming instrument for cultural cooperation in the EU. There is no Community programme specifically concerned with artistic craftsmanship in general or the building of organs in particular, since funding in the cultural heritage field is provided only under the 'Culture 2000' programme.

The Honourable Member can find further information on this programme at the following Internet site: (http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/index_fr.html).

In 2004, the 'Culture 2000' programme will be giving prominence to the cultural heritage. This sector comprises movable heritage, intangible heritage, historical archives and libraries, archaeology, underwater heritage, cultural sites and landscapes, apart from the cultural heritage of the modern era.
The Commission would furthermore draw the Honourable Member's attention to the fact that projects financed under the Structural Funds(1) often have a cultural dimension, including the restoration and utilisation of the architectural and cultural heritage, the building of cultural facilities, the setting-up of cultural and tourist services and the provision of training in the arts or in the management of cultural activities.

(1) More specifically: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF).

(2004/C 58 E/008)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2712/02
by María Izquierdo Rojo (PSE) to the Commission
(20 September 2002)

Subject: Welfare benefits for emigrant Spanish grape-pickers

More than 15 000 Spanish casual workers are currently employed as grape-pickers in France. As far as their rights are concerned, it has been stated that for the present harvesting season of 2002 ‘grape-pickers shall be exempted from the obligation to pay sickness insurance and pension contributions under the French social security system’. In addition, the information booklet distributed by the Spanish Ministry of Employment to the grape-pickers states clearly that ‘at the end of the contract, workers should ask their employer to give them their pay receipts, which should include specification of the social security payments made on their behalf’. In the present circumstances, it is difficult to see how this obligation could be met.

Can the Commission confirm that for the harvesting season of 2002 grape-pickers will be exempted from the obligation to pay sickness insurance and pension contributions under the French social security system, and will thus not be entitled to the corresponding social and employment benefits? Does the Commission not consider that this situation points up the ineffectiveness of the EU rules on social security and the failure to respect the international principles governing welfare? Is this not a case of discrimination against workers from another Member State? Can the Commission provide an estimate of the total sum of lost benefits for these workers?

Answer given by Mrs Diamantopoulou on behalf of the Commission
(16 October 2002)

Community law, as laid down in Council Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 of 14 June 1971 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons, self-employed persons and their families moving within the Community and in Council Regulation (EEC) No 574/72 of 21 March 1972 fixing the procedure for its implementation (1), provides only for coordination of Member States’ social security systems with a view to providing social protection to persons moving within the Union. Seasonal workers, as defined in Article 1(c) of Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71, enjoy the same rights and obligations as any other category of workers. This is clear from Article 2 (persons covered), Article 3 (principle of equal treatment for Member State and Community nationals) and Article 13(2)(a) (applicable legislation) of the Regulation.

As far as the specific benefits referred to in the Honourable Member’s question are concerned, it should be pointed out that, in the case of sickness benefits, Article 18(2) of Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 states clearly that the provisions governing the aggregation of insurance periods, periods of employment and periods of residence apply also to this type of workers, provided only that the worker concerned has not ceased to be insured for period exceeding four months. To this end, the seasonal worker must present to the institution in the place of residence a certified statement issued by the competent institution and valid for the same duration as the seasonal work (2).