Den Europæiske Unions
Tidende

C 273

Dansk udgave

Meddelelser og oplysninger

57. årgang

20. august 2014

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Europa-Parlamentet

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DA

Meddelelse til læseren

Denne publikation indeholder forespørgsler til skriftlig besvarelse fra medlemmer af Europa-Parlamentet og svarene fra en EU-institution.

Den oprindelige sprogudgave af forespørgslen og svaret er anført før en eventuel oversættelse.

Det er muligt, at svaret i visse tilfælde er givet på et andet sprog end forespørgslen. Det afhænger af arbejdssproget i det udvalg, der er blevet anmodet om et svar.

Forespørgsler og svar offentliggøres i overensstemmelse med artiklerne 117 og 118 i Europa-Parlamentets forretningsorden.

Der er adgang til alle forespørgsler og svar gennem Europa-Parlamentets websted (Europarl) under overskriften parlamentariske spørgsmål og forespørgsler:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/da/parliamentary-questions.html

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S&D	Gruppen for Det Progressive Forbund af Socialdemokrater i Europa-Parlamentet
ALDE	Gruppen Alliancen af Liberale og Demokrater for Europa
Verts/ALE	Gruppen De Grønne/Den Europæiske Fri Alliance
ECR	De Europæiske Konservative og Reformister
GUE/NGL	Den Europæiske Venstrefløjs Fællesgruppe/Nordisk Grønne Venstre
EFD	Gruppen for Europæisk Frihed og Demokrati
NI	Løsgængere

IV

(Oplysninger)

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EUROPA-PARLAMENTET

FORESPØRGSLER TIL SKRIFTLIG BESVARELSE

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(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009459/13
an die Kommission
Jorgo Chatzimarkakis (ALDE)
(5. August 2013)

Betrifft: Entlassung von Lehrern in Griechenland

Am Mittwoch, den 31. Juli veröffentlichte das griechische Bildungsministerium die Liste mit den Namen von 2 122 Lehrern von Berufsfachschulen, die auf Forderung der Troika hin entlassen werden sollen.

Das Bildungsministerium hat praktisch die Hälfte aller Fachausbildungszweige in der Sekundarstufe in Griechenland abgeschafft und sich dabei unter anderem auf die Studie berufen, in der alle Fachausbildungssysteme in Europa verglichen werden.

Unter den entlassenen Lehrkräften befinden sich Lehrer, die nach schriftlichen Prüfungen vom Obersten Rat für Personalauswahl (ASEP) eingestellt worden waren und nicht nur Top-Qualifikationen sondern auch Berufserfahrung besitzen und bereits anerkanntermaßen einen Beitrag zum griechischen Bildungswesen geleistet haben.

Ein anschauliches Beispiel für die Absurdität dieser Entscheidung, die Forderungen der Troika zu erfüllen, besteht wohl darin, dass auch eine Lehrerin für das Fach Grafik und Design betroffen ist, die zusammen mit anderen Lehren eine Auszeichnung für hervorragende Leistungen für Innovation vom griechischen Bildungsministerium erhalten hat, nachdem sie sie einen dreidimensionalen pop-up-Leitfaden entworfen hat, der eine innovative Anwendung für Menschen mit besonderen Bedürfnissen enthält. Außerdem hat sie an einer Reihe europäischer Programme für Zusammenarbeit und Schüleraustausch, wie „Leonardo“ und „Comenius“ mitgearbeitet.

In Anbetracht dessen wird die Kommission um Beantwortung folgender Fragen ersucht:

— Da es hier um das Leben von Menschen und Familien geht, die in den Ruin getrieben werden, möge die Kommission bitte mitteilen, welche Schritte sie unternommen hat, um diesen Menschen ihren Arbeitsplatz zurück zu geben? Wozu dient eine solche Umstrukturierung des öffentlichen Dienstes, wenn sie zur Marginalisierung und Abwanderung der geistigen Elite des Landes führt?

— Ist der Kommission und dem zuständigen Direktorat die besagte vergleichende Studie über die Fachausbildungssysteme in Europa bekannt? Liegt eine Stellungnahme zur bestmöglichen Strategie für eine Anpassung an die europäischen Standards vor? Werden darin soziale, wirtschaftliche und den Bildungssektor betreffende Konsequenzen aufgezeigt?

— Welche Strategie verbirgt sich hinter der Finanzierung von Innovationsprojekten im europäischen Bildungswesen, wenn dabei ausgerechnet die Initiatoren von Neuerungen, die offiziell für ihre Errungenschaften ausgezeichnet wurden, im Rahmen solch kurzsichtiger Maßnahmen arbeitslos gemacht werden?

Antwort von Herrn Rehn im Namen der Kommission
(23. Oktober 2013)

Die Europäische Kommission teilt voll und ganz die Auffassung des Herrn Abgeordneten, dass eine hohe Bildungsqualität für die Zukunft Griechenlands von entscheidender Bedeutung ist. Die griechischen Behörden unternehmen Anstrengungen, um das griechische Bildungs- und Ausbildungssystem, das hinsichtlich Qualität, Effektivität und Effizienz vor großen Herausforderungen steht, zu reformieren und zu verbessern. Neben der Modernisierung und qualitativen Verbesserung des Bildungswesens geht es dabei um die Überwindung der beträchtlichen Ineffizienzen in der öffentlichen Verwaltung, auch im Bildungssektor. Die Reform der öffentlichen Verwaltung ist wesentlicher Bestandteil des Anpassungsprozesses, den Griechenland in Gang gesetzt hat, um auf einen Pfad nachhaltigen Wachstums zurückzukehren und wieder Arbeitsplätze zu schaffen.

Im Rahmen der Reform der öffentlichen Verwaltung nehmen einige Berufsschullehrer am Mobilitätsprogramm teil. Das bedeutet jedoch keineswegs, dass die betreffenden Lehrer entlassen werden.

Die am Mobilitätsprogramm teilnehmenden Bediensteten werden anhand zentral festlegter Bewertungskriterien beurteilt und anschließend in neue Stellen vermittelt. Nur wenn eine Neuzuweisung nicht möglich ist, werden die Betreffenden aus dem öffentlichen Dienst ausscheiden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009459/13
to the Commission
Jorgo Chatzimarkakis (ALDE)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Dismissal of teachers in Greece

On Wednesday, 31 July, the Greek Ministry of Education published a list of 2 122 names of technical education teachers who are to be made redundant at the demand of the Troika.

The Ministry of Education has abolished about half the technical studies specialities in secondary education in the country, citing, *inter alia*, a comparative study of European technical education systems.

Some of the teachers being made redundant were recruited through written examinations of the Supreme Personnel Selection Council and have top qualifications and teaching experience and have made a recognised contribution to education.

The absurdity of the decision to implement the Troika's demands can best be grasped by considering the case of a graphics teacher: together with other teachers, she received an Excellence in Innovation award from the Greek Ministry of Education for creating a three-dimensional pop-up book featuring an innovative application of computers which was adapted for use by people with special needs. She had also taken part in a number of European cooperation programmes, such as the 'Leonardo' and 'Comenius' programmes, and exchanges, particularly with schools in Germany.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— Given that these are real human beings and families that are being destroyed, what steps has it taken to enable those involved to get their jobs back? What is the point of restructuring the public sector if this leads to the marginalisation or emigration of Greece's scientific potential?

— Have the Commission and the relevant Directorate been notified of the comparative study of European technical education systems? Has any opinion been drawn up about the best way to adjust to European standards? Is it taking account of the social, economic and educational consequences?

— What is the rationale behind funding innovation projects in European education, given that the creators of innovative actions who have been awarded prizes for their work are being made redundant as a result of short-sighted decision-making?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(23 October 2013)

The European Commission fully agrees with the Honourable Member that high quality education is key for the future of Greece. The Greek authorities are making efforts to reform and improve the country's education and training system which faces important challenges in terms of quality, effectiveness and efficiency. This involves measures to modernise and upgrade the quality of education, but also tackling the extensive inefficiencies in the functioning of the public administration, including the education system. The public administration reform is an essential part of the adjustment Greece is undertaking to return to sustainable growth and employment creation.

In the context of the public administration reform, a number of vocational education teachers have been placed in the mobility scheme. This does not imply, however, that these teachers are dismissed.

Employees placed in the mobility scheme will be assessed within a centrally-defined evaluation framework and subsequently reallocated to new positions. Only those employees who fail to be reallocated will exit the public sector.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011497/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Destruição do arsenal químico sírio: ponto da situação

Notícias recentes dão conta de que teve início, na Síria, a destruição do arsenal químico na posse das forças leais ao governo de Assad.

Assim, pergunto à Alta Representante:

— A UE acompanha de alguma forma este processo?

— Que avaliação faz do mesmo?

— Tem conhecimento de algum calendário para a sua conclusão?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(26 de fevereiro de 2014)

A UE tem vindo a apoiar o esforço internacional para destruir o arsenal de armas químicas da Síria, tanto do ponto de vista político como financeiro. A UE não só facultou mapas pormenorizados e veículos blindados para a missão conjunta ONU/OPAQ na Síria, como também disponibilizou verbas para o fundo OPAQ-ONU. A Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente e os seus serviços estão a acompanhar de perto o processo, mantendo contactos regulares com a OPAQ e com as Nações Unidas, bem como com os parceiros internacionais.

Aquando da adoção da resolução do Conselho de Segurança da ONU sobre a destruição do arsenal de armas químicas da Síria, a Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente declarou que essa resolução «representa um passo decisivo para uma resposta conjunta e duradoura da comunidade internacional à crise na Síria». Simultaneamente, deixou bem claro que «não podemos perder de vista o objetivo principal, ou seja, pôr termo à violência e avançar para uma transição pacífica e democrática na Síria».

Assim, a UE tomou conhecimento do relatório de dezembro de 2013 da missão da ONU/OPAQ, que indicava terem sido realizados constantes progressos para eliminar o programa de armas químicas da República Árabe Síria e que a missão continuava a verificar o processo, acelerando simultaneamente a planificação e preparação da remoção de agentes químicos do território da Síria.

O prazo final para a destruição do arsenal de armas químicas da Síria, fixado na Resolução do Conselho de Segurança da ONU para o final do primeiro semestre de 2014, deve ser cumprido. O calendário das etapas intermédias foi interrompido e tornou-se evidente que o transporte marítimo das armas químicas do porto de Latakia para o navio americano «Cap Ray» não ficaria concluído no início de 2014. A UE congratula-se com o início da transferência de produtos químicos da Síria para destruição fora do país. Este facto representa um passo importante, mas muito há ainda a fazer, nomeadamente a destruição real dos produtos químicos. A UE transmitiu às autoridades sírias a mensagem clara de que a Resolução 2118 do CSNU e o respetivo calendário devem ser inteiramente respeitados e que não serão aceites atrasos injustificados.

Os Estados-Membros da UE consideram que, em última análise, cabe à República Árabe da Síria garantir a eliminação e a destruição do seu programa de armas químicas em tempo oportuno e de forma segura.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011497/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Destruction of Syria's chemical arsenal: current situation

According to recent news reports, the process of destroying the chemical arsenal held by forces loyal to the Assad Government has begun in Syria.

— Is the EU monitoring this process in any way?

— What is its assessment of it?

— Is the High Representative aware of any schedule for its completion?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(26 February 2014)

The EU has been supporting the international effort to destroy Syria's chemical weapons politically as well as financially. Not only did the EU provide detailed maps and armoured vehicles to the joint UN/OPCW mission in Syria, but it also made available funds for the OPWC-UN funds. The High Representative/Vice-President and her services are following the process closely, staying in regular contact with both OPCW and United Nations, as well as with international partners.

Upon the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution concerning Syria's chemical weapons, the High Representative/Vice-President stated that 'it represents a major step towards a sustainable and unified international response to the crisis in Syria'. At the same time, she made clear that 'we must not lose sight of the most important goal: ending the violence and heading towards a peaceful and democratic transition in Syria.'

The EU noted the December 2013 report of the UN/OPCW mission stating that sustained progress had been realised in eliminating the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic and that the mission continued to verify the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, while accelerating the planning and preparations for the removal of the chemical agents from the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The overall target date for the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons was set by the UNSC Resolution for the end of the first semester of 2014 and should not be missed. The schedule of intermediate steps has been broken and it became clear that the transportation of the chemical weapons from the port of Latakia into the American ship Cap Ray by sea would not be concluded by early 2014. The EU welcomes the start of the transfer of chemicals from Syria for their destruction outside the country. This development marks an important step, but much remains to be done, including the actual destruction of the chemicals. The EU has conveyed a clear message to the Syrian authorities that they must fully comply with UNSC resolution 2118, including its timeframe, refusing unjustified delays.

The EU Member States consider that it is ultimately the responsibility of the Syrian Arab Republic to ensure the removal and destruction of its chemical weapons program in a timely and safe manner.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011905/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(17 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Tutela dei diritti delle donne nei paesi colpiti da conflitti: il caso della Siria

Alcune testate giornalistiche hanno riportato la testimonianza di una giovane tunisina di 21 anni che sarebbe stata convinta dal marito a lasciare i corsi alla facoltà di storia di Manouba per trasferirsi in Siria e prostituirsi in modo lecito allo scopo di «soddisfare le pulsioni sessuali dei combattenti jihadisti».

Affinché questa pratica risultasse lecita dal punto di vista islamico, la ragazza avrebbe sposato e divorziato da 152 uomini diversi in un anno.

Da quanto riportato, il partito salafita tunisino recluterebbe giovani donne che si prostituirebbero in modo lecito per dare la forza ai jihadisti di vincere il nemico.

Considerando che queste pratiche sono profondamente lesive della dignità umana, oltre che della salute, con il concreto rischio, per queste donne, di contrarre malattie per le scarse condizioni igieniche; e che le giovani coinvolte sarebbero obbligate alla prostituzione, plagiate con motivazioni di carattere religioso, può l'Alto Rappresentante rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

— È al corrente della situazione sopra descritta?

— Ritiene possibile l'adozione di ulteriori misure finalizzate al rispetto dei diritti minimi di dignità delle donne nei paesi colpiti da conflitti?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(4 marzo 2014)

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente è seriamente preoccupata per gli abusi ai danni delle donne nei paesi interessati da conflitti, in particolare in Siria, e ha ripetutamente condannato le diffuse e continue violazioni dei diritti umani in questo paese, compresa l'escalation di violenze etniche e religiose. L'AR/VP dà particolare risalto alla delicata situazione delle donne e dei bambini.

L'UE è il principale donatore di assistenza umanitaria e dello sviluppo nella crisi siriana, con finanziamenti per oltre 2,2 miliardi di EUR, tra cui gli aiuti umanitari degli Stati membri. Grazie ai fondi stanziati dalla Commissione, varie organizzazioni non governative internazionali e partner delle Nazioni Unite ricevono finanziamenti per programmi destinati specificamente alle donne sia in Siria sia nei paesi vicini che accolgono un gran numero di rifugiati. Tali programmi comprendono attività intese a garantire il rispetto dei diritti delle donne alla dignità, concentrandosi ad esempio sulla prevenzione e sulla risposta alla violenza di genere (compresa la violenza sessuale), sulla riduzione dei rischi derivanti dalla mancanza di protezione delle donne e ragazze siriane in situazioni di vulnerabilità, sul sostegno economico alle famiglie monoparentali guidate da una donna e sui regimi di sostegno finanziario specifici volti ad evitare l'abbandono scolastico da parte delle ragazze.

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente continuerà a considerare il destino delle donne nel conflitto siriano una questione di primaria importanza e ad utilizzare tutti i mezzi dell'UE per alleviare le loro sofferenze e migliorare le loro condizioni.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011905/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(17 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Safeguarding women's rights in conflict-stricken countries: the case of Syria

According to newspaper headlines, a young Tunisian woman, aged 21, has been convinced by her husband to abandon her studies at the faculty of history in Manouba, in order to move to Syria and prostitute herself legally to satisfy the sexual desires of the Jihadist fighters.

In order for this practice to be legal from an Islamic point of view, the young woman has married and divorced 152 different men in one year.

According to the reports, the Tunisian Salafist party is recruiting young women to act as legal prostitutes in order to give the Jihadists strength to conquer their enemies.

These practices are incredibly damaging to human dignity, as well as to health, and these women are at genuine risk of contracting diseases because of poor hygiene conditions. The young women involved are forced into prostitution, manipulated on religious grounds.

— Is the High Representative aware of the situation described above?

— Does she believe it is possible to adopt further financial measures aimed at ensuring the basic respect of women's rights to dignity in conflict-stricken countries?

Answer given by High-Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2014)

The HR/VP is deeply concerned about the abuse of women in conflict-stricken countries and in particular in Syria. She has repeteadly condemned the continuing widespread violations of human rights in Syria, including the rise of religiously or ethnically motivated violence. She has also particulary highlighted the delicate situation of women and children.

The EU is the biggest donor to the Syrian crisis in humanitarian and development assistance with an amount of over EUR 2.2 billion which includes the contributions from Member States on humanitarian assistance. Through the Commission's allocation, several International Non-Governmental organisations and UN-partners are funded for programmes especially focusing on women, both inside Syria and in the neighbouring countries hosting large numbers of refugees. Such programmes includes activities related to ensuring respect of women's rights to dignity by focusing e.g. on prevention and response to gender-based violence (including sexual violence), on reducing the protection risks faced by vulnerable Syrian women and girls, on economic support to women-headed households and on specific financial support schemes to avoid girls drop-out of school.

The HR/VP will continue to attach a particular importance to the fate of women in the Syrian conflict and use all EU means to alleviate their suffering and improve their conditions.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-012316/13
aan de Raad
Mark Demesmaeker (Verts/ALE)
(29 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Taalpolitiek Raad

Als Europarlementslid ben ik een veelvuldig gebruiker van het webportaal van de Raad. Ik merk daarbij dat er een feitelijk onjuiste taalpolitiek wordt gehanteerd, in het bijzonder aangaande de contactgegevens waarop de Raad te bereiken is.

Zo wordt op het webportaal van de Raad, die in de verschillende talen van de EU verschijnt, het eentalige Franstalige adres gebruikt voor het fysieke (post)adres van de Raad. Enkel de Nederlandstalige versie gebruikt het adres „Wetstraat" i.p.v. „Rue de la Loi", zie http://www.consilium.europa.eu/contacts?lang=nl (maar in de bijgevoegde plattegrond van Brussel staan de EU instellingen dan weer enkel met het Franstalige adres aangegeven, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/Plan_du_quartier_eur.pdf, net zoals overigens in alle anderstalige versies van de Raadswebsite).

Ik zou er bij de Raad voor willen pleiten om tweetalige (NL en FR) adressen te gebruiken. Zo hoort het ook: adressen maken deel uit van de officiële nomenclatuur van Brussel dat tot nader bericht een officieel tweetalige regio is. De Raad zou door deze praktijk elementair respect betonen voor de regio, inclusief haar Vlaamse inwoners, en voor het land waar hij te gast is.

Kan de Raad mij zeggen of deze taalpolitiek een bewust beleid is?

Erkent de Raad dat dit feitelijk incorrect taalbeleid een gevoel van disrespect kan oproepen bij Vlaamse inwoners van Brussel?

Erkent de Raad dat dit in de rest van Europa/wereld verkeerdelijk de indruk wekt dat Brussel een eentalig Franstalige stad is?

Kan de Raad mij verzekeren dat de nodige aanpassingen zullen worden doorgevoerd, nl. dat alle onderdelen van het webportaal, en bij uitbreiding ook de overige communicatie (briefhoofden, naamkaartjes, uitnodigingen voor evenementen, enz.), in de beschreven zin kunnen worden aangepast/in de toekomst aangemaakt en dat contactgegevens in de twee officiële talen van Brussel zullen worden aangegeven? Zo nee, waarom niet?

Kan de Raad mij verzekeren dat er een interne richtlijn zal worden uitgevaardigd die dit zal opleggen?

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-012317/13
aan de Raad
Mark Demesmaeker (Verts/ALE)
(29 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Taalpolitiek Europese Raad

Als Europarlementslid ben ik een veelvuldig gebruiker van het webportaal van de Europese Raad. Ik merk daarbij dat er een feitelijk onjuiste taalpolitiek wordt gehanteerd, in het bijzonder aangaande de contactgegevens waarop de Europese Raad te bereiken is.

Zo wordt op het webportaal van de Europese Raad, die in de verschillende talen van de EU verschijnt, het eentalige Franstalige adres gebruikt voor het fysieke (post)adres van de Europese Raad („Rue de la Loi 175" i.p.v. „Wetstraat 175"), en dat zelfs in de Nederlandstalige versie, hoewel er een perfect alternatief bestaat („Wetstraat 175"), aangezien Brussel een Nederlandstalige stad is, zie http://www.european-council.europa.eu/contacts?lang=nl

Terloops, op de website van de voorzitter van de Europese Raad zelf klopt alles dan weer wel, http://www.european-council.europa.eu/the-president?lang=nl, dus men weet blijkbaar wel hoe het kan/moet.

Ik zou er voor willen pleiten om tweetalige (NL en FR) adressen te gebruiken. Zo hoort het ook: adressen maken deel uit van de officiële nomenclatuur van Brussel dat tot nader bericht een officieel tweetalige regio is. De Raad zou door deze praktijk elementair respect betonen voor de regio, inclusief haar Vlaamse inwoners, en voor het land waar hij te gast is.

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Erkent de Raad dat dit in de rest van Europa/wereld verkeerdelijk de indruk wekt dat Brussel een eentalig Franstalige stad is?

Kan de Raad mij verzekeren dat de nodige aanpassingen zullen worden doorgevoerd, nl. dat alle onderdelen van het webportaal, alsook de overige communicatie (briefhoofden, naamkaartjes, uitnodigingen voor evenementen, enz.) in de beschreven zin worden aangepast en dat de contactgegevens in de twee officiële talen van Brussel zullen worden aangegeven? Zo nee, waarom niet?

Gecombineerd antwoord

(24 februari 2014)

Wat de postadressen betreft, is de handelwijze van het secretariaat-generaal van de Raad om de lokale officiële talen te gebruiken.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012316/13
to the Council
Mark Demesmaeker (Verts/ALE)
(29 October 2013)

Subject: The Council's language policy

As a Member of the European Parliament, I often use the Council's website. In doing so, I observe that in practice an erroneous language policy is applied, particularly with regard to the details provided on how to contact the Council.

For example, on the Council's website, which is displayed in the various EU languages, the postal address given for the Council is monolingual, in French. Only the Dutch version of the website refers to the street as 'Wetstraat', rather than 'Rue de la Loi' — cf. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/contacts?lang=nl (while in the attached map of Brussels, the addresses of the EU institutions are given only in French — http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/Plan_du_quartier_eur.pdf — as indeed in all the other language versions of the Council's website).

I would urge the Council to use bilingual addresses (NL and FR). That is the correct approach: addresses form part of the official nomenclature of Brussels, which until further notice is an officially bilingual region. By adopting such an approach, the Council would display elementary respect for the region, including its Flemish residents, and for the country that hosts it.

Can the Council tell me whether this language policy has been adopted deliberately?

Does the Council acknowledge that this de facto incorrect language policy could evoke a sense of disrespect on the part of Flemish residents of Brussels?

Does the Council acknowledge that, in the rest of Europe/the world, this gives the false impression that Brussels is a monolingual French-speaking city?

Can the Council give me an assurance that the necessary changes will be made, i.e. that all sections of the website, and indeed all other communications (letterheads, name cards, invitations to events, etc.), can be altered as proposed / in future be produced in that way, and that contact details will be provided in the two official languages of Brussels? If not, why not?

Can the Council give me an assurance that internal guidelines will be issued to impose this?

Question for written answer E-012317/13
to the Council
Mark Demesmaeker (Verts/ALE)
(29 October 2013)

Subject: The European Council's language policy

As a Member of the European Parliament, I often use the European Council's website. In doing so, I observe that in practice an erroneous language policy is applied, particularly with regard to the details provided on how to contact the European Council.

For example, on the European Council's website, which is displayed in the various EU languages, the postal address given for the European Council is monolingual, in French ('Rue de la Loi 175' rather than 'Wetstraat 175'), and this even applies to the Dutch version of the website, even though a perfectly good alternative exists ('Wetstraat 175'), as Brussels is a Dutch-speaking city — cf. http://www.european-council.europa.eu/contacts?lang=nl.

It may be noted in passing that the website of the President of the European Council himself adopts the correct approach to this — http://www.european-council.europa.eu/the-president?lang=nl — so evidently the European Council does in fact know how things can and should be done.

I would urge the European Council to use bilingual addresses (NL and FR). That is the correct approach: addresses form part of the official nomenclature of Brussels, which until further notice is an officially bilingual region. By adopting such an approach, the Council would display elementary respect for the region, including its Flemish residents, and for the country that hosts it.

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Joint reply

(24 February 2014)

With regard to postal addresses, the practice of the General Secretariat of the Council is to use the local official languages.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-012443/13
προς την Επιτροπή (Αντιπρόεδρος/Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος)
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: VP/HR — Θρησκευτικές μειονότητες

Είναι ευρέως γνωστό ότι η ΕΕ δεν προστατεύει αρκετά ενεργά τις θρησκευτικές μειονότητες, περιλαμβανομένων των χριστιανών στην περιοχή της Ανατολικής Μεσογείου, λαμβάνοντας υπόψη την κατάσταση στο κατεχόμενο από την Τουρκία τμήμα της Κύπρου, τα διαρκή δεινά που υφίστανται οι χριστιανοί και άλλες μειονότητες στη Συρία, τα προβλήματα που αντιμετωπίζουν οι χριστιανοί στην Αίγυπτο, τις διώξεις και δολοφονίες χριστιανών στο Ιράκ, το Πακιστάν κ.λπ.

Ερωτάται, επομένως, η Ύπατη εκπρόσωπος της ΕΕ για θέματα εξωτερικής πολιτικής Katherine Ashton:

1. Τι είδους δράσεις έχει αναλάβει η ΕΕ για να προστατεύσει τους χριστιανούς στις περιοχές αυτές;

2. Είναι η Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος πρόθυμη να ενεργήσει πιο αποτελεσματικά για την αντιμετώπιση των δεινών τους στο πλαίσιο μιας αναθεωρημένης πολιτικής γειτονίας της ΕΕ για την Ανατολική Μεσόγειο;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(6 Μαρτίου 2014)

Στα συμπεράσματα του Συμβουλίου του 2009 και του 2011, η ΕΕ τόνισε τη δέσμευσή της για την προώθηση και προστασία της ελευθερίας θρησκείας και πεποιθήσεων (FoRB) και εκφράζει την ανησυχία της σχετικά με τις πράξεις θρησκευτικής μισαλλοδοξίας και βίας, ιδίως εναντίον Χριστιανών και των τόπων λατρείας τους. Με την έγκριση των κατευθυντήριων γραμμών σχετικά με την προώθηση και προστασία της ελευθερίας θρησκείας και πεποιθήσεων του 2013 — που έγινε ευρέως δεκτή από θρησκευτικές και μη θρησκευτικές ομάδες — η ΕΕ πρόβαλε τη προώθηση και προστασία της ελευθερίας θρησκείας και πεποιθήσεων ως προτεραιότητα της εξωτερικής της πολιτικής στον τομέα των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων.

Χρησιμοποιώντας όλο το φάσμα των διπλωματικών μέσων στους αναφερόμενους τομείς, η ΕΕ υποστήριξε το δικαίωμα όλων των προσώπων στην ελευθερία θρησκείας ή πεποιθήσεων, μεμονωμένα ή από κοινού με άλλους, χωρίς φόβους μισαλλοδοξίας και επιθέσεων, και υπενθύμισε στα κράτη το πρωταρχικό τους καθήκον να προστατεύουν όλα τα πρόσωπα από διακριτική μεταχείριση ή χρήση βίας.

Το 2013, η Επιτροπή προκήρυξε διαγωνισμό στο πλαίσιο της Ευρωπαϊκής Πρωτοβουλίας για τη Δημοκρατία και τα δικαιώματα του ανθρώπου (EIDHR), με συνολικό ποσό 5 εκατ. ευρώ, εστιάζοντας στην καταπολέμηση των διακρίσεων για λόγους θρησκείας ή πεποιθήσεων. Μπορούσαν να υποβάλλουν προτάσεις υπερασπιστές των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων και οργανώσεις, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των κοινοτήτων θρησκευτικών ή άλλων πεποιθήσεων. Η υλοποίηση του προγράμματος θα αρχίσει το 2014.

Στο βόρειο τμήμα της Κύπρου, η Επιτροπή δεν διαθέτει νομικό μέσο για την επιβολή της νομοθεσίας της ΕΕ, εφόσον έχει ανασταλεί η εφαρμογή του κεκτημένου, εν αναμονή διευθέτησης και επανένωσης. Η Επιτροπή εξακολουθεί να παρακολουθεί τα συναφή ζητήματα και τα θέτει τακτικά στην τουρκοκυπριακή κοινότητα, σημειώνοντας με ενδιαφέρον τα πρόσφατα βήματα που έγιναν από τις δύο κοινότητες για τη διευκόλυνση της άσκησης των θρησκευτικών τους καθηκόντων.

Η ευρωπαϊκή πολιτική γειτονίας, η οποία αναθεωρήθηκε τον Μάιο 2011, εξακολουθεί να αποτελεί κατάλληλο μέσο δέσμευσης της ΕΕ, δεδομένου ότι επικεντρώνεται στις ενισχυμένες υποχρεώσεις για τα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα, ιδίως όσον αφορά την καταπολέμηση των διακρίσεων και την προώθηση και προστασία της ελευθερίας θρησκείας και πεποιθήσεων.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012443/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 November 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Religious minorities

It is widely believed that the EU has not been active enough in protecting religious minorities, including Christians, in the Eastern Mediterranean region, especially in view of what is happening in the Turkish occupied part of Cyprus, the continuous suffering of Christians and other minorities in Syria, the problems Christians face in Egypt, and the persecution and killing of Christians in Iraq, Pakistan, etc.

1. What action has the EU taken to protect Christians in these areas?

2. Is the High Representative ready to act more effectively in addressing their suffering by means of a reformulated EU policy towards the Eastern Mediterranean neighbourhood?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2014)

In 2009 and 2011 Council Conclusions, the EU emphasised its commitment to the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) and expressed its concern about acts of religious intolerance and violence, notably against Christians and their places of worship. With the adoption of guidelines on FoRB in 2013 — widely welcomed by religious and non-religious groups alike — the EU highlighted FoRB as a priority in its external human rights policy.

Using the full range of its diplomatic tools in the areas referred to, the EU has been advocating the right of all persons to practice their religion or belief freely, individually or in community with others, without fear of intolerance and attacks, and reminded States of their primary duty to protect everyone from discrimination or violence.

In 2013, the Commission launched a call for proposal under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human rights (EIDHR) with a lot of 5 M EUR focusing on combatting discrimination on religious or belief grounds. Human rights defenders and organisations, including religious or belief communities, could apply. The implementation will start in 2014.

In the northern part of Cyprus, the Commission does not have any legal instrument to enforce EC law as long as the *acquis* is suspended, pending a settlement and reunification. The Commission continues to monitor related matters and regularly raises them with the Turkish Cypriot community, noting with interest recent steps by both communities to facilitate religious worship.

The European Neighbourhood Policy, reviewed in May 2011, remains an adequate vehicle of EU engagement as it focuses on reinforced commitments on human rights, notably on fighting discrimination and on promoting FoRB.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-012552/13
till kommissionen
Åsa Westlund (S&D)
(6 november 2013)

Angående: PFOA i bröstmjölk

Det perfluorerande ämnet PFOA förekommer ofta i människors vardagsmiljö. PFOA används vanligtvis för att skapa vatten-, smuts- och fettavvisande ytor. Produkter såsom impregnerade textilier och papper, samt rengöringsmedel och brandsläckningsskum kan innehålla PFOA. Vetenskapliga studier visar att detta ämne är cancerframkallande och sannolikt reproduktionsstörande.

Nya undersökningar vid Örebro Universitet visade att PFOA koncentreras hos spädbarn . Höga halter av ämnet har uppmätts i bröstmjölk. 20 gånger högre halter uppmättes i barnens blodomlopp än hos deras mödrar!

1. Vilka åtgärder kommer kommissionen att vidta med anledning av de här skrämmande resultaten?

2. Hur planerar kommissionen att agera för att minska användningen av PFOA?

Svar från Antonio Tajani på kommissionens vägnar
(7 februari 2014)

I direktiv 2006/122/EG ([1]) infördes begränsningar av användning och utsläppande på marknaden av perfluoroktansulfonat (PFOS) i EU. Enligt begränsningen ska kommissionen följa den pågående riskbedömningen av perfluoroktansyra (PFOA) och tillgången till säkrare alternativ.

Kommissionen beställde därför en extern studie för att bedöma eventuella begränsningar av användning och utsläppande på marknaden av PFOA ([2]). I maj 2010 anordnade kommissionen en workshop där man presenterade resultaten av studien. Slutsatsen ([3]) blev att det behövs fortsatta diskussioner om regler enligt Reach-förordningen ([4]).

Om det finns en oacceptabel hälso- eller miljörisk i samband med tillverkning, användning och utsläppande på marknaden av ämnen och denna risk kräver åtgärder på EU-nivå, ska man införa nya begränsningar ([5]). En sådan process kan inledas av kommissionen eller ett medlemsland som ska underrätta Europeiska kemikaliemyndigheten (Echa) om sin avsikt att utarbeta ett förslag om begränsning. Avsikten publiceras också i Echas "avsiktsregister" ([6]).

PFOA har också klassificerats som reproduktionstoxiskt i kategori 1B i bilaga VI till CLP-förordningen ([7]) med verkan från och med den 1 januari 2015. På grundval av denna klassificering kommer kommissionen snart att anta ett förbud mot försäljning till allmänheten av PFOA som ämne eller i blandningar, i enlighet med artikel 68.2 i Reach-förordningen.

Enligt Reachs godkännandeförfarande har PFOA lagts till kandidatförteckningen ([8]) över särskilt farliga ämnen ([9]) på grund av att det klassificerats som reproduktionstoxiskt i kategori 1B och som ett långlivat, bioackumulerande och toxiskt ämne (PBT-ämne). Det betyder att leverantörerna måste informera konsumenterna om hur man använder varor som innehåller särskilt farliga ämnen på ett säkert sätt ([10]).

([1]) Direktivet ändrar för 30:e gången rådets direktiv 76/769/EEG.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/chemicals/files/docs_studies/final_report_pfoa_pfos_en.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/chemicals/files/reach/docs/events/pfoa-main-conclusions_en.pdf
([4]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32006R1907:en:NOT
([5]) Artikel 68.1 i Reach-förordningen.
([6]) http://www.echa.europa.eu/web/guest/addressing-chemicals-of-concern/registry-of-intentions
([7]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:353:0001:1355:sv:PDF
([8]) Artikel 59 i Reach-förordningen.
([9]) Ämnen som inger mycket stora betänkligheter (SVHC).
([10]) Leverantörer av varor i EU eller EES som innehåller ämnen i kandidatförteckningen i en koncentration över 0,1 % (w/w) måste ge tillräcklig information om säker användning av varan till sina kunder, eller på begäran till en konsument inom 45 dagar efter mottagandet av begäran.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012552/13
to the Commission
Åsa Westlund (S&D)
(6 November 2013)

Subject: PFOA in breast milk

The perfluorinated substance perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) occurs frequently in people's day-to-day environment. It is usually used to create water-, dirt- and grease-repellent surfaces. Products such as impregnated textiles and paper, detergents and fire-fighting foams may contain PFOA. Scientific studies show that this substance is carcinogenic and probably toxic to reproduction.

New studies carried out at Örebro University showed that PFOA is concentrated in infants. High levels of the substance were detected in breast milk, and concentrations measured in the children's blood were 20 times higher than in that of their mothers.

1. What measures will the Commission take in the light of these alarming results?

2. What action does it plan to take to reduce the use of PFOA?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(7 February 2014)

Directive 2006/122/EC ([1]) introduced a restriction on the marketing and use of PFOS ([2]) in the EU. According to that restriction, the Commission had to keep under review the on-going risk assessment activities on PFOA ([3]) and the availability of safer alternative substances.

In this context, the Commission mandated an external study to collect information to assess possible restrictions on the marketing and use of PFOA ([4]). In May 2010, the Commission organised a workshop, where the results of this study were presented and it was concluded ([5]) that there was a need for further discussions on regulatory measures under REACH ([6]).

When there is an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment, arising from the manufacture, use or placing on the market of substances, which needs to be addressed on a Union-wide basis, a restriction process should be initiated ([7]). This process can be started either by the Commission or by a Member State and ECHA ([8]) should be notified of the intention to develop a restriction proposal, this intention would also be published in ECHA's 'Registry of Intention (RoI)' ([9]).

Also, PFOA has been classified as toxic to reproduction, Category CB, in Annex VI to the CLP Regulation ([10]) with effect from 1 January 2015. On the basis of this classification, the Commission will soon adopt a ban on the supply to the general public of PFOA as a substance and in mixtures containing PFOA, in accordance with Article 68 (2) of REACH.

Under the authorisation process of REACH, PFOA has been added to the Candidate List ([11]) of SVHC ([12]) based on its classification as toxic for reproduction, Category CB, and as a persistent, bioccumulative and toxic substance (PBT). This triggers the obligation for suppliers to provide information to consumers on safe use of articles containing SVHCs ([13]).

([1]) Amending for the 30th time the Council Directive 76/769/EEC.
([2]) Perfluorooctane sulfonates.
([3]) Perfluorooctanoic acid.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/chemicals/files/docs_studies/final_report_pfoa_pfos_en.pdf
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/chemicals/files/reach/docs/events/pfoa-main-conclusions_en.pdf
([6]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32006R1907:en:NOT
([7]) Pursuant to Article 68(1) of REACH.
([8]) European Chemicals Agency.
([9]) http://www.echa.europa.eu/web/guest/addressing-chemicals-of-concern/registry-of-intentions.
([10]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:353:0001:1355:en:PDF
([11]) Article 59 of REACH.
([12]) Substances of Very High Concern.
([13]) EU or EEA suppliers of articles which contain substances on the Candidate List in a concentration above 0.1% (w/w) have to provide sufficient information to allow safe use of the article to their customers or upon request, to a consumer within 45 days of the receipt of the request.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-012899/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(13 november 2013)

Betreft: Bevoorrechte rijken (vervolg)

Multimiljonairs kunnen binnenkort de instabiliteit in hun land van herkomst vermijden, overal in de EU verblijven, elders in de wereld visumvrij reizen en belastingkorting krijgen door in het buitenland gemaakte winst naar Malta te repatriëren. Dit alles wordt over een aantal maanden mogelijk met het Maltese Individual Investor Programme. In theorie kan een Zuid-Afrikaanse miljonair met deze maatregel voor 650 000 euro een paspoort kopen, misschien zelfs niet permanent in Malta verblijven en belasting van een buitenlandse onderneming naar het eiland repatriëren om een teruggave van 85 % op belaste inkomsten te verkrijgen ([1]).

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van deze maatregel, die deze week door het parlement van Malta is aangenomen?

2. Kan de Commissie een vergelijking trekken tussen de situatie in Portugal zoals omschreven in mijn vorige vraag (nr. E-000462/2013) en de huidige situatie in Malta?

3. Zijn er volgens de Commissie verschillen tussen deze twee maatregelen die rijke burgers uit derde landen in staat stellen toegang tot de EU te kopen? Zo ja, welke?

4. Is de Commissie eveneens van mening dat een dergelijk systeem voornamelijk mensen die iets te verbergen hebben aantrekt, zoals een aantal keer in Europa is gebeurd (bijvoorbeeld de afgezette premier van Thailand Thaksin Shinawatra, die het Montenegrijns staatsburgerschap kocht en gebruikte om zich te beschermen tegen een gevangenisstraf in Bangkok vanwege corruptie)?

5. Getuigt het volgens de Commissie van discriminatie dat het voor gewone mensen erg moeilijk is zich te laten naturaliseren in Malta en dat de naturalisatieprocedure voor hen arbitrair en langzaam verloopt, terwijl voor 650 000 euro al na maximaal vijf maanden een Maltees paspoort wordt verstrekt?

6. Wat is de Commissie van plan te doen om deze tendens bestaande uit het kopen van paspoorten te keren, die paspoorthouders de mogelijkheid biedt zich eenvoudig in elk ander EU-land te vestigen?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(28 februari 2014)

De Commissie verwijst het geachte Parlementslid naar haar antwoord op vraag E-13318/13.

([1]) http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/en/businessdetails/business/businessnews/citizenship-individual-investor-programme-20131016.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012899/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(13 November 2013)

Subject: Privileged rich (follow-up)

Multimillionaires can avoid instability in their home countries, reside anywhere in the EU, benefit from visa-free travel elsewhere, and enjoy tax rebates by repatriating overseas profits to Malta. It will all be possible with the Maltese Individual Investor Programme in a few months time. Theoretically, this measure will allow a South African millionaire to pay EUR 650 000 for a passport, perhaps not even reside permanently in Malta, and repatriate taxes from a foreign company to the island to obtain an 85% refund on taxed income. ([1])

1. Is the Commission aware of this measure, which was adopted by the Maltese Parliament this week?

2. Could the Commission compare the situation in Portugal described in my previous question, No E-000462/2013, with that currently prevailing in Malta?

3. Does the Commission see any differences between these two measures allowing wealthy third-country citizens to buy entry into the EU? If so, could it specify them?

4. Does the Commission agree that such a system mostly attracts people with something to hide, as has happened several times in Europe (for example, the ousted Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who purchased Montenegrin citizenship and used it to protect himself from imprisonment in Bangkok for corruption)?

5. Does the Commission find it discriminatory that naturalisation for ordinary people in Malta is a very difficult, discretionary and long procedure, while obtaining a Maltese passport by paying EUR 650 000 takes a maximum of just five months?

6. What does the Commission intend to do in order to stop this passport-buying trend, which allows the bearers to reside easily in any other EU Member State?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to Parliamentary Question E-13318/13.

([1]) http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/en/businessdetails/business/businessnews/citizenship-individual-investor-programme-20131016

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-012901/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Roberta Metsola (PPE)
(13 ta' Novembru 2013)

Suġġett: Il-bejgħ taċ-ċittadinanza Maltija, u għalhekk ta' dik tal-UE

Fit-12 ta' Novembru 2013, il-Parlament Malti għadda emendi għall-Att dwar iċ-Ċittadinanza Maltija (il-Kap. 188 tal-Liġijiet ta' Malta) biex jippermetti li ċ-ċittadinanza Maltija u tal-UE tinbigħ lil ċittadini ta' pajjiżi terzi. L-ismijiet taċ-ċittadini ta' pajjiżi terzi li jixtru ċ-ċittadinanza se jinżammu sigrieti, u dawn il-persuni ma jkollhom l-ebda obbligu jirrisjedu, iżuru, jaħdmu jew jinvestu f'Malta jew fi kwalunkwe Stat Membru ieħor tal-UE.

Filwaqt li ċ-ċittadinanza tikkunsidraha bħala materja ta' kompetenza nazzjonali, il-Kummissjoni temmen li l-fatt li din il-lista ta' ċittadini ġodda tal-UE se tinżamm sigrieta jaqbel mal-ispirtu tat-Trattat tal-Unjoni Ewropea, u partikolarment tal-Artikolu 10(3) tiegħu li jistabbilixxi li d-deċiżjonijiet "għandhom jittieħdu b'mod kemm jista' jkun miftuħ u qrib iċ-ċittadin"?

Il-Kummmissjoni taf bi kwalunkwe Stat Membru ieħor li jbigħ iċ-ċittadinanza tiegħu bla ebda rekwiżit ta' residenza, investiment fittul, rabtiet mal-Unjoni, jew ħtieġa li dak li jkun jirfes it-territorju tal-UE?

Wara l-approvazzjoni tal-Montenegro bħala pajjiż kandidat għas-sħubija fl-UE, il-Financial Times irrapportat li "Brussell xejret bandiera ħamra daqshiex fuq il-bejgħ tal-passaporti", u żiedet tgħid: Minkejja l-apparenza ġdida imma superfiċjali ta' proċessi regolari, l-awtoritajiet qed jerġgħu joħolqu opportunità oħra għall-korruzzjoni. Uffiċjali tal-UE jwissu li, jekk il-Montenegro jibqa' għaddej bl-iskema tiegħu dwar il-passaporti, iċ-ċittadini tiegħu jistgħu jitilfu d-dritt li jivvjaġġaw bla viżi fiż-żona ta' Schengen". Il-Kummissjoni tista' tikkonferma li ddiskutiet l-iskema tal-Montenegro dwar il-passaporti, u jekk iva, x'irriżulta minn dawk id-diskussjonijiet? Il-Kummissjoni hija fil-qagħda li sserraħ ras il-popolazzjoni ta' Malta li, għal min għandu passaport Malti, din l-iskema mhi se jkollha l-ebda impatt fuq l-ivvjaġġar fi ħdan iż-żona ta' Schengen?

X'inhuma l-implikazzjonijiet ta' din il-liġi Maltija ġdida f'dak li jirrigwarda l-ġlieda tal-UE kontra t-terroriżmu, il-kriminalità serja u organizzata, u l-ġlieda kontra l-ħasil tal-flus fil-livell tal-UE?

Ladarba Malta għaddejja minn Proċedura ta' Żbilanċ Eċċessiv, il-Kummissjoni kif sejra tinvestiga l-implikazzjonijiet baġitarji ta' din l-iskema l-ġdida?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Reding f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(28 ta' Frar 2014)

Il-Kummissjoni tirreferi lill-Onorevoli Membru għat-tweġiba tagħha għall-Mistoqsija parlamentari E-13318/13.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012901/13
to the Commission
Roberta Metsola (PPE)
(13 November 2013)

Subject: Sale of Maltese and therefore EU citizenship

On 12 November 2013, the Maltese Parliament passed amendments to the Maltese Citizenship Act (Chapter 188 of the Laws of Malta) to allow the sale of Maltese and EU citizenship to third-country nationals. The names of the third-country nationals purchasing citizenship will be kept secret and there will be no obligation for them to reside, set foot in, work in or invest in Malta or any other EU Member State.

While understanding that citizenship is considered to be an issue that falls under national competence, does the Commission believe that the fact that this list of new EU citizens will be kept secret is in line with the spirit of the Treaty on European Union, and particularly its Article 10(3) which states that 'decisions shall be taken as openly and as closely as possible to the citizen'?

Is the Commission aware of any other Member State that sells its citizenship without any requirements for residence, long-term investment, ties with the Union, or a need to set foot in EU territory?

Following Montenegro's approval as an EU candidate country, the *Financial Times* reported that 'Brussels has raised a giant red flag over the sale of passports', adding: 'Despite the new veneer of regular processes, the authorities are creating yet another opportunity for graft. EU officials warn that if Montenegro proceeds with its passports scheme, its citizens may lose their right to visa-free travel in the Schengen zone'. Can the Commission confirm that it has discussed Montenegro's passport sale scheme and, if so, what was the outcome of those discussions? Is the Commission in a position to fully reassure the Maltese population that this scheme will not have any impact whatsoever on travel within the Schengen area for Maltese passport holders?

What are the implications of this new Maltese law in terms of the EU's fight against terrorism, serious and organised crime, and money laundering at EU level?

Seeing that Malta has been placed under the excessive deficit procedure, how will the Commission be looking into the budgetary implications of this new scheme?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to Parliamentary Question E-13318/13.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-012952/13
till kommissionen
Åsa Westlund (S&D)
(14 november 2013)

Angående: Flyktingar från Syrien

Flera tusen syrier flyr dagligen från sitt land, och FN:s regionala åtgärdsplan för Syrien förutspår att det kommer att finnas totalt 3,5 miljoner flyktingar från Syrien vid utgången av 2013. Bland de 28 medlemsstaterna har Tyskland och Sverige tagit emot 59 procent av alla asylansökningar. Det råder brist på helt korrekta och tillförlitliga uppgifter om det totala antalet syrier som kommer till Europa och söker asyl här. Enligt FN:s flyktingkommissarie, FN:s flyktingkommissariat, finns det tecken på att skyddet för syrier inom EU är bristfälligt.

Vad gör EU mot denna bakgrund för att se till att syriska flyktingar kan resa in i EU under säkra former och har tillgång till rättvisa asylförfaranden?

Har man undersökt förslaget om att införa flyktingkvoter och, om så är fallet, vad har man kommit fram till? Vad har föreslagits för att uppmuntra samtliga medlemsstater att ta ett större ansvar?

Vilka förslag och lösningar lägger kommissionen fram för att hjälpa medlemsstaterna att hantera denna situation och garantera flyktingarnas säkerhet och mänskliga rättigheter?

Svar från Cecilia Malmström på kommissionens vägnar
(27 januari 2014)

Varken kommissionen eller medlemsstaterna har lagt fram något förslag om införande av kvoter för att fördela ansvaret när det gäller personer, t.ex. syriska medborgare, som spontant anländer till en medlemsstats yttre gränser för att söka skydd där. Sådana personer måste behandlas i enlighet med tillämpliga bestämmelser i EU-lagstiftningen och stadgan om de grundläggande rättigheterna. Enligt Eurostat har hittills under 2013 omkring 43 000 personer som hävdar att de är syriska medborgare sökt asyl i EU.

När det är ett stort tryck på en medlemsstats asylsystem kan kommissionen, i nära samarbete med Europeiska byrån för samarbete i asylfrågor, sända exempelvis asylexpertgrupper som kan bistå de berörda myndigheterna. EU-stödet kan också ha formen av ekonomiskt bistånd. Kommissionen och Europeiska byrån för samarbete i asylfrågor har vidtagit åtgärder för att uppnå större enhetlighet i medlemsstaternas sätt att hantera syriska asylsökande, i synnerhet när det gäller bedömningen av deras skyddsansökningar.

Samtidigt har Förenta nationernas Höge flyktingkommissarie uppmanat det internationella samfundet att erbjuda skydd åt utsatta syriska flyktingar i länder i regionen. Som ett svar på den uppmaningen har flera medlemsstater erbjudit inresetillstånd av humanitära skäl och/eller vidarebosättningsplatser. Kommissionen har också kontinuerligt uppmanat medlemsstaterna att satsa mer på vidarebosättning.

Kommissionen och medlemsstaterna har mobiliserat över 2 miljarder euro i humanitärt bistånd och utvecklingsbistånd som ett direkt svar på krisen. 55,9 % av kommissionens humanitära bistånd går till syriska flyktingar och värdsamhällen i regionen och resten till verksamhet inne i Syrien.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-012952/13
to the Commission
Åsa Westlund (S&D)
(14 November 2013)

Subject: Refugees from Syria

Thousands of Syrians are fleeing their country on a daily basis and the UN Syria Regional Response Plan is predicting a total of 3.5 million refugees from Syria by the end of 2013. Of the 28 Member States, Germany and Sweden have received 59% of the claims lodged. There is a lack of fully accurate and reliable data on the total number of Syrians coming to Europe and seeking asylum here. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN's refugee agency, there are indications of gaps in the protection of Syrians within the EU.

Given this situation, what is the EU doing to ensure that Syrian refugees are able to enter the EU safely and have access to fair asylum procedures?

Has the suggestion of introducing quotas for refugees been elaborated on and, if so, what was the outcome? What has been suggested in order to encourage all Member States to accept more responsibility?

What suggestions and solutions is the Commission putting forward to help Member States deal with this situation and to guarantee safety and human rights to the refugees?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(27 January 2014)

Neither the Commission nor the Member States have suggested introducing quotas for allocation of responsibility for persons, including Syrian nationals, who spontaneously arrive at the external border of a Member State to seek protection there. Such persons must be treated in accordance with the relevant provisions of EC law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. According to Eurostat, some 43.000 persons claiming to be Syrian nationals have requested asylum in the EU so far in 2013.

Where a Member State's asylum system is under pressure, the Commission, in close cooperation with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), can offer assistance in kind, for instance through deployment of asylum support teams in order to assist the relevant authorities. EU support may also take the form of financial assistance. The Commission and EASO have also taken steps to ensure a more convergent approach by Member States to Syrian asylum-seekers, particularly in terms how their protection claims are assessed.

At the same time, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees has called on the international community to offer protection to a number of vulnerable Syrians displaced to countries in the region. In response to this call, several Member States have offered humanitarian admission and/or resettlement places. The Commission has also constantly called for Member States to engage more in resettlement.

The Commission and Member States have mobilised over EUR 2 billion in humanitarian and development assistance in direct response to the crisis. 55.9% of the Commission's humanitarian assistance goes to Syrian refugees and host-communities in the region and the remainder to activities inside Syria.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-013014/13
προς το Συμβούλιο
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(15 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ανάγκη τουρκικής απεμπλοκής από την παράνομη κατοχή της Κύπρου

Η Τουρκία έχει προσαρτήσει παρανόμως το βόρειο τμήμα της Κύπρου τις τελευταίες τέσσερις δεκαετίες. Σήμερα, κατά την πέμπτη δεκαετία της τουρκικής κατοχής, η ΕΕ εξακολουθεί να μην απευθύνει σοβαρές οδηγίες στην Τουρκία για το τι αυτή η τελευταία θα έπρεπε να κάνει σχετικά με τη βόρειο Κύπρο. Η Τουρκία δεν υφίσταται έστω και την παραμικρή διεθνή πίεση για να τερματίσει την εκ μέρους της παράνομη κατοχή. Για κάποιον ανεξήγητο λόγο, η ΕΕ δεν θεωρεί επιβεβλημένο το να απεμπλακεί η Τουρκία από την παράνομη κατοχή εδάφους ενός κράτους μέλους της ΕΕ. Δεν θεωρεί ότι το μέλλον κάποιας περιοχής εξαρτάται από αυτό. Ενώ λοιπόν η ΕΕ εξακολουθεί να πιστεύει ότι μπορεί να υπαγορεύει στο Ισραήλ τι πρέπει αυτό να κάνει σχετικά με τα σύνορά του, κι ότι μπορεί έτσι να έχει έναν εποικοδομητικό ρόλο, ενεργεί πολύ διαφορετικά στην περίπτωση της Τουρκίας, μιας υποψήφιας προς ένταξη χώρας.

Ζητώ συνεπώς από το Συμβούλιο να πει την άποψή του για τα παρακάτω αναπάντητα ερωτήματα που θέτει ο Κυπριακός λαός:

1. Πιστεύει άραγε η ΕΕ ότι:

α) η Τουρκία μοιράζεται κάποια σύνορα με τη νήσο της Κύπρου;

β) η Τουρκία έχει νόμιμες ιστορικές, πολιτικές ή άλλες εδαφικές απαιτήσεις επί του βορείου τμήματος της νήσου;

γ) λόγοι ασφαλείας δικαιολογούν την συνεχιζόμενη εκ μέρους της Τουρκίας κατοχή του 37% του εδάφους ενός κράτους μέλους της ΕΕ;

δ) δύναται να αποφασίσει να επέμβει και να ζητήσει τον τερματισμό της 39χρονης κατοχής εδάφους της νήσου ενεργώντας με τον ίδιο σταθερό τρόπο που ενήργησε πρόσφατα στην περίπτωση του Ισραήλ και της Δυτικής Όχθης;

2. Πώς μπορούν οι Κύπριοι να αποκτήσουν εκ νέου εμπιστοσύνη προς τους θεσμούς της ΕΕ εάν η ΕΕ δεν βοηθάει στην εξεύρεση μιας δίκαιης και βιώσιμης λύσης στο κυπριακό ζήτημα σε πλήρη αρμονία με το ευρωπαϊκό «κοινοτικό κεκτημένο»;

Απάντηση
(3 Μαρτίου 2014)

Το Συμβούλιο υπενθυμίζει ότι η Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία έγινε μέλος της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης την 1η Μαΐου 2004 και υπογραμμίζει ότι μόνο η Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία αναγνωρίζεται ως υποκείμενο του διεθνούς δικαίου. Επιπλέον και σύμφωνα με το πρωτόκολλο αριθ. 10 της Συνθήκης Προσχώρησης του 2003, η εφαρμογή του κεκτημένου αναστέλλεται στις περιοχές της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας στις οποίες η Κυβέρνηση της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας δεν ασκεί ουσιαστικό έλεγχο.

Όπως τονίζεται στα πρόσφατα συμπεράσματα που εξεδόθησαν στις 17 Δεκεμβρίου 2013, το Συμβούλιο αναμένει ότι η Τουρκία θα υποστηρίξει ενεργά τις διεξαγόμενες διαπραγματεύσεις με σκοπό τη δίκαιη, συνολική και βιώσιμη λύση του Κυπριακού στο πλαίσιο του ΟΗΕ, σύμφωνα με τις σχετικές αποφάσεις του Συμβουλίου Ασφαλείας του ΟΗΕ και βάσει των αρχών στις οποίες εδράζεται η Ένωση. Η δέσμευση της Τουρκίας και η συμβολή της με συγκεκριμένες ενέργειες σε αυτή τη συνολική διευθέτηση έχει ζωτική σημασία.

Το Συμβούλιο τόνισε επίσης όλα τα κυριαρχικά δικαιώματα των κρατών μελών της ΕΕ, τα οποία περιλαμβάνουν, μεταξύ άλλων, τη σύναψη διμερών συμφωνιών, καθώς και την εξερεύνηση και την εκμετάλλευση των φυσικών πόρων τους, σύμφωνα με το κεκτημένο της ΕΕ και το διεθνές δίκαιο, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της Σύμβασης των Ηνωμένων Εθνών για το Δίκαιο της Θάλασσας, και τόνισε επίσης την ανάγκη σεβασμού της κυριαρχίας των κρατών μελών επί των χωρικών τους υδάτων.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013014/13
to the Council
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(15 November 2013)

Subject: Need for Turkish disengagement from the illegal occupation of Cyprus

The northern part of Cyprus has been illegally annexed for the last four decades by Turkey. Now in the fifth decade of Turkish occupation, the EU is still not issuing serious instructions to Turkey about what it should do about northern Cyprus. Turkey does not find itself under even the slightest international pressure to finally end its illegal occupation. For some inexplicable reason the EU does not consider it to be imperative that Turkey should disengage from the illegal occupation of an EU Member State. It does not consider that the future of any region depends on it. Yet although the EU still holds the view that it can dictate to Israel about what it should do about its borders, and that it can play a constructive role in doing so, it acts very differently in the case of Turkey, a candidate country for accession.

I therefore ask the Council to express its opinion on the following unanswered questions raised by Cypriot people:

1. Does the EU believe that:

a) Turkey shares a border with the island of Cyprus?

b) Turkey has a legitimate historical, political or other territorial claim on the northern part of the island?

c) there is a security reason which justifies Turkey's continued occupation of 37% of the territory of an EU Member State?

d) it can decide to intervene and demand the termination of the 39-year-long occupation of the island by acting in the same staunch way as it did recently in the case of Israel and the West Bank?

2. How can Cypriots regain their trust in EU institutions if the EU does not help find a just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem in full compliance with the European *acquis communautaire*?

Reply
(3 March 2014)

The Council recalls that the Republic of Cyprus became a member of the European Union on 1st May 2004 and underlines that only the Republic of Cyprus is recognised as a subject of international law. Moreover and in line with Protocol 10 of the 2003 Accession Treaty, the application of the *acquis* is suspended in those areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control.

As emphasised in the latest conclusions adopted on 17 December 2013, the Council expects Turkey to actively support the on-going negotiations aimed at a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement of the Cyprus problem within the UN framework, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and in line with the principles on which the Union is founded. Turkey's commitment and contribution in concrete terms to such a comprehensive settlement is crucial.

The Council has also stressed all the sovereign rights of EU Member States which include, inter alia, entering into bilateral agreements, and to explore and exploit their natural resources in accordance with the EU *acquis* and international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and has also stressed the need to respect the sovereignty of Member States over their territorial sea.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-013080/13
till kommissionen
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(18 november 2013)

Angående: Regional konsumtion, allvarlig skada, handelspolitiska skyddsåtgärder

I sitt svar på skriftlig fråga E-007771/2013 säger kommissionen ”att det inte ligger i EU:s intresse att ändra det rådande konsumtionssystemet”. Frågan gällde dock inte huruvida man borde ändra konsumtionssystemet vad gäller dess omfattning och effekter, utan huruvida det borde omfattas av samma granskning som andra handelspolitiska skyddsåtgärder.

Kommissionen lägger själv fram en rad starka argument för att betrakta regional konsumtion som en handelspolitisk skyddsåtgärd: ”en internationell konsumtionspolitik skulle dessutom kunna innebära en konkurrensnackdel för företag inom EU”, ”marknadsförhållandena för varor från tredjeländer är i detta skede mindre likvärdiga än vad som är fallet inom EU” och ”skillnader i handelsvillkor hos olika länder kan påverka parallellhandeln, exempelvis vad gäller administrativa krav för registrering och arbetskostnader”.

Det verkar som om regional konsumtion i den europeiska handelspolitiken ska uppfattas som en skyddsåtgärd mot tredjeländers varor, även om åtgärden inte omfattas av de formella reglerna för handelsskyddsåtgärder ([1]).

Kommissionens säger själv att internationell konsumtion i bästa skulle ha en osäker effekt på EU företag (samtidigt som den erkänner att detta inte nödvändigtvis är negativt). Kan kommissionen, med hänvisning till detta, förklara varför rättighetsinnehavare inte måste påvisa att parallellimport orsakar dem ”allvarlig skada” på samma sätt som man måste göra om man önskar dra nytta av antidumpnings- och utjämningsåtgärder?

Svar från Michel Barnier på kommissionens vägnar
(7 februari 2014)

Som framgår av svaret på ledamotens fråga nr E-000363/2013 anser inte kommissionen att de befintliga reglerna för konsumtion av varumärkesrättigheter är en handelspolitisk skyddsåtgärd. Dessa regler ingår snarare i EU:s ramverk för varumärkesinnehavares rättigheter, där det bland annat fastställs att innehavaren ska ges kontroll över sitt varumärke genom att ensam ha rätt att importera eller godkänna någon annans import av varor av detta märke från marknader utanför EES till marknader inom EES.

Varumärkesinnehavet medför en rad rättigheter, bland annat rätten att förbjuda användning och applicering av det skyddade varumärket samt utbud till försäljning, import eller export av varor försedda med ett identiskt eller liknande varumärke. Alla regler som skyddar varumärken kan förvisso ha en inverkan på handeln, men detta innebär inte att de ska anses vara handelspolitiska skyddsåtgärder.

Varumärkesinnehavare är därför inte skyldiga att bevisa att de lidit ”allvarlig skada” på grund av parallellimport för att kunna dra nytta av övriga rättigheter som följer av varumärkesinnehavet.

I samband med detta påpekar kommissionen också att WTO-medlemmar enligt artikel 6 i avtalet om handelsrelaterade aspekter av immaterialrätter (Trips-avtalet) ska vara fria att själva anta regler om konsumtion av sådana rättigheter utan att detta ska ha något samband med WTO:s specifika krav avseende handelspolitiska skyddsåtgärder.

([1]) Se rådets förordningar: http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/accessing-markets/trade-defence/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013080/13
to the Commission
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(18 November 2013)

Subject: Regional exhaustion, serious injury, trade defence instruments

In its answer to Written Question E-007771/2013, the Commission states that 'it would not be in the interest of the EU to change the current exhaustion regime'. However, the question was not whether the exhaustion regime should be changed in terms of its scope and effects, but whether it should not be made subject to the same scrutiny as other trade defence instruments.

In its reply, the Commission itself advances a strong case for considering regional exhaustion a trade defence instrument, arguing that 'an international exhaustion policy [could cause] EU businesses [to] face a competitive disadvantage', that 'market conditions for goods from third countries are less equal at this stage than within the EU' and that 'parallel trade may be influenced by differences regarding trade conditions in different countries such as administrative burdens of registration and labour costs'.

It would seem that, in European trade policy, regional exhaustion is to be regarded as a defence mechanism against foreign goods even though it falls outside the scope of the formal trade defence instrument regulations ([1]).

With reference to its own admission that international exhaustion would, at best, have an uncertain impact on EU companies (although it does acknowledge that that impact would not necessarily be negative), could the Commission explain why rights holders are not required to demonstrate that they have suffered serious injury as a result of parallel imports in the same way as aspiring beneficiaries of anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures are?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(7 February 2014)

As stated previously in its reply to Question E-000363/2013 by the Honourable Member, the Commission considers that current regime concerning exhaustion of trademark rights is not a trade defence instrument. It is a part of the set of rules defining the scope of the rights in the European Union for the holder of a trademark. Those rules allow a trademark holder to maintain control over his own brand in the Union by allowing only to the trademark owner or with his consent the importation into the EEA of his branded goods that have been placed on a market outside the EEA.

Trademark ownership includes several rights, such as the right to prohibit the use, affixation, offering for sale, importing or exporting of identical or similar signs to the protected trademark. All trademark rights may have effects on trade but this does not render them trade defence measures.

Consequently rights holders are not required to demonstrate that they have suffered 'serious injury' as a result of parallel imports in the same way as they do not have to demonstrate such 'serious injury' in order to benefit from other rights granted by trademark protection.

In this regard, the Commission recalls that under Article 6 of the TRIPS Agreement, WTO Members are free to choose their own regime of exhaustion of rights, without there being any link to the specific requirements defined by the WTO for trade defence mechanisms.

([1]) See links to Council regulations here http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/accessing-markets/trade-defence/

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-013222/13
ao Conselho
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(21 de novembro de 2013)

Assunto: Declarações de Lisa Monaco, assessora de Obama para o combate ao terrorismo

Segundo informações vindas a público, os EUA terão ao seu serviço um exército de 90 mil espiões ciberespaciais, aos quais acrescem pelo menos 100 mil agentes secretos. Em 2012, o orçamento das agências secretas cresceu mais de 52 milhões de dólares. A assessora de Obama para o combate ao terrorismo, Lisa Monaco, reiterou que os EUA vão continuar a recolher informações atendendo ao «equilíbrio entre as necessidades de segurança e as preocupações de privacidade».

Assim pergunto ao Conselho:

Que avaliação faz destes dados e das declarações da assessora de Obama para o combate ao terrorismo?

Houve ou irá haver algum tipo de abordagem entre os Estados-Membros relativamente a este reiterar da espionagem massiva pelos EUA?

Resposta
(3 de março de 2014)

O Conselho não debateu as declarações específicas a que os Senhores Deputados se referem. Embora a segurança nacional continue a ser da exclusiva responsabilidade dos Estados-Membros, os Estados-Membros e o Conselho adotaram uma abordagem comum em relação aos aspetos da proteção de dados relacionados com as atividades de vigilância que afetam as pessoas residentes na União Europeia.

No Conselho Europeu de outubro de 2013, os Chefes de Estado ou de Governo emitiram uma declaração sobre a matéria. Os Chefes de Estado ou de Governo debateram as profundas preocupações que estes acontecimentos causaram aos cidadãos europeus. Exprimiram a sua convicção de que a parceira UE-EUA tem de se basear no respeito e na confiança, nomeadamente em matérias relativas ao trabalho e à cooperação dos serviços secretos.

Na reunião dos Ministros da Justiça e do Interior da UE e dos EUA, que se realizou em Washington a 18 de novembro de 2013, foi emitida uma declaração conjunta, que reconhecia, nomeadamente, a existência de tensões na relação causadas pelas alegadas atividades de vigilância, e a necessidade de restabelecer a confiança.

Os presidentes do grupo de trabalho ad hoc UE-EUA sobre a proteção de dados publicaram o seu relatório a 27 de novembro de 2013.

Os Estados-Membros e o Conselho aprovaram em 6 de dezembro de 2013 um contributo em nome da UE e dos Estados-Membros para a análise dos EUA dos programas de vigilância. Este contributo foi posteriormente transmitido às autoridades dos EUA adequadas pela Delegação da UE em Washington. Este contributo destaca a necessidade de igualdade de tratamento entre residentes na UE e nacionais dos EUA, de reconhecimento do direito à privacidade dos residentes na UE e da determinação da necessidade e da proporcionalidade dos programas e das medidas corretivas, e da supervisão em benefício dos residentes na UE.

No seu discurso de 17 de janeiro de 2014, o Presidente Obama anunciou uma série de medidas para equilibrar melhor as necessidades de segurança com as liberdades individuais, incluindo a proteção de dados. Essas medidas são igualmente extensivas aos cidadãos não americanos e iniciam um processo de reforma que envolverá também o Congresso dos EUA.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013222/13
to the Council
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(21 November 2013)

Subject: Statements by President Obama's counter-terrorism advisor, Lisa Monaco

Information has come to light that the USA has an army of 90 000 cyberspace spies at its disposal, and at least an additional 100 000 secret agents. The budget for the secret services was increased by more than USD 52 million in 2012. President Obama's counter-terrorism advisor, Lisa Monaco, has stressed that the US will continue to collect information, while 'balancing our security needs with the privacy concerns all people share'.

What is the Council's assessment of these figures and the statements made by President Obama's counter-terrorism advisor?

Has there been, or will there be, any kind of coordinated approach by Member States regarding the renewed US commitment to large-scale spying?

Reply
(3 March 2014)

The Council has not discussed the specific statements to which the Honourable Member refers. Whilst national security remains the sole responsibility of the Member States, the Member States and the Council have taken a common approach on the data protection aspects relating to surveillance activities affecting persons residing in the European Union.

At the European Council of October 2013, the Heads of State or Government issued a statement on the issue. The Heads of State or Government discussed the deep concerns that these events have raised among European citizens. They expressed their conviction that the EU-US partnership must be based on respect and trust, including matters concerning the work of, and cooperation between secret services.

The EU-US Justice and Home Affairs ministerial meeting, held in Washington DC on 18 November 2013, issued a joint statement, which recognised, amongst other things, the tensions in the relationship which the alleged surveillance activities have caused and the need to restore trust.

On 27 November 2013, the Chairs of the EU-US ad hoc Working Group on Data Protection published their report.

On 6 December 2013, the Member States and the Council endorsed a contribution on behalf of the EU and its Member States to the US review of surveillance programmes. This contribution has subsequently been conveyed to the appropriate US authorities by the EU Delegation in Washington DC. This contribution highlights the need for equal treatment between EU residents and US nationals, for recognition of enforceable privacy rights for EU residents, and for the establishment of the necessity and proportionality of the programmes and of remedies and oversight benefitting EU residents.

In his speech on 17 January 2014, President Obama announced a series of measures to better balance security needs with individual liberties including data protection. These measures also extend to Non-American citizens and initiate a process of reform which will also involve the U.S. Congress.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-013224/13
ao Conselho
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(21 de novembro de 2013)

Assunto: Colaboração da Agência Nacional de Segurança e da CIA em ataques ilegais com aviões drones

Pelo menos 22 pessoas morreram nos últimos dias, em consequência de cinco bombardeamentos efetuados no Afeganistão por aviões não tripulados norte-americanos.

Estes atentados ocorreram dias depois do relator especial da ONU sobre a luta antiterrorista ter divulgado uma versão preliminar do seu relatório, no qual afirma que o total de vítimas civis dos bombardeamentos com aquelas aeronaves supera em muito o número admitido por Washington.

Antecedendo o encontro na Casa Branca entre o primeiro-ministro paquistanês, Nawaz Sharif, e o presidente dos EUA, Barack Obama, a Amnistia Internacional caucionou os dados apurados pelo Gabinete de Jornalismo Investigativo, segundo o qual, desde 2004, os cerca de 400 bombardeamentos com drones levados a cabo nos distritos do Paquistão que fazem fronteira com o Afeganistão causaram entre 2 500 e 3 600 mortes.

Segundo notícias recentemente divulgadas, a Agência Nacional de Segurança e a CIA colaboram estreitamente no lançamento destes ataques ilegais com aviões drones, nomeadamente usando os também ilegais programas de espionagem das comunicações globais para precisarem os alvos.

Assim, pergunta-se ao Conselho:

Pretende levar a cabo diligências tendo em vista a celebração de um acordo internacional para pôr fim a este tipo de armamento (drones)?

Resposta
(17 de fevereiro de 2014)

No seu parecer consultivo de 8 de julho de 1996 sobre a legalidade da ameaça ou do uso de armas nucleares, o Tribunal Internacional de Justiça confirmou que as disposições da Carta da ONU sobre o uso da força são aplicáveis independentemente das armas empregadas.

Os drones não são armas, mas certas categorias de drones podem ser utilizadas como vetor de armas, bombas ou mísseis. Enquanto tais, os drones não suscitam qualquer nova questão fundamental de direito internacional suscetível de tornar necessário um acordo internacional específico. No entanto, devem ser utilizados em conformidade com o direito internacional.

Como referido na ONU em outubro de 2013, o ponto de vista da UE está de acordo com as seguintes conclusões constantes do relatório do Relator Especial da ONU Christof Heyns:

— O quadro jurídico internacional vigente em relação ao uso da força, incluindo o direito internacional em matéria de direitos humanos, o direito internacional humanitário e o direito sobre o uso da força entre Estados, constitui um quadro adequado para a utilização dos drones;

— O direito à vida só poderá ser adequadamente protegido se forem respeitados todos os diversos requisitos decorrentes dos vários elementos constitutivos do direito internacional;

— As normas centrais do direito internacional não precisam de ser, e não deverão ser, postas de lado para enfrentar os novos desafios colocados pelo terrorismo;

— Os Estados deverão ser transparentes em relação às suas políticas em matéria de uso de drones armados.

Como recordado no mesmo contexto, a UE e seus Estados-Membros continuarão a trabalhar para garantir que as medidas que tomam para combater o terrorismo cumprem as respetivas obrigações ao abrigo do direito internacional, nomeadamente do direito internacional em matéria de direitos humano.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013224/13
to the Council
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(21 November 2013)

Subject: Collaboration by the National Security Agency and the CIA in illegal drone strikes

In recent days, at least 22 people have died as a result of five bomb attacks on Afghanistan carried out by unmanned US aircraft.

These attacks took place days after the UN Special Rapporteur on counter-terrorism and human rights issued an interim report which states that the number of civilian victims killed by these aircraft is much higher that the figure acknowledged by Washington.

Prior to the meeting at the White House between the Pakistani Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, and the President of the United States, Barack Obama, Amnesty International ratified the figures compiled by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, according to which between 2 500 and 3 600 people have been killed since 2004 by around 400 drone strikes on Pakistani districts bordering Afghanistan.

According to recent news reports, the NSA and the CIA play a key role in the launching of these illegal drone strikes by illegally spying on global communications in order to identify targets.

Does the Council intend to take steps to draw up an international agreement that will ban the use of drones?

Reply
(17 February 2014)

In its advisory opinion of 8 July 1996 on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, the International Court of Justice confirmed that the UN Charter's provisions on the use of force apply regardless of the weapons employed.

Drones are not weapons, but certain categories of drones can be used as a delivery system for weapons, such as bombs or missiles. As such, drones do not raise any fundamentally new question of international law that would require a specific international agreement. However, they must be used in compliance with international law.

As stated at the UN in October 2013, EU views are in line with the following conclusions contained in the report by UN Special Rapporteur Christof Heyns:

— The established international legal framework regarding the use of force, including international human rights law, international humanitarian law and the law on inter-state force, constitutes an adequate framework for the use of drones;

— The right to life can be adequately secured only if all the distinct requirements posed by the various constitutive parts of international law are met;

— The central norms of international law need not, and should not, be abandoned to meet the new challenges posed by terrorism;

— States should be transparent about their policy on the use of armed drones.

As recalled in the same context, the EU and its Member States will continue to work to ensure that the measures they take to counter and combat terrorism comply with their obligations under international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and the charter of fundamental rights of the EU.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013318/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(25. November 2013)

Betrifft: Geschäft mit EU-Pässen

Nach geltendem EU-Recht kann jedes Land selbst entscheiden, wem es nach welchen Kriterien die Staatsbürgerschaft gewährt. Ganz selten verkaufen Länder wie Großbritannien und Österreich Staatsbürgerschaften, etwa an sehr reiche Araber, Chinesen oder Osteuropäer, zumeist gekoppelt an Millioneninvestitionen im Lande. Anscheinend nehmen immer mehr EU-Länder Geld für Staatsbürgerschaften, ohne dass dafür Investitionen vor Ort oder ein Wohnsitz im jeweiligen Land nötig sind. Malta etwa will Menschen aus Ländern außerhalb der EU für 650 000 EUR eine Staatsbürgerschaft anbieten.

Zudem werden Staatsbürgerschaften zunehmend auch aus geopolitischen oder ethnischen Motiven gegen eine relativ geringe Bearbeitungsgebühr „verschenkt". Beispielsweise wird Menschen mit „bulgarischer Identität" aus Moldawien, Mazedonien und der Ukraine die bulgarische Staatsbürgerschaft angeboten. Auch Rumänien vergibt die Staatsbürgerschaft an Bewohner Moldawiens. Quellen aus Mazedonien melden zudem, dass in Bulgarien gerade erst 2 000 EU-Pässe zu Schleuderpreisen verkauft worden sein sollen.

1. Wie steht die Kommission zu dem Verkauf europäischer Pässe, mit dem ja auch der Zugang für organisierte Kriminalität nach Europa erleichtert wird?

2. Wie steht die Kommission zu Meldungen, wonach in Bulgarien zu Schleuderpreisen EU-Pässe an Mazedonier verkauft werden?

3. Was wird diesbezüglich auf EU-Ebene unternommen, um dieses Vorgehen, das gegen den Geist der europäischen Verträge verstößt, einzudämmen?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(28. Februar 2014)

Die Kommission verweist den Herrn Abgeordneten auf ihre Stellungnahme bei der Aussprache im Parlament am 15. Januar 2014 ([1]).

Nach ständiger Rechtsprechung des Gerichtshofs der Europäischen Union ist es Sache eines jeden Mitgliedstaats, unter Beachtung des Unionsrechts die Voraussetzungen für den Erwerb und den Verlust der Staatsangehörigkeit festzulegen. Seit dem Vertrag von Maastricht bedeutet die Gewährung der Staatsangehörigkeit eines Mitgliedstaats auch die Gewährung der Unionsbürgerschaft und somit starker zusätzlicher Rechte. Daher sind Einbürgerungsbeschlüsse eines Mitgliedstaats nicht neutral in Bezug auf andere Mitgliedstaaten und die EU.

Die Kommission erwartet, dass die Mitgliedstaaten ihre Befugnis zur Erteilung der Staatsangehörigkeit im Geist der loyalen Zusammenarbeit mit den anderen Mitgliedstaaten und der EU ausüben. Dabei sollte den Normen und Verpflichtungen, durch die sie völkerrechtlich gebunden sind, sowie den Kriterien, auf denen die nationalen Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetze der Mitgliedstaaten gründen, Rechnung getragen werden.

Nach Kontakten mit der Kommission haben die maltesischen Behörden weitere Änderungen der auf der Grundlage des maltesischen Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetzes erlassenen Verordnungen angenommen. Durch die Einführung des Kriteriums einer „echten Verbindung" mit dem Land über ein wirksames Wohnsitzerfordernis von mindestens 12 Monaten als Voraussetzung für den Erwerb der Staatsangehörigkeit haben die maltesischen Behörden im Geist der loyalen Zusammenarbeit auf die Bedenken der Kommission reagiert. Die Kommission geht davon aus, dass die geänderte Staatsbürgerschaftsregelung nun wirksam vor Ort durchgeführt wird.

Die Kommission untersucht derzeit ähnliche Regelungen in allen betroffenen Mitgliedstaaten, um zu prüfen, ob weitere Maßnahmen erforderlich sind, um sicherzustellen, dass die Mindestanforderung einer „echten Verbindung" mit dem Land erfüllt ist.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20140115+ITEM-017+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013318/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(25 November 2013)

Subject: Trade in EU passports

Under current EC law, each country can decide for itself who to grant citizenship to and what criteria to apply in doing so. Very rarely, countries like the United Kingdom and Austria sell citizenships, for example to very rich Arabs, Chinese people or Eastern Europeans, usually linked to millions being invested in the country. It seems as though more and more EU countries are accepting money for citizenships, without any local investment or residence in the country in question being required. Malta, for example, will offer citizenship to people from countries outside the EU for EUR 650 000.

Moreover, citizenships are also increasingly being 'given away' on geopolitical or ethnic grounds for a relatively low handling fee. For example, people with 'Bulgarian identity' from Moldova, Macedonia and Ukraine are offered Bulgarian citizenship. Romania also grants citizenship to people living in Moldova. Sources in Macedonia also report that, in Bulgaria, 2 000 EU passports have just been sold at rock-bottom prices.

1. What is the Commission's view of the sale of European passports, which would also facilitate access to Europe for organised crime?

2. What is its opinion of the reports claiming that EU passports are being sold in Bulgaria to Macedonians at rock-bottom prices?

3. What is being done at EU level to curb this practice, which violates the spirit of the European Treaties?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its statement at the debate in the Parliament on 15 January 2014 ([1]).

According to settled case-law of the Court of Justice of the EU, it is for each Member State, having due regard to Union law, to lay down the conditions for acquisition and loss of nationality. Since the Treaty of Maastricht, granting Member State nationality also means granting EU citizenship and hence strong additional rights. Therefore naturalisation decisions by a Member State are not neutral with regard to other Member States and the EU.

The Commission expects Member States to use their prerogative to award nationality in the spirit of sincere cooperation with other Member States and the EU. Account should be taken of the norms and obligations by which they are bound under international law and the criteria upon which Member States traditionally build their nationality laws.

Following contacts with the Commission, the Maltese authorities adopted further amendments to the regulations issued under the Maltese Citizenship Act. By introducing the requirement of a 'genuine link' with the country through an effective residence requirement of at least 12 months as a pre-condition for obtaining citizenship, the Maltese authorities addressed the concerns raised by the Commission in the spirit of sincere cooperation. The Commission expects that the amended citizenship scheme is now effectively implemented on the ground.

The Commission is analysing similar schemes in all Member States concerned in order to see if any further action is required, to make sure that the minimum requirement of a 'genuine link' to the country is met.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20140115+ITEM-017+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande P-013375/13
till kommissionen
Åsa Westlund (S&D)
(26 november 2013)

Angående: Israels deportering av EU-medborgare

Förra veckan flög fyra svenska socialdemokratiska politiker till Israel för att delta i en konferens i Betlehem. Konferensen anordnades av Olof Palme Internationella Center (OPC) som arbetar med internationella utvecklingsprojekt, partiinriktat demokratistöd och demokrati, mänskliga rättigheter och fred. OPC:s verksamhet finansieras bland annat av den svenska staten. De fyra politikerna stoppades i passkontrollen på flygplatsen i Israel och blev under förödmjukande former förhörda och ifrågasatta om sin resa, utan vatten eller mat. De blev hållna i förvar i över 17 timmar. Efter förhöret blev de satta, var och en för sig, i fängelseceller i väntan på att bli deporterade, efter att ha varit vakna i över 40 timmar. De blev fråntagna pass och mobiltelefoner. Israelerna hävdade att de inte kunde redogöra tillräckligt detaljerat om vad konferensen skulle handla om och att de därför blev deporterade. De har efter deporteringen fått tio års inreseförbud på ännu oklara grunder.

1. Hur ser kommissionen på det faktum att Israel behandlar EU-medborgare och representanter från Sveriges största parti som brottslingar, kränker deras mänskliga rättigheter och deporterar dem utan sakskäl, när de åker till Israel för att medverka i en demokratikonferens?

2. Kommer kommissionen ifrågasätta Israels agerande vid samtal med landet, inte minst hur de behandlade dessa EU-medborgare och representanter från Sveriges största parti som brottslingar och särskilt beslutet om tio års inreseförbud?

3. Hur ser kommissionen på att Israel försvårar arbetet för fred och samtal i regionen, ett arbete OPC drivit under flera år, med finansiering från svenska staten?

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-013556/13
till kommissionen (Vice-ordföranden / Höga representanten)
Åsa Westlund (S&D)
(28 november 2013)

Angående: VP/HR – Israels deportering av EU-medborgare

Förra veckan flög fyra svenska socialdemokratiska politiker till Israel för att delta i en konferens i Betlehem. Konferensen anordnades av Olof Palme Internationella Center (OPC) som arbetar med internationella utvecklingsprojekt, partiinriktat demokratistöd och demokrati, mänskliga rättigheter och fred. OPC:s verksamhet finansieras bland annat av den svenska staten. De fyra politikerna stoppades i passkontrollen på flygplatsen i Israel och blev under förödmjukande former förhörda och ifrågasatta om sin resa, utan vatten eller mat. De blev hållna i förvar i över 17 timmar. Efter förhöret blev de satta, var och en för sig, i fängelseceller i väntan på att bli deporterade, efter att ha varit vakna i över 40 timmar. De blev fråntagna pass och mobiltelefoner. Israelerna hävdade att de inte kunde redogöra tillräckligt detaljerat om vad konferensen skulle handla om och att de därför blev deporterade. De har efter deporteringen fått tio års inreseförbud på ännu oklara grunder.

1. Hur ser den höga representanten på det faktum att Israel behandlar EU-medborgare och representanter från Sveriges största parti som brottslingar, kränker deras mänskliga rättigheter och deporterar dem utan sakskäl, när de åker till Israel för att medverka i en demokratikonferens?

2. Kommer den höga representanten ifrågasätta Israels agerande vid samtal med landet, inte minst hur de behandlade dessa EU-medborgare och representanter från Sveriges största parti som brottslingar och särskilt beslutet om tio års inreseförbud?

3. Hur ser den höga representanten på att Israel försvårar arbetet för fred och samtal i regionen, ett arbete OPC drivit under flera år, med finansiering från svenska staten?

Samlat svar från den Höga representanten/Vice ordförande Catherine Ashton på kommissionens vägnar
(27 januari 2014)

I det fall du beskriver är det medlemsstaterna, och inte EU, som är direkt ansvariga för enskilda konsulära frågor. Europeiska utrikestjänsten har varit i kontakt med den medlemsstat som gav konsulärt bistånd till de berörda personerna. Som vi uppfattar det blev de fyra personerna förhörda på flygplatsen vid ankomsten till Israel och nekades inresa. Det främsta skälet för detta var enligt de israeliska myndigheterna att Olof Palmes Internationella Center hade lämnat felaktig information om var personerna skulle bo. De israeliska myndigheterna har uppgett att de anser att det är en förseelse att lämna felaktig reseinformation. Svenska utrikesdepartementet har varit i kontakt med de berörda personerna.

EU stöder fullt ut de insatser som görs av parterna och Förenta staterna för en rättvis och varaktig lösning på konflikten mellan Israel och Palestina. EU berömmer också president Mahmoud Abbas och premiärminister Netanyahus ledarskap och varnar för åtgärder som skulle kunna utgöra hinder för förhandlingarna.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-013375/13
to the Commission
Åsa Westlund (S&D)
(26 November 2013)

Subject: Deportation of EU nationals by Israel

Last week four politicians from Sweden's Social Democratic Party flew to Israel to attend a conference in Bethlehem. The conference was organised by the Olof Palme International Center (OPC) which works on international development projects, party-oriented support for democracy and democracy, human rights and peace issues. The OPC's activities are financed, *inter alia*, by the Swedish state. The four politicians were stopped at passport control at the airport in Israel and were subjected to humiliating interrogation and questioning about the purpose of their trip, without being given water or food. They were held in detention for over 17 hours. After the interrogation, they were each put into separate prison cells pending deportation, after being awake for more than 40 hours. Their passports and mobile phones were taken off them. The Israelis claimed that they were deported because they could not explain in sufficient detail what the conference was to be about. Following their deportation, they were given a 10-year entry ban for reasons that are still not clear.

1. What is the Commission's view of Israel treating EU nationals and representatives from Sweden's largest political party as criminals, violating their human rights and deporting them without material reason when they go to Israel to take part in a conference on democracy?

2. Will the Commission question these actions during talks with Israel, not least as regards the way these EU nationals and representatives from Sweden's largest political party were treated as criminals and especially the decision to impose a 10-year entry ban?

3. What is the Commission's view of Israel hampering efforts towards peace and talks in the region, work that has been pursued by the OPC for many years, with funding from the Swedish government?

Question for written answer E-013556/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Åsa Westlund (S&D)
(28 November 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Deportation by Israel of EU citizens

Last week, four Swedish Social Democratic politicians flew to Israel to take part in a conference in Bethlehem. The conference was organised by the Olof Palme International Centre (OPC) which works with international development projects, provides party-oriented democratic support and promotes democracy, human rights and peace. The OPC's activities are financed by the Swedish Government, among other bodies. The four politicians were stopped at passport control at the airport in Israel and were interrogated and questioned about their journey in a humiliating way, without being given anything to drink or eat. They were held in custody for more than 17 hours. After the interrogation they were each put in separate prison cells while they awaited deportation, after having been awake for more than 40 hours. Their passports and mobile phones were taken away from them. The Israelis claimed that the politicians could not give sufficiently detailed information about the subject of the conference and that this is why they were deported. After their deportation, a 10-year ban on entering Israel was imposed on them for reasons which are still unclear.

1. What is the High Representative's opinion of the fact that Israel has treated EU citizens and representatives of Sweden's largest party as criminals, has breached their human rights and has deported them without giving a valid reason, when they went to Israel to take part in a conference on democracy?

2. Will the High Representative question the Israelis about their actions when she is in contact with the country and, most importantly, ask them about treating these EU citizens and representatives of Sweden's largest party as criminals and, in particular, imposing a 10-year ban on them entering Israel?

3. What is the High Representative's view of Israel making progress towards peace and dialogue in the region more difficult, when this is work that the OPC has been promoting for many years, with funding from the Swedish Government?

Joint answer given by High-Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission

(27 January 2014)

In the cases you mention, Member States, not the EU, have direct responsibility for individual consular issues. The EEAS has enquired with the Member State which provided consular assistance to the affected individuals. It is our understanding that the four individuals were questioned at the airport upon arrival in Israel and were denied entry. The main reason, invoked by Israeli authorities for this, was that the Olaf Palme International Centre had given incorrect information about where they were going to stay and Israeli authorities have indicated that they consider giving wrong travel information as a wrongdoing. The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been in contact with the concerned people.

The EU fully supports the efforts of the parties and of the US towards a just and lasting settlement for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, commends the leadership shown by President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu and has warned against actions that undermine the negotiations.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-013395/13
till rådet
Carl Schlyter (Verts/ALE)
(26 november 2013)

Angående: Tillgången till USA:s positionspapper i det transatlantiska partnerskapet för handel och investeringar (TTIP)

Enligt bekräftade uppgifter har USA överlämnat vissa positionspapper till EU-kommissionen relaterat till de pågående förhandlingarna om det transatlantiska partnerskapet för handel och investeringar, positionspapper som USA uppges ha krävt inte får överlämnas till medlemsstaterna. Enligt bekräftade uppgifter har rådet ännu inte fått ta del av dessa positionspapper. Hur förhåller sig rådet till detta?

Svar
(17 februari 2014)

Rådet fäster stor vikt vid de pågående förhandlingarna mellan EU och Förenta staterna om det transatlantiska partnerskapet för handel och investeringar. I linje med bestämmelserna i fördraget förhandlar kommissionen i enlighet med de den 14 juni 2013 antagna förhandlingsdirektiven i samråd med rådets handelspolitiska kommitté, som ingående granskar all utveckling av förhandlingarna. Kommissionen måste därför förse den handelspolitiska kommittén med den information som den behöver för att utföra sin uppgift.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013395/13
to the Council
Carl Schlyter (Verts/ALE)
(26 November 2013)

Subject: Access to the US position papers on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

According to verified reports, the US has submitted certain position papers to the Commission relating to the ongoing negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, which the US has reportedly said must not be forwarded to the Member States. According to verified reports, the Council has not yet been allowed to see these position papers. What is the Council's view of this?

Reply
(17 February 2014)

The Council attaches great importance to the ongoing negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership between the EU and the United States of America. In line with the Treaty provisions, the Commission is conducting these negotiations in accordance with the negotiating directives adopted on 14 June 2013 and in consultation with the Council's Trade Policy Committee, which closely scrutinises all developments in the negotiations. In this regard, the Commission is required to provide the Trade Policy Committee with the information it requires to exercise its role.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-013422/13
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (NI)
(26 novembre 2013)

Oggetto: Acquisto della cittadinanza a Malta

A Malta, secondo la nuova legge approvata recentemente, basterà avere la fedina penale pulita e pagare 650mila euro e chiunque potrà diventare cittadino dell'isola (con libero accesso quindi all'UE).

Così facendo chi può permettersi di spendere questa cifra potrà muoversi liberamente all'interno dell'UE e recarsi negli Usa senza visto, secondo un accordo stipulato da Washington con vari Paesi, tra cui Malta.

Si stima che a regime il programma potrebbe attrarre tra le duecento e le trecento domande all'anno, con introiti quindi in crescita per le casse governative negli anni futuri.

La nuova legge maltese è il primo caso in assoluto all'interno dell'UE di vero e proprio acquisto di cittadinanza. In altri Stati membri, ad esempio in Portogallo, la cittadinanza viene concessa solo dopo 5 anni di residenza e dopo che il richiedente abbia investito 500 mila euro in immobili, in Austria la cifra richiesta è invece di 10 milioni di euro e anche in questo caso deve essere investita nell'economia reale (3 milioni nel caso di donazioni a opere pubbliche). A Malta, al contrario, la cittadinanza viene elargita immediatamente senza richiesta di alcun investimento che contribuisca al benessere dell'economia e i nomi dei neocittadini saranno tenuti segreti.

Intende la Commissione intervenire affinché anche Malta, pur nel rispetto del principio di sussidiarietà, inasprisca le norme per la concessione della cittadinanza?

Qual è l'opinione della Commissione sul fatto che i nomi dei neocittadini non siano resi pubblici?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(28 febbraio 2014)

La Commissione rinvia l'onorevole parlamentare alla risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-013318/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013422/13
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (NI)
(26 November 2013)

Subject: Acquiring citizenship in Malta

In Malta, according to a recently approved law, anyone with a clean criminal record and who can pay EUR 650 000 can become a Maltese citizen (and thus obtain free access to the EU).

By so doing, anyone able to afford this sum will be able to move freely within the EU and visit the USA without a visa, in accordance with an agreement stipulated between Washington and various countries, including Malta.

It is estimated that a fully operational programme could attract between two and three hundred applications annually, thus swelling government coffers in years to come.

The new Maltese law is the first instance in the EU of actually buying citizenship. In other Member States such as Portugal, citizenship is granted only after 5 years' residency and once the applicant has invested EUR 500 000 in property; in Austria the figure is EUR 10 million and here in Italy it must be invested in the real economy (EUR 3 million in the case of donations to public works). In Malta, however, citizenship is granted immediately with no request for any investment to contribute to the well-being of the economy and the new citizens' names are kept secret.

Does the Commission intend to take action so that Malta, while adhering to the principle of subsidiarity, tightens its regulations for the granting of citizenship?

What is the Commission's opinion on the fact that the names of the new citizens are not made public?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-013318/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013425/13
to the Commission
Baroness Sarah Ludford (ALDE)
(27 November 2013)

Subject: Iranian death penalty for drug offences and EU funding

Iran is one of 33 countries which apply the death penalty for drug-related crimes, including trafficking, cultivation, manufacturing and possession of illicit drugs. However, under Article 6(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights capital punishment should be reserved only for 'the most serious crimes', and the UN Human Rights Council has stated that drug offences do not fall into this category. It is estimated that Iran executed approximately 540 people for drug offences in 2011 alone, over 80% of the total number of executions in Iran ([1]).

The European Union funds law enforcement efforts for drug-related crimes in Iran through the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and through direct assistance by the Commission and Member States. Arrests made under these EU-funded programmes, which include technical assistance in border controls, financial aid and staff training, are likely to result in death sentences and executions.

In its resolution on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2009 ([2]), Parliament called on the Commission to develop guidelines in relation to international funding for drug enforcement activities (beyond its existing obligations stipulated in Article 3(5) TEU) to ensure that EU-funded programmes do not result in human rights violations, including the application of the death penalty. The resolution also stressed that the abolition of the death penalty for drug-related offences should be a pre-condition for financial assistance.

1. Can the Commission specify the amount of funding Iran receives for law enforcement activities related to drug trafficking through earmarked grants to the UNODC, the Economic Cooperation Organisation and other channels?

2. Has the Commission developed guidelines as called for in the above resolution? If not, when does it plan to do so?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2014)

The EU has a strong position against the death penalty (DP). The EU consistently calls on Iran to halt pending executions and introduce a moratorium on DP in all cases, also related to drug offences. 89 people, some responsible of executions in connection with drug offences, are on the EU list of Iranian human rights (HR) violators.

As regards EU assistance to counter drug trafficking in Iran, the EU has no direct bilateral funding. The EU-financed 'Heroin Route Programme' covers not only Iran but mainly Afghanistan, Pakistan and the other Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) member states (Turkey + Central Asia). Aimed at regional capacity building and info exchange on drug trafficking, it was partly suspended in Iran, also due to HR concerns. Under the UNODC Container Control Programme supported under the Heroin Route programme, EUR 65,000 has been spent in 2011-13 for training the Iranian container profiling unit. However, the latter is not operational and all related activities have been suspended. Within the other components of this programme of EUR 9.5 million, Iran is not receiving any funding directly for law enforcement activities.

The 'EU Guidelines on DP' endorsed in early 2013 state that DP must not be imposed i.a. for drug related crimes.

The EU has supported 'International Harm Reduction Association', an NGO promoting policies and practices to restrict DP for drug offences through EIDHR. IHRA designed and implements 'HR due diligence for drug control' to help donors/implementing agencies to develop their HR assessment. Iran is one of the retentionist states that received international drug enforcement aid. The amount allocated to this project was almost EUR 300.000.

Please see also answer to Written Question E-11425/2011.

([1]) http://www.ihra.net/files/2012/11/27/HRI_-_2012_Death_Penalty_Report_-_FINAL.pdf
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&refere

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013426/13
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter / Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(27 november 2013)

Betreft: VP/HR — Nieuw kantoorgebouw voor buitenlanddienst Ashton in Egypte

De Europese Dienst voor Extern Optreden (EEAS) in Egypte, de buitenlanddienst onder leiding van Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger Ashton, wil verhuizen naar een ander gebouw: het nieuwe gebouw heeft een oppervlakte van 4 200m^2, bedoeld voor de komende 15 jaar. Het huidige gebouw, met een oppervlakte van 4 260m^2, zou ten eerste „te klein" zijn voor het groeiende aantal personeelsleden en zou ten tweede niet voldoen aan de eisen met betrekking tot veiligheid en hygiëne ([1]).

De huidige kosten van de EEAS in Egypte:

— Huur: EUR 745 500 per jaar.

— Overige kosten: EUR 172 000 per jaar.

De toekomstige kosten van de EEAS in Egypte:

— Huur: EUR 1 101 916 per jaar.

— Overige kosten: EUR 311 496 per jaar.

— „Renovatie" van het nieuwe gebouw: EUR 2 682 747.

1. Hoe verklaart de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger de bewering van de EEAS in Egypte dat het een groter gebouw nodig zou hebben (voor het groeiende aantal personeelsleden), maar juist naar een kleiner gebouw wil verhuizen, dat nota bene veel duurder is? Deelt zij de mening dat dit tegenstrijdig is? Hoe verdedigt zij, dit in overweging nemende, nochtans de „noodzaak" van de verhuizing?

2. Hoe specificeert de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger de bewering van de EEAS in Egypte dat zijn huidige gebouw niet aan de eisen met betrekking tot veiligheid en hygiëne zou doen? Om welke eisen gaat het hier concreet? Waarom is het, klaarblijkelijk, niet mogelijk het huidige gebouw dusdanig te renoveren, opdat het wél aan de betreffende eisen zal voldoen — wetende dat het nieuwe gebouw nota bene óók „gerenoveerd" dient te worden? Hoe verantwoordt de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger, dit in overweging nemende, nochtans de „noodzaak" van de verhuizing en de daarmee gepaard gaande kosten?

3. Hoe verklaart de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger het groeiende aantal personeelsleden van de EEAS in Egypte? Waarom resp. voor welke taken zijn er aldaar klaarblijkelijk méér personeelsleden nodig? Met welke concreet positieve resultaten, voortvloeiend uit hun werkzaamheden, rechtvaardigt de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger, enerzijds, het groeiende aantal personeelsleden en, anderzijds, de aanwezigheid van de EEAS in Egypte überhaupt?

4. Deelt de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger de mening dat, ten eerste, de EEAS niets in Egypte of eender welk land te zoeken heeft en dat, ten tweede, de EEAS niets, maar dan ook helemaal níets klaarspeelt? Deelt de Commissie de mening dat de EEAS per direct opgeheven dient te worden? Zo neen, hoe rechtvaardigt de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger het bestaan van de EEAS tegenover de belastingbetalers die voor deze zinloze, miljoenenverslindende dienst moeten opdraaien?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(5 maart 2014)

Overeenkomstig artikel 203 van het Financieel Reglement heeft de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter bijgaand rapport over het voorstel inzake de gebouwen van de EU-delegatie in Caïro gezonden aan het Europees Parlement en de Raad. Het rapport is besproken op de vergadering van de commissie Begrotingscontrole (COCOBU) van 27 november. Tijdens deze vergadering zijn geen bezwaren geuit. Alle antwoorden op de vraag van het geachte Parlementslid zijn te vinden in dit rapport.

De conclusies van de Raad van december 2013 over de evaluatie van de EDEO weerspiegelen de steun van de lidstaten voor het werk dat de dienst verrricht. De resolutie van het Europees Parlement van juni 2013 („EEAS two years on") bevatte gelijkluidende positieve berichten. De EDEO is volledig verantwoordingsplichtig aan de begrotingsautoriteit met betrekking tot de toegevoegde waarde van zijn activiteiten.

([1]) Memorandum of the Budgetary Authority. Ref. Ares(2013)3489957 — 15/11/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013426/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(27 November 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — new office building for Ashton's External Action Service in Egypt

The European External Action Service (EEAS), headed by Vice-President/High Representative Ashton, wishes to move from its current building in Egypt to a different building which has an area of 4 200 m^2 and is intended for use for the next 15 years. It is claimed firstly that the current building, with an area of 4 260 m^2, is 'too small' for the growing number of staff and secondly that it does not meet safety and hygiene requirements ([1]).

The current costs of the EEAS in Egypt:

— Rent: EUR 745 500 per annum.

— Other costs: EUR 172 000 per annum.

The future costs of the EEAS in Egypt:

— Rent: EUR 1 101 916 per annum.

— Other costs: EUR 311 496 per annum.

— 'Renovation' of the new building: EUR 2 682 747.

1. How does the Vice-President/High Representative explain the claim by the EEAS in Egypt that it needs a larger building (for the growing number of staff), and yet plans to move into a building which is — smaller, and yet far more expensive? Does she agree that this is contradictory? In view of this fact, how does she nonetheless defend the 'need' for this removal?

2. Can the VP/HR give details in support of the claim by the EEAS in Egypt that its current building does not meet safety and hygiene requirements? What requirements, exactly, are at issue? Why is it, evidently, not possible to renovate the current building so that it does meet these requirements, bearing in mind that even the new building is said to require 'renovation'? In the light of this, how can the VP/HR nonetheless substantiate the 'need' for the removal and the associated costs?

3. How does the VP/HR explain the growing number of staff employed by the EEAS in Egypt? Why, and to perform what tasks, are more staff evidently needed there? By means of what specific positive result s arising from their work does the VP/HR justify on the one hand the growing number of staff and on the other hand the very fact that the EEAS has an office in Egypt to begin with?

4. Does the VP/HR agree firstly that the EEAS should not be in Egypt or in any other country and secondly that the EEAS is achieving absolutely nothing? Does the Commission agree that the EEAS ought to be abolished immediately? If not, how does the VP/HR justify the existence of the EEAS to the taxpayers who have to pay for this pointless service, which swallows up millions?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(5 March 2014)

Following Art 203 of the Financial Regulation, the HR/VP has transmitted the attached report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the proposed office for the EU Delegation in Cairo. The report was discussed at the COCOBU meeting of the 27 November. No objection was raised during that meeting. All the answers to the parliamentary question are included in this report.

The Council conclusions of December 2013 on the EEAS Review reflect the support of Member States for the work of the service, similarly encouraging messages were included in the EP resolution of June 2013 ('EEAS two years on'). The EEAS is fully accountable to the Budget Authority for the value-added of its activities.

([1]) Memorandum of the Budgetary Authority. Ref. Ares(2013)3489957 — 15/11/2013.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-013475/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(27 novembre 2013)

Oggetto: Rafforzamento del radicalismo islamico tra i cittadini europei

Grazie alla Turchia, che permette a chiunque di unirsi ai ribelli attraverso i suoi confini, in Siria ci sono 50 mila combattenti identificabili come estremisti islamici, di questi, 10 mila sono jihadisti collegati ai terroristi di Al Qaeda e vengono dall'Europa.

In Siria c'è la terza più grande mobilitazione di mujaheddin della storia e il direttore del Centro nazionale antiterrorismo ha più volte sottolineato che molti europei vanno in Siria, vengono addestrati e poi tornano indietro facendo parte di un movimento jihadista globale che ha come obiettivo l'Europa occidentale e anche gli Stati Uniti.

Può la Commissione precisare quanto segue:

1. è a conoscenza di questo fenomeno?

2. come intende affrontare la minaccia della crescita dell'integralismo islamico in Europa?

3. come intende evitare il rafforzamento della rete di Al-Qaeda in Europa?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(6 marzo 2014)

L'UE è allarmata dal crescente radicalismo islamico tra i cittadini europei e dal fatto che molti tra questi si rechino in Siria allo scopo di combattere con i gruppi radicali. Questo problema è stato evidenziato nella recente comunicazione della Commissione «Prevenire la radicalizzazione che porta al terrorismo e all'estremismo violento» ([1]).

In considerazione dei rischi posti dai cittadini stranieri che si recano in Siria, anche dall'Europa, per unirsi ai gruppi estremisti e a seguito dei lavori del Consiglio, l'UE ha invitato tutti gli Stati confinanti con la Siria o ad essa collegati da rotte aeree o marittime dirette a restare vigilanti, incoraggiandoli altresì ad adottare misure adeguate per impedire il flusso di combattenti stranieri da e verso il paese. L'UE è determinata ad impegnarsi con i paesi terzi anche per far fronte in modo efficace al terrorismo e al finanziamento dei flussi di combattenti stranieri.

([1]) COM(2013) 941 def.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013475/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(27 November 2013)

Subject: Increased Islamic radicalism among European citizens

Thanks to Turkey allowing anyone to cross its borders to join the rebels in Syria, there are 50 000 known Islamic extremists fighting in the country, 10 000 of whom are al-Qa'ida-linked jihadists from Europe.

The Mujahidin force in Syria is the third largest in history, and the director of the national counter-terrorism centre has repeatedly emphasised the fact that many Europeans are travelling to Syria, being trained, and then returning home as members of a global jihadist movement whose targets are Western Europe and the United States.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation?

2. How does it intend to deal with the threat of increased Islamic fundamentalism in Europe?

3. How will it prevent the al-Qa'ida network from becoming stronger in Europe?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2014)

The EU is alarmed by the increased Islamist radicalism among European citizens and that many Europeans are travelling to Syria to fight with radicals groups. This issue was highlighted in the recent Commission Communication on Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism ([1]).

In view of the risks posed by foreign nationals traveling to Syria, including from Europe, to join extremist groups and following the work of the Council, the EU has called on all States bordering Syria or with direct or maritime routes into Syria to remain vigilant. It encouraged those states to take appropriate measures to prevent the flow of foreign fighters to and from Syria. The EU is determined to engage with third countries also to deal effectively with terrorism and the financing of the flows of foreign fighters.

([1]) COM(2013) 941 final.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013507/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(28. November 2013)

Betrifft: Neuronale Ceroid-Lipofuszinose, eine Form von Kinderdemenz

Kinderdemenz ist genetisch veranlagt — bedingt durch einen Defekt auf dem Chromosom 16 kommt es zu einer Fehlfunktion des Recyclingprozesses in der Zelle. Dadurch lagert sich sogenannter Zellmüll in der Zelle ab.

Der Lebensweg führt von Erblindung über den Verlust der Merk-, Sprach-, Geh- und Handlungsfähigkeit — und damit den Rollstuhl — in den meisten Fällen zwischen dem 20. und 30. Lebensjahr zum Tod.

1. Wie ist in diesem Bereich der aktuelle Forschungsstand in der Europäischen Union?

2. Welcher Betrag wird, wenn überhaupt, aus europäischen Mitteln zur Verfügung gestellt? (Bitte um Angaben der Haushaltslinie/n)

3. Gibt es seitens der Kommission konkrete Programme und Projekte zur Unterstützung der Erkrankten und deren Familien? Wenn ja, welche? In welchen Mitgliedsländern?

4. Wie sieht die europaweite Zusammenarbeit in diesem Bereich aus? Unter den einzelnen Mitgliedsländern?

5. Gibt es aktuelle Zahlen zur Häufigkeit dieser Erkrankung? Nach Mitgliedsländern bzw. EU-Durchschnitt?

Antwort von Tonio Borg im Namen der Kommission
(3. März 2014)

Die Europäische Kommission hat im Verlauf des Siebten Rahmenprogramms für Forschung und Entwicklung von 2007 bis 2013 rund 3 Mio. EUR für die Erforschung von Neuronalen Ceroid-Lipofuszinosen (NCL) aufgewandt.

Hervorzuheben ist das vom Universitätsklinikum Hamburg-Eppendorf koordinierte Projekt DEM-CHILD ([1]) mit folgender Zielsetzung: 1. Entwicklung innovativer Prüf- und Screening-Methoden für alle NCL, um die Früherkennung und damit die Prävention zu gewährleisten; 2. Zusammenstellung der weltweit größten, klinisch und genetisch am besten charakterisierten Gruppe von NCL-Patienten mit dem Ziel, die Krankheitsprävalenz zu untersuchen und den natürlichen Verlauf der NCL präzise zu beschreiben, so dass ein Evaluierungstool für experimentelle Therapiestudien entwickelt werden kann; 3. Identifizierung neuer Biomarker und Modifikatoren von NCL zur Unterstützung innovativer Therapien; 4. Entwicklung von Therapien im Zusammenhang mit NCL.

Die Kommission hat keine spezifische NCL-Strategie. An NCL erkrankte Patienten können Maßnahmen in Anspruch nehmen, die im Rahmen des horizontalen EU-Aktionsprogramms betreffend seltene Krankheiten eingerichtet wurden. Weitere Informationen über Maßnahmen im Zusammenhang mit seltenen Krankheiten enthalten die Antworten der Kommission auf die schriftlichen Anfragen E-010728/12, E-006307/12 und E-009253/12 zum selben Thema.

Die Prävalenz von NCL beträgt gemäß der Orphanet-Datenbank ([2]) 1-9/1 000 000.

([1]) http://www.dem-child.eu/index.php/background-16.html
([2]) http://www.orpha.net/consor/cgi-bin/Disease_Search.php?lng=EN&data_id=650&Disease_Disease_Search_diseaseGroup=ceroid&Disease_Disease_Search_diseaseType=Pat&Disease(s)/group of diseases=Neuronal-ceroid-lipofuscinosis&title=Neurona"l-ceroid-lipofuscinosis&search=Disease_Search_Simple

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013507/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(28 November 2013)

Subject: Neuronal ceroid lipofuscinosis, a type of child dementia

Child dementia is genetically determined: an abnormality in chromosome 16 leads to a malfunction in the cell's recycling process, and cellular waste is deposited in the cell.

Sufferers may lose their sight, memory, the power of speech and the ability to walk or move, requiring them to use a wheelchair. Most sufferers do not live beyond 20 or 30.

1. What is the current state of research in the European Union in this area?

2. How much European funding, if any, is available? (Please indicate budget line(s)).

3. Does the Commission have any specific programmes and/or projects to support sufferers and their families? If so, what are these? In which Member States?

4. How much European cooperation exists in this area? How much cooperation is there between Member States?

5. Does the Commission have updated figures on the prevalence of the disease? Please provide the EU average and figures for individual Member States.

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(3 March 2014)

The European Commission dedicated approximately EUR 3 million for research on neuronal ceroid lipofuscinoses (NCLs) through the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development 2007-2013.

In particular, the project DEM-CHILD ([1]), coordinated by the University Hospital of Hamburg-Eppendorf, focuses on (1) the development of innovative testing and screening methods for all NCLs in order to ensure early diagnosis and thereby prevention; (2) the establishment of the world's largest, clinically and genetically best characterised set of NCL patients in order to study disease prevalence and precisely describe the natural history of the NCLs leading to the development of an evaluation tool for experimental therapy studies; (3) the identification of novel biomarkers and modifiers of NCL to support the development of innovative therapies; (4) the development of therapies for NCLs.

The Commission has no specific policy for NCLs. Patients with NCLs could benefit from actions developed under horizontal EU action on rare diseases. For more information regarding work on rare diseases, the Commission would refer to its answer to Written Questions E-010728/12, E-006307/12 and E-009253/12 on the same subject.

The prevalence of NCLs according to the Orphanet database ([2]) is 1-9/1,000,000.

([1]) http://www.dem-child.eu/index.php/background-16.html
([2]) http://www.orpha.net/consor/cgi-bin/Disease_Search.php?lng=EN&data_id=650&Disease_Disease_Search_diseaseGroup=ceroid&Disease_Disease_Search_diseaseType=Pat&Disease(s)/group of diseases=Neuronal-ceroid-lipofuscinosis&title=Neuronal-ceroid-lipofuscinosis&search=Disease_Search_Simple

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-013511/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(28 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Τα μνημεία στην κατεχόμενη Αμμόχωστο καταρρέουν

Σύμφωνα με την τουρκοκυπριακή ημερήσια εφημερίδα Kibris, η τουρκοκυπριακή οργάνωση Famagusta Initiative (Πρωτοβουλία για την Αμμόχωστο) έχει προειδοποιήσει ότι το Κάστρο του Οθέλλου, ο προμαχώνας Μαρτινέγκο και άλλα μνημεία στην κατεχόμενη περιοχή της Αμμοχώστου βρίσκονται σε εξαιρετικά κακή κατάσταση και χρειάζονται άμεση αποκατάσταση.

Δεδομένου ότι η Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία δεν μπορεί να ασκήσει έλεγχο σε αυτή την περιοχή, η οποία βρίσκεται υπό τουρκική κατοχή από το 1974, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Τι ενέργειες μπορεί να λάβει για να αποτρέψει την κατάρρευση αυτών των μνημείων;

2. Με ποιους τρόπους μπορεί να παρέμβει και να ζητήσει διεθνή υποστήριξη, χρηματοδότηση και τεχνική βοήθεια, (από την Unesco και άλλους διεθνείς οργανισμούς), προκειμένου να προστατεύσει τα μνημεία αυτά, τα οποία αποτελούν αναπόσπαστο μέρος της κοινής ευρωπαϊκής πολιτιστικής μας κληρονομιάς;

3. Είναι διατεθειμένη να πιέσει την Τουρκία να επιστρέψει την Αμμόχωστο στους νόμιμους κατοίκους της, ως μέτρο οικοδόμησης εμπιστοσύνης;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(4 Μαρτίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή αποδίδει μεγάλη σημασία στη διατήρηση της πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς της Κύπρου. Στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος βοήθειας για την τουρκοκυπριακή κοινότητα, από το 2012 έχει χορηγήσει 4 εκατ. ευρώ για τη στήριξη των δραστηριοτήτων της δικοινοτικής τεχνικής επιτροπής για την πολιτιστική κληρονομιά, η οποία συστάθηκε το 2008 από τους δύο Κυπρίους ηγέτες και λειτουργεί υπό την αιγίδα των Ηνωμένων Εθνών. Η χρηματοδότηση της ΕΕ για την πολιτιστική κληρονομιά εφαρμόζεται από το Πρόγραμμα των Ηνωμένων Εθνών για την Ανάπτυξη «Εταιρική σχέση για το μέλλον» (UNDP PFF).

Στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος βοήθειας του 2013, η Επιτροπή δεσμεύτηκε να συνεχίσει να υποστηρίζει το έργο της δικοινοτικής επιτροπής με περαιτέρω συνεισφορά ύψους 1,4 εκατ. ευρώ.

Τα μέτρα συντήρησης που χρηματοδοτούνται από την ΕΕ για τον Πύργο του Οθέλλου της Αμμοχώστου προβλέπεται να ολοκληρωθούν το 2014. Αυτό θα επιτρέψει την επαναλειτουργία του μνημείου το οποίο σήμερα είναι κλειστό στο κοινό λόγω προβλημάτων ασφαλείας.

Μεταξύ άλλων έργων προτεραιότητας για την Αμμόχωστο που εντοπίστηκαν από την δικοινοτική τεχνική επιτροπή περιλαμβάνεται ο Προμαχώνας Ραβελίν (Ravelin) και τα ενετικά τείχη μεταξύ του Ναυστάθμου και του Πύργου του Οθέλλου/Κάστρου.

Η ΕΕ διαθέτει περιορισμένες αρμοδιότητες στον τομέα της πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς και η Επιτροπή θα χαιρετίσει κάθε πρωτοβουλία που ευνοεί την ανάπτυξη δραστηριοτήτων από άλλους διεθνείς χορηγούς σ' αυτόν τον σημαντικό τομέα.

Όσον αφορά την τρίτη ερώτηση, η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος στην απάντησή της στις γραπτές ερωτήσεις E-12465/13 και E-012622/13 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013511/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(28 November 2013)

Subject: Monuments in occupied Famagusta are collapsing

According to the Turkish-Cypriot daily newspaper *Kibris*, the Turkish-Cypriot organisation 'Famagusta Initiative' has warned that the Othello Castle, the Arsenal Bastion and other monuments in the occupied area of Famagusta are in extremely bad condition and in need of urgent restoration.

As the Republic of Cyprus cannot exercise control over this area, which has been under Turkish occupation since 1974, we ask the Commission the following questions:

1. What actions can it take to prevent these monuments from collapsing?

2. In what ways can it intervene and seek international support, funding and technical assistance (from Unesco or other international organisations) in order to protect these monuments, which are part and parcel of our common European cultural heritage?

3. Is it willing to press Turkey to return Famagusta to its legal inhabitants as a confidence-building measure?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2014)

The Commission attaches great importance to the preservation of cultural heritage in Cyprus. Under the Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community, since 2012 it has provided EUR 4 million for the support of activities of the bi-communal Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, established in 2008 by the two Cypriot Leaders and operating under United Nations auspices. EU funding for cultural heritage is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme Partnership for the Future (UNDP PFF).

Under the 2013 Aid Programme, the Commission is committed to continue supporting the work of the bi-communal committee with a further contribution of EUR 1.4 million.

EU-funded conservation measures for the Othello Tower in Famagusta are scheduled to be completed in 2014. This will allow the reopening of the monument which is currently closed to the public due to safety concerns.

Other Famagusta-related priority projects identified by the bi-communal Technical Committee include the Ravelin (Land gate) and the Venetian walls between the Arsenal and Othello Tower/Citadel.

The EU has only limited competences in the field of cultural heritage and the Commission would welcome any initiative conducive to increased activities by other international donors in this important area.

As regards the third question the Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to written questions E-12465/13 and E-012622/13 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013542/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE), Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE), Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE), Marc Tarabella (S&D), Ana Gomes (S&D), Joanna Senyszyn (S&D), Laima Liucija Andrikienė (PPE) y Jürgen Klute (GUE/NGL)
(28 de noviembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Las mujeres y el proceso de paz en Colombia

El proceso de paz en Colombia sigue avanzando en su hoja de ruta con el anuncio del acuerdo en el capítulo político. Sin embargo, no se garantiza la participación de la sociedad civil en el proceso, y aún menos la participación de las mujeres y de las organizaciones de mujeres.

El Consejo de la UE publicó en 2008 una comunicación titulada «Planteamiento global para la aplicación por la UE de las Resoluciones 1325 y 1820 del Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas sobre la mujer, la paz y la seguridad ([1])», en la que se afirma lo siguiente:

«La UE promoverá la aplicación de las Resoluciones 1325 y 1820 a través de su diálogo político y sobre derechos humanos con los países socios, en particular los afectados por conflictos armados, después de un conflicto o en situación de fragilidad, asegurándose de que las organizaciones de la sociedad civil y nacionales participen en el proceso. […] Además promoverá la aplicación de las Resoluciones 1325 y 1820 a través de sus declaraciones políticas hechas en los foros internacionales […]. La UE intentará apoyar la participación de la mujer en los procesos de paz tanto a través de la diplomacia como de la ayuda financiera. La UE se esforzará por que haya un mayor número de mujeres en puestos destacados de mediadores y negociadores. Reconociendo que los esfuerzos de paz de las mujeres a nivel local y nacional son también recursos valiosos para la resolución de los conflictos y la consecución de la paz, la UE apoyará que estas organizaciones participen en los procesos de paz además de que las mujeres participen en todos niveles oficiales de la toma de decisiones.»

Por ello, entendemos que la Alta Representante de la Unión debe seguir estas líneas de actuación. La UE ha acogido con satisfacción y ha apoyado el proceso de paz en Colombia. Sin embargo, no ha pedido ni una mayor participación de la sociedad civil en el diálogo del proceso de paz, ni una participación más activa de las mujeres.

¿Qué está haciendo realmente la UE para promover la participación de la sociedad civil y, más concretamente, de las mujeres en el proceso de paz? Más allá de un posible apoyo financiero de la UE a las organizaciones de mujeres en la región, ¿qué medidas ha tomado la Delegación de la UE en Bogotá para facilitar la participación de las mujeres en el proceso de paz? ¿Promoverá activamente el SEAE la participación y representación de las mujeres en las negociaciones de paz?

Respuesta de la alta representante/vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de marzo de 2014)

La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta coincide plenamente con Su Señoría en cuanto a la importancia del papel de la sociedad civil y, especialmente, de las mujeres en los procesos de paz, concretamente en el de Colombia.

Por lo que respecta a las conversaciones de La Habana entre el Gobierno colombiano y las FARC, si bien es cierto que los representantes de la sociedad civil no participan directamente en esas discusiones, las opiniones de los ciudadanos se integran con regularidad en el proceso a través de un importante mecanismo de consulta gestionado por la Oficina de las Naciones Unidas en Colombia y por la Universidad nacional de ese país, que ha canalizado numerosas contribuciones tanto de organizaciones como de personas.

La UE considera asimismo que las organizaciones de la sociedad civil y, particularmente, las organizaciones de mujeres están llamadas a desempeñar un papel determinante para el éxito del proceso de paz si se llega a un acuerdo entre las partes. Por consiguiente, velará tanto por mantener un diálogo permanente con la sociedad civil como por brindar apoyo a las organizaciones que la representan (especialmente las de mujeres), complementando de esa forma la cuantiosa asistencia financiera dedicada por la UE al fomento de una cultura de la paz en Colombia.

([1]) Consejo de la UE, 15671/1/08, 1 de diciembre de 2008.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013542/13
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE), Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE), Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE), Marc Tarabella (S&D), Ana Gomes (S&D), Joanna Senyszyn (S&D), Laima Liucija Andrikienė (PPE) und Jürgen Klute (GUE/NGL)
(28. November 2013)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Frauen und der Friedensprozess in Kolumbien

Der Friedensprozess in Kolumbien verläuft nach Zeitplan, zumal inzwischen die Vereinbarung über das politische Kapitel bekanntgegeben wurde. Die Teilhabe der Bürgergesellschaft ist jedoch nicht gewährleistet, die Teilhabe von Frauen und Frauenorganisationen noch weniger.

2008 veröffentlichte der Rat der EU eine Mitteilung mit dem Titel: „Umfassender Ansatz für die Umsetzung der Resolutionen 1325 und 1820 des Sicherheitsrates der Vereinten Nationen betreffend Frauen, Frieden und Sicherheit durch die EU“ ([1]), in der er Folgendes mitteilte:

„Die EU wird sich in ihren politischen Dialogen und ihren Menschenrechtsdialogen mit Partnerländern, insbesondere jenen, die von bewaffneten Konflikten betroffen sind, Konfliktfolgen zu bewältigen haben oder sich in einer fragilen Situation befinden, für die Umsetzung der Resolutionen 1325 und 1820 einsetzen und dabei darauf achten, dass lokale und nationale Organisationen der Zivilgesellschaft in den Prozess eingebunden sind“.

„Ferner wird sie die Umsetzung der Resolutionen 1325 und 1820 durch ihre in internationalen Foren abgegebenen politischen Erklärungen […] fördern. […] Die EU will die Beteiligung von Frauen an Friedensprozessen sowohl auf diplomatischem Wege als auch finanziell fördern. Eine größere Zahl von Frauen soll als Vermittler und Chefunterhändler eingesetzt werden. In dem Bewusstsein, dass die Friedensbemühungen von Frauen auf lokaler und nationaler Ebene auch eine wertvolle Hilfe für Konfliktlösung und Friedenskonsolidierung sind, will die EU das Engagement dieser Organisationen in Friedensprozessen — zusätzlich zur Einbeziehung von Frauen auf allen förmlichen Entscheidungsebenen — unterstützen“.

Daher sollte die Hohe Vertreterin diesen Handlungsmöglichkeiten folgen. Die EU hat den Friedensprozess in Kolumbien begrüßt und unterstützt. Sie hat jedoch weder eine stärkere Teilhabe der Bürgergesellschaft am Dialog über den Friedensprozess gefordert, noch eine stärkere Teilhabe der Frauen.

Was unternimmt die EU zur Förderung der Teilhabe der Bürgergesellschaft und insbesondere der Frauen am Friedensprozess? Welche Maßnahmen hat die EU-Delegation in Bogotá zusätzlich zu möglicher finanzieller Unterstützung der EU für Frauenorganisationen in der Region unternommen, um die Teilhabe von Frauen am Friedensprozess zu fördern? Wird der EAD die Teilhabe von Frauen an den Friedensgesprächen und ihre Vertretung bei diesen Gesprächen fördern?

Antwort von Frau Ashton— Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(3. März 2014)

Die Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin teilt voll und ganz die Ansichten der Frau Abgeordneten über die wichtige Rolle der Zivilgesellschaft — und insbesondere der Frauen — in Friedensprozessen, vor allem in Kolumbien.

Es trifft zwar zu, dass die Vertreter der Zivilgesellschaft nicht direkt an den Gesprächen zwischen der Regierung Kolumbiens und den FARC in Havanna teilnehmen. Die Standpunkte der Zivilgesellschaft werden jedoch regelmäßig über einen ausführlichen Konsultationsmechanismus, der vom Büro der Vereinten Nationen in Kolumbien und der Nationalen Universität von Kolumbien durchgeführt wird, in den Prozess eingebracht. Sowohl Organisationen als auch Einzelpersonen sorgten dadurch bereits für zahlreiche Beiträge.

Die EU ist ferner der Ansicht, dass die Organisationen der Zivilgesellschaft, insbesondere Frauenorganisationen, einen entscheidenden Beitrag zum Erfolg der Umsetzung des Friedensprozesses leisten werden, wenn die Vertragsparteien zu einer Einigung kommen. Unter diesem Gesichtspunkt wird die EU sich besonders um den ständigen Dialog mit der Zivilgesellschaft bemühen und auch die Organisationen der Zivilgesellschaft, insbesondere Frauenorganisationen, unterstützen; aufbauend auf den bereits beträchtlichen Finanzhilfen der EU als Beitrag zur Förderung einer Kultur des Friedens in Kolumbien.

([1]) Rat der Europäischen Union, 15671/1/08 — 1. Dezember 2008.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-013542/13
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE), Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE), Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE), Marc Tarabella (S&D), Ana Gomes (S&D), Joanna Senyszyn (S&D), Laima Liucija Andrikienė (PPE) et Jürgen Klute (GUE/NGL)
(28 novembre 2013)

Objet: VP/HR — Les femmes et le processus de paix en Colombie

Le processus de paix en Colombie suit son cours, comme en témoigne la conclusion d'un accord sur le volet politique. Néanmoins, la participation de la société civile, a fortiori celle des femmes et des organisations de femmes, à ce processus n'est pas assurée.

Dans une communication de 2008, intitulée «Approche globale pour la mise en œuvre par l'UE des résolutions 1325 et 1820 du Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies sur les femmes, la paix et la sécurité» ([1]), le Conseil de l'Union européenne déclarait:

«L'UE favorisera la mise en œuvre des résolutions 1325 et 1820 au travers des dialogues politiques et des dialogues consacrés aux Droits de l'homme qu'elle mène avec les pays partenaires, en particulier les pays touchés par un conflit armé ou qui se trouvent en phase post-conflit ou en situation de fragilité, et elle veillera à ce que les organisations locales et nationales issues de la société civile soient associées à ce processus.»

«Elle favorisera par ailleurs la mise en œuvre des résolutions 1325 et 1820 au travers des déclarations politiques qu'elle fera dans les enceintes internationales […]. L'UE s'efforcera de soutenir la participation des femmes dans les processus de paix, tant par la diplomatie que par une aide financière. Elle fera le nécessaire pour que davantage de femmes figurent parmi les médiateurs et les négociateurs en chef. Sachant que les efforts déployés par les femmes au niveau local et national en faveur de la paix sont également très utiles à la résolution des conflits et à la consolidation de la paix, l'UE encouragera les organisations de femmes à s'impliquer dans les processus de paix, parallèlement à la présence de femmes à tous les niveaux de la prise de décision formelle».

Il nous apparaît donc que la haute représentante doit suivre ces orientations. L'Union européenne a salué et encouragé le processus de paix en Colombie. Néanmoins, elle n'a jamais demandé que la société civile participe plus activement au dialogue pour la paix, ni plaidé pour une participation plus importante des femmes.

Qu'entreprend réellement l'Union pour favoriser la participation de la société civile et, en particulier, des femmes au processus de paix? Au-delà d'un éventuel soutien financier de l'Union aux organisations de femmes de la région, quelles sont les mesures prises par la délégation européenne à Bogota pour faciliter la participation des femmes au processus de paix? Le SEAE œuvrera-t-il à favoriser la participation des femmes aux négociations de paix et leur représentation au sein de celles-ci?

Réponse donnée par Mme Asthon, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(3 mars 2014)

La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante partage totalement l'opinion de l'Honorable Parlementaire au sujet du rôle important que la société civile, et notamment les femmes, peuvent jouer dans les processus de paix, en particulier en Colombie.

En ce qui concerne les négociations de La Havane entre le gouvernement colombien et les FARC, s'il est vrai que les représentants de la société civile ne participent pas directement aux discussions, l'avis de la société civile est néanmoins régulièrement pris en compte dans le processus de paix grâce à un vaste mécanisme de consultation, géré par le bureau de l'ONU en Colombie et l'université nationale de Colombie et qui a attiré de nombreuses contributions de la part d'organisations et de particuliers.

L'UE croit, elle aussi, que les organisations de la société civile, et en particulier les organisations de femmes, auront un rôle crucial à jouer pour assurer le succès de la mise en œuvre du processus de paix si un accord est conclu entre les parties. À cet égard, l'UE veillera à maintenir un dialogue continu avec la société civile et à soutenir les organisations de la société civile, surtout celles de femmes, en s'appuyant sur l'aide financière déjà substantielle fournie par l'EU pour contribuer à l'émergence d'une culture de la paix en Colombie.

([1]) Conseil de l'Union européenne, 15671/1/08, 1.12.2008.

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-013542/13
Komisijai (Komisijos pirmininko pavaduotojai ir vyriausiajai įgaliotinei)
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE), Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE), Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE), Marc Tarabella (S&D), Ana Gomes (S&D), Joanna Senyszyn (S&D), Laima Liucija Andrikienė (PPE) ir Jürgen Klute (GUE/NGL)
(2013 m. lapkričio 28 d.)

Tema: VP/HR – Moterys ir Kolumbijos taikos procesas

Taikos procesas Kolumbijoje vyksta pagal numatytą planą, tai liudija ir susitarimas dėl politikos klausimų skyriaus. Vis dėlto nėra užtikrintas pilietinės visuomenės dalyvavimas taikos procese ir kur kas mažiau užtikrintas moterų ir moterų organizacijų dalyvavimas.

2008 m. ES Taryba paskelbė komunikatą pavadinimu „Visapusiškas ES požiūris į Jungtinių Tautų Saugumo Tarybos rezoliucijų 1325 ir 1820 dėl moterų, taikos ir saugumo įgyvendinimo ([1])“, kuriame pareiškiama:

„ES skatins įgyvendinti Rezoliucijas 1325 ir 1820 palaikydama politinius dialogus ir dialogus žmogaus teisių klausimais su šalimis partnerėmis, visų pirma ginkluotų konfliktų paveiktomis šalimis, šalimis po konfliktų ar pažeidžiamomis šalimis, užtikrindama vietos ir nacionalinių pilietinės visuomenės organizacijų dalyvavimą šiame procese.

Ji toliau skatins įgyvendinti Rezoliucijas 1325 ir 1820, darydama politinius pareiškimus tarptautiniuose forumuose. (…) ES sieks remti moterų dalyvavimą taikos procesuose diplomatinėmis ir finansinėmis priemonėmis. ES sieks, kad kuo daugiau moterų atliktų tarpininkų ir vyriausiųjų derybininkų funkcijas. Pripažindama, kad vietos ir nacionaliniu lygiu moterų dedamos taikos stiprinimo pastangos taip pat yra vertingas konfliktų sprendimo ir taikos stiprinimo veiksnys, ES ne tik stengsis įtraukti moteris į oficialių sprendimų priėmimo procesą visais lygiais, bet ir skatins tokias organizacijas dalyvauti taikos procesuose.“

Taigi suprantame, kad vyriausioji įgaliotinė privalo laikytis šių veiklos krypčių. ES palankiai įvertino ir rėmė taikos procesą Kolumbijoje. Tačiau nei pilietinės visuomenės, nei moterų ji neragino aktyviau dalyvauti taikos procese.

Kokių veiksmų iš tiesų imasi ES, siekdama skatinti pilietinės visuomenės ir ypač moterų dalyvavimą taikos procese? Be galimos finansinės ES paramos moterų organizacijoms šiame regione, kokių veiksmų ėmėsi ES delegacija Bogotoje tam, kad palengvintų moterų dalyvavimą taikos procese? Ar EIVT aktyviai skatina moterų dalyvavimą ir atstovavimą joms taikos derybose?

Europos Sąjungos vyriausiosios įgaliotinės ir Komisijos pirmininko pavaduotojos Catherine Ashton atsakymas Komisijos vardu
(2014 m. kovo 3 d.)

Europos Sąjungos vyriausioji įgaliotinė ir Komisijos pirmininko pavaduotoja pritaria gerbiamų parlamento narių nuomonei, kad pilietinės visuomenės, o ypač moterų, vaidmuo taikos procese, visų pirma Kolumbijoje, yra labai svarbus.

Nors Havanoje vykusiose Kolumbijos Vyriausybės ir KRGP (Kolumbijos revoliucinių ginkluotųjų pajėgų) diskusijose pilietinės visuomenės atstovai tiesiogiai nedalyvavo, šiame procese į pilietinės visuomenės požiūrį atsižvelgiama pasitelkiant labai svarbų konsultacinį mechanizmą, kuriam vadovauja Jungtinių Tautų būstinė Kolumbijoje ir nacionalinis Kolumbijos universitetas, paskatinęs daug organizacijų ir asmenų bendradarbiauti šiame procese.

ES taip pat mano, kad jei šalys tarpusavyje susitars, pilietinės visuomenės organizacijos, o ypač moterų organizacijos, turės atlikti esminį vaidmenį siekiant užtikrinti sėkmingą taikos proceso įgyvendinimą. Remdamasi ES suteikta didele finansine parama, skirta padėti skatinti taikos kultūrą Kolumbijoje, ES skirs daug dėmesio tam, kad išlaikytų nuolatinį dialogą su pilietine visuomene ir paremtų jos organizacijas, ypač moterų organizacijas.

([1]) Europos Sąjungos Taryba, dok. Nr. 15671/08, 2008 m. gruodžio 1 d.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-013542/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE), Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE), Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE), Marc Tarabella (S&D), Ana Gomes (S&D), Joanna Senyszyn (S&D), Laima Liucija Andrikienė (PPE) oraz Jürgen Klute (GUE/NGL)
(28 listopada 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Kobiety a proces pokojowy w Kolumbii

Proces pokojowy w Kolumbii toczy się zgodnie z opracowanym planem działania, o czym świadczy zapowiedziane porozumienie w sprawie rozdziału politycznego. Jednakże udział społeczeństwa obywatelskiego w procesie nie jest gwarantowany, a udział kobiet i organizacji kobiecych jest jeszcze mniej pewny.

Rada UE opublikowała w 2008 r. komunikat zatytułowany „Kompleksowe podejście do wdrażania przez UE rezolucji 1325 i 1820 Rady Bezpieczeństwa ONZ w sprawie kobiet, pokoju i bezpieczeństwa" ([1]) , w którym znalazło się następujące stwierdzenie:

„UE będzie propagować realizację rezolucji 1325 i 1829 poprzez dialog polityczny oraz dialog na temat praw człowieka prowadzony z krajami partnerskimi, zwłaszcza tymi dotkniętymi przez konflikty zbrojne, znajdującymi się w fazie wychodzenia z konfliktu lub sytuacji niestabilności, gwarantując, że lokalne i krajowe organizacje społeczeństwa obywatelskiego będą zaangażowane w proces pokojowy".

„Ponadto będzie także propagować wdrażanie Rezolucji 1325 oraz 1820 poprzez oświadczenia polityczne wydawane na forach międzynarodowych. […] UE będzie wspierała udział kobiet w procesach pokojowych zarówno poprzez działania na szczeblu dyplomatycznym, jak i finansowym. UE będzie działać na rzecz zwiększenia liczby kobiet pełniących funkcje mediatorów i głównych negocjatorów. Uznając, że działania pokojowe podejmowane przez kobiety na poziomie lokalnym i krajowym są istotne dla rozwiązywania konfliktów i budowania pokoju, UE będzie wspierać te organizacje w ramach procesów pokojowych, a także wspierać angażowanie kobiet na wszystkich formalnych poziomach decyzyjnych."

Stąd też, jak rozumiemy, Wysoka Przedstawiciel musi stosować się do tych kierunków działania. UE z zadowoleniem przyjęła i poparła proces pokojowy w Kolumbii. Jednakże nie domagała się ani większego udziału społeczeństwa obywatelskiego w dialogu dotyczącym procesu pokojowego ani większego udziału kobiet.

Jakie konkretne środki podjęła UE w celu promowania udziału społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, a w szczególności kobiet, w procesie pokojowym? Jakie działania, poza możliwym wsparciem finansowym z UE dla organizacji kobiecych w regionie, podjęła delegacja UE w Bogocie w celu ułatwienia kobietom udziału w procesie pokojowym? Czy ESDZ będzie aktywnie promować uczestnictwo i przedstawicielstwo kobiet w rozmowach pokojowych?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(3 marca 2014 r.)

Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca Komisji Catherine Ashton w pełni podziela opinię Pani Posłanki na temat istotnej roli, jaką społeczeństwo obywatelskie, zwłaszcza kobiety, mogą odegrać w procesach pokojowych, szczególnie w Kolumbii.

Co się tyczy rozmów pokojowych prowadzonych w Hawanie między kolumbijskim rządem a FARC, choć istotnie przedstawiciele społeczeństwa obywatelskiego nie uczestniczą w nich bezpośrednio, opinie społeczeństwa obywatelskie są w tych rozmowach regularnie uwzględniane za pomocą znaczącego mechanizmu konsultacji administrowanego przez kolumbijskie biuro Organizacji Narodów Zjednoczonych i Narodowy Uniwersytet Kolumbii. W ramach tych konsultacji wpłynęły opinie zarówno od organizacji, jak i od pojedynczych obywateli.

UE również jest zdania, że jeśli strony osiągną porozumienie, organizacje społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, zwłaszcza te skupiające kobiety, będą miały do odegrania kluczową rolę w zapewnieniu wdrożenia postanowień procesu pokojowego. W tym względzie UE zwracać będzie szczególną uwagę zarówno na prowadzenie stałego dialogu ze społeczeństwem obywatelskim, jak i na wspieranie jego organizacji, zwłaszcza organizacji kobiecych, opierając się na udzielanej już przez UE znacznej pomocy finansowej w celu wspierania kultury pokoju w Kolumbii.

([1]) Rada UE, 15671/08, 24 grudnia 2008 r.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-013542/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE), Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE), Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE), Marc Tarabella (S&D), Ana Gomes (S&D), Joanna Senyszyn (S&D), Laima Liucija Andrikienė (PPE) e Jürgen Klute (GUE/NGL)
(28 de novembro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — As mulheres e o processo de paz na Colômbia

O processo de paz na Colômbia tem continuado a seguir o seu roteiro com o anúncio do acordo no campo político. No entanto, a participação da sociedade civil no processo não está assegurada e a participação das mulheres e das suas organizações ainda menos.

O Conselho da UE publicou, em 2008, uma comunicação intitulada «Abordagem global da aplicação pela UE das Resoluções 1325 (2000) e 1820 (2008) do Conselho de Segurança das Nações Unidas sobre as mulheres, a paz e a segurança ([1])», que afirma:

«A UE promoverá a implementação das Resoluções 1325 e 1820 através dos seus diálogos políticos e dos diálogos em matéria de direitos humanos que estabelece com os países parceiros, em especial com os países afetados por um conflito armado ou que se encontram numa fase pós-conflito ou em situação de fragilidade, e assegurará que as organizações da sociedade civil, locais ou nacionais, sejam associadas a este processo».

«Além disso, promoverá a implementação das Resoluções 1325 e 1820 através das suas declarações políticas no âmbito das instâncias internacionais […] A UE esforçar-se-á por apoiar a participação das mulheres nos processos de paz, tanto pela via diplomática como através de uma ajuda financeira. Diligenciará também para que seja maior o número de mulheres a ocupar cargos de mediador e de chefe de negociação. Reconhecendo que os esforços de paz desenvolvidos pelas mulheres a nível local e nacional são também um recurso valioso para a resolução dos conflitos e a consolidação da paz, a UE incentivará as organizações de mulheres a participarem nos processos de paz, bem como a presença das mulheres em todos os níveis da tomada de decisão formal».

Assim, acreditamos que a Alta Representante deve seguir estas linhas de ação. A UE acolheu e apoiou o processo de paz na Colômbia. Contudo, não apelou a uma maior participação da sociedade civil no diálogo tendo em vista o processo de paz, nem a uma maior participação das mulheres no mesmo.

Que medidas concretas desenvolve a UE para promover a participação da sociedade civil e, em particular, das mulheres no processo de paz? Para além do possível apoio financeiro da UE para as organizações de mulheres na região, que medidas tomou a delegação da UE em Bogotá para facilitar a participação das mulheres no processo de paz? Irá o SEAE promover de forma ativa a participação e a representação das mulheres nas conversações de paz?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(3 de março de 2014)

A AR/VP perfilha inteiramente a opinião do Senhor Deputado sobre a importância do papel que a sociedade civil e, em especial, as mulheres podem desempenhar nos processos de paz, designadamente na Colômbia.

No que se refere às conversações de Havana entre o Governo da Colômbia e as FARC, embora seja verdade que os representantes da sociedade civil não participam diretamente nos debates, os pontos de vista da sociedade civil são, no entanto, regularmente tidos em conta através de um mecanismo de consulta importante, gerido pelo Gabinete das Nações Unidas na Colômbia e pela Universidade Nacional da Colômbia, que tem recolhido muitas contribuições provenientes tanto de organizações como de particulares.

A UE considera também que as organizações da sociedade civil e, em especial, as organizações de mulheres terão um papel crucial a desempenhar para assegurar o êxito da instauração do processo de paz, caso venha a ser concluído um acordo entre as partes. A este respeito, a UE atribuirá atenção especial à necessidade de manter um diálogo permanente com a sociedade civil e de apoiar as organizações da sociedade civil, especialmente as organizações de mulheres, com base no já substancial apoio financeiro concedido pela UE para ajudar a promover uma cultura de paz na Colômbia.

([1]) Conselho da UE, 15671/08, de 1 de dezembro de 2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013542/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE), Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE), Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE), Marc Tarabella (S&D), Ana Gomes (S&D), Joanna Senyszyn (S&D), Laima Liucija Andrikienė (PPE) and Jürgen Klute (GUE/NGL)
(28 November 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Women and Colombian peace process

The peace process in Colombia is continuing to follow its roadmap with the announcement of the agreement on the political chapter. However, the participation of civil society in the process is not guaranteed, and the participation of women and women's organisations even less so.

The EU Council published a communication in 2008 entitled 'Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security' ([1]), in which it states:

'The EU will promote the implementation of Resolutions 1325 and 1820 through its political and human rights dialogues with partner countries, particularly those affected by armed conflict, in post conflict phase or situations of fragility, ensuring that local and national civil society organisations are engaged in the process'.

'It will furthermore promote the implementation of Resolutions 1325 and 1820 through its political statements made within the international *fora*. […] The EU will seek to support women's participation in peace processes both through diplomacy and financial support. The EU will strive towards greater number of women as mediators and chief negotiators. Recognising that women's peace efforts at the local and national levels are also a valuable resource for conflict resolution and peace building, the EU will support these organisations to engage in peace processes in addition to involving women at all formal decision-making levels.'

Thus, we understand that the High Representative must follow those lines of action. The EU has welcomed and supported the peace process in Colombia. However, it has neither called for more participation of civil society in the peace process dialogue, nor for stronger participation of women.

What is the EU actually doing to promote the participation of civil society and, more particularly, women in the peace process? Beyond possible financial support from the EU for women's organisations in the region, what action has the EU delegation in Bogotá taken to facilitate women's participation in the peace process? Will the EEAS actively promote the participation and representation of women in the peace talks?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(3 March 2014)

The HR/VP fully shares the Honourable Member's views on the important role civil society, and especially women, can play in peace processes, in particular in Colombia.

Regarding the Havana talks between the Colombian Government and the FARC, while it is true that civil society representatives do not participate directly in discussions, the views of civil society are, nonetheless, being fed regularly into the process via a substantial consultation mechanism, managed by the United Nations Office in Colombia and the national University of Colombia, which has been attracting numerous contributions from organisations and individuals alike.

The EU also believes that civil society organisations, and in particular women's organisations, will have a crucial role to play in ensuring the success of the implementation of the peace process if a deal is agreed between the parties. In this respect, the EU will pay close attention to both keep a continuous dialogue with the civil society and to support the civil society organisations, and in particular women's organisations, building upon the already substantial financial aid provided by the EU to help in promoting a culture of peace in Colombia.

([1]) Council of the European Union, 15671/1/08 — 1 December 2008.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-013576/13
till kommissionen (Vice-ordföranden / Höga representanten)
Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL)
(29 november 2013)

Angående: VP/HR – Iran

Iran är det land som, näst efter Kina, verkställer flest dödsdomar. År 2012 avrättades 522 personer och hittills i år ligger siffran på 400 avrättade. Natten till den 26 oktober 2013 avrättades två kurdiska politiska fångar, Habibullah Golparipour 29 år och Reza Esmaeili 35 år, av den iranska regimen. Samma dag avrättades även 16 politiskt aktiva balucher i Zahidan-provinsen.

I fängelset Raja'o Shahr, nordväst om Teheran, väntar Zaniar Moradi och Loghman Moradi på att avrättas genom hängning efter en rättegång 2010 som bröt mot all grundläggande rättssäkerhet. Den avrättningen måste stoppas.

Den dialog som nu pågår mellan den nye iranske presidenten Rouhani och västvärlden, och det framlagda förslaget till avtal om kärnenergi/kärnvapen, får dock inte dra uppmärksamheten från de brott mot mänskliga rättigheter som begås i Iran. Ett land där kvinnoförtryck, förbud mot homosexualitet och avrättningar av minderåriga är daglig verklighet.

EU, och det internationella samfundet, måste fortsätta kritisera brotten mot de mänskliga rättigheterna i Iran så länge dessa illdåd pågår.

Vilka åtgärder har Vice ordföranden/Höga representanten vidtagit, eller planerar att vidta, för att försöka förmå den iranska regimen att upphöra med sina förföljelser av politiska meningsmotståndare och avrättningar av politiska fångar? Avser Vice ordföranden/Höga representanten agera i frågan om de dödsdömda fångarna Zaniar Moradi och Loghman Moradi?

Svar från den höga representanten/vice ordföranden Catherine Ashton på kommissionens vägnar
(4 februari 2014)

EU delar helt oron över den utbredda användningen av dödsstraff i Iran, vilken har bekräftats genom ett alarmerande stort antal avrättningar under 2013. De flesta avrättningarna ägde rum efter summariska rättegångar utan möjlighet att överklaga och som avsåg brott som enligt internationella minimistandarder inte bör leda till dödsstraff, framför allt narkotikahandel.

Vad gäller Zanyar och Loghman Moradi, som är medlemmar i det kurdiska partiet Komalah och som dömts till döden för mord, uttalade sig Catherine Ashton den 11 januari 2013 och uttryckte sin oro över att de erkänt under tortyr och bad om att de skulle benådas.

EU har kraftfullt och i enlighet med sina principer tagit ställning mot dödsstraffet och fortsätter att uppmana Iran att stoppa alla förestående avrättningar samt införa ett moratorium för detta grymma och omänskliga straff.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013576/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL)
(29 November 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Islamic Republic of Iran

Iran is the country which imposes the most death sentences after China. In 2012, 522 people were executed there and the figure so far for this year is 400. On the night of 26 October 2013, two Kurdish political prisoners, Habibullah Golparipour, aged 29, and Reza Esmaeili, aged 35, were executed by the Iranian regime. On the same day, 16 politically active Baluchis were executed in Zahidan province.

In the Raja'i Shahr prison, north-west of Tehran, Zaniar Moradi and Loghman Moradi are awaiting execution by hanging, following a court case in 2010 which breached all fundamental legal rights. These executions must be stopped.

The dialogue now taking place between the new Iranian President Rouhani and the West and the proposal for an agreement on nuclear energy and nuclear weapons must not be allowed to distract attention from the breaches of human rights being committed in Iran. This is a country where the oppression of women, the ban on homosexuality and executions of minors are a daily reality.

The EU and the international community must continue to express their opposition to the breaches of human rights in Iran for as long as these outrages continue.

What measures has the Vice-President/High Representative taken or does she plan to take to attempt to persuade the Iranian regime to stop persecuting its political opponents and executing political prisoners? Does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to act on the question of Zaniar Moradi and Loghman Moradi, who have been condemned to death?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(4 February 2014)

The EU fully shares the concern regarding the extensive use of capital punishment in Iran, as confirmed by the alarming number of executions carried out in Iran throughout 2013. Most of the executions took place after summary trials, without the right to appeal and for offences, notably drugs trafficking, which according to international minimum standards should not result in capital punishment.

As regards the case of Messrs. Zanyar and Loghman Moradi, members of the Kurdish Komalah party, who were sentenced to death on charges of murder, the spokesperson of High Representative Catherine Ashton issued a statement on 11 January 2013, expressing concern that the two individuals confessed under torture and appealing for clemency.

The EU holds a strong, principled position against the death penalty. It consistently calls on Iran to halt all pending executions and to introduce a moratorium on this cruel and inhuman punishment.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-013584/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(2 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Costi elevati per un'alimentazione sana: quali prospettive per il nuovo piano di azione europeo e per la strategia europea

In tema di alimentazione, gli esperti raccomandano di seguire una dieta equilibrata e variegata, consumando 5 porzioni al giorno di frutta e verdura, cereali integrali, carni magre e limitando il consumo di alimenti ad alto contenuto energetico. Tuttavia, diversi studi di alcune università americane sostengono che il costo di una caloria di pesce, carne magra, frutta, verdura e cereali integrali è mediamente più elevato rispetto al costo di un caloria di cibi ad alto contenuto energetico. Ovviamente è possibile seguire un'alimentazione sana anche con risorse finanziarie limitate, tuttavia risulta più complesso rispetto al consumo di cibi grassi che è più semplice e rapido. Da ciò deriva che spesso solo le fasce più agiate della popolazione possono permettersi di seguire una dieta equilibrata.

D'altro lato, è stata effettuata una ricerca in Sud Africa per verificare gli effetti di una riduzione del prezzo dei prodotti alimentari «salutari» sulle consuetudini alimentari: grazie alla partecipazione di una grande azienda privata, e a circa 260.000 famiglie coinvolte, in circa 800 supermercati è stato possibile prevedere sconti su tali prodotti. I risultati evidenziano che le politiche di riduzione dei costi dei cibi sani ne aumentano sensibilmente il consumo da parte delle persone.

Nella «strategia europea sugli aspetti sanitari connessi all'alimentazione, al sovrappeso e all'obesità» si parla della possibilità di garantire costi più contenuti per la frutta e la verdura al fine di favorirne il consumo, in particolare fra i giovani. In Europa si stima che il 10-30 % della popolazione sia obesa, mentre il 30-70 % sia in sovrappeso e che le malattie collegate direttamente all'obesità sono responsabili di ben il 7 % dei costi sanitari dell'Unione europea.

Può la Commissione far sapere se:

— intende approfondire il rapporto tra alimentazione equilibrata e effettiva accessibilità economica nel contesto del Gruppo ad alto livello sulla nutrizione e l'attività fisica;

— può indicare quali sono state le azioni poste in essere per garantire costi più contenuti per gli alimenti in esame;

— ritiene che si possa realizzare in Europa uno studio similare a quello svolto in Sud Africa?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(24 gennaio 2014)

La strategia europea del 2007 sugli aspetti sanitari connessi all'alimentazione, al sovrappeso e all'obesità ([1]) promuove una dieta equilibrata e stili di vita attivi tra i cittadini dell'UE. La strategia incentiva le partnership votate a interventi concreti che coinvolgano sia gli Stati membri dell'UE (il gruppo ad alto livello sulla nutrizione e l'attività fisica ([2])) che la società civile (la piattaforma d'azione europea per l'alimentazione, l'attività fisica e la salute ([3])) e affrontino questioni quali la promozione del consumo di frutta e verdura, la riformulazione degli alimenti e la disponibilità di opzioni alimentari sane.

Il gruppo ad alto livello sta sviluppando un piano d'azione comune per affrontare il problema dell'obesità infantile (2014-2020) che analizza, fra l'altro, l'importante ruolo spettante ai genitori e alla scuola, la pratica regolare di attività fisica da parte dei bambini e l'auspicabile introduzione di limitazioni in materia di commercializzazione e di pubblicità.

La strategia ha evidenziato che l'obesità in Europa va aumentando e che il fenomeno interessa in misura molto maggiore coloro che appartengono ai ceti socioeconomici più bassi. Quest'ultima problematica era stata altresì messa in luce — e avallata — nella recente valutazione esterna della strategia ([4]) e nella relazione della Commissione sulle disuguaglianze sanitarie nell'UE ([5]). Questo tema sarà inoltre oggetto di due conferenze all'inizio del 2014 ([6]).

([1]) COM(2007) 279 definitivo.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/high_level_group/index_it.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/platform/index_it.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/docs/pheiac_nutrition_strategy_evaluation_en.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/key_documents/index_en.htm#anchor2
([5]) «Health inequalities in the EU — Final report of a consortium. Consortium lead: Sir Michael Marmot», 11 dicembre 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/health/social_determinants/docs/healthinequalitiesineu_2013_en.pdf
([6]) Conferenza conclusiva dell'azione congiunta sulle disuguaglianze sanitarie «Azione equità»; «Affrontare il problema delle disuguaglianze sanitarie nel 2014 e oltre: promuovere la coesione e rafforzare la salute per la crescita», 23 gennaio 2014; http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/dyna/enews/enews.cfm?al_id=1436; «Salute in Europa — una maggiore equità», 18 marzo 2014. L'obiettivo della conferenza è affrontare la questione di una maggiore equità nel campo della salute in Europa, migliorando l'accesso alla salute stessa e lottando contro la discriminazione nonché contro l'aumento delle discriminazioni in questo ambito specifico.

Gli aspetti fiscali e le politiche dei prezzi sono di competenza degli Stati membri.

La Commissione ha avviato due progetti pilota con l'obiettivo di incrementare il consumo di frutta e di verdura fresche nelle comunità in cui il reddito delle famiglie è inferiore al 50 % della media dell'UE-27. Al momento non sono previsti ulteriori studi sul rapporto tra i prezzi e le abitudini alimentari.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013584/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(2 December 2013)

Subject: The high costs of a healthy diet: what prospects for the new European action plan and the European strategy?

When it comes to food, experts recommend that we follow a balanced and varied diet containing five daily portions of fruit and vegetables, wholegrain cereals and lean meat, and that we limit our consumption of high-energy foodstuffs. However, various studies from a number of US universities claim that the cost of a calorie of fish, lean meat, fruit, vegetables and wholegrain cereals is higher, on average, than the cost of a calorie of high-energy food. Of course, it is possible to eat healthily even on a limited budget; however, it is more difficult to consume healthy food than to consume fatty food, which is quicker and easier. It thus follows that the wealthier members of society are often the only ones who can afford to follow a balanced diet.

On the other hand, research has been carried out in South Africa to look at the effects of a reduction in the price of 'healthy' food products on eating habits: thanks to the participation of a large private company, and the approximately 260 000 families involved, it was possible to reduce the prices of these products in some 800 supermarkets. The results show that a policy of reducing the cost of healthy food considerably increases its consumption.

'A Strategy for Europe on nutrition, overweight and obesity related health issues' mentions the possibility of guaranteeing lower costs for fruit and vegetables in order to encourage greater consumption, particularly among young people. It is estimated that 10-30% of Europeans are obese, while 30-70% are overweight, and diseases directly related to obesity are responsible for no less than 7% of healthcare costs in the European Union.

Can the Commission say:

— whether it intends to conduct an in-depth analysis into the relationship between a balanced diet and genuine economic accessibility within the context of the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical activity;

— what steps have been taken to ensure lower costs for the foodstuffs concerned;

— whether it believes that a study similar to that conducted in South Africa could be carried out in Europe?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(24 January 2014)

The 2007 EU Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity-related Health Issues ([1]) promotes a balanced diet and active lifestyles among EU citizens. The strategy encourages action-oriented partnerships involving EU Member States (the High Level Group for Nutrition and Physical Activity ([2])) and civil society (EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health ([3])) and addresses issues such as the promotion of fruits and vegetables consumption, food reformulation and the availability of healthy food options.

The High Level Group is developing a common Action Plan to tackle childhood obesity (2014-2020), addressing, among other elements, the important role of parents and schools, the regular participation of children in physical activity and the advisable boundaries for marketing and advertising.

The strategy highlights that obesity is rising among Europeans and that it disproportionately affects those in low socioeconomic groups. This concern with low-socioeconomic groups was also highlighted — and endorsed — following the recent external evaluation of the strategy ([4]) and the Commission report on 'Health inequalities in the EU' ([5]). This topic will also be addressed at two events at the beginning of 2014 ([6]).

Issues of taxation and pricing policies are within the remit of the Member States.

([1]) COM(2007) 279.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/high_level_group/index_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/platform/index_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/docs/pheiac_nutrition_strategy_evaluation_en.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/key_documents/index_en.htm#anchor2
([5]) 'Health inequalities in the EU — Final report of a consortium. Consortium lead: Sir Michael Marmot', 11 December 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/health/social_determinants/docs/healthinequalitiesineu_2013_en.pdf
([6]) The final conference of the EU-financed Joint Action on Health Inequalities 'Equity Action'; 'Addressing health inequalities 2014 and beyond: building cohesion and strengthening health for growth', 23 January 2014; http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/dyna/enews/enews.cfm?al_id=1436
'Health in Europe — making it fairer', 18 March 2014. It aims to address the issue of improving equity in health in Europe, improving access to health and combating discrimination including multiply discrimination in health.

The Commission has started two pilot projects that aim to increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables in communities where the household income is below 50% of the EU-27. At this point, no additional studies on the relationship between pricing and eating habits are foreseen.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-013597/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(2 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ανεργία των νέων

Με 26,6 εκατομμύρια ανέργους στην ΕΕ και με την ανεργία των νέων να ανέρχεται σε πρωτόγνωρα επίπεδα στις περισσότερες χώρες της νότιας Ευρώπης, η Επιτροπή καλείται να απαντήσει στα εξής:

1. Για ποιο λόγο το όριο ηλικίας για τους άνεργους νέους, το οποίο πρόκειται να περιληφθεί στον δείκτη που χρησιμοποιείται για την «Εγγύηση για τη Νεολαία», ορίζεται στα 25 έτη και όχι στα 30;

2. Διαθέτει η Επιτροπή συγκεκριμένο σχέδιο δράσης για την πρόληψη και την αποκατάσταση αυτών των ανησυχητικά υψηλών επιπέδων ανεργίας των νέων;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

1. Στη σύσταση του Συμβουλίου σχετικά με τη θέσπιση «εγγυήσεων για τη νεολαία» ([1]), τα κράτη μέλη καλούνται να εξασφαλίσουν ότι όλοι οι νέοι ηλικίας κάτω των 25 ετών λαμβάνουν ευκαιρίες απασχόλησης καλής ποιότητας, συνεχή εκπαίδευση, μαθητεία ή άσκηση εντός τεσσάρων μηνών από τη στιγμή που ολοκληρώνουν την επίσημη εκπαίδευση ή καθίστανται άνεργοι. Αυτό το όριο ηλικίας αντικατοπτρίζει τον επίσημο ορισμό για την απασχόληση των νέων, όπως χρησιμοποιείται από την Eurostat.

Τα κράτη μέλη είναι ελεύθερα να εξασφαλίσουν παρόμοιες ευκαιρίες για άνεργα ή ανενεργά άτομα άλλων ηλικιακών ομάδων, αλλά αυτό δεν πρέπει να θέτει σε κίνδυνο την επιτυχή υλοποίηση των «εγγυήσεων για τη νεολαία» ηλικίας κάτω των 25 ετών, οι οποίοι επί του παρόντος υφίστανται τα υψηλότερα ποσοστά ανεργίας.

Όπως αποφασίστηκε από την αρχή προϋπολογισμού της ΕΕ, η χρηματοδοτική υποστήριξη της ΕΕ από την «πρωτοβουλία για την απασχόληση των νέων» (YEI) ύψους 6 δισεκατομμυρίων ευρώ ([2]), θα επικεντρωθεί αποκλειστικά σε (επίπεδο NUTS 2) περιοχές όπου τα ποσοστά ανεργίας για τους νέους ηλικιακής ομάδας 15-24 ήταν πάνω από 25% το 2012. Κατ' αρχήν, η χρηματοδοτική υποστήριξη θα απευθύνεται σε νέους κάτω των 25 ετών που δεν έχουν απασχοληθεί, εκπαιδευτεί ή καταρτιστεί. Τα κράτη μέλη μπορούν να επεκτείνουν την εν λόγω ομάδα για να συμπεριλάβουν άτομα ηλικίας έως 30 ετών (από τις επιλέξιμες περιφέρειες) σε εθελοντική βάση, αλλά πρέπει να λάβουν υπόψη τη δέσμευση που έχουν αναλάβει βάσει της ανωτέρω σύστασης του Συμβουλίου.

2. Η εφαρμογή των «εγγυήσεων για τη νεολαία» αποτελεί πρώτη προτεραιότητα της Επιτροπής για την προώθηση της απασχόλησης των νέων. Μπορείτε να βρείτε όλες τις σχετικές πρωτοβουλίες στην παρακάτω διεύθυνση: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1036

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2013:120:0001:0006:EN:PDF
([2]) Σε τιμές του 2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013597/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(2 December 2013)

Subject: Youth unemployment

With 26.6 million people unemployed in the EU and youth unemployment reaching unprecedented levels in most southern European countries, the Commission is asked to answer the following:

1. Why is the age limit for unemployed young people to be included in the indicator used for the Youth Guarantee set at 25 instead of 30?

2. Does the Commission have a specific action plan to prevent and rectify these alarmingly high levels of youth unemployment?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(5 February 2014)

1. The Council Recommendation on establishing the Youth Guarantee ([1]) calls on Member States to ensure that all young people under 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. This age limit reflects the official definition of youth employment as used by Eurostat.

Member States are free to ensure similar opportunities to unemployed or inactive people of other age groups, but doing so should not endanger the successful delivery of the Youth Guarantee for under 25 year olds, which currently suffer the highest unemployment rates.

As decided by the EU budgetary authority, EU financial support from the EUR 6 billion ([2]) Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) will be concentrated exclusively in (NUTS 2 level) regions with youth unemployment rates for the age group 15-24 above 25% in 2012. In principle, this will target young persons under the age of 25 not in employment, education or training. Member States may extend this target group to include young people up to the age of 30 (within the eligible regions) on a voluntary basis, but should bear in mind their commitment under the above Council Recommendation.

2. The implementation of the Youth Guarantee is the first priority for the Commission in promoting youth employment. All related initiatives can be found here: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1036

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2013:120:0001:0006:EN:PDF
([2]) In 2011 prices.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013611/13
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(2 December 2013)

Subject: Destruction of food due to overproduction

Could the Commission provide me with details of how much food is destroyed in the EU as a result of overproduction?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(7 March 2014)

The Commission does not have statistics on how much food is destroyed in the EU as a result of overproduction. If 'food' is interpreted as 'agricultural products' in the context of this question, Member States might keep statistics on this, or on some products.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013660/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Proyectos hidroeléctricos y derechos indígenas en Guatemala

Numerosas compañías multinacionales se han interesado últimamente por las perspectivas que ofrece el negocio de las centrales hidroeléctricas en Guatemala. Entre ellas se encuentran varias compañías de origen europeo, como Unión Fenosa o ENEL.

Estas compañías europeas que intervienen en el país han sido acusadas por todo tipo de organizaciones sociales, políticas y diferentes ONG de no respetar el derecho de consulta, ni tan siquiera los mismísimos derechos humanos. Numerosas investigaciones acusan a las empresas europeas de beneficiarse de la práctica inexistencia de un marco jurídico estable para implementar sus proyectos sin necesidad alguna de cumplir con los estándares y tratados internacionales. En concreto, la mayoría de estos proyectos nunca respeta lo estipulado en el Convenio 169 de la OIT, que establece que este tipo de proyectos se deben hacer tras la realización de un referéndum en las comunidades afectadas.

En muchos de los citados proyectos hidroeléctricos desarrollados se ha realizado el citado referéndum, cuyo resultado ha sido el rechazo de los proyectos por parte de las poblaciones locales. Sin embargo, estas expresiones de la voluntad de los pueblos indígenas han sido completamente ignoradas por las compañías hidroeléctricas, que han desarrollado sus proyectos en Guatemala violando el citado Convenio 169 de la OIT. El Gobierno guatemalteco es el responsable de cumplir los tratados internacionales que ha firmado y, por tanto, debe garantizar que se respete la voluntad democráticamente expresada de los pueblos originarios de su territorio de no desarrollar muchos de los proyectos que se han construido o que se pretenden construir.

Con respecto a la situación del mercado de la energía, los precios no han dejado de subir, produciendo un acceso muy desigual a dicho recurso y la queja de numerosas ONG y organizaciones sociales ante el abandono y la restricción del consumo energético desde la privatización del sector. Esto evidencia que dichos proyectos hidroeléctricos no han beneficiado a las comunidades donde se han construido.

¿Dispone la Comisión de una lista de los proyectos hidroeléctricos que se han construido en Guatemala pese a que las comunidades indígenas los han rechazado, violando claramente el Convenio 169 de la OIT? ¿Piensa instar a Guatemala a que cumpla el citado Convenio, del que es Parte, y defienda de manera efectiva los derechos de los pueblos indígenas? En el marco del Acuerdo de Asociación UE-América Central, ¿piensa exigir al Gobierno de Guatemala que cumpla de manera efectiva dicho convenio?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-013661/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Proyectos hidroeléctricos en Guatemala y empresas europeas

Numerosas compañías multinacionales se han interesado en los últimos tiempos por las perspectivas que ofrece el negocio de las centrales hidroeléctricas en Guatemala. Entre ellas se encuentran varias compañías de origen europeo, como Unión Fenosa o ENEL.

Estas compañías europeas que intervienen en el país han sido acusadas por todo tipo de organizaciones sociales y políticas, y diferentes ONG, de no respetar el derecho de consulta, ni tan siquiera los mismísimos derechos humanos. Numerosas investigaciones acusan a las empresas europeas de beneficiarse de la práctica inexistencia de un marco jurídico estable para implementar sus proyectos sin necesidad alguna de cumplir con las normas y los tratados internacionales. En concreto, la mayoría de estos proyectos nunca respeta lo estipulado en la Convención 169 de la OIT, que establece que este tipo de proyectos se deben hacer tras la celebración de un referéndum entre las comunidades afectadas.

Con respecto a la situación del mercado de la energía, los precios no han dejado de subir, produciendo un acceso muy desigual a dicho recurso y la queja de numerosas ONG y organizaciones sociales ante el abandono y la restricción del consumo energético desde la privatización del sector. Esto evidencia que dichos proyectos hidroeléctricos no han beneficiado a las comunidades donde se han construido.

Los contratos de construcción de proyectos hidroeléctricos aportan sustanciosos ingresos a las empresas constructoras y eléctricas a costa de un fuerte impacto sobre el medio ambiente que, en muchas ocasiones, se produce sobre los territorios de comunidades indígenas. Estos millonarios contratos de construcción suponen una importante fuente de ingresos para numerosas grandes empresas europeas, que realizan sus proyectos violando abiertamente las disposiciones de la OIT.

¿Considera la Comisión que las actuaciones de empresas como ENEL o Unión Fenosa en Guatemala cumplen el artículo primero del Acuerdo de Asociación UE-América Central? ¿Cómo pretende obligar a las empresas europeas a que respeten el Derecho internacional en Guatemala para hacer cumplir el artículo primero del Acuerdo de Asociación UE-América Central?

Respuesta conjunta de la alta representante y vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión

(6 de marzo de 2014)

Según la información procedente de la Comisión Nacional de la energía eléctrica, actualmente 27 centrales hidroeléctricas funcionan en el país. Otros 20 proyectos están aprobados o en fase de estudio por parte de las autoridades competentes.

La UE considera de extrema importancia que se consulte convenientemente a la población que podría verse afectada por estos proyectos. En el marco de su diálogo con el Gobierno de Guatemala y en colaboración con la OIT, la UE ha instado a las autoridades guatemaltecas a que cumplieran sus acuerdos internacionales, incluido el Convenio 169 de la OIT. Un acceso equitativo a la información es fundamental a este respecto debiendo aplicarse mecanismos de consulta efectivos. El hecho de que varios proyectos hidroeléctricos funcionen sin conflictos pone de relieve que también existen buenas prácticas.

Con el fin de contribuir a los esfuerzos del Gobierno para estimular el diálogo y reducir los niveles de violencia social, la UE ha identificado para el período 2014-2020 la «Resolución de conflictos, la paz y la seguridad» como uno de los sectores prioritarios de su cooperación.

En lo que respecta al Acuerdo de Asociación, el artículo 1 establece que los derechos humanos y el desarrollo sostenible son objetivos generales; por lo que se debe lograr un equilibrio adecuado entre el desarrollo económico, el social y el medioambiental en el marco de la aplicación del Acuerdo. Para lograr este objetivo, la UE seguirá promoviendo la responsabilidad social de las empresas. Respetar la legislación local constituye un requisito previo fundamental para que las empresas cumplan su responsabilidad social. Mientras tanto, cabe recordar que el Acuerdo de Asociación no impone obligaciones o crea derechos a cualquier otra persona jurídica que no sea la UE y los países de América Central.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013660/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Hydroelectric projects and the rights of indigenous peoples in Guatemala

Numerous multinational companies, including a number of European companies such as Unión Fenosa or ENEL, have recently been expressing an interest in the business opportunities offered by hydroelectric power plant in Guatemala.

However, a wide spectrum of social and political organisations and various NGOs have been accusing European companies involved in Guatemala of failing to respect the rights of those concerned to be consulted and of infringing human rights. Numerous investigations have concluded that European companies are taking advantage of the virtual absence of any firmly established legal framework provisions to push forward their projects without being required in any way to comply with international standards and agreements, in particular the provisions of ILO Convention No 169 requiring consultation of affected communities by means of a referendum prior to the launching of such projects.

In many cases, the outcome of referendums in which local communities have opposed the launching of hydroelectric projects have simply been ignored by the companies, which have gone ahead with their projects in Guatemala anyway, thereby infringing the above convention. The Guatemalan Government is responsible for ensuring compliance with international agreements signed by it and should therefore guarantee respect for the democratically expressed wishes of indigenous peoples in its territory and halt work on many projects which are being completed or are about to be launched.

Concerning the energy market situation, prices have continued to rise, creating major inequalities regarding access. Many NGOs and social organisations complain of unavailable or limited power supplies following the privatisation. The hydroelectric projects have clearly been of no benefit to the communities in which they are located.

Does the Commission have a list of hydroelectric projects realised in Guatemala in the face of opposition from local communities, thereby clearly infringing ILO Convention No 169? Will it urge Guatemala to comply with the Convention, to which it is a signatory, and effectively uphold the rights of indigenous peoples? In the context of the EU-Central America Association Agreement, will it urge the Guatemalan Government to comply fully with the terms of the Convention?

Question for written answer E-013661/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Hydroelectrical projects in Guatemala and European enterprises

A number of multinational companies have recently become interested in the business opportunities offered by hydroelectrical plants in Guatemala. These include several European-based companies, such as Unión Fenosa and ENEL.

However, a wide spectrum of social and political organisations and various NGOs have accused European companies involved in Guatemala of failing to respect the right to consultation of those affected and of infringing basic human rights. Numerous investigations have accused European companies of taking advantage of the almost complete absence of a stable legal framework to carry out their projects without having to comply with international rules and treaties Specifically, most of these companies fail to respect the terms of ILO Convention 169, which establishes that such projects can only be implemented once a referendum has been held in the communities affected by them.

Prices in the energy market have continued to rise, making access to energy highly unequal and leading to complaints from many NGOs and social organisations about the absence or restriction of power supply since the sector was privatised. This clearly shows that these hydroelectric projects have been of no benefit to the communities in which they are located.

Contracts to build hydroelectric projects are a source of considerable income for construction and electrical companies, at the cost of severe environmental impact, which often takes place on land belonging to indigenous communities. These multi-million euro construction contracts are a major source of income for a large number of big European companies, which carry out their projects in open violation of ILO treaties.

Does the Commission consider that the actions of companies such as ENEL or Unión Fenosa in Guatemala comply with the terms of the EU-Central America Association Agreement? How does it intend to force European companies to respect international law in Guatemala, in compliance with Article 1 of the EU-Central America Association Agreement?

Joint answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission

(6 March 2014)

According to information from the National Commission of Electric Energy, currently 27 hydroelectric plants are operating throughout the country. Another 20 projects are either approved or under consideration by the competent authorities.

The EU believes that proper consultations with the population that potentially could be affected by these projects are of high importance. In the framework of its dialogue with the government of Guatemala and in collaboration with the ILO, the EU urged the Guatemalan authorities to comply with its international agreements, including ILO Convention No 169. Equal access to information is essential in this regard and effective consultation mechanisms ought to be set up. The fact that several hydroelectric projects operate without conflict shows that there are some good practices.

In order to contribute to the government's efforts to stimulate dialogue and reduce the levels of social violence, the EU has identified for the 2014-2020 period 'Conflict resolution, peace and security' as one of the focal sectors for its cooperation.

Regarding the Association Agreement, Article 1 states that human rights and sustainable development are overarching objectives; and an appropriate balance should therefore be struck between economic, social and environmental development when implementing the Agreement. To achieve this goal, the EU will further promote Corporate Social Responsibility. Respect of local legislation constitutes a basic prerequisite for any enterprise to meet its social responsibility. Meanwhile, it should be recalled that the Association Agreement does not impose obligations or create rights on any other legal persons than the EU and the Central American countries.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013666/13
an die Kommission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(3. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Riskcycle: besonders problematische Stoffe in der Abfallphase

Über eine Reduktion des Eintrages besonders problematischer Stoffe wie POPs oder SVHC-Chemikalien in die Primärprodukte können auch die Sekundärprodukte geschützt werden.

1. Teilt die Kommission die Auffassung, dass die Reduzierung des Eintrages besonders problematischer Stoffe insbesondere der Umsetzung der REACH-Verordnung obliegt, deren Guidance-Dokumente explizit die Abfallphase in die Stoffbewertung für beispielsweise die Stoffregistrierung einbeziehen?

2. Sind der Kommission Registrierdossiers bekannt, die diesem Anspruch genügen?

3. Hält die Kommission diese Fragestellung für die laufende Dossierprüfung durch die ECHA für eine hilfreiche Vorgabe, um die erforderlichen Prioritäten zu setzen?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(4. März 2014)

Die Qualität von Recyclingmaterialien hängt in hohem Maß von der Homogenität und Reinheit der Abfallströme ab. Die Abfallphase sollte in die im Rahmen von REACH ([1]) vorgesehenen Stoffsicherheitsbeurteilungen der Registranten aufgenommen werden. Zudem gibt es registrierte Stoffe, bei denen diese Phase in den Registrierungsdossiers abgedeckt wird. Dieses Element sollte jedoch nicht im Mittelpunkt des Prozesses der Stoffbewertung stehen. Die Beschränkungsverfahren und Zulassungsverfahren sind besser geeignet, um auf Bedenken im Zusammenhang mit problematischen Stoffe in der Abfallphase einzugehen. Die Bewertung kann jedoch dazu beitragen, die Wissenslücken im Hinblick auf viele Stoffe zu schließen und Prioritäten festzulegen, damit diese Risikomanagementinstrumente in die Lage versetzt werden, Bedenken, die in der Abfallphase aufkommen, gerecht zu werden.

([1]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1907/2206 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 18. Dezember 2006 zur Registrierung, Bewertung, Zulassung und Beschränkung chemischer Stoffe.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013666/13
to the Commission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(3 December 2013)

Subject: Risk cycle: particularly problematic substances in the waste stage

By reducing the input of particularly problematic substances such as POPs or substances of very high concern (SVHCs) in the primary products, these can also be kept out of secondary products.

1. Does the Commission agree that reducing the input of particularly problematic substances is a particular responsibility under the implementation of the REACH Regulation, the Guidance Documents of which explicitly include the waste stage in the substance evaluation for the registration of substances, for example?

2. Is the Commission aware of any registration dossiers that satisfy this requirement?

3. Does the Commission consider this to be a useful objective in the ongoing examination of dossiers by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) in order to set the necessary priorities?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2014)

Quality of recyclates depends to a large degree in homogeneity and purity of waste streams. The waste stage should be included in the chemical safety assessments of registrants under REACH ([1]) and there are substances registered, for which the registration dossiers cover this stage. However, this element should not be the focus of the substance evaluation process. The restriction and authorisation processes are better suited to address concerns from problematic substances in the waste stage. However, evaluation can help bridge the knowledge gap on many substances and set priorities enabling these risk management tools to address concerns identified in the waste stage.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1907/2206 of the European parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013735/13
an die Kommission
Jutta Steinruck (S&D) und Josef Weidenholzer (S&D)
(4. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Europäisches Jahr 2014

Die Mehrheit der Mitglieder des Europäischen Parlaments unterstützte Anfang 2013 die Schriftliche Erklärung 32/2012 und sprach sich für ein Europäisches Jahr 2014 unter dem Motto „Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie" aus. Auf die parlamentarische Anfrage (E-008093/2013) zum Thema antwortete die Kommission noch im August und sagte zu, Themen und Inhalte für ein mögliches Europäisches Jahr 2014 zu prüfen. Vor dem Hintergrund, dass es seit dem Jahr 2003 bei den Europäischen Jahren keine Lücke mehr gab und es sich um ein sehr erfolgreiches Projekt handelt, stellen sich folgende Fragen:

1. Welche Themen wurden von der Kommission für das Jahr 2014 in Betracht gezogen?

2. Wie werden die Themen, die in Betracht gezogen werden, erhoben?

3. Wo sind die Ergebnisse der Prüfungen der Themen einzusehen?

4. Warum hat sich die Kommission entschlossen, das Europäische Jahr 2014 nicht unter das Motto „Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie" zu stellen?

5. Warum hat sich die Kommission entschlossen, im Jahr 2014 kein Europäisches Jahr zu veranstalten?

6. Wo und wann wurde formell entschieden, dass es kein Europäisches Jahr 2014 geben soll?

7. Was passiert mit den finanziellen Mitteln, die für das Europäische Jahr 2014 vorgesehen waren?

8. Wann hat die Kommission vor, ein Europäisches Jahr für die Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie zu veranstalten, wie vom Europäischen Parlament gefordert?

Antwort von Herrn Barroso im Namen der Kommission
(4. März 2014)

Wie bereits in der Antwort auf die Anfragen P-012282/2013 und E-13588/13 erläutert, sind bei der Kommission verschiedene Vorschläge für die Themenstellung des Europäischen Jahres 2014 eingegangen. Da jedoch in diesem Jahr Wahlen zum Europäischen Parlament stattfinden und institutionelle Veränderungen erfolgen, erscheint es aus Sicht der Kommission sinnvoller, die Maßnahmen im Zusammenhang mit dem Europäischen Jahr der Bürger und Bürgerinnen 2013 auch 2014 fortzuführen.

Für das Europäische Jahr 2014 waren keine besonderen Finanzmittel vorgesehen. Die Finanzierung von Maßnahmen, die 2014 im Rahmen des Europäischen Jahres der Bürger und Bürgerinnen gefördert werden, erfolgt auf Grundlage des Haushalts 2013.

Der Vorschlag, 2015 zum Europäischen Jahr der Entwicklung zu erklären, wurde von der Kommission gebilligt und wird nun im Europäischen Parlament und im Rat erörtert. Weitere Vorschläge für die thematische Ausrichtung künftiger Europäischer Jahre wird die Kommission zu gegebener Zeit prüfen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013735/13
to the Commission
Jutta Steinruck (S&D) and Josef Weidenholzer (S&D)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: European Year 2014

At the start of 2013 the majority of MEPs backed Written Declaration 32/2012 and expressed their support for European Year 2014 for 'Reconciling Work and Family Life'. The Commission gave its reply to the parliamentary question (E-008093/2013) on this subject just in August, with a commitment to consider carefully themes and content for a possible European Year 2014. In light of the fact that there has been a European Year theme every year since 2003 and that this is a highly successful project, we would like to know:

1. What themes has the Commission considered for 2014?

2. How are the themes being considered assessed?

3. Where can the results of the deliberations on the themes be seen?

4. Why has the Commission decided not to devote European Year 2014 to 'Reconciling Work and Family Life'?

5. Why has the Commission decided not to arrange a European Year in 2014?

6. Where and when was the official decision made that there would be no European Year 2014?

7. What is happening with the financial resources which were earmarked for European Year 2014?

8. When does the Commission intend to organise a European Year for reconciling work and family life, as requested by Parliament?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2014)

As already replied to questions P-012282/2013 and E-13588/13, the Commission has received a number of competing proposals for the European year 2014. However, considering the specific nature of 2014 as a year of elections of the European Parliament and of institutional transition, the Commission has considered that it is more appropriate to continue actions related with the 2013 European Year of Citizens into 2014.

No specific resources were earmarked for the European year 2014. The actions which will be supported in 2014 in the framework of the European Year of Citizens are budgeted on the 2013 financial envelope.

The proposal that 2015 should be the European Year of Development has been adopted by the Commission and is now being considered for adoption by the European Parliament and the Council. The Commission will consider future proposals for European years in due time.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-013740/13
a Bizottság számára
Peter van Dalen (ECR), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Surján László (PPE) és Hannu Takkula (ALDE)
(2013. december 4.)

Tárgy: Nigéria

Míg a Boko Haram és az abból kivált Anszaru csoport által szított vallási erőszak széles médiavisszhangot kap, az ilyen csoportok felbukkanását megkönnyítő feltételek kezelése még várat magára. Sürgősen foglalkozni kell ennek hátterével, az észak- és közép-nigériai szövetségi államokban élő nem-muszlimok módszeres elszigetelése, valamint a vallási erőszakot övező büntetlenség kultúrája kérdésével. Ezek a tényezők együttesen olyan környezetet teremtenek, amelyben a vallási diszkriminációra és erőszakra következmények nélkül sor kerülhet.

Milyen lépéseket tesz az EU azért, hogy támogassa a nigériai kormányt a büntetlenség elleni küzdelmében, illetve a vallás és meggyőződés szabadságának előmozdításában Nigéria északi és középső szövetségi államaiban?

Catherine Ashton főképviselő/alelnök válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2014. február 28.)

A nigériai elhúzódó erőszak súlyos aggodalomra ad okot. Nem csupán az állami intézményekre, hanem az ártatlan civilekre is irányul – muszlimokra és keresztényekre egyaránt.

Az EU együttműködik Nigéria kormányával és népével, hogy segítsen pontot tenni az erőszakhullám végére. Ez a problémák megfelelő megoldásáról szóló, folyamatos politikai párbeszéden, illetve a nigériai kezdeményezéseket támogató, célzott segítségnyújtási intézkedéseken keresztül valósul meg. Nigériával folytatott politikai párbeszédében az EU szüntelenül hangsúlyozza, hogy az erőszak kiváltó okait kell kezelni, és olyan átfogó megközelítést kell elfogadni, amely kiterjed a jó kormányzásra, a jogállamiságra, az emberi jogok tiszteletben tartására, az inkluzív gazdasági fejlődésre és a munkahelyteremtésre.

A 10. Európai Fejlesztési Alap (EFA) a kormányzathoz kapcsolódó programok és intézkedések széles körét támogatja a vízellátás, a higiénés körülmények és az anyák egészségvédelme terén. Ezen túlmenően a Stabilitási Eszköz különleges támogatást nyújt a biztonság és a jogállamiság terén. A 11. EFA a tervek szerint bizonyos, Észak-Nigériában végrehajtandó tevékenységekre fogja helyezni a hangsúlyt.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013740/13
aan de Commissie
Peter van Dalen (ECR), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), László Surján (PPE) en Hannu Takkula (ALDE)
(4 december 2013)

Betreft: Nigeria

Terwijl het religieuze geweld waartoe Boko Haram en de tak Ansaru aanzetten momenteel veel media-aandacht krijgt, moeten de omstandigheden die de opkomst van dergelijke groepen bevorderen, nog aan de orde worden gesteld. Er blijft een dringende behoefte bestaan om de onderliggende systematische marginalisering van niet-moslims in de noordelijke en centrale staten aan te pakken, evenals het klimaat van straffeloosheid dat religieus geweld omringt. Deze factoren creëren tezamen een situatie waarin religieuze discriminatie en religieus geweld kunnen plaatsvinden zonder dat daaraan gevolgen zijn verbonden.

Welke maatregelen neemt de EU om de Nigeriaanse overheid te steunen in de strijd tegen straffeloosheid en bij de bevordering van godsdienstvrijheid en levensovertuiging in de noordelijke en centrale staten van Nigeria?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(28 februari 2014)

Het aanhoudende geweld in Nigeria is een bron van grote zorg. Het geweld richt zich niet alleen tegen de instellingen, maar ook tegen onschuldige burgers, zowel moslims als christenen.

De EU werkt samen met de regering en de bevolking van Nigeria om deze cyclus van geweld te helpen doorbreken. Zij doet dit via een permanente politieke dialoog over passende oplossingen voor de problemen en door gerichte steunmaatregelen ter ondersteuning van de Nigeriaanse initiatieven. In haar politieke dialoog met Nigeria benadrukt de EU constant de noodzaak om de dieper liggende oorzaken van het geweld aan te pakken en te streven naar een integrale aanpak die ook goed bestuur, de rechtsstaat, de eerbiediging van de mensenrechten, een inclusieve economische ontwikkeling en de schepping van werkgelegenheid omvat.

Het 10e Europees Ontwikkelingsfonds (EOF) ondersteunt een breed spectrum van beleidsprogramma's en acties op het gebied van watervoorziening, sanitaire voorzieningen en de gezondheid van moeder en kind. Daarnaast voorziet het stabiliteitsinstrument in specifieke bijstand op het gebied van veiligheid en de rechtsstaat. Het is de bedoeling bepaalde activiteiten in het kader van het 11e EOF toe te spitsen op het noorden van Nigeria.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-013740/13
komissiolle
Peter van Dalen (ECR), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), László Surján (PPE) ja Hannu Takkula (ALDE)
(4. joulukuuta 2013)

Aihe: Nigeria

Vaikka Boko Haramin ja sen seuraajajärjestön Ansarun lietsoma uskonnollinen väkivalta on tällä hetkellä laajasti esillä tiedotusvälineissä, tällaisten ryhmien syntymiseen johtaviin olosuhteisiin ei ole vielä paneuduttu. On nopeasti puututtava taustalla olevaan muiden kuin muslimien järjestelmälliseen syrjintään useilla Pohjois- ja Keski-Nigerian alueilla, samoin kuin uskonnolliseen väkivaltaan liittyvään rankaisemattomuuden kulttuuriin. Yhdessä nämä tekijät muodostavat suotuisan ympäristön uskonnollisen syrjinnän ja väkivallan harjoittamiselle ilman seurauksia.

Mihin toimenpiteisiin EU on ryhtymässä tukeakseen Nigerian hallitusta rankaisemattomuuden torjumisessa ja uskonnon ja vakaumuksen vapauden edistämisessä Pohjois- ja Keski-Nigeriassa?

Korkean edustajan, varapuheenjohtaja Catherine Ashtonin komission puolesta antama vastaus
(28. helmikuuta 2014)

Väkivallan jatkuminen Nigeriassa aiheuttaa suurta huolta. Sen kohteena on valtion laitosten lisäksi myös viattomia siviilejä – niin muslimeja kuin kristittyjäkin.

EU työskentelee Nigerian hallituksen ja kansan kanssa väkivallan kierteen katkaisemiseksi esimerkiksi käymällä jatkuvaa poliittista vuoropuhelua asianmukaisten ratkaisujen löytämiseksi ongelmiin sekä toteuttamalla kohdennettuja aputoimia nigerialaisaloitteiden tueksi. EU korostaa Nigerian kanssa käymässään poliittisessa vuoropuhelussa jatkuvasti tarvetta puuttua väkivallan perussyihin ja omaksua kattava lähestymistapa, johon sisältyy hyvä hallintotapa, oikeusvaltioperiaate, ihmisoikeuksien kunnioittaminen, osallistava talouskehitys ja työpaikkojen luominen.

Kymmenennestä Euroopan kehitysrahastosta (EKR) tuetaan monia erilaisia hallintoon liittyviä ohjelmia ja toimia vesihuollon, puhtaanapidon ja äitiysterveyden alalla. Lisäksi vakautusvälineestä annetaan erityistukea turvallisuuden ja oikeusvaltioperiaatteen alalla. Yhdennestätoista Euroopan kehitysrahastosta pyritään tukemaan tiettyjä Pohjois-Nigeriassa toteutettavia toimia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013740/13
to the Commission
Peter van Dalen (ECR), Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL), László Surján (PPE) and Hannu Takkula (ALDE)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Nigeria

While religious violence instigated by Boko Haram and its offshoot Ansaru is currently receiving wide media coverage, the conditions that facilitate the emergence of such groups have yet to be addressed. There remains an urgent need to tackle the underlying systematic marginalisation of non-Muslims in various northern and central states, as well as the culture of impunity surrounding religious violence. Together, these factors create an enabling environment in which religious discrimination and violence can occur without consequences.

What measures is the EU taking to support the Nigerian government in combating impunity and promoting freedom of religion and belief in the northern and central states of Nigeria?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

The continued violence in Nigeria is of great concern. It targets not only state institutions, but also innoncent civilians, both Muslims and Christians.

The EU is working with the government and people of Nigeria to help bring an end to the cycle of violence. It does so through continuous political dialogue on appropriate solutions to the problems, and through targeted aid interventions in support of Nigerian initiatives. In its political dialogue with Nigeria, the EU constantly stresses the need to address the root causes of violence and to adopt a comprehensive approach that includes good governance, the rule of law, respect of human rights, inclusive economic development and job creation.

The 10th European Development Fund (EDF) is supporting a broad range of governance related programmes and interventions in the field of water, sanitation and maternal health. In addition, the Instrument for Stability is providing specific assistance in the area of security and rule of law. The 11th EDF will try to focus certain activities on the North of Nigeria.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013748/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Family farming

Last month the United Nations launched the international year of family farming 2014 initiative in a bid to raise awareness of the role that family farms play in providing food security and alleviating hunger and poverty. As over 95% of farms in the EU are family-run, I agree with Commissioner Cioloş belief that they constitute the 'heart of European agriculture'. Nevertheless, the number of full-time farmers has fallen by over one third — representing almost 5 million jobs — in the last decade, as holdings have been integrated into larger farming units.

Given the centrality of family farming in the EU, what measures does the Commission plan to take in order to support family farming and to ensure that it has a competitive future in the coming years? Furthermore, how does the Commission expect the reformed Common Agricultural Policy to contribute to family farming?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2014)

Following the recent reform of the common agricultural policy (CAP), the Commission has put in place a policy framework with targets and common tools to deal with socioeconomic and environmental challenges faced by farms across the EU. The CAP offers a wide range of measures to enhance the competitiveness of family farms irrespective of their size, output and production methods. Measures available within Rural Development Policy allow family farms to become more sustainable by improving economic, environmental and social delivery. Support can be granted for knowledge transfer, advisory and farming management services, farm modernisation and/or restructuring and also to support cooperation of different economic actors in rural areas. A specific emphasis is placed on targeting young farmers, which is essential in order to ensure generational renewal of farms.

The reform also provides farmers with the means to have more effective access to markets. Farmers can opt for measures that will help them to sell their products directly to consumers and become involved in short supply chains and local markets. Measures aiming at strengthening of producer organisations and introduction of risk management tools are also intended to enhance the competitiveness of family farms. As far as research and innovation is concerned, the European Innovation Partnership for agricultural productivity and sustainability will provide opportunities for setting up Operational Groups who will develop, test and apply innovative approaches.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-013759/13
till kommissionen
Marita Ulvskog (S&D)
(4 december 2013)

Angående: Bostadsbyggnation i naturområdet kring Råstasjön

Det pågår för närvarande en namninsamling för att skydda det artrika grönområdet kring Råstasjön i den svenska kommunen Solna. Nära 12 000 människor har undertecknat ett upprop mot nybebyggelse i det känsliga området.

Råstasjön har ett mycket rikt djur- och växtliv. Områdets orörda natur är hemvist för ett stort antal växt- och djurarter, bland annat de rödlistade fågelarterna brunand och silltrut samt den i Sverige ovanliga vattenrallen.

Världsnaturfonden utnämnde den 30 augusti 2013 Råstasjön till "Svensk Pärla", en utmärkelse som delas ut baserat på områdens höga bevarandevärde och betydelse för naturupplevelser, men också behovet av skydd.

Det finns en oro för att nybyggnation i området skulle ha negativa effekter på den biologiska mångfalden. Solna kommun förväntas i en ny detaljplan föreslå byggen av ett stort antal lägenheter nära Råstasjön. Det skulle rimligtvis medföra asfalteringar och andra ingrepp på den naturliga miljön.

1. Är kommissionen medveten om situationen vid Råstasjön?

2. Inte minst mot bakgrund av Världsnaturfondens ovannämnda beslut, anser kommissionen att uppförandet av bostäder i ett känsligt naturområde som Råstasjön är förenligt med EU:s miljönormer för att bevara eller återuppbygga naturliga livsmiljöer för vilda djur och växter?

Svar från Janez Potočnik på kommissionens vägnar
(14 februari 2014)

Kommissionen har inte underrättats om något byggprojekt vid Rastasjön. Detta område är inte skyddat enligt EU-lagstiftning, och kommissionen känner inte till någon förekomst av någon art som omfattas av det strikta skydd som gäller för arter i bilaga I i fågeldirektivet ([1]). De arter som ledamoten nämner finns förtecknade i bilaga II, vilket innebär att de får jagas i enlighet med nationell lagstiftning. Enligt direktivet ska dock medlemsstaterna ta hänsyn till skyddet av våtmarker, och i synnerhet våtmarker av internationell betydelse. Det är de svenska myndigheterna som har ansvaret för att analysera konsekvenserna av detta bostadsprojekt, som inte nödvändigtvis är oförenliga med naturskydd. Det finns i detta skede inget som tyder på att Sverige skulle bryta mot EU-lagstiftningen.

([1]) Europaparlamentets och rådets direktiv 2009/147/EG av den 30 november 2009 om bevarande av vilda fåglar.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013759/13
to the Commission
Marita Ulvskog (S&D)
(4 December 2013)

Subject: Housing construction in the natural area around Lake Råstasjön

Signatures are currently being collected in support of the protection of the species-rich green space around Lake Råstasjön in the Swedish municipality of Solna. Almost 12 000 people have signed a petition to stop new housing in this sensitive area.

Lake Råstasjön has a very rich flora and fauna. The area's untouched natural environment is home to a large number of plant and animal species, including red-listed bird species like the Common Pochard and Lesser Black-backed Gull, and the Water Rail, which is rare in Sweden.

On 30 August 2013, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) designated Lake Råstasjön a 'Swedish pearl', a distinction that is awarded based on the area's high conservation value and importance for natural attractions, but also the need for protection.

There is concern that new housing in the area would have a negative impact on biodiversity. In a new local development plan, the municipality of Solna is expected to propose the construction of a large number of apartments near to Lake Råstasjön. This is likely to involve asphalting and other encroachments on the natural environment.

1. Is the Commission aware of the situation at Lake Råstasjön?

2. In view of WWF's abovementioned decision in particular, does the Commission consider the construction of housing in a sensitive natural area like Lake Råstasjön to be compatible with the EU's environmental standards for conserving and rebuilding natural habitats for wild fauna and flora?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

The Commission has not been informed of housing plans near Lake Rastasjön. This area is not protected under the EU legislation and the Commission is not aware of the presence in the area of strictly protected species, as listed under Annex I of the Birds Directive ([1]). The species mentioned by the Honourable Member are listed under Annex II, i.e. they may be hunted under national legislation. The directive nevertheless foresees that Member States shall pay attention to the protection of wetlands and particularly to wetlands of international importance. The Swedish authorities are responsible for the evaluation of the impact of this housing project which is not necessary incompatible with nature conservation. There is, at this stage, no evidence that Sweden is not acting in conformity with EU legislation.

([1]) Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-013863/13
Komisii (podpredsedníčke Komisie/vysokej predstaviteľke Únie)
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(5. decembra 2013)

Vec: VP/HR – Nepokoje v Sýrii

Ak existuje relevantný dôkaz o tom, že v uplynulých dňoch došlo pri útoku v Sýrii k použitiu chemických zbraní, došlo zároveň k závažnému porušeniu medzinárodného práva. Európska únia už nemôže stáť bokom, zatiaľ čo práva nevinných civilistov sú porušované, ba čo viac, dochádza k stratám na ľudských životoch. Pri sýrskom útoku zahynulo viac než stotisíc ľudí a veľké množstvo ďalších bolo nútené opustiť krajinu.

Chemický útok nemožno za absolútne žiadnych okolností ospravedlniť. Reakcia Európy sa ale musí opierať o nespochybniteľné dôkazy. Iba tak možno dosiahnuť, aby násilie nevyústilo do ďalšieho násilia.

Disponuje podpredsedníčka Komisie/vysoká predstaviteľka Únie nespochybniteľnými dôkazmi o chemickom útoku? Ak áno, aké budú jej nasledujúce kroky?

Odpoveď vysokej predstaviteľky Únie a podpredsedníčky Komisie Catherine Ashtonovej v mene Komisie
(10. marca 2014)

Vysoká predstaviteľka Únie a podpredsedníčka Komisie je vážne znepokojená hrozbou, ktorú sýrske chemické zbrane predstavujú pre občanov Sýrie a jej susedné krajiny a tiež na regionálnej a medzinárodnej úrovni. Ako sa uvádza v správach Bezpečnostnej rady OSN, existujú nesporné dôkazy, že v Sýrii boli použité chemické zbrane. V správach sa neuvádzajú páchatelia týchto útokov.

Vysoká predstaviteľka Únie a podpredsedníčka Komisie plne podporila medzinárodnú iniciatívu zameranú na zničenie sýrskeho programu chemických zbraní a uvítala rezolúciu Bezpečnostnej rady OSN č. 2118.

Európska únia podporuje medzinárodné úsilie na zničenie sýrskych chemických zbraní tak politicky, ako aj prakticky. EÚ predovšetkým poskytla podrobné mapy a obrnené vozidlá pre spoločnú misiu OSN a Organizácie pre zákaz chemických zbraní (OPCW) v Sýrii. Vysoká predstaviteľka a podpredsedníčka Komisie a jej útvary tento proces pozorne sledujú a udržiavajú pravidelný kontakt s OPCW a OSN, ako aj s medzinárodnými partnermi.

EÚ vzala na vedomie správu misie OSN/OPCW z decembra 2013, v ktorej sa uvádza, že pri odstraňovaní programu chemických zbraní Sýrskej arabskej republiky sa dosahuje sústavný pokrok a že misia naďalej overuje odstraňovanie sýrskeho programu chemických zbraní, pričom zrýchlila plánovanie a prípravy na odvoz chemických látok z územia Sýrskej arabskej republiky.

V rezolúcii BR OSN sa konečný termín na likvidáciu chemických zbraní Sýrie stanovil na koniec prvého polroka 2014. Harmonogram opatrení, ktoré sa majú dovtedy uskutočniť, je flexibilný, pričom začína byť jasné, že preprava chemických zbraní po mori sa nezačne skôr ako začiatkom roku 2014.

EÚ víta začatie presunu chemikálií zo Sýrie na účely ich zničenia mimo krajiny. Tento vývoj predstavuje dôležitý krok, zostáva však toho urobiť ešte veľa vrátane samotnej deštrukcie chemikálií. EÚ si dobre uvedomuje prekážky v logistike a bezpečnostné podmienky v krajine. Napriek tomu je znepokojená oneskorením v procese ničenia chemických zbraní a vyzýva vládu Sýrie, aby plne spolupracovala so spoločnou misiou OSN/OPCW. EÚ poskytla pomoc spoločnej misii a trustovému fondu OPCW a bude vo svojej podpore aj naďalej pokračovať. Okrem toho vláda Sýrie musí napriek údajným finančným ťažkostiam dodržiavať svoje medzinárodné záväzky; na tento účel bolo prijaté príslušné rozhodnutie Rady s cieľom povoliť rozmrazenie finančných prostriedkov na platby pre osobitný trustový fond OPCW určený na likvidáciu arzenálu sýrskych chemických zbraní.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013863/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Unrest in Syria

If there exists relevant proof that chemical weapons were used recently in an attack in Syria, this would be a serious breach of international law. The European Union can no longer stand by while the rights of innocent civilians are violated and, what is more, people are losing their lives. During the Syrian attack, more than a hundred thousand people were killed and a large number of others were forced to leave the country.

A chemical attack cannot be justified under any circumstances whatsoever. Europe's reaction, however, must be based on indisputable evidence. Only in this way will it be possible to ensure that violence does not lead to further violence.

Does the Vice-President/High Representative have indisputable evidence of a chemical attack? If so, what will its next steps be?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(10 March 2014)

The HR/VP is gravely concerned about the threat posed by Syria's chemical weapons for the people of Syria, the neighbouring countries, as well about at the regional and international level. As indicated in the reports to the UN Security Council, there is undisputable evidence that chemical weapons have been used in Syria. The reports do not identify the perpetrators of these attacks.

The HR/VP fully supported the international initiative aimed at destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons programme and welcomed the Resolution no. 2118 of the UN Security Council.

The EU has been supporting the international effort to destroy Syria's chemical weapons politically as well as practically. In particular, the EU provided detailed maps and armoured vehicles to the joint UN/OPCW mission in Syria. The HR/VP and her services are following the process closely, staying in regular contact with both the OPCW and the United Nations, as well as with international partners.

The EU noted the December 2013 report of the UN/OPCW mission stating that sustained progress had been realised in eliminating the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic and that the mission continued to verify the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, while accelerating the planning and preparations for the removal of the chemical agents from the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The overall target date for the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons was set by the UNSC Resolution for the end of the first semester of 2014. The schedule of intermediate steps has been flexible and it became clear that the transportation of the chemical weapons by sea would not begin before early 2014.

The EU welcomes the start of the transfer of chemicals from Syria for their destruction outside the country. This development marks an important step, but much remains to be done, including the actual destruction of the chemicals. The EU is well aware of the logistical obstacles and of the security conditions in the country. Nonetheless, the EU is concerned about the delays in the process of destruction and calls on the Government of Syria to fully cooperate with the UN/OPCW Joint Mission. The EU has provided assistance to the joint mission and to the OPCW trust fund and will continue its support. Moreover, the Government of Syria must respect its international obligations, despite its alleged financial difficulties; to this aim, a relevant Council Decision has been adopted in order to authorise the unfreezing of funds for the payment to the OPCW Special Trust Fund for the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons arsenal.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-013874/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(5. decembra 2013)

Vec: Práva starších

Valné zhromaždenie OSN vyhlásilo 1. október za Medzinárodný deň seniorov ešte v roku 1990, a to v nadväznosti na predchádzajúce iniciatívy, z ktorých najdôležitejšou bol Viedenský medzinárodný akčný plán pre problematiku starnutia. Je potrebné a dôležité vynaložiť patričné úsilie potrebné na to, aby i starší ľudia mohli byť plnohodnotnými členmi spoločnosti. Ich práva musia byť podporované a chránené, a to najmä prostredníctvom vedenia mnohostranného dialógu zainteresovaných strán. V tejto súvislosti sú už dlhšiu dobu vedené diskusie o nutnosti novej medzinárodnej zmluvy o ochrane práv starších osôb.

Aký je postoj Komisie k nutnosti vypracovania takejto novej medzinárodnej zmluvy?

Odpoveď vysokej predstaviteľky/podpredsedníčky Ashtonovej v mene Komisie
(28. februára 2014)

Situácia starších osôb je významnou prioritou programu EÚ, a to tak v rámci EÚ, ako aj na úrovni regionálnych a medzinárodných organizácií. EÚ je plne odhodlaná podporovať a chrániť ľudské práva starších ľudí a je si vedomá toho, že starší ľudia čelia vážnym výzvam. EÚ sa angažuje v rámci OSN a aktívne sa podieľa na činnosti otvorenej pracovnej skupiny pre starnutie ustanovenej Valným zhromaždením OSN, ako aj Komisie pre sociálny rozvoj, ktorá sa zaoberá problematikou vykonávania madridského medzinárodného akčného plánu týkajúceho sa starnutia.

V rámci existujúcich medzinárodných záväzkov v oblasti ľudských práv by bolo možné urobiť oveľa viac v záujme zlepšenia uplatňovania ľudských práv starších osôb a boja proti diskriminácii na základe veku. Vzhľadom na to sme sa v septembra 2013 na zasadnutí Rady OSN pre ľudské práva dohodli na ustanovení nezávislého experta s mandátom v oblasti vyhodnocovania vykonávania existujúcich právnych predpisov a stanovenia najlepších postupov.

EÚ bude s uvedeným expertom po jeho vymenovaní spolupracovať a zdieľať praktické príklady, napríklad svoje skúsenosti s vykonávaním Dohovoru o právach osôb so zdravotným postihnutím, ktorý sa uplatňuje na najzraniteľnejšie skupiny starších ľudí, najmä ľudí so zdravotným postihnutím v dôsledku poškodenia súvisiaceho s vyšším vekom. EÚ by sa mohla podeliť aj o svoje skúsenosti s tým, ako sa prostredníctvom európskeho partnerstva v oblasti inovácií zameraného na aktívne a zdravé starnutie (ktoré združuje zainteresované strany z verejného a súkromného sektora) snaží pomôcť starším občanom EÚ v tom, aby viedli zdravý, aktívny a nezávislý život. Ďalším príspevkom by mohli byť informácie o tom, ako Komisia monitoruje implementáciu existujúceho právneho acquis EÚ, ktoré zahŕňa aj ustanovenia na ochranu proti diskriminácii na základe veku v zamestnaní a povolaní, v členských štátoch.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013874/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Rights of the elderly

The UN General Assembly proclaimed 1 October to be the International Day of Older Persons back in 1990, following up on initiatives, the most important of which was the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing. It is necessary and important to make the appropriate efforts needed to ensure that older people can be full members of society. Their rights must be promoted and protected, especially through multilateral dialogue among stakeholders. To this end, discussions have long been held on the need for a new international treaty on the protection of the rights of the elderly.

What is the Commission's position on the need to draw up a new international treaty of this type?

Answer given by High-Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

The situation of older persons is high on the EU's agenda, both within the EU and at the level of regional and international organisations. The EU is fully committed to the promotion and protection of human rights of older persons and acknowledges the serious challenges older persons face. The EU is engaged at the UN and participates actively both in the UN General Assembly's open-ended working group on Ageing as well as in the Commission on Social Development which considers the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

Still much more could be done under the existing international human rights obligations to improve the enjoyment of human rights by older persons and to combat age discrimination. In view of that we have agreed at the September 2013 session of the UN Human Rights Council to the creation of an Independent Expert with a mandate focusing on the assessment of the implementation of existing law and the identification of best practice.

The EU will cooperate with the expert once appointed and share practical examples, for instance its experience with the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which covers the most vulnerable groups of older person namely those with disabilities resulting from age related impairments. The EU could also share how it is seeking to enable EU older citizens to lead healthy, active and independent lives by the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing which gathers stakeholders from public and private sectors, and how the Commission is monitoring Member States' implementation of the existing EU legal *acquis* which also comprises provisions to protect against age-related discrimination in employment and occupation.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-013887/13
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(5 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: Privatização de empresas públicas em Portugal (III)

As privatizações levadas a cabo pelo governo português desde junho de 2011, no contexto da vigência do programa UE-FMI, tiveram um resultado líquido para o Estado de 4 492 milhões de euros.

Importa salientar que, com estas privatizações, o governo português alienou empresas estratégicas (EDP, REN e ANA), todas elas rentáveis, pelo que de futuro o Estado se verá privado não apenas de uma intervenção mais forte nesses setores da economia, indutora do desenvolvimento económico e da justiça social, mas igualmente dos lucros e dividendos que essas empresas geram.

Apesar de um dos argumentos justificativos das privatizações ser a necessidade de redução da dívida pública, constata-se que o encaixe financeiro imediato destas privatizações (que, como referido anteriormente, terá como contrapartida a ausência de encaixes futuros, desde logo sob a forma de lucros e dividendos) não corresponde senão a 2 % do montante da dívida pública, que se estima que ascenda a mais de 211 milhões de euros.

Assim, em face do exposto, solicitamos à Comissão que nos informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Como justifica a imposição destas privatizações? Tendo em conta que o Tratado é (supostamente) neutro no que respeita à propriedade privada ou pública destas empresas, não deveria a Comissão respeitar esta posição de modo estrito?

2. Procedeu a alguma avaliação do impacto destas privatizações, designadamente na perda estimada de receitas futuras por parte do Estado português e na redução da sua capacidade de intervenção em setores estratégicos, como resultado destas privatizações?

Resposta dada pelo Vice-Presidente Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(24 de fevereiro de 2014)

Aquando da conceção do Programa de Ajustamento Económico para Portugal na primavera de 2011, tanto o Governo como os mutuantes internacionais consideraram apropriado que Portugal contribuísse para as suas necessidades de financiamento ao longo do período abrangido pelo programa, nomeadamente, através de privatizações. Em consequência, quando estas necessidades de financiamento foram estimadas, tomaram-se em consideração as receitas resultantes de privatizações no montante de 5 mil milhões de EUR. Este montante foi atingido de forma muito precoce em relação ao calendário previsto e o Governo prevê novas privatizações nos próximos meses. Em termos financeiros, o programa de privatizações do Governo é, assim, um êxito significativo.

A Comissão considera que as políticas no domínio social e do desenvolvimento devem ser aplicadas através dos meios adequados (p.ex. política de I&D e inovação e política fiscal). Estas políticas fazem parte integrante da Agenda UE2020, desempenhando a Comissão um papel ativo no âmbito deste processo. A definição do que se deve entender por «setor estratégico» não é um conceito fixo, dependendo de uma série de parâmetros e registou alterações substanciais nos últimos anos. O facto de hoje em dia os fornecedores de energia e os operadores aeroportuários serem muitas vezes empresas privadas reflete a evolução das mentalidades ao longo do tempo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013887/13
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Privatisation of public companies in Portugal (III)

The privatisations carried out by the Portuguese Government since June 2011 as part of the EU-IMF programme have raised a net sum of EUR 4.492 billion for the state.

It should be noted that with these privatisations, the Portuguese Government has disposed of strategic companies (the energy company EDP, the energy grid company REN and the airport operator ANA) that were profitable, and this will deny the Government both the ability to strongly influence these sectors of the economy, which promote economic development and social justice, as well as the profits and dividends that these companies generate.

Although one of the reasons given for the privatisations was the need to reduce the public debt, the immediate financial gain from these privatisations (which, as mentioned above, deny the state future income, as profits and dividends come to an end) do not even cover 2% of the public debt, which is estimated to be more than EUR 211 million.

1. In light of the above, how does the Commission justify these privatisations? Given that the Treaty is (supposedly) neutral with regard to whether these companies should be in public or private ownership, is the Commission not obliged to strictly respect the same position?

2. Has there been any assessment of the impact of these privatisations, in terms of lost future revenue to the Portuguese Government and the weakening of its ability to intervene in these strategic sectors?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(24 February 2014)

Upon conception of the Economic Adjustment Programme for Portugal in Spring 2011, both the government and the international lenders considered it appropriate that Portugal would make a contribution to its financing needs over the programme period, *inter alia* through privatisations. As a consequence, when estimating these financing needs, revenues from privatisations amounting to EUR 5 billion have been taken into account. This amount has been achieved much ahead of schedule and the government plans further privatisation in the coming months. Financially, the government's privatisation programme is thus a significant success.

The Commission believes that development and social policies should be implemented through appropriate means (e.g. R&D and innovation and tax policies). Such policies are part of the EU2020 Agenda and the Commission plays an active role in this process. The definition of what is a 'strategic sector' is not a fixed concept it depends on numerous parameters of a given economy and it has undergone substantial changes in past years. The fact that nowadays energy providers and airport operators are very often private undertakings reflects the evolution of perceptions in time.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-013888/13
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(5 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: Privatização de empresas públicas em Portugal (IV)

Está em curso o processo de privatização dos CTT. Com mais esta privatização, em que se prevê alienar 70 % do capital de mais uma empresa estratégica e rentável, o governo português espera arrecadar 500,2 milhões de euros (o que corresponderá a cerca de 0,2 % do montante da dívida pública).

Perguntamos à Comissão:

1. Como justifica a imposição de mais esta privatização? Tendo em conta que o Tratado é (supostamente) neutro no que respeita à propriedade privada ou pública destas empresas, não deveria a Comissão respeitar esta posição de modo estrito?

2. Procedeu a alguma avaliação do impacto da privatização dos CTT em termos de perda estimada de receitas futuras por parte do Estado português e de redução da sua capacidade de intervenção neste setor estratégico?

3. O que está previsto relativamente aos 30 % de capital da empresa que não serão privatizados nesta fase?

4. Em que outros países da UE o Estado abdicou totalmente da sua posição no setor dos serviços postais?

Resposta dada pelo Vice-Presidente Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(24 de fevereiro de 2014)

Em dezembro de 2013, o Estado português alienou 70 % dos CTT através de uma oferta privada inicial. O preço das ações atingiu o valor máximo do intervalo determinado pelo Governo (5,52 EUR por ação), tendo o Estado encaixado verbas correspondentes, no total, a quase 500 milhões de EUR na sequência da alienação. Deste modo, a operação foi considerada um enorme êxito do ponto de vista financeiro.

No âmbito do Programa de Ajustamento Económico, o Governo já alcançou o objetivo de obter receitas de privatização no montante de 5 mil milhões de EUR. A Comissão não exerceu quaisquer pressões sobre o Governo português no sentido de privatizar os CTT, não tendo este último ainda informado a Comissão dos seus planos relativamente aos 30 % de capital social da empresa ainda não privatizados.

As empresas que prestam serviços postais foram privatizadas em diversos outros Estados-Membros da UE como, por exemplo, nos Países Baixos, na Alemanha e no Reino Unido. A Comissão não mantém um registo das privatizações realizadas no setor dos serviços postais.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013888/13
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: Privatisation of public companies in Portugal (IV)

The privatisation of the Portuguese Post Office (CTT) is underway. The intention of this privatisation is to sell 70% of the capital of yet another strategic and profitable company, through which the Portuguese Government hopes to raise EUR 5.2 million (equivalent to about 0.2% of the public debt).

1. How does the Commission justify yet another privatisation? Given that the Treaty is (supposedly) neutral with regard to whether these companies should be in public or private ownership, is the Commission not obliged to strictly respect the same position?

2. Has there been any assessment of the impact of privatising the CTT, in terms of lost future revenue to the Portuguese Government and the weakening of its ability to intervene in this strategic sector?

3. What are the plans for the 30% of the company's capital that is not being privatised in this phase?

4. In which other EU countries have governments totally renounced their position in the postal services sector?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(24 February 2014)

In December 2013, the Portuguese State sold 70% of the postal service company (CTT) through an initial private offering. The share price came out at the top of the price corridor set by the government (EUR 5.52 per share) and the sale yielded nearly EUR 500 million in total for the State. The sale was thus considered a big success from a financial point of view.

Within the Economic Adjustment Programme, the government has already achieved the target of privatisation receipts of EUR 5 billion. The Commission has not exerted any pressure on the Portuguese Government to privatise CTT. The Portuguese Government has not informed the Commission about its plans regarding the 30% of the capital not yet privatised.

Postal services companies have been privatised in a number of other EU Member States, e.g. the Netherlands, Germany and the UK. The Commission does not keep a record of privatisations in the postal service sector.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-013889/13
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(5 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: Recomendações da Comissão sobre as próximas eleições para o Parlamento Europeu

De acordo com notícias divulgadas na imprensa, a Comissão Europeia dirigiu aos governos dos Estados-Membros, no final de setembro, um conjunto de recomendações sobre as próximas eleições para o Parlamento Europeu.

Entre essas recomendações está o pedido para que os partidos concorrentes a estas eleições informem a que partido político europeu pertencem, sendo sugerida a inclusão dos respetivos nomes e símbolos nos boletins de voto, e que candidato apoiam para o cargo de presidente da Comissão Europeia.

1. Em face do exposto, solicitamos à Comissão que nos informe sobre o teor detalhado das recomendações enviadas aos governos dos Estados-Membros sobre as próximas eleições para o Parlamento Europeu.

2. Tendo em conta que estas recomendações extravasam claramente o conteúdo das normas da UE existentes relativas às eleições para o Parlamento Europeu, como justifica esta intromissão em aspetos da organização deste ato eleitoral?

Resposta dada por Viviane Reding em nome da Comissão
(25 de fevereiro de 2014)

Encorajar a participação dos cidadãos da UE na vida democrática é uma grande prioridade da Comissão. Como indicado no Relatório de 2013 sobre a Cidadania da UE intitulado

«Cidadãos da UE: os seus direitos, o seu futuro» ([1]), a participação nas eleições para o Parlamento Europeu é a principal forma de os cidadãos contribuírem para a elaboração de políticas da UE e constitui o fundamento da democracia representativa na UE.

Trata-se da razão pela qual a Comissão recomendou recentemente medidas para facilitar a participação dos cidadãos nas eleições para o Parlamento Europeu e reforçar a dimensão europeia destas eleições. Para o efeito, a Comissão adotou uma Comunicação ([2]) e uma Recomendação ([3]) sobre o reforço da realização democrática e eficaz das eleições para o Parlamento Europeu a que o Senhor Deputado se refere.

A Recomendação é dirigida aos partidos políticos nacionais e europeus, bem como aos Estados-Membros. Prevê nomeadamente que os eleitores devem ser informados sobre a filiação entre os partidos nacionais e os partidos políticos europeus, nomeadamente mediante a indicação dessa filiação nos boletins de voto e em todos os materiais de campanha dos partidos nacionais; que os partidos políticos europeus e nacionais devem dar a conhecer o candidato a Presidente da Comissão Europeia que apoiam; e que os partidos políticos nacionais devem garantir que os seus tempos de antena para as eleições sejam também utilizados para informar os cidadãos sobre este candidato e o seu programa.

A Comissão faz notar que a Recomendação respeita igualmente a resolução do Parlamento Europeu sobre as eleições europeias em 2014 ([4]).

([1]) COM(2013) 269.
([2]) COM(2013) 126.
([3]) JO L79 de 21.3.2013, p. 29.
([4]) Resolução do Parlamento Europeu, de 22 de novembro de 2012, sobre as eleições para o Parlamento Europeu em 2014 (2012/2829(RSP)).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013889/13
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(5 December 2013)

Subject: The Commission's recommendations for the forthcoming European Parliament elections

According to press reports, at the end of September the Commission sent Member-State governments a set of recommendations for the forthcoming European Parliament elections.

In these recommendations, the parties contesting the elections are requested to provide information on the European political party to which they belong, with the suggestion that the respective names and logos are included on voting forms, together with the candidate they are supporting for the post of Commission President.

1. In light of the above, can the Commission provide the specific details of the recommendations sent to Member State governments for the forthcoming Parliament elections?

2. Given that these recommendations clearly go beyond the provisions of the existing EU standards for Parliament elections, how does the Commission justify this interference in aspects of how these elections are organised?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(25 February 2014)

Encouraging the participation of EU citizens in the democratic life is a high priority for the Commission. As stated in the 2013 EU Citizenship Report 'EU citizens: your rights, your future' ([1]), participation in the European Parliament elections is the primary way for citizens to contribute to the shaping of EU policy and constitutes the bedrock of representative democracy in the EU.

This is why the Commission recently recommended measures to facilitate citizens' participation in the European Parliament elections and to strengthen the European dimension of these elections. To that purpose the Commission adopted a communication ([2]) and a recommendation ([3]) for further enhancing the democratic and efficient conduct of the European elections to which the Honourable Members refers.

The recommendation is addressed to national and to European political parties, as well as to the Member States. It provides *inter alia* that voters should be informed of the affiliation between national and European political parties, including by the indication of such an affiliation on the ballots and by displaying it in campaign materials of national parties; European and national parties should make known the candidate for President of the European Commission they support; national parties should ensure that their political broadcasts are also used to inform citizens about that candidate and the candidate's programme.

The Commission notes that the recommendation also follows the European Parliament resolution on the 2014 European elections ([4]).

([1]) COM(2013)269.
([2]) COM(2013)126.
([3]) OJ L79, 21.3.2013, p. 29.
([4]) European Parliament resolution of 22 November 2012 on the elections to the European Parliament in 2014(2012/2829(RSP)).

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013897/13
aan de Commissie
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE)
(6 december 2013)

Betreft: Passagierslijsten — Mexico en Rusland

Vanaf 1 januari 2014 zijn luchtvaartmaatschappijen verplicht de gegevens van passagierslijsten (PNR) voor alle vluchten van en naar Mexico aan de Mexicaanse autoriteiten te doen toekomen. Een dergelijke overdracht van gegevens is volgens de EU-wetgeving inzake privacybescherming niet toegestaan.

1. Wanneer heeft de Commissie voor het eerst kennis genomen van de plannen van de Mexicaanse autoriteiten om PNR-gegevens op te vragen, en wanneer is de Commissie hiervan officieel door de Mexicaanse autoriteiten op te hoogte gesteld?

2. Welke stappen zal de Commissie ondernemen om te waarborgen dat de overdracht van gegevens aansluit bij de Europese regels inzake privacybescherming?

3. Welke stappen zal de Commissie ondernemen om te waarborgen dat Europese luchtvaartmaatschappijen na 1 januari 2014 niet met hoge boetes of intrekking van de landingsrechten worden geconfronteerd?

4. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van het bestaan van een overeenkomst inzake het delen van gegevens tussen Mexico, de VS en Canada? Welke consequenties heeft deze overeenkomst voor de overdracht van persoonlijke gegevens aan Mexico? Welke juridische waarborgen zijn er voor de burgers van de Europese Unie?

Rusland

5. Hoe luidt de stand van zaken wat betreft de besprekingen met Rusland over de toekomstige verplichting voor luchtvaartmaatschappijen om PNR-gegevens over te dragen? Welke strategie volgt de Commissie om te waarborgen dat een dergelijke overdracht aansluit bij de EU-wetgeving inzake privacybescherming? Wanneer verwacht de Commissie resultaten van deze besprekingen?

6. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van het feit dat China heeft verklaard dat het luchtvaartmaatschappijen niet zal toestaan om de gegevens van Chinese burgers aan de Russische autoriteiten te doen toekomen wanneer zij alleen maar over Russisch grondgebied heen vliegen? Kan de Commissie toelichten waarom de EU niet eveneens kan weigeren om in dergelijke gevallen de gegevens van EU-burgers over te dragen?

7. Hoe verhoudt deze grootschalige overdracht van gegevens zich tot de Russische massa-afluisterprogramma's zoals SORM?

8. Is de Commissie er zeker van dat PNR-gegevens niet door de Russische autoriteiten zullen worden gebruikt om hun verbod op bepaalde activiteiten van „buitenlandse" ngo's te handhaven? Welk soort garanties heeft de Commissie van Rusland ontvangen?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(28 februari 2014)

De Mexicaanse wetgeving is in november 2012 in werking getreden, maar is nog niet ten uitvoer gelegd voor het luchtverkeer tussen de EU en Mexico. In 2013 verzochten de Mexicaanse autoriteiten de diensten van de Commissie om onderhandelingen over een PNR-overeenkomst te starten. De diensten van de Commissie hebben de Mexicaanse autoriteiten op de hoogte gebracht van het rechtskader van de EU.

Na intensieve contacten tussen de diensten van de Commissie (bijgestaan door de delegatie van de EU in Mexico) en de Mexicaanse autoriteiten in december 2013 zijn de Mexicaanse autoriteiten ermee akkoord gegaan om de Europese luchtvaartmaatschappijen niet te verplichten met ingang van 1 januari 2014 PNR-gegevens door te geven. Besprekingen over de technische aspecten tussen de diensten van de Commissie en de bevoegde Mexicaanse autoriteiten zullen de komende maanden plaatsvinden.

De Commissie is niet op de hoogte van een overeenkomst inzake de uitwisseling van PNR-gegevens tussen de VS, Mexico en Canada.

De Commissie is niet op de hoogte van de verklaring van China en zal deze kwestie onderzoeken.

Wat betreft de vragen van de Russische Federatie verwijst de Commissie het geachte Parlementslid naar haar antwoord op schriftelijke vraag P-014030/13. Er wordt nog steeds met de Russische autoriteiten gesproken nog steeds over uitstaande problemen, waaronder de zorgwekkende verplichte gegevensoverdracht bij vluchten over Siberië.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013897/13
to the Commission
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE)
(6 December 2013)

Subject: Passenger name records — Mexico and Russia

From 1 January 2014 carriers will be required to transfer passenger name record (PNR) data to the Mexican authorities for all flights to and from Mexico. Such data transfers are not allowed under EU data protection laws.

1. When did the Commission first hear about the Mexican authorities' plans to require the transfer of PNR data, and when was the Commission officially informed by the Mexican authorities?

2. What steps will the Commission take to ensure that data transfers to Mexico are in line with European data protection rules?

3. What steps will the Commission take to ensure that European carriers do not face high fines or a withdrawal of landing rights from 1 January 2014?

4. Is the Commission aware of a data sharing agreement between Mexico, the US and Canada? What consequences will that agreement have for transfers of personal data to Mexico? What legal safeguards will EU citizens have?

Russia

5. What is the state of play with regard to the talks with Russia on the future requirement for carriers to transfer PNR data? What strategy does the Commission have to ensure that such transfers are in line with EU data protection laws? When does the Commission expect an outcome from these talks?

6. Is the Commission aware that China has declared that carriers will not be allowed to share Chinese citizens' data with the Russian authorities when they are simply flying over Russian territory? Can the Commission explain why the EU should not also refuse to hand over EU citizens' data in such cases?

7. How does this massive data transfer fit in with Russia's mass surveillance programmes, such as SORM?

8. Is the Commission sure that PNR data will not be used by the Russian authorities to enforce their ban on certain activities by 'foreign' NGOs? What sort of reassurances has the Commission received from Russia?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

The Mexican legislation entered into force in November 2012 but has not yet been implemented with regard to traffic between EU and Mexico. The Mexican authorities asked the Commission services in 2013 to start negotiating a PNR agreement. The Commission services informed the Mexican authorities about the EU legal framework.

Following close contacts in December 2013 between the Commission services (assisted by the EU delegation in Mexico) and the Mexican authorities, the latter agreed not to require European carriers to transfer PNR data as of 1 January 2014. Technical talks between the Commission services and the relevant Mexican authorities will take place in the coming months.

The Commission is not aware of an agreement between the US, Mexico and Canada on the sharing of PNR data.

The Commission is not aware of this declaration by China and will look into this.

Regarding the Russian Federation, the Commission refers the Honourable Member to its reply to Question P-014030/13. Talks with the Russian authorities continue to address outstanding issues, among which the requirement to transfer data for overflights, which is a major concern.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-013923/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(6 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ρύπανση στον ποταμό Νέστο

Έντονη ανησυχία έχει προκαλέσει στους κατοίκους και φορείς της περιφέρειας Ανατολικής Μακεδονίας και Θράκης, η ανίχνευση στον ποταμό Νέστο, αυξημένων συγκεντρώσεων καδμίου σε δείγματα του επιφανειακού ύδατος, που είχε ως αποτέλεσμα να απαγορευθεί η αλιεία στο ελληνικό τμήμα του ποταμού.

Δεδομένου ότι α) παρά την Κοινή Επιτροπή Εμπειρογνωμόνων που έχει συσταθεί από τους Υπουργούς Περιβάλλοντος της Ελλάδας και της Βουλγαρίας, οι βουλγαρικές αρχές, επί του παρόντος, δεν έχουν δώσει σχετικά στοιχεία σε ό,τι αφορά τις ρυπογόνες δραστηριότητες που αναπτύσσονται στις διασυνοριακές λεκάνες απορροής όπως όφειλαν, β) οι ελληνικές αρχές έχουν προβεί σε σειρά υπομνημάτων, διαμαρτυριών-διαβημάτων προς τη βουλγαρική πλευρά, προκειμένου να λάβει όλα τα απαραίτητα μέτρα για την αποφυγή του φαινομένου της ρύπανσης του ποταμού, γ) οι δύο χώρες δεσμεύονται από τις διμερείς συμφωνίες (συμφωνία για τα ύδατα του Νέστου, 1995), από τις Οδηγίες, 2008/105/ΕΟΚ, 91/676/ΕΟΚ και κυρίως από την οδηγία πλαίσιο 2000/60 ΕΕ για τη διασυνοριακή ρύπανση, είναι συμβαλλόμενα μέρη στην σύμβαση του Ελσίνκι της Οικονομικής Επιτροπής για την Ευρώπη του ΟΗΕ για την προστασία και χρήση των διασυνοριακών υδάτων και λιμνών, δ) Σε παλαιότερη ερώτησή μου (E-1022/10), η Επιτροπή είχε επισημάνει, μεταξύ άλλων, ότι, «Στο πλαίσιο του διασυνοριακού προγράμματος Ελλάδα-Βουλγαρία 2007-2013 έχει δημοσιευθεί μια πρώτη πρόσκληση υποβολής προτάσεων με προϋπολογισμό 60 εκατομμυρίων ευρώ», και ε) η Επιτροπή, απαντώντας σε σχετική ερώτηση συναδέλφου (E-010014/2013), σημείωνε ότι πραγματοποιεί με τη Βουλγαρία «διμερείς συναντήσεις προκειμένου να συζητήσει, μεταξύ άλλων, ποια μέτρα απαιτούνται ώστε να υλοποιηθούν οι στόχοι της οδηγίας πλαίσιο για τα ύδατα».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

α) Πώς κρίνει την αντιμετώπιση της διασυνοριακής ρύπανσης του Νέστου η Επιτροπή μέχρι σήμερα; Γνωρίζει πώς αξιοποιήθηκαν τα διατεθέντα κονδύλια για το Διασυνοριακό Πρόγραμμα Ελλάδας-Βουλγαρίας 2007-2013;

β) Ποια είναι τα προβλήματα που έχει εντοπίσει η Επιτροπή στα σχέδια διαχείρισης που της υπέβαλε η Βουλγαρία; Διερευνά τα αίτια της ύπαρξης καδμίου στην εν λόγω λεκάνη απορροής (BG3000), που εμφανίζεται στα υποβληθέντα σχέδια διαχείρισης (πίνακας 9.1, σελίδα 37) που επισυνάπτονται στην απάντηση E-010014/2013;

γ) Τι μέτρα, νομικά ή και άλλα, μπορούν να λάβουν οι φορείς αλλά και οι κάτοικοι των περιοχών ώστε να προστατέψουν την υγεία τους, την οικολογική ισορροπία και το περιβάλλον από την συνεχιζόμενη ρύπανση του ποταμού Νέστου;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(27 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή δημοσίευσε την αξιολόγησή της σχετικά με τα σχέδια διαχείρισης της λεκάνης απορροής ποταμού της Βουλγαρίας (ΣΔΛΑΠ) τον Νοέμβριο του 2012 ([1]), τονίζοντας την ανάγκη για τη βελτίωση της συνεργασίας και του συντονισμού σε όλες τις πτυχές του ΣΔΛΑΠ που αφορούν κοινές με την Ελλάδα περιοχές λεκάνης απορροής ποταμού, συμπεριλαμβανομένου του ελέγχου για τη διασυνοριακή ρύπανση. Η Επιτροπή επανέλαβε την εν λόγω σύσταση τον Νοέμβριο του 2013, κατά τη διάρκεια διμερούς σύσκεψης με τις βουλγαρικές αρχές, εμμένοντας στην ανάγκη να βελτιωθεί η χημική παρακολούθηση και η αξιολόγηση των πιέσεων της χημικής ρύπανσης.

Μετά την 4η πρόσκληση υποβολής προτάσεων, έχει δεσμευτεί το 100% του διαθέσιμου προϋπολογισμού του διασυνοριακού προγράμματος συνεργασίας Ελλάδας-Βουλγαρίας 2007-2013, συμπεριλαμβανομένου του τομέα παρέμβασης «Προστασία, διαχείριση & προώθηση των περιβαλλοντικών πόρων». Η προθεσμία για την υποβολή προτάσεων ήταν η 8η Νοεμβρίου 2012 και καμία από τις επενδύσεις δεν προοριζόταν για τον ποταμό Νέστο.

Η Βουλγαρία δεν κοινοποίησε υπερβάσεις των προτύπων ποιότητας περιβάλλοντος (ΠΠΠ) για βαρέα μέταλλα, όπως το κάδμιο, για την περιοχή λεκάνης απορροής ποταμού στην οποία ανήκει ο ποταμός Νέστος (BG 4000). Ωστόσο, τα ΠΠΠ που εφαρμόστηκαν ήταν παρωχημένα. Έκτοτε η Βουλγαρία πληροφόρησε την Επιτροπή, με βάση τις κατευθυντήριες γραμμές της Επιτροπής του 2011, ότι θα εφαρμοστούν αυστηρότερα ΠΠΠ, στο πλαίσιο της επόμενης αξιολόγησης και, κατά περίπτωση, στον εντοπισμό των διορθωτικών μέτρων.

([1]) Βλέπε http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/pdf/CWD-2012-379_EN-Vol3_BG.pdf

Η προστασία του ποταμού Νέστου από τη ρύπανση θα πρέπει να διασφαλιστεί μέσω κοινού (ή πλήρως συντονισμένου) ΣΔΛΑΠ για τις σχετικές περιφέρειες στην Ελλάδα και τη Βουλγαρία (BG 4000 και GR 12). Εναπόκειται στις ελληνικές και βουλγαρικές αρχές να μεριμνήσουν κατά την επικαιροποίηση των ΣΔΛΑΠ το 2015 να εξεταστούν τα κενά, οι καθυστερήσεις και η έλλειψη συντονισμού των προηγούμενων ΣΔΛΑΠ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013923/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(6 December 2013)

Subject: Pollution in the River Nestos

The inhabitants and authorities of the region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace along the River Nestos are extremely concerned following the detection of increased traces of cadmium in surface water samples, resulting in a prohibition on fishing along the Greek section of the river.

Given that: (a) the Bulgarian authorities have not yet provided the requisite information on the pollution-generating activities that have developed along the cross-border river, despite the Joint Experts Commission established by the Environment Ministers of Greece and Bulgaria; (b) the Greek authorities have issued a series of memos and protests to the Bulgarian side for all necessary measures to be taken to avoid pollution of the river; (c) the two countries are bound by bilateral agreements (Agreement on the Waters of the Nestos, 1995), by Directives 2008/105/EC and 91/676/EEC and, in particular, by Framework Directive 2000/60/EC, in relation to cross-border pollution, and are signatories to the UN Economic Commission for Europe's Helsinki Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes; (d) in response to an earlier question of mine (E-1022/10), the Commission pointed out, among other things, that the 'Greece-Bulgaria 2007-2013 cross border programme has launched a first call for proposals with a budget of EUR 60 million'; and (e) the Commission, in response to another question (E-010014/2013), stated that it was conducting 'bilateral meetings [with Bulgaria] to discuss, among other issues, what measures are required to address the objectives of the Water Framework Directive',

a) How does the Commission judge the handling of cross-border pollution of the Nestos to date? Does it know how the funds for the Greece-Bulgaria 2007-2013 cross-border programme have been utilised?

b) What problems has it identified in the management plans submitted by Bulgaria? Is it investigating the reasons for the presence of cadmium in the Nestos basin (BG3000), which is apparent in the submitted management plans (Table 9.1, page 37) appended to answer E-010014/2013?

c) What measures — legal or otherwise — can the authorities and the inhabitants of the region take in order to protect their health, the ecological balance and the environment from the continuing serious pollution of the River Nestos?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2014)

The Commission published its assessment of the Bulgarian River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) in November 2012 ([1]), stressing the need to improve cooperation and coordination on all aspects of the Bulgarian RBMPs related to river basin districts shared with Greece, including the control of cross-border pollution. The Commission reiterated this recommendation in November 2013, at a bilateral meeting with the Bulgarian authorities, insisting on the need to improve chemical monitoring and the assessment of chemical pollution pressures.

After 4th call for proposal, 100% of the available budget of the Greece- Bulgaria 2007-2013 cross-border programme, including the intervention area 'Protection, Management & Promotion of the Environmental Resources' has been committed. The deadline for submission of proposals was 8 November 2012, and none of the investments targeted the river Nestos.

No exceedances of the Environmental Quality Standards (EQS) for heavy metals, such as cadmium, were reported by Bulgaria for the river basin district to which the river Nestos belongs (BG4000). However, the EQS applied were obsolete. Bulgaria has since informed the Commission that more stringent EQS, based on the 2011 Commission guidance, will be applied in the next assessment and, where appropriate, in the identification of any remedial measures.

The protection of the River Nestos from pollution should be ensured through a joint (or fully coordinated) RBMP for the relevant districts in Greece and Bulgaria (BG4000 and GR12). It is for the Greek and Bulgarian authorities to ensure that the 2015 update of the RBMPs addresses the gaps, delays and lack of coordination of the previous RBMPs.

([1]) See http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/pdf/CWD-2012-379_EN-Vol3_BG.pdf

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013967/13
aan de Commissie
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(9 december 2013)

Betreft: 2,75 miljard euro aan onterecht uitgekeerde regionale subsidies in 2012

Het jaarverslag over de uitvoering van de begroting van de Europese Unie door de Europese Rekenkamer over 2012 ([1]) hoofdstuk 5 bevat de uitkomsten van de door de Rekenkamer uitgevoerde onderzoeken met betrekking tot de (betalings)verrichtingen (regionaal beleid, energie en vervoer).

In de door de Europese Rekenkamer uitgevoerde onderzoeken werd in 49 % van de steekproefgevallen fouten aangetroffen.

Op de totale betalingen voor regionaal beleid, energie en vervoer van 40,7 miljard euro voor 2012 komt men op een geschat bedrag van ongeveer 2,8 miljard euro aan onterecht uitgekeerde regionale subsidies, oftewel maar liefst 6,8 %. Volgens de Commissie is het percentage van 6,8 % in lijn met de drie voorgaande jaren.

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van het jaarverslag van de Europese Rekenkamer over 2012 [(1)]?

2. Concludeert de Commissie nu ook eindelijk dat het regionale beleid afgeschaft moet worden en de middelen terug moeten naar de bijdragende lidstaten zodat elke lidstaat zelf kan bepalen hoe het geld wordt besteed, zeker nu blijkt dat het percentage onterecht uitgekeerde regionale subsidies over de laatste vier jaar onacceptabel hoog is gebleven? Zo nee, waarom niet?

Antwoord van de heer Hahn namens de Commissie
(7 maart 2014)

De Commissie is op de hoogte van het verslag van de Rekenkamer over de uitvoering van de begroting van de Europese Unie voor het begrotingsjaar 2012.

Het cohesiebeleid vormt het belangrijkste beleidsinstrument van de EU ter ondersteuning van haar strategie voor slimme, duurzame en inclusieve groei; dit wordt weerspiegeld in de conclusies van de bijeenkomst van de Europese Raad van 7-8 februari 2013 en is verankerd in het pakket regelgeving dat onlangs door het Europees Parlement en de Raad is aangenomen.

Het door de Rekenkamer geconstateerde foutenpercentage voor 2012 is gebaseerd op een extrapolatie van de fouten die zijn ontdekt in de uitgaven bij een steekproef van projecten die zijn gecontroleerd in verschillende lidstaten, maar de Rekenkamer verklaarde: „de EU-middelen werden voor het beoogde doel gebruikt en waren in zekere zin nuttig, al werden de voorwaarden voor de gebruikmaking ervan niet volledig in acht genomen" ([2]). Het is derhalve niet mogelijk om het foutenpercentage te vertalen in een hoeveelheid euro's die „verdwenen" is of waarvoor sprake van fraude is. In ieder geval geeft de Commissie follow-up aan alle gevallen waarin fouten zijn ontdekt, om ervoor te zorgen dat alle ten onrechte betaalde bedragen worden teruggevorderd.

([1]) http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/AR12/AR12_NL.pdf
([2]) http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/FAQ12/a13_37.nl.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013967/13
to the Commission
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(9 December 2013)

Subject: EUR 2.75 billion in undue regional subsidies paid out in 2012

Chapter 5 of the Annual Report from the Court of Auditors on the implementation of the 2012 budget of the European Union ([1]) sets out the outcomes of the investigations carried out by the Court of Auditors into (payment) transactions (in regional policy, energy and transport).

Errors were found in 49% of samples in the investigations carried out by the Court of Auditors.

Based on the total payments of EUR 40.7 billion for regional policy, energy and transport for 2012, the estimated sum of undue regional subsidies paid out is approximately EUR 2.8 billion, which is at least 6.8%. According to the Commission, this percentage of 6.8% is in line with the three preceding years.

1. Is the Commission au fait with the annual report from the Court of Auditors for 2012[1]?

2. Will the Commission now finally come to the conclusion that regional policy must be abolished and the funds returned to the contributing Member States so that each Member State can itself determine how the money is spent, especially as it is now evident that the percentage of regional subsidies unduly paid out has become unacceptably high over the last four years? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(7 March 2014)

The Commission is aware of the Court of Auditors' Report regarding the implementation of the budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012.

Cohesion policy constitutes the EU's main policy instrument to support its strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth, as reflected in the conclusions of the European Council's meeting of 7-8 February 2013, and enshrined in the regulatory package recently adopted by the European Parliament and the Council.

The Court of Auditors reported an error rate for 2012 which is based on an extrapolation of errors detected in expenditure of a sample of projects audited in different Member States, but points out that 'the EU funds were used for their intended purposes and provided some benefit, even though they did not fully respect the conditions related to their use' ([2]). Consequently, the error rate cannot be translated into an amount of euros that have 'gone missing' or are the subject of fraud. In any event, the Commission follows up all cases of detected errors, to ensure that all irregular amounts are recovered.

([1]) http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/AR12/AR12_NL.pdf
([2]) http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/FAQ12/a13_37.EN.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-013974/13
an die Kommission
Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE), Karl-Heinz Florenz (PPE), Jo Leinen (S&D) und Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE)
(10. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Die Bedeutung der Fazilität für das Guyana-Schild

Das Guyana-Schild umfasst etwa 270 Millionen Hektar Land in Brasilien, Kolumbien, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname und Französisch-Guayana und ist eine der wichtigsten Ökoregionen der Welt mit einer riesigen Vielfalt an Ökosystemen, von denen einige weltweit einzigartig sind. Es enthält eines der größten ungestörten tropischen Regenwaldgebiete der Welt, das etwa 500 Millionen Tonnen Kohlenstoff pro Jahr bindet, und liefert 10 bis 15 % des Süßwassers auf der Welt.

Die Kommission hat den Schutz und die nachhaltige Entwicklung der Region seit den 1990er-Jahren aktiv gefördert, auch durch die Finanzierung der Guyana-Schild-Initiative 2006-2009 und der Fazilität für das Guyana-Schild, einer Initiative der Kommission in Zusammenarbeit mit dem UNDP, von 2010 bis 2014.

Ist die Kommission angesichts der Bedeutung des Guyana-Schilds bei der Eindämmung des Verlusts von biologischer Vielfalt in der Welt und angesichts seines Süßwasservorkommens, dem Schutz seiner tropischen Regenwälder und seiner Kohlenstoffbindung in Verbindung mit dem Klimawandel der Ansicht, dass diese Region auch weiterhin langfristig geschützt werden sollte?

Ist die Kommission auf der Grundlage ihrer politischen Ziele im neuen mehrjährigen Finanzrahmen bereit, die langfristige nachhaltige Entwicklung des Guyana-Schilds sowie ihre Zusammenarbeit mit dem UNDP und der Fazilität für das Guyana-Schild weiterhin sowohl politisch als auch finanziell zu unterstützen?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(27. Februar 2014)

Die Kommission ist sich über die Bedeutung von Guyana-Schild als Ökoregion durchaus im Klaren und hat die Guyana-Schild-Initiative aktiv unterstützt. Sie ist der Auffassung, dass die Grundsätze der guten Regierungsführung und der nachhaltigen Bewirtschaftung natürlicher Ressourcen zum langfristigen Schutz der Region beitragen dürften. Eine verstärkte Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Ländern der Region wird in diesem Zusammenhang unerlässlich sein, auch zur Gewährleistung der langfristigen Nachhaltigkeit der Region.

Im Rahmen des neuen mehrjährigen Finanzrahmens werden auch Mittel für die regionale Unterstützung von Programmen und Projekten für nachhaltige Entwicklung zur Verfügung stehen. Insbesondere im Rahmen des 11. EEF rund 65 Mio. EUR (18,6 % der vorgeschlagenen Mittelausstattung für den indikativen Plan für die Region der Karibik in Höhe von insgesamt 350 Mio. EUR vorsieht) für die Sektoren Umwelt & Klima sowie Energie bereitgestellt. Zudem werden Maßnahmen zum Schutz von Guyana-Schild künftig auch aus Intra-AKP-Mitteln, bei denen ein Schwerpunkt auf Umwelt und Klimawandel liegt, und aus DCI-Mitteln finanziert werden können.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-013974/13
aan de Commissie
Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE), Karl-Heinz Florenz (PPE), Jo Leinen (S&D) en Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE)
(10 december 2013)

Betreft: Belang van de Guyanaschild-faciliteit

Het Guyanaschild, dat 270 miljoen hectare omvat en zich uitstrekt over Brazilië, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname en Frans Guyana, is een van de belangrijkste ecoregio's ter wereld en kent een enorme verscheidenheid aan ecosystemen, waarvan enkele uniek zijn op aarde. Het Guyanaschild omvat een van de grootste ongerepte gebieden met primaire tropische bossen ter wereld met circa 500 miljoen ton koolstofvastlegging per jaar, en het levert 10 tot 15 procent van de drinkwatervoorziening op aarde.

De Europese Commissie heeft sinds de jaren negentig van de vorige eeuw het behoud en de duurzame ontwikkeling van het gebied actief bevorderd, onder meer door financiering van het Guyanaschild-initiatief 2006-2009, en, van 2010 tot 2014, de Guyanaschild-faciliteit, een initiatief van de Commissie in samenwerking met het VN-ontwikkelingsprogramma UNDP.

Is de Commissie ook van mening dat de bescherming van het Guyanaschild op lange termijn gewaarborgd moet zijn, aangezien het schild cruciaal is om het verlies van biodiversiteit overal ter wereld een halt te kunnen toeroepen en van groot belang is voor de drinkwatervoorziening, de bescherming van tropische bossen en — in verband met de opwarming van de aarde — voor koolstofvastlegging?

Is de Commissie, op grond van haar beleidsvoornemens voor het nieuwe meerjarig financieel kader, bereid de duurzame ontwikkeling van het Guyanaschild op lange termijn zowel politiek als financieel te blijven waarborgen, onder meer door middel van samenwerking met het UNDP en voortzetting van de Guyanaschild-faciliteit?

Antwoord van de heer Potočnik namens de Commissie
(27 februari 2014)

De Commissie erkent het belang van het Guyanaschild als ecoregio en heeft de Guyanaschild-faciliteit actief ondersteund. Zij is van mening dat de langetermijnbescherming van het Guyanaschild moet worden gegrondvest op de beginselen van goede governance en duurzaam beheer van de natuurlijke hulpbronnen. In dit verband is nauwere samenwerking tussen de landen in de regio van essentieel belang en de sleutel tot de duurzaamheid van de regio op lange termijn.

Het nieuwe meerjarige financiële kader voorziet in regionale steun voor programma's en projecten ter ondersteuning van duurzame ontwikkeling. Met name in het kader van het 11e EOF is circa 65 miljoen EUR, dat wil zeggen 18,6 % van de voorgestelde toewijzing voor het regionaal indicatief plan voor het Caribisch gebied, waarmee in totaal een bedrag van 350 miljoen EUR is gemoeid, uitgetrokken voor de sectoren milieu en klimaat/energie. Bovendien kan steun voor de bescherming van het Guyanaschild ook uit intra-ACS-middelen, waarbij sterk de nadruk wordt gelegd op milieu en klimaatverandering, alsmede uit DCI-middelen worden gefinancierd.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013974/13
to the Commission
Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE), Karl-Heinz Florenz (PPE), Jo Leinen (S&D) and Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: Importance of the Guiana Shield Facility

The Guiana Shield, covering 270 million hectares in Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guyana, is one of the most important eco-regions in the world, with an enormous variety of ecosystems, some of which are unique in the world. It contains one of the largest undisturbed areas of primary tropical forest in the world with a carbon sequestration of approximately 500 million tons per year, and it provides 10 to 15% of the world's fresh water supply.

The Commission has been actively promoting the conservation and sustainable development of the area since the 1990s, including via the funding of the 2006-2009 Guiana Shield Initiative, and the Guiana Shield Facility, an initiative established by the Commission in cooperation with the UNDP, from 2010 to 2014.

Given the importance of the Guiana Shield in halting the loss of biodiversity in the world, and as regards its fresh water supply, its tropical forest protection and its carbon sequestration in relation to global warming, does the Commission consider that the area should continue to be protected in the long term?

Based on its policy intentions in the new multiannual financial framework, is the Commission prepared to continue to ensure, both politically and financially, the long-term sustainable development of the Guiana Shield, as well as its cooperation with the UNDP and the Guiana Shield Facility?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2014)

The Commission recognises the importance of the Guiana Shield as an eco-region and has actively supported the Guiana Shield Facility project. The Commission considers that the principles of good governance and the sustainable management of natural resources should underpin the long-term protection of the Guiana Shield. In this respect, enhanced collaboration between the countries in the region is essential and will be the key to region's sustainability in the long term.

Under the new multi-annual financial framework, regional support will be available for programmes and projects in support of sustainable development. In particular under the 11th EDF, approximately 65 million euros representing 18,6% of the proposed allocation for the Caribbean Regional Indicative Plan, amounting to a total of 350 million euros, have been set aside for the Environment & Climate/Energy sector. Moreover, support to the protection of the Guiana shield will be possible under the Intra-ACP funds, where Environment and Climate Change is as one major focuses, as well as DCI funds.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-013991/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(10 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Rapimento di dodici suore da un convento cristiano in Siria

Il 2 dicembre scorso, 12 suore sono state rapite in Siria nel monastero di Santa Tecla Pelagia Sayyaf, sito nel villaggio cristiano di Maalula, nella zona di Qalamoun. Il sequestro è stato rivendicato venerdì da un gruppo ribelle chiamato Brigate Qalamoun Libero.

La Commissione:

1. è a conoscenza di questi fatti?

2. come intende intervenire a supporto della liberazione delle religiose rapite?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(10 marzo 2014)

L'AR/VP condivide la profonda preoccupazione per la situazione delle religiose rapite dal convento cristiano in Siria, vicenda che i suoi servizi seguono attentamente. L'Unione ribadisce sistematicamente, anche nelle conclusioni del Consiglio «Affari esteri», la preoccupazione per l'excalation di violenze etniche e religiose.

L'Unione considera inammissibile ogni forma di violenza contro i civili, in generale, e le violenze per motivi d'identità, quali la religione o l'origine etnica, in particolare. In Siria violenze di questo tipo perpetrate a danno della comunità cristiana, come anche di altre comunità, sono duramente condannate dall'AR/VP. Nel paese si sono verificati numerosi casi di rapimenti, scomparse e detenzioni arbitrarie e in diverse occasioni l'AR/VP ha intimato con decisione che si ponga fine a queste pratiche esecrabili, chiedendo la liberazione delle persone rapite o ingiustamente detenute.

La reazione dell'Unione al vasto e complesso conflitto siriano rientra in un approccio globale, che ricomprende gli sforzi volti a contrastare le diffuse violazioni dei diritti umani, che causano profonde sofferenze per milioni di cittadini, e a ricercare una soluzione alla crisi in corso.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-013991/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(10 December 2013)

Subject: Kidnapping of 12 nuns from a Christian convent in Syria

On 2 December, 12 nuns were kidnapped from the St Thecla Convent in Syria, located in the Christian village of Maaloula, in the Qalamoun region. Responsibility for this kidnapping has been claimed by a rebel group known as the Free Qalamoun Brigades.

Can the Commission state:

1. whether it is aware of the above?

2. what action it intends to take to help free the kidnapped nuns?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(10 March 2014)

The HR/VP shares the grave concern at the situation of the kidnapped nuns from a Christian convent in Syria and her services are following the situation very closely. The EU has repeatedly stated, including in Foreign Affairs Council conclusions, its concern with the rise of religiously or ethnically motivated violence.

Any violence against civilians in general, and based on identitity issues such as religion or ethnicity in particular, is unacceptable. The Christian community of Syria, alongside other communtiies, has been victim of such violence, which the HRVPcondemns in the strongest terms. There have been numerous cases of kidnapping, disappearance and arbitrary detention in Syria. The HRVP has repeatedly made clear that such appalling practices must stop and all those kidnapped or arbitrarily detained be released without delay.

The EU addresses the Syrian conflict in its entirety and vast complexity by means of a comprehensive approach, which includes efforts to work against the widespread violations of human rights, causing suffering to millions of Syrian people and seeking a solution to the ongoing crisis.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-014034/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(11 december 2013)

Betreft: Miljarden in Palestijns zwart gat

In het Britse blad The Sunday Times, van 13 oktober jl, wordt melding gemaakt van EU Rekenkamer rapport 14/2013 ([1]). In het rapport wordt ingegaan op het gebrek aan toezicht op de besteding van Europese hulpfondsen aan de „Palestijnse autoriteiten". Daardoor is het zicht op de besteding van EUR 2 300 000 000 aan hulpfondsen, die de EU tussen 2008 en 2012 aan de zogenaamde „bezette gebieden" heeft overgemaakt, verdwenen.

Op 20 september 2012 heb ik vragen gesteld aan de Commissie over de besteding van gelden die door de EU aan de Palestijnse Autoriteit worden overgemaakt (E-008299/2012). Ik uitte daarbij mijn zorg dat deze gelden werden aangewend om terroristen die in Israëlische gevangenissen zijn opgesloten duizenden dollars per maand te betalen. De Commissie heeft in haar antwoord medegedeeld dat, van de door de Europese burgers aan de Palestijnse autoriteit betaalde belastingmiddelen, niets bij de veroordeelde terroristen terechtkomt.

1. Kan de Commissie bevestigen dat de Europese Rekenkamer een rapport heeft uitgegeven waarin kritiek wordt geleverd op de controle van de EU, of liever gezegd het gebrek hiervan, over de wijze waarop Europees belastinggeld is besteed dat aan de „Palestijnse autoriteit" is overgemaakt?

2. Zo ja, komt dan het antwoord dat de Commissie mij heeft gegeven in een ander licht te staan?

3. Blijft de Commissie in het licht van de bevindingen van de Europese Rekenkamer volhouden dat er geen cent aan EU-belastinggeld terechtkomt bij Palestijnse terroristen?

4. Zo ja, waar baseert de Commissie dit standpunt op? Graag een gedetailleerde toelichting met ondersteunend bewijsmateriaal.

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(22 januari 2014)

1. De Commissie bevestigt dat de Europese Rekenkamer op 11 december 2013 een verslag heeft gepubliceerd over de directe financiële steun die door de EU is verleend aan de Palestijnse Autoriteit. De conclusie van dit verslag luidde dat de Commissie en de EDEO er ondanks de moeilijke omstandigheden in zijn geslaagd deze steun ten uitvoer te leggen en dat er geen aanwijzingen zijn voor corruptie of wanbeheer.

2. De Commissie is derhalve van mening dat haar antwoord op schriftelijke vraag 8299/2012 nog steeds geldt ([2]).

3. Het verslag van de Rekenkamer wijst er niet op dat belastinggeld van EU-burgers terecht zou komen bij terroristen

4. Zie het antwoord onder punt 3.

([1]) http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR13_14/SR13_14_EN.pdf
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014034/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(11 December 2013)

Subject: Billions disappearing down Palestinian black hole

An article which appeared in the British newspaper The *Sunday Times* on 13 October 2013 referred to Report No 14/2013 by the Court of Auditors of the EU ([1]). That report mentions the lack of monitoring of the use made of European aid funding channelled to the 'Palestinian authorities'. As a result, there has been a failure to keep track of the way in which EUR 2 300 000 000 in aid which the EU transferred to the so-called 'occupied territories' between 2008 and 2012 was spent.

On 20 September 2012, I put questions to the Commission concerning the use made of funds transferred to the Palestinian Authority by the EU (E-008299/2012). I expressed my concern that these funds were being used to pay thousands of dollars per month to terrorists in Israeli prisons. In its answer, the Commission stated that none of the money which European citizens pay in tax ends up in the hands of convicted terrorists.

1. Can the Commission confirm that the Court of Auditors has issued a report which criticises the way in which the EU has monitored — or rather failed to monitor — how European taxpayers' money has been spent which was transferred to the 'Palestinian Authority'?

2. If so, does that shed a different light on the answer which the Commission gave me?

3. In the light of the findings of the Court of Auditors, does the Commission continue to maintain that not a single cent of EU taxpayers' money finds its way into the hands of Palestinian terrorists?

4. If so, on what does the Commission base this position? Please provide a detailed account with supporting evidence.

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(22 January 2014)

1. The Commission can indeed confirm that the Court of Auditors issued a report on EU Direct Financial Support to the Palestinian Authority on 11th December 2013. The report concluded that the Commission and EEAS have succeeded in implementing this support despite difficult circumstances and that there is no evidence of corruption or mismanagement.

2. In these circumstances, the Commission considers that its reply to question 8299/2012 remains valid ([2]).

3. The Court's report does not contain any findings indicating that EU taxpayers money has found its way to terrorists.

4. See reply to point 3.

([1]) http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR13_14/SR13_14_EN.pdf
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014066/13
an den Rat
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE) und Eva Lichtenberger (Verts/ALE)
(12. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Kriterien für den Verzicht auf ausschließliche Zuständigkeit der EU

In ihrer Antwort auf die Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011256/2013 scheint die Kommission implizit zum Ausdruck zu bringen, dass das Übereinkommen über das Einheitliche Patentgericht (EPG) sich auf gemeinschaftliche Vorschriften oder deren Geltungsbereich auswirkt. Zudem gibt die Kommission zu, dass das Übereinkommen über das EPG in die ausschließliche Zuständigkeit der EU fällt, schiebt jedoch mögliche rechtliche Unregelmäßigkeiten auf die Frage, ob die Union dem Verzicht auf ihre ausschließliche Zuständigkeit zugestimmt habe.

Ist der Rat der Ansicht, dass das Parlament und die Kommission alle notwendigen Formalitäten für einen Verzicht der EU auf ihre ausschließliche Zuständigkeit zum Abschluss des Übereinkommens über das EPG erledigt haben? Kann der Rat die erforderlichen Formalitäten im Detail aufführen und darlegen, welche davon erledigt wurden?

Antwort
(24. Februar 2014)

Es ist nicht Sache des Rates, die Standpunkte der Kommission zu kommentieren oder Auslegungen von Rechtsvorschriften der Union vorzunehmen.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-014066/13
till rådet
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE) och Eva Lichtenberger (Verts/ALE)
(12 december 2013)

Angående: Kriterier för att göra avkall på EU:s exklusiva behörighet

I sitt svar på den skriftliga frågan E-011256/2013 tycks kommissionen underförstått säga att avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol påverkar gemensamma regler eller ändrar räckvidden för dessa. Dessutom medger kommissionen att avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol faller under EU:s exklusiva befogenhet, men låter frågan om en eventuell lagöverträdelse övergå i frågan om huruvida unionen har gått med på att ge avkall på sin exklusiva befogenhet.

Anser rådet att parlamentet och kommissionen har fullgjort alla de nödvändiga formaliteterna för att EU ska kunna ge avkall på sin exklusiva befogenhet i fråga om att ingå avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol? Kan rådet i detalj ange de formaliteter som krävs och ange vilka av dessa som har fullgjorts?

Svar
(24 februari 2014)

Det är inte rådets sak att kommentera ståndpunkter som kommissionen gett uttryck för eller att tolka unionslagstiftningens bestämmelser.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014066/13
to the Council
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE) and Eva Lichtenberger (Verts/ALE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Criteria for waiving EU exclusive competence

In its answer to Written Question E-011256/2013 the Commission seems to be implicitly saying that the Unified Patent Court (UPC) agreement affects common rules or alters their scope. Additionally, the Commission admits that the UPC agreement falls within the EU's exclusive competence but shifts the potential legal irregularity to the question of whether the Union has given its consent to have its exclusive competence waived.

Does the Council consider that Parliament and the Commission have fulfilled all the necessary formalities for the EU to waive its exclusive competence to conclude the UPC agreement? Can the Council detail the required formalities and state which of these have been fulfilled?

Reply
(24 February 2014)

It is not for the Council to comment on positions expressed by the Commission nor to interpret provisions of Union law.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014067/13
an die Kommission
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE) und Eva Lichtenberger (Verts/ALE)
(12. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Kriterien für den Verzicht auf ausschließliche Zuständigkeit der EU

In ihrer Antwort auf die Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011256/2013 scheint die Kommission implizit zum Ausdruck zu bringen, dass das Übereinkommen über das Einheitliche Patentgericht (EPG) sich auf gemeinschaftliche Vorschriften oder deren Geltungsbereich auswirkt. Zudem gibt die Kommission zu, dass das Übereinkommen über das EPG in die ausschließliche Zuständigkeit der EU fällt, schiebt jedoch mögliche rechtliche Unregelmäßigkeiten auf die Frage, ob die Union dem Verzicht auf ihre ausschließliche Zuständigkeit zugestimmt hat.

Ist die Kommission der Ansicht, dass das Parlament und der Rat alle notwendigen Formalitäten für einen Verzicht der EU auf ihre ausschließliche Zuständigkeit zum Abschluss des Übereinkommens über das EPG erledigt haben? Kann die Kommission die erforderlichen Formalitäten im Detail aufführen und darlegen, welche davon erledigt wurden?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(24. Februar 2014)

Die Reform des Patentsystems in Europa stützt sich auf zwei Elemente — die Schaffung eines Europäischen Patents mit einheitlicher Wirkung (Verordnungen 1257/2012 ([1]) und 1260/2012 ([2])) sowie die Einrichtung einer gemeinsamen spezialisierten Patentgerichtsbarkeit (Übereinkommen über das Einheitliche Patentgericht — EPG). Die Gerichtsbarkeit ist notwendig für das Funktionieren Europäischer Patente mit einheitlicher Wirkung. Diese besondere Struktur beeinträchtigt nicht die künftige Ausübung der Zuständigkeiten der Union entsprechend den Verträgen. Abschließend möchte die Kommission klarstellen, dass sie in ihrer Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-011256/2013 nicht implizit zum Ausdruck gebracht hat, dass das Übereinkommen über das Einheitliche Patentgericht (EPG) sich auf gemeinschaftliche Vorschriften oder deren Geltungsbereich auswirkt, sondern nur die rechtliche Lage angesprochen hat, die sich ergeben würde, wenn dies der Fall wäre.

([1]) Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1257/2012 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 17. Dezember 2012 über die Umsetzung der verstärkten Zusammenarbeit im Bereich der Schaffung eines einheitlichen Patentschutzes (ABl. L 361 vom 31.12.2012, S. 1-8).

([2]) Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1260/2012 des Rates vom 17. Dezember 2012 über die Umsetzung der verstärkten Zusammenarbeit im Bereich der Schaffung eines einheitlichen Patentschutzes im Hinblick auf die anzuwendenden Übersetzungsregelungen (ABl. L 361 vom 31.12.2012, S. 89-92).

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-014067/13
till kommissionen
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE) och Eva Lichtenberger (Verts/ALE)
(12 december 2013)

Angående: Kriterier för att göra avkall på EU:s exklusiva befogenhet

I sitt svar på den skriftliga frågan E-011256/2013 tycks kommissionen underförstått säga att avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol påverkar gemensamma regler eller ändrar räckvidden för dessa. Dessutom medger kommissionen att avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol faller under EU:s exklusiva befogenhet, men låter frågan om en eventuell lagöverträdelse övergå i frågan om huruvida unionen har gått med på att ge avkall på sin exklusiva befogenhet.

Anser kommissionen att parlamentet och rådet har fullgjort alla de nödvändiga formaliteterna för att EU ska kunna ge avkall på sin exklusiva befogenhet i fråga om att ingå avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol? Kan kommissionen i detalj ange de formaliteter som krävs och ange vilka av dessa som har fullgjorts?

Svar från Michel Barnier på kommissionens vägnar
(24 februari 2014)

En reform av patentsystemet i Europa omfattar två huvudsakliga delar – införandet av ett europeiskt patent med enhetlig verkan (förordningarna 1257/2012 ([1]) och 1260/2012 ([2])) och inrättandet av en särskild gemensam rättsinstans för patentmål (avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol – UPC). En rättinstans är nödvändig för att ett europeiskt patent med enhetlig verkan ska fungera. Denna struktur påverkar inte utövandet av unionens befogenheter i enlighet med fördragen i framtiden. Slutligen skulle kommissionen vilja klargöra att man i sitt svar på den skriftliga frågan E-011256/2013, inte antydde att UPC-avtalet påverkar gemensamma regler eller ändrar räckvidden för dessa. Kommissionen ville endast uppmärksamma den rättsliga situation som skulle uppstå om så vore fallet.

([1]) Europaparlamentets och rådets förordning (EU) nr 1257/2012 av den 17 december 2012 om genomförande av ett fördjupat samarbete för att skapa ett enhetligt patentskydd (EUT L 361, 31.12.2012, s. 1).

([2]) Rådets förordning (EU) nr 1260/2012 av den 17 december 2012 om genomförande av ett fördjupat samarbete för att skapa ett enhetligt patentskydd när det gäller tillämpliga översättningsarrangemang (EUT L 361, 31.12.2012, s. 89).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014067/13
to the Commission
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE) and Eva Lichtenberger (Verts/ALE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Criteria for waiving EU exclusive competence

In its answer to Written Question E-011256/2013 the Commission seems to be implicitly saying that the Unified Patent Court (UPC) agreement affects common rules or alters their scope. Additionally, the Commission admits that the UPC agreement falls within the EU's exclusive competence but shifts the potential legal irregularity to the question of whether the Union has given its consent to have its exclusive competence waived.

Does the Commission consider that Parliament and the Council have fulfilled all the necessary formalities for the EU to waive its exclusive competence to conclude the UPC agreement? Can the Commission detail the required formalities and state which of these have been fulfilled?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(24 February 2014)

The reform of the patent system in Europe comprises two main elements — the creation of a European patent with unitary effect (Regulations 1257/2012 ([1]) and 1260/2012 ([2])) and the establishment of a common specialised patent jurisdiction (Agreement on a Unified Patent Court — UPC). The jurisdiction is essential for the functioning of European patents with unitary effect. This particular structure is without prejudice with regard to the exercise of the Union competence in line with the Treaties in the future. Finally, the Commission would wish to clarify that in its reply to Written Question E-011256/2013, it did not imply that the UPC Agreement affects common rules or alters their scope, but merely addressed the legal situation that would arise if it did.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 1257/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2012 implementing enhanced cooperation in the area of the creation of unitary patent protection, OJ L 361, 31.12.2012, p. 1-8.

([2]) Council Regulation (EU) No 1260/2012 of 17 December 2012 implementing enhanced cooperation in the area of the creation of unitary patent protection with regard to the applicable translation arrangements, OJ L 361, 31.12.2012, p. 89-92.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014072/13
alla Commissione
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(12 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Crisi del settore edile

L'edilizia rappresenta un settore nevralgico dell'economia italiana che, a causa del difficile momento congiunturale, versa in un momento di forte crisi che non accenna a diminuire, come testimoniato dalle proiezioni che prevedono per il 2014 ancora un forte calo di investimenti e, di conseguenza, di lavoro e occupazione.

Gli investimenti in nuove abitazioni tra il 2008 e il 2011 sono calati del 35,5 %, quelli in opere pubbliche del 29 %. Dal 2008 a oggi sono andati persi più di 446 mila posti di lavoro solo nel settore edilizio, e con i settori collegati alle costruzioni si arriva a 690mila, mentre le imprese fallite sono più del 23 % del totale stimato in quell'anno e sono oltre 50 i miliardi di investimento persi negli ultimi cinque anni.

In sei anni ben il 26 % degli investimenti è andato perduto a causa di motivazioni note come la mancanza di fiducia, la mancanza di crescita, l'indisponibilità economica e la difficoltà che il settore riscontra nel recupero dei prestiti.

Il settore è per lo più composto da piccolissime aziende travolte dalla crisi.

Alla luce dell'enorme patrimonio edilizio già esistente in Italia e caratterizzato da costruzioni di 40 anni di vita dove vive almeno il 55 % delle famiglie italiane, che appartengono all'ormai storico «boom edilizio» del secondo dopoguerra (1946-1971) e che necessitano di un'attività di adeguamento a certi parametri tecnologici da cui oggi non si può più prescindere, per cui appare necessario avviare opere di riqualificazione dei centri storici, di manutenzione delle scuole, degli edifici pubblici e delle strutture sanitarie laddove le principali cause che hanno decretato la crisi nel settore edile sono il blocco dei crediti vantati nei confronti della pubblica amministrazione e la mancanza di affidamenti da parte degli istituti di credito;

può la Commissione far sapere:

1. quali misure intende adottare per rimettere in moto quelle imprese edili sane che stanno quotidianamente chiudendo per mancanza di liquidità;

2. quali strategie di rilancio intende varare per rilanciare un settore chiave per la crescita e lo sviluppo?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(28 febbraio 2014)

La Commissione è a conoscenza della situazione esposta dall'Onorevole deputato per quanto concerne la grave crisi che ha colpito il settore delle costruzioni in Italia e in altri paesi dell'UE.

La strategia Costruzioni 2020 ([1]) propone interventi per aiutare il settore delle costruzioni, segnatamente laddove è stato colpito dalla crisi. Il relativo Piano d'azione delinea programmi, incentivi fiscali, meccanismi di credito e strumenti finanziari per il rinnovo degli edifici esistenti.

Seguendo l'approccio adottato per il periodo 2007-2013, i Fondi strutturali e di investimento europei (fondi ESI) forniranno nel 2014-2020 la possibilità di sostenere gli investimenti per promuovere l'efficienza energetica, la gestione intelligente dell'energia e l'uso delle energie rinnovabili negli edifici pubblici e nelle infrastrutture. I fondi ESI possono anche supportare gli investimenti per affrontare rischi specifici nonché azioni integrate volte a cogliere le sfide ambientali, climatiche, demografiche e sociali che interessano le aree urbane. I criteri specifici di intervento dei fondi sono definiti nell'Accordo di partenariato dell'Italia e nei relativi programmi operativi.

I ritardi nei pagamenti gravano in modo particolare sul settore delle costruzioni in certi paesi, tra cui l'Italia. Un altro modo per favorire la liquidità delle imprese consiste pertanto nell'assicurare che la direttiva sui ritardi di pagamento ([2]) sia recepita e applicata in modo corretto. La Commissione è attualmente in contatto con le autorità italiane per verificare l'ottemperanza a tale direttiva.

([1]) COM(2012) 433 final del 31 luglio 2012 «Strategia per la competitività sostenibile del settore delle costruzioni e delle sue imprese».
([2]) Direttiva 2011/7/UE.

Se i provvedimenti nazionali a recepimento della direttiva risultassero non conformi o se la direttiva fosse applicata in modo incorretto, la Commissione potrà adottare le misure necessarie tra cui avviare, ad esempio, procedure di infrazione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014072/13
to the Commission
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Crisis in the construction sector

The construction sector is a crucial part of the Italian economy, which is in deep crisis due to the current tough economic climate and which is set to remain so, as the forecasts of yet another sharp fall in investment and hence in employment in 2014 show.

Between 2008 and 2011, investment in new housing construction fell by 35.5%, and in public works projects by 29%. More than 446 000 jobs have been lost in the construction sector alone since 2008, a figure which rises to 690 000 when the related sectors are included, while more than 23% of the estimated total number of businesses operating that year have gone bankrupt and more than EUR 50 billion in investment has been lost over the last five years.

In six years, no less than 26% of investment has been lost for familiar reasons such as lack of confidence, lack of growth, lack of liquidity and the problems encountered by the sector in recovering monies owed to it.

The sector consists, for the most part, of very small companies which have been severely affected by the crisis.

Italy already has an enormous building stock, which typically consists of buildings with a 40-year lifespan constructed during the now famous 'construction boom' following the Second World War (1946-1971) and housing at least 55% of Italian families. These buildings need to be adapted in order to comply with a number of technological standards which can no longer be overlooked. Consequently, work needs to start on upgrading historic centres and on maintaining schools, public buildings and healthcare facilities. The main causes of the crisis in the construction sector were the blocking of claims against the public administration and the failure of credit institutions to lend.

1. What steps will the Commission take to get viable construction companies that are closing every day due to a lack of liquidity back on track?

2. What strategies does it intend to launch to revive a sector which is crucial to growth and development?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

The Commission is aware of the situation presented by the Honourable Member regarding the significant economic downturn of the construction sector in Italy and other EU countries.

The Construction 2020 ([1]) strategy proposes actions to help the construction sector, specifically where it has been affected by the crisis. Its Action Plan emphasises programmes, fiscal incentives, credit mechanisms and financial instruments for the renovation of existing buildings.

Following the approach taken for the 2007-2013 period, European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds will provide in 2014-2020 the opportunity to support investments to promote energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public buildings and infrastructure. ESI funds can also support investments to address specific risks and integrated actions to tackle environmental, climate, demographic and social challenges affecting urban areas. The specific criteria of intervention of the funds will be defined in Italy's Partnership Agreement and Operational Programmes.

Late payments particularly affect the construction sector in some countries, including Italy. Another way of supporting liquidity of enterprises is therefore to ensure that the late payment Directive ([2]) is correctly transposed and applied. The Commission is currently in contact with the Italian authorities in order to verify compliance with the directive.

Should the national measures transposing the directive reveal non-compliance, or if the directive is being incorrectly applied, the Commission may take the necessary action including, where appropriate, infringement procedures.

([1]) COM(2012) 433 final of 31 July 2012 'Strategy for the sustainable competitiveness of the construction sector and its enterprises'.
([2]) Directive 2011/7/EU.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014087/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 décembre 2013)

Objet: Feuille de route intersectorielle

La Commission pourrait-elle, comme le lui demande le Parlement dans le rapport d'initiative voté lors de la session de décembre, élaborer des feuilles de route intersectorielles portant sur l'évolution des secteurs de l'énergie, des transports et des TIC?

Comment l'imagine-t-elle?

Réponse donnée par M. Tajani au nom de la Commission
(3 mars 2014)

La Commission accueille favorablement le rapport d'initiative du Parlement européen. Elle reconnaît sans réserve les avantages de la coordination des politiques, mais son plan de travail ne prévoit pas de feuilles de route intersectorielles. Dès à présent, les documents d'élaboration et de planification des politiques dans les trois domaines mentionnés tiennent pleinement compte des évolutions intersectorielles. Le processus CARS 2020 est déjà en soi un exemple de politique holistique moderne: la Commission a regroupé avec succès les intérêts de différentes parties prenantes et sensiblement amélioré la coordination de ses services.

Dans un contexte plus récent — celui de son Plan stratégique de mise en œuvre ([1]) établi dans le cadre du partenariat européen d'innovation «Villes et collectivités intelligentes» –, la Commission applique une stratégie intégrée des questions relatives aux secteurs de l'énergie, des transports et des TIC et fournit une plate-forme de coordination à un large éventail de parties prenantes qui, en collaboration avec ses propres services, procéderont entre autres à l'élaboration d'une feuille de route pour ces trois secteurs.

En outre, les réunions régulières des commissaires du groupe «Compétitivité» ont fonctionné comme un forum de facto où toutes les questions stratégiques transversales ont été examinées avec la participation des commissaires compétents. Enfin, la stratégie Europe 2020 constitue un cadre général qui englobe des éléments de prospective et de rétrospective dans de nombreux domaines différents.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/eip/smartcities/files/sip_final_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014087/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Cross-cutting roadmaps

Will the Commission develop cross-cutting roadmaps that cover development in the energy sector, the transport sector and the ICT sector, as requested by Parliament in its own-initiative report adopted during the December part-session?

What shape will these roadmaps take?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(3 March 2014)

The Commission welcomes the EP own-initiative report. The Commission fully recognises the benefits of policy coordination but does not foresee such inter-sectoral roadmaps in its Work Planning. Already today, policy development and policy planning documents in all of the three fields mentioned take cross-sectoral developments fully into account. The very CARS 2020 process is already an example of a modern holistic policy making, where the Commission successfully brought together the interests of various stakeholders and significantly improved the coordination among Commission services.

More recently, in its Strategic Implementation Plan ([1]) in the context of the European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities, an integrated approach to energy, transport and ICT issues is being pursued and provides a platform for coordination among a broad group of various stakeholders with participation of relevant Commission services, which will, *inter alia* develop a cross-cutting roadmap that covers energy, transport and ICT.

In addition, regular meetings of the Competitiveness Group of Commissioners provided an effective forum in which all cross-cutting strategic questions were discussed with the participation of all relevant Commissioners. Finally, the Europe 2020 process provides the overall framework which foresees forward-looking and retrospective elements across many different areas.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/eip/smartcities/files/sip_final_en.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014094/13
an den Rat
Cornelia Ernst (GUE/NGL)
(12. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Empfehlung des Rates für wirksame Maßnahmen zur Integration der Roma in den Mitgliedstaaten (9./10. Dezember 2013)

In Nummer 2.10. der Empfehlung des Rates für wirksame Maßnahmen zur Integration der Roma in den Mitgliedstaaten (9./10. Dezember 2013) ist zu lesen, dass Informationsmaßnahmen durchgeführt werden sollten, um Roma besser für ihre Rechte (vor allem im Zusammenhang mit Diskriminierungen und möglichen Rechtsbehelfen) und bürgerlichen Pflichten zu sensibilisieren.

Was bedeutet in diesem Zusammenhang der Begriff „bürgerliche Pflichten"?

Antwort
(3. März 2014)

Unter dem Begriff „bürgerliche Pflichten" sind gewöhnlich eine Reihe von Verpflichtungen zu verstehen, deren Erfüllung von den Bürgern allgemein erwartet wird, wie z. B. die Wahrnehmung des Wahlrechts, der Schulbesuch und die Entrichtung von Steuern sowie im allgemeineren Sinn die Einhaltung von Recht und Gesetz und das verantwortungsvolle und ethische Handeln in der Gesellschaft.

Allerdings gibt es weder eine Definition des Begriffs „bürgerliche Pflichten" in den Rechtsvorschriften der EU noch liegt dem Rat zurzeit ein Vorschlag vor, in dem eine solche Definition enthalten wäre.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014094/13
to the Council
Cornelia Ernst (GUE/NGL)
(12 December 2013)

Subject: Council recommendations on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States, 9 and 10 December 2013

Point 2.10 of the Council recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States (9 and 10 December 2013) reads:

'Carry out information activities to further raise awareness among Roma of their rights (notably in relation to discrimination and the possibilities of seeking redress) and of their civic duties.'

What does the term 'civic duties' mean in this context?

Reply
(3 March 2014)

'Civic duties' commonly means the fulfilment of a number of responsibilities generally expected from citizens such as voting, attending school and paying taxes, and more generally, respecting the law and behaving responsibly and ethically in society.

There is, however, no definition of 'civic duties' in EU legislation, nor is there any proposal containing such a definition currently before the Council.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014107/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Sledovacie programy agentúr USA a ochrana súkromia občanov EÚ

Výbor Európskeho parlamentu LIBE začal v septembri tohto roku vyšetrovanie súvisiace s tajným programom elektronického sledovania dát, ktorý prevádzkuje americká tajná služba. V uplynulých dňoch schválené nezáväzné uznesenie Európskeho parlamentu poukazuje na skutočnosť, že Únia by mala pozastaviť platnú dohodu so Spojenými štátmi americkými o programe sledovania financovania terorizmu, ktorá je v platnosti od augusta 2010. Každá dohoda s USA by mala vychádzať z právne záväzných noriem ochrany osobných údajov.

Akým postupom sa môže Komisia zasadiť za to, aby sa neopakovala situácia z nedávnej minulosti, kedy došlo k odpočúvaniu politických predstaviteľov, diplomatov či niekoľkých európskych inštitúcií?

Odpoveď pani Redingovej v mene Komisie
(28. februára 2014)

Komisia 27. novembra stanovila v oznámení o obnovení dôvery v toky údajov medzi EÚ a USA ([1]) a v oznámení o fungovaní systému bezpečného prístavu z pohľadu občanov EÚ a spoločnosti usadených v EÚ ([2]) opatrenia, ktoré treba prijať, aby sa obnovila dôvera v toky údajov medzi EÚ a USA.

V ten istý deň Komisia informovala o výsledkoch konzultácií s USA, ktoré sa uskutočnili v reakcii na tvrdenia médií o prístupe USA k údajom určeného poskytovateľa v EÚ v rozpore s dohodou o programe sledovania financovania terorizmu (TFTP). Komisia ďalej zintenzívni svoje úsilie o dôkladné sledovanie vykonávania dohody o TFTP v krátkodobom aj dlhodobom horizonte a o urýchlenie ďalšieho spoločného preskúmania tak, aby sa uskutočnilo už na jar 2014.

Spolupredsedovia EÚ *ad hoc* pracovnej skupiny EÚ – USA pre ochranu údajov takisto uverejnili v novembri 2013 správu ([3]), ktorá obsahuje vysvetlenia Spojených štátov o právnom rámci pre oblasť spravodajských činností.

V reakcii na tlačové správy o špionáži delegácií EÚ zo strany Spojených štátov podpredsedníčka Komisie/vysoká predstaviteľka Catherine Ashtonová otvorila túto problematiku priamo s ministrom zahraničných vecí USA Johnom Kerrym a poradkyňou pre národnú bezpečnosť USA Susan Riceovou.

Prezident Obama predniesol 17. januára prejav o preskúmaní získavania spravodajských informácii USA zachytávaním signálov, v ktorom oznámil prvé kroky zamerané na riešenie obáv občanov a inštitúcií EÚ.

Komisia pokračuje v dialógu s USA o týchto otázkach, a to aj v rámci rokovaní o posilnení bezpečného prístavu ([4]) a o zastrešujúcej dohode o ochrane údajov v oblasti presadzovania práva.

([1]) COM(2013) 846.
([2]) COM(2013) 847.
([3]) Dostupné na: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/files/report-findings-of-the-ad-hoc-eu-us-working-group-on-data-protection.pdf
([4]) COM(2013) 847.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014107/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Surveillance programmes by US agencies and privacy of EU citizens

In September this year, Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs started an investigation related to the secret electronic data surveillance programme operated by the US Secret Service. In recent days, the non-binding resolution approved by Parliament points out that the EU should suspend an existing agreement with the United States on the programme to monitor terrorist financing which has been in force since August 2010. Any agreement with the US should be based on legally binding standards for the protection of personal data.

What procedure may the Commission put in place in order to avoid a repetition of the recent situation, when there was wiretapping of political leaders, diplomats and several European institutions?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

On 27 November, the Commission set out the actions that need to be taken to restore trust in data flows between the EU and the U.S. in a communication on Rebuilding Trust in EU-US Data Flows ([1]) and a communication on the Functioning of the Safe Harbour from the Perspective of EU Citizens and Companies Established in the EU ([2]).

On the same day the Commission informed about the outcome of the consultations conducted with the U.S. in reaction to media allegations about the U.S. accessing the data of the Designated Provider in the EU contrary to the TFTP Agreement. The Commission will further intensify its efforts to keep the implementation of the TFTP Agreement under close scrutiny short- and long-term and to advance the next joint review to spring 2014.

The EU Co-chairs of the ad hoc EU-US Working Group on Data Protection also published a report in November 2013 ([3]), which includes clarifications provided by the US on the legal framework surrounding intelligence activities.

In response to press reports of US spying on EU Delegations, HRVP Ashton raised the issue directly with US Secretary of State John Kerry and with the US National Security Advisor Susan Rice.

On 17 January, President Obama delivered a speech on the review of US signals intelligence, in which first steps to address the concerns of EU citizens and institutions were announced.

The Commission continues its dialogue with the US on these issues, including in the framework of the negotiations on the strengthening of Safe Harbour ([4]) and on an 'umbrella' data protection agreement in the field of law enforcement.

([1]) COM(2013) 846.
([2]) COM(2013) 847.
([3]) Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/files/report-findings-of-the-ad-hoc-eu-us-working-group-on-data-protection.pdf
([4]) COM(2013) 847.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014111/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Presadzovanie ľudských práv vo svete

Presadzovanie ľudských práv a demokracie vo svete patrí medzi naše priority. Výročné správy nám v mnohom uľahčujú prácu, pretože nám poskytujú obraz o tom, či bola naša práca úspešná a či sa nám podarilo dosiahnuť stanovené ciele. Zmapovaním situácie zistíme, kde všade je najviac potrebná naša pomoc. Výročná správa Únie za rok 2012 hovorí o tom, že je potrebné v našom úsilí pokračovať. Porušovanie zásad demokracie, právneho štátu a potláčanie ľudských práva a základných slobôd je v niektorých krajinách sveta bohužiaľ ešte stále častým javom. V tomto smere je kľúčové, aby sme boli jednotní. Ak chceme byť úspešní, všetky európske inštitúcie a všetky členské štáty musia mať spoločný a silný prístup.

Akým spôsobom plánuje Komisia prispieť k presadzovaniu ľudských práv a základných slobôd vo svete v nadchádzajúcom období?

Odpoveď vysokej predstaviteľky a podpredsedníčky Komisie Ashtonovej v mene Komisie
(6. marca 2014)

Európska únia sa vo veľkej miere zameriava na podporu a ochranu ľudských práv a demokracie na celom svete a plne súhlasí s tým, že spoločný prístup je nevyhnutný, ak chceme uspieť v tomto úsilí. Prijatie strategického rámca a akčného plánu EÚ pre ľudské práva a demokraciu (11855/12) v júni 2012 bolo rozhodujúcim krokom v tomto smere. EÚ má jednotný strategický rámec pre túto dôležitú oblasť politiky, ktorý schválili Rada a Európsky parlament. Tento strategický rámec a súvisiaci akčný plán stanovujú priority, zásady a ciele prístupu EÚ založeného na ľudských právach na nadchádzajúcich desať rokov a záväzok k spoločnému úsiliu pri podpore ľudských práv a základných slobôd.

Od prijatia strategického rámca a akčného plánu EÚ sa na konkretizácii tohto dôležitého politického nástroja neustále pracuje. Pán Stavros Lambrinidis bol vymenovaný za prvého osobitného zástupcu EÚ (OZEÚ) pre ľudské práva s mandátom na zvýšenie účinnosti a viditeľnosti politiky EÚ v oblasti ľudských práv. V takmer všetkých delegáciách EÚ boli zriadené kontaktné miesta pre ľudské práva a demokraciu, ktoré sú v príslušných krajinách zodpovedné za spoluprácu osobitne zameranú na tieto otázky. V roku 2013 Rada prijala dva nové súbory usmernení v oblasti ľudských práv: usmernenia EÚ o presadzovaní a ochrane slobody náboženského vyznania alebo viery (FORB) a usmernenia na presadzovanie a ochranu všetkých ľudských práv homosexuálov, bisexuálov, transrodových a intersexuálnych osôb (LGBTI). Úsilie vynakladané na presadzovanie ľudských práv a základných slobôd zahŕňa aj vypracúvanie miestnych stratégií v oblasti ľudských práv pre tretie krajiny, neustále zapájanie sa do dialógov o ľudských právach, ako aj vydávanie verejných vyhlásení a oficiálnych demaršov.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014111/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Promotion of human rights in the world

The promotion of human rights and democracy in the world is one of our priorities. Annual reports facilitate our work in many ways because they provide a picture of whether our work has been successful and whether we have managed to achieve our objectives. By mapping the situation, we ascertain where our help is most needed. The EU Annual Report for 2012 tells us that we must continue our efforts. Violations of the principles of democracy and the rule of law and the suppression of human rights and fundamental freedoms are, unfortunately, still common occurrences in many countries around the world. In this respect, it is crucial that we stand united. If we are to succeed, all European institutions and all Member States must have a common, strong approach.

How does the Commission intend to contribute to the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the world in the near future?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2014)

The EU is highly dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights and democracy worldwide and fully agrees that a common approach is necessary if we are to succeed in this endeavour. The adoption of the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (11855/12) in June 2012 was a decisive step in that direction. The EU has a unified strategic framework for this crucial policy area, endorsed by the Council and the EP. The Strategic Framework, and the accompanying Action Plan, set priorities, principles and objectives of the EU's human rights approach for the upcoming 10 years, and bond for a collective effort in the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Since the adoption of the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan, the work on giving substance to this important policy instrument has been on-going. Stavros Lambrinidis has been appointed the first EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Human Rights, with a mandate to enhance the effectiveness and visibility of the EU's human rights policy. Focal points for human rights and democracy have been established in almost all EU delegations, responsible for working specifically with these issues in respective countries. In 2013, the Council adopted two new sets of guidelines in the field of human rights: EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief (FORB), and Guidelines to promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons. Efforts to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms include developing local human rights country strategies in third countries, continually engage in human rights dialogues, produce public statements, and official procedures.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-014121/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13. decembra 2013)

Vec: Kultúra v Európskej únii

Kultúrny a kreatívny sektor zamestnáva v členských štátoch vyše osem miliónov ľudí a priamo sa podieľa aj na rozvoji cestovného ruchu. Zároveň – zohľadňujúc skutočnosť, že kultúrne a kreatívne sektory zaujímajú strategickú pozíciu medzi umením, podnikaním a technológiou – sú, takpovediac, katalyzátorom inovácií aj pre iné odvetvia, akými sú napríklad informačné či komunikačné technológie. Význam kultúry aj preto nemožno chápať iba tak, že plní len ekonomickú funkciu. Naopak, v ľudských životoch a v spoločnosti zohráva významnú úlohu.

Aké kroky plánuje podniknúť Komisia v snahe podporiť kultúru a tvorivé sektory v rámci Únie a zároveň sa tak pričiniť aj o rozvoj zamestnanosti ľudí činných v oblasti kultúry a umenia?

Odpoveď pani Vassiliouovej v mene Komisie
(11. februára 2014)

Komisia súhlasí s názorom váženej pani poslankyne, že kultúra zohráva dôležitú úlohu v živote ľudí a spoločnosti a že kultúra preukázala svoju schopnosť vytvárať pracovné miesta a zlepšiť ekonomický výhľad miest a regiónov. Iniciatíva Európske hlavné mestá kultúry iniciatíva je toho dobrým príkladom. Inteligentné investície do kultúry majú naďalej svoj význam aj v časoch hospodárskeho poklesu.

Vo svojom oznámení o podpore kultúrnych a tvorivých sektorov v záujme rastu a zamestnanosti v EÚ vydanom v septembri 2012 ([1]) Komisia vyzvala členské štáty, aby vytvorili viacvrstvové stratégie na zvýšenie potenciálu kultúry a tvorivosti a aby ich postavili do popredia vo svojich národných rozvojových plánoch. Opatrenia členských štátov dopĺňa aj viacero iniciatív EÚ na podporu vzniku kreatívnych ekosystémov v rámci odvetví, a to so zameraním na päť politických stimulov: budovanie zručností, zlepšenie prístupu k financovaniu, rozšírenie trhu v prospech týchto odvetví, rozšírenie ich medzinárodného pôsobenia a posilnenie spojení medzi jednotlivými politikami a odvetviami hospodárskych činností.

Dôležité je tiež to, aby kultúrna obec aj naďalej čo najlepšie využívala všetky príležitosti na úrovni EÚ, najmä tie, ktoré poskytujú fondy politiky súdržnosti, ale aj špecializovaný program Tvorivá Európa, COSME, Erasmus + a programu Horizont 2020. Program Tvorivá Európa, ktorý sa uplatňuje od 1. januára 2014, sa intenzívne zameriava na posilnenie schopnosti sektorov kultúry a tvorivej činnosti ochraňovať a podporovať európsku kultúrnu a jazykovú rozmanitosť, ako aj posilňovať ich príspevok ku konkurencieschopnosti v kontexte stratégie Európa 2020.

([1]) COM(2012) 537.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014121/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(13 December 2013)

Subject: Culture in the European Union

The cultural and creative sector employs over 8 million people in the Member States, and makes a direct contribution to tourism development. At the same time, the cultural and creative sectors — bearing in mind that they occupy a strategic position between the arts, businesses and technology — are a kind of catalyst for innovation in other sectors as well, such as information and communications technology, for example. The significance of culture cannot be therefore understood only in terms of its economic role. On the contrary, it plays an important role in people's lives and in society.

What steps does the Commission plan to take in the effort to support culture and the creative sectors in the Union, and at the same time to boost employment of people active in the area of culture and the arts?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

The Commission shares the view of the Honourable Member that culture plays an important role in people's lives and society and that culture has a proven ability to create jobs and improve the economic outlook of cities and regions. The European Capitals of Culture initiative is a good example of this. Smart investment in culture remains important even in times of economic downturn.

The Commission communication on promoting the cultural and creative sectors for growth and jobs in the EU of September 2012 ([1]) called on Member States to develop multi-layered strategies to enhance the potential of culture and creativity, and to place them high on national development agendas. The actions of Member States are also complemented by a number of EU initiatives to support the emergence of creative ecosystems across sectors, focusing on five policy drivers: developing skills, improving access to finance, enlarging the marketplace for these sectors, expanding their international reach, and reinforcing links between different policies and sectors of economic activities.

It is also crucial that the cultural community continues to make the most of all opportunities at EU level, in particular those of the Cohesion Policy Funds, but also in the dedicated Creative Europe programme, COSME, Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020. Creative Europe, which applies from 1 January 2014, has a strong focus on reinforcing the capacity of cultural and creative sectors to safeguard and promote European cultural and linguistic diversity, and to strengthen their contribution to competitiveness in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy.

([1]) COM(2012) 537.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande P-014122/13
till rådet
Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL)
(16 december 2013)

Angående: Bemanningsföretag och exemplet Lagena Distribution

Trygga anställningar måste vara en förutsättning för en välfungerande arbetsmarknad. Bemanningsföretagens inträde på svensk arbetsmarknad har förändrat situationen till ett allt otryggare arbetsliv för människor. Bemanningsdirektivet 2008/104/EG trädde i kraft 2008, och hade en likabehandlingsprincip. Det vill säga att anställda av bemanningsföretag inte skulle ha sämre arbetsvillkor än anställda inom kundföretaget.

Det svenska vin- och spritdistributörsföretaget Lagena hade 2009 30 bemanningsanställda av totalt 114, och den 11 november 2013 varslades ytterligare 25 av de nu 70 fastanställda för att ersättas av bemanningsanställda. Det innebär att över hälften av personalstyrkan skulle vara från bemanningsföretag. Lagena har ”leasat ut” lagerverksamheten till det tyska företaget DHL och ägs således delvis av den tyska staten.

Är det förenligt med EU:s bemanningsdirektiv 2008/104/EG att avskeda fastanställda för att ersätta dem med bemanningsföretag, som DHL gjort på Lagena Distribution?

Svar
(24 februari 2014)

Europaparlamentets och rådets direktiv 2008/104/EG av den 19 november 2008 om arbetstagare som hyrs ut av bemanningsföretag ([1]) syftar till att skydda arbetstagare som hyrs ut av bemanningsföretag och förbättra kvaliteten i det arbete som utförs av dem.

Det är inte rådets sak att tolka genomförandet av bestämmelserna i ett EU-direktiv eller ett enskilt företags agerande.

([1]) EUT L 327, 5.12.2008, s. 9.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014122/13
to the Council
Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Temporary employment agencies: the example of Lagena Distribution

Job security must be a precondition for a well functioning labour market. The entry of temporary employment agencies on to the Swedish labour market has led to a new situation in which people's working lives are increasingly insecure. The Temporary Agency Work Directive (2008/104/EC) entered into force in 2008 and was based on the principle of equal treatment. In other words, employees of temporary employment agencies should not have less favourable working conditions than employees in the user enterprise.

In 2009 the Swedish wines and spirits distribution firm Lagena employed 30 agency workers out of a total of 114, and on 11 November 2013 another 25 of the permanent employees, who now numbered 70, were made redundant to be replaced by agency workers. That means that over half of the staff will be from temporary employment agencies. Lagena has 'leased out' its warehousing operation to the German firm DHL and is thus partly owned by the German state.

Is it compatible with the EU Temporary Agency Work Directive (2008/104/EC) to dismiss permanent employees to replace them with temporary agency workers, as DHL has done at Lagena Distribution?

Reply
(24 February 2014)

The aim of Directive 2008/104/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on temporary agency work ([1]) is to ensure the protection of temporary agency workers and to improve the quality of temporary agency work.

It is not for the Council to provide an interpretation on the implementation of the legal provisions of an EU directive nor on the actions of an individual company.

([1]) OJ L 327, 5.12.2008, p. 9.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014125/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(16. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Arbeitnehmerfreizügigkeit und Roma

In Deutschland leben viele Menschen aus Rumänien und Bulgarien, die gut integriert sind. Allerdings kommen aus beiden Ländern auch viele Menschen, die in ihrer Heimat unter sehr schwierigen Bedingungen oft in Armut lebten und bessere Lebensverhältnisse suchen. Ein großes Problem ist auch der mangelnde Besitz von Personaldokumenten. Die EU ist angeblich mit acht Millionen Personen ohne Personaldokumente konfrontiert.

Der Städtetag klagte: „Oft ist der Gesundheitszustand schlecht. Meist fehlt eine Krankenversicherung. Die Armutsflüchtlinge leben zum Teil in überfüllten Wohnungen und in verwahrlosten Immobilien, teilweise in sonstigen provisorischen Unterkünften. Fälle von Kriminalität, Bettelei und Prostitution führen zu Problemen in den Nachbarschaften".

Ab 2014 gilt für Rumänen und Bulgaren die volle Arbeitnehmerfreizügigkeit — das heißt, sie können in jedem EU-Land eine Stelle annehmen. Diese wird sicherlich erneut auch besonders von den Roma genutzt werden, die in der Regel wenig gebildet und auf dem Arbeitsmarkt kaum vermittelbar sind. Viele von ihnen suchen um Asyl an, obwohl keinerlei Asylgründe vorliegen. Die Kommunen klagen, dass ein Teil der Zuwanderer aus beiden EU-Ländern nur deshalb nach Deutschland komme, um Sozialleistungen zu bekommen.

Die betroffenen Bürgermeister sind sauer: „Wir geben eine Menge Geld an die Europäische Union zum Zwecke auch der Hilfe für die Länder aus Osteuropa. Und das muss dann auch entsprechend genutzt werden. Wir zahlen nicht zweimal. Nicht einmal über die Europäische Union und ein zweites Mal durch Sozialleistungen hier".

1. Gibt es auf EU-Ebene in diesem Zusammenhang Überlegungen, wie die reine Reise vom Sozialtopf des einen EU-Staates zum anderen — sog. Sozialtourismus — verhindert werden soll?

2. Welche Überlegungen gibt es auf EU-Ebene hinsichtlich des mangelnden Besitzes von Personaldokumenten?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(3. März 2014)

Der Kommission ist der Vorwurf des „Sozialtourismus" in einigen Mitgliedstaaten bekannt, doch liegen ihr keine Anhaltspunkte für einen systematischen und verbreiteten Sozialtourismus vor. Vielmehr kommt eine kürzlich vorgelegte Mitteilung der Kommission ([1]) über die Freizügigkeit der EU-Bürger zu dem Ergebnis, dass die meisten EU-Bürger, die in einen anderen Mitgliedstaat ziehen, dies zu Arbeitszwecken tun. Zudem belegen laut Mitteilung die von den Mitgliedstaaten vorgelegten Zahlen sowie jüngste Studien, dass mobile EU-Bürger Sozialleistungen nicht intensiver in Anspruch nehmen als die Staatsangehörigen der Aufnahmeländer. Die Kommission ist überdies der Auffassung, dass im EU-Recht ausreichende Sicherheitsklauseln vorgesehen sind, um Mitgliedstaaten vor unangemessenen finanziellen Belastungen zu schützen und gleichzeitig zu gewährleisten, dass EU-Bürger von ihrem Recht auf Freizügigkeit wirksam Gebrauch machen können. Das EU-Recht enthält auch eine Reihe solider Garantien, die den Mitgliedstaaten bei der Bekämpfung von Rechtsmissbrauch und Betrug helfen. Weitere Einzelheiten werden in der oben genannten Mitteilung dargelegt.

Hinsichtlich der fehlenden Personaldokumente, auf die sich der Herr Abgeordnete bezieht, möchte die Kommission daran erinnern, dass die Mitgliedstaaten lediglich verpflichtet sind, Unionsbürgern die Einreise mit einem gültigen Personalausweis oder Reisepass zu gewähren, und dass sich jeder Unionsbürger für einen Zeitraum von bis zu drei Monaten in einem anderen Mitgliedstaat der EU aufhalten kann, ohne dass andere Bedingungen und Formalitäten als das Erfordernis des Besitzes eines gültigen Personalausweises oder Reisepasses gelten.

([1]) KOM(2013)837 endg. vom 25. November 2013 — Freizügigkeit der EU-Bürger und ihrer Familien: fünf grundlegende Maßnahmen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014125/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(16 December 2013)

Subject: Free movement of workers and the Roma

There are many well-integrated people from Romania and Bulgaria who live in Germany. However, there are also many people from both of those countries who lived in very difficult conditions, and often poverty, in their homeland, and who are seeking better living conditions. Another major problem is the lack of personal documents. The EU reportedly faces eight million people with no personal documentation.

The German Association of Cities (or *Städtetag*) has complained that 'their state of health is also poor. There is often no health insurance. These refugees from poverty live in a mixture of overcrowded housing, dilapidated properties and other temporary accommodation. Cases of criminality, begging and prostitution lead to problems in the local neighbourhoods'.

As of 2014, the full freedom of movement for workers will apply to Romania and Bulgaria — in other words, their citizens may take a job in any EU country. This freedom will, I am sure, be once again particularly exploited by the Roma, who are generally poorly educated and scarcely employable. Many of them apply for asylum, despite the fact that there are no grounds for so doing. The municipalities are complaining that some of the immigrants from these two EU countries only come to Germany in order to claim social security benefits.

The mayors in question are angry: 'We give pots of money to the European Union, including to help the countries of eastern Europe. That is how that money must then be used. We should not be paying twice: once through the European Union and a second time through welfare payments here at home'.

1. In light of all this, is it being considered at EU level how a stop is going to be put to this 'welfare tourism' — where people move from one EU Member State to the next in search of welfare payments?

2. What deliberations are taking place at EU level in respect of all the people with no personal documents?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(3 March 2014)

The Commission is aware of allegations of 'benefit tourism' in some Member States but not of any evidence that would show that it is systematic and widespread. Rather, a recent Commission communication ([1]) on free movement of EU citizens finds that most EU citizens moving to another Member State do so to work, and that figures provided by Member States as well as recent studies show that mobile EU citizens use welfare benefits no more intensively than the host countries' nationals. Moreover, the Commission considers that EC law contains sufficient safeguards to protect Member States from unreasonable financial burdens while ensuring that EU citizens can effectively exercise their right to free movement. It also contains a range of robust safeguards to help Member States fight abuse and fraud. Further details are set out in the above communication.

As regards the lack of personal documentation to which the Honourable Member refers, the Commission would like to recall that Member States are only obliged to grant EU citizens leave to enter their territory with a valid ID card or passport, and EU citizens have a right of residence in another EU Member State for a period of up to three months without any conditions or formalities other than the requirement to hold a valid ID card or passport.

([1]) COM(2013) 837 final of 25 November 2013 — Free movement of EU citizens and their families: Five actions to make a difference.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014178/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) y Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Gestión de las aguas en la EU — Estado químico y contaminación

En noviembre de 2013, los grupos Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública e Ingenieros sin Fronteras presentaron el documento «Propuestas para la mejora de la gestión del agua en la EU».

El *Plan para salvaguardar los recursos hídricos de Europa* señala que existe un conocimiento inadecuado e insuficiente acerca del estado químico y la calidad de las aguas de la UE, desconociéndose el estado químico del 40 % de las masas de aguas europeas. Esta falta de información sobre estado químico y contaminantes impide la generación de estados de opinión. La presencia de contaminantes constituye un serio riesgo para la salud pública y el desconocimiento sobre estos contaminantes incrementa de forma considerable tales riesgos.

Dicho Plan indica que no se ha logrado el pleno cumplimiento de las directivas existentes con carácter previo a la Directiva Marco de Agua que incidían sobre el estado químico de las aguas y que existe presión significativa por contaminación difusa en el 38 % de las masas de agua de la UE y una presión significativa por contaminación puntual en el 22 % de las masas de agua. Aunque se han reducido los focos de contaminación puntual, la contaminación difusa, de origen fundamentalmente agrario, continúa incrementándose, y solo se puede solucionar con cambios en la gestión agrícola.

¿Considera la Comisión que tendría que incluirse en la normativa comunitaria que:

1. se establezcan protocolos estandarizados de obligado cumplimiento para las redes de monitoreo de la calidad química de las aguas en función de los usos y funciones de cada masa de agua y del tipo y naturaleza de los contaminantes presentes,

2. las series de datos sobre el estado químico y de los contaminantes de la masa de agua sean objeto de difusión pública,

3. se amplíe la lista de sustancias peligrosas prioritarias sujetas a plazos estrictos para su reducción progresiva y cese total y prohibición de vertido de las mismas,

4. deba incluirse de forma expresa en la normativa comunitaria el cumplimiento de la Directiva Marco de Agua, junto con el resto de directivas que inciden en la calidad del agua, en los mecanismos de condicionalidad de cualquier tipo de ayudas de la PAC,

5. en aplicación del principio de quien contamina paga, se garantice la aplicación de tasas por contaminación al uso de fertilizantes y pesticidas,

6. sea obligatorio establecer bandas de protección, libres de pesticidas y fertilizantes, a lo largo de los cursos de agua?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de marzo de 2014)

La Directiva marco del agua (DMA) ([1]) obliga a los Estados miembros a elaborar programas de seguimiento para determinar el estado químico de las masas de agua. Especifica una serie de parámetros de seguimiento, y se complementa con orientaciones sobre cómo centrar esa labor. Los Estados miembros deben informar del estado químico de las masas de agua en sus planes hidrológicos de cuenca previa consulta pública. Cada seis años, la Comisión revisa la lista de sustancias prioritarias. En 2013, se añadieron a la lista seis sustancias peligrosas prioritarias y se reclasificaron como tales dos sustancias prioritarias existentes.

El Reglamento de desarrollo rural ([2]) establece, en relación con las disposiciones sobre tarificación del agua, unas condiciones para recibir ciertas categorías de ayudas con cargo al Fondo de desarrollo rural, así como otras basadas en la DMA que deben cumplir las inversiones en regadío. En la última reforma de la política agrícola común (PAC), la Comisión propuso añadir la DMA al mecanismo de condicionalidad, pero el legislador de la UE descartó esa posibilidad.

La legislación de la UE contempla el principio de que quien contamina, paga, y la imposición de tasas, entre otros instrumentos económicos, es una herramienta adecuada para aplicar ese principio. Esa decisión corresponde a los Estados miembros.

([1]) Directiva 2000/60/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de octubre de 2000, por la que se establece un marco comunitario de actuación en el ámbito de la política de aguas (DO L 327 de 22.12.2000).
([2]) Reglamento (CE) n° 1305/2013 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 17 de diciembre de 2013, relativo a la ayuda al desarrollo rural a través del Fondo Europeo Agrícola de Desarrollo Rural (Feader) y por el que se deroga el Reglamento (CE) n° 1698/2005 del Consejo.

La DMA exige que se adopten medidas para reducir la contaminación desde fuentes difusas. La Directiva sobre los plaguicidas ([3]) obliga a los Estados miembros a aplicar planes de gestión integrada de plagas. En ambos casos, una posible medida sería la creación de bandas de protección. La Directiva sobre los nitratos ([4]) también se refiere a la necesidad de establecer disposiciones para proteger los cursos de agua de la escorrentía procedente de la aplicación de fertilizantes nitrogenados en sus proximidades.

([3]) Directiva 2009/128/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 21 de octubre de 2009, por la que se establece el marco de la actuación comunitaria para conseguir un uso sostenible de los plaguicidas (DO L 309 de 24.11.2009).

([4]) Directiva 91/676/CEE del Consejo, de 12 de diciembre de 1991, relativa a la protección de las aguas contra la contaminación producida por nitratos utilizados en la agricultura.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014178/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) and Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Water management in the EU — chemical status and pollution

In November 2013, the groups Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública and Ingenieros sin Fronteras presented the document entitled 'Proposals for improved water management in the EU'.

According to the Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources, there is inadequate and insufficient knowledge about the chemical status and quality of EU waters, and the chemical status of 40% of bodies of water in the EU is unknown. This lack of information on chemical status and pollutants stands in the way of the public having an opinion on the subject. The presence of pollutants constitutes a serious risk to public health, and the lack of knowledge about these pollutants significantly increases such risks.

The Blueprint states that full compliance with the pre-Water Framework Directive directives relating to the chemical status of water has not been achieved. It also states that there is significant pressure from diffuse pollution, affecting 38% of EU water bodies, and from point-source pollution, affecting 22% of EU water bodies. Although point sources of pollution have been reduced, diffuse pollution, primarily originating from agriculture, continues to increase, and can only be resolved through changes in agricultural management.

Does the Commission believe that EU legislation should include provisions requiring that:

1. Standardised mandatory protocols be laid down for networks to monitor the chemical status of water based on the uses and functions of each body of water and the type and nature of pollutants in them?

2. Data on the chemical status of and pollutants in water bodies be made public?

3. The list of priority hazardous substances subject to strict timetables for gradual reduction and total banning, and prohibition on release, be extended?

4. Compliance with the Water Framework Directive, together with the other directives on water quality, be expressly included in EU legislation in the conditionality mechanisms for any type of aid from the common agricultural policy?

5. Pursuant to the polluter pays principle, charges be applied for pollution caused by the use of fertilisers and pesticides?

6. It be mandatory to provide buffer zones that are free from pesticides and fertilisers along watercourses?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(3 March 2014)

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) ([1]) requires Member States (MS) to establish monitoring programmes to determine the chemical status of water bodies. It specifies certain monitoring parameters and is complemented by guidance on how to focus monitoring. MS are required to report the chemical status of water bodies in their river basin management plans subject to public consultation. The Commission reviews the list of priority substances every six years. In 2013, 6 priority hazardous substances (PHS) were added to the list and 2 existing priority substances reclassified as PHS.

The Rural Development Regulation ([2]) sets out conditions related to WFD water pricing provisions to get certain categories of support under the Rural Development Fund as well as WFD-based conditions to be fulfilled by investments in irrigation. The Commission proposal in the last reform of the common agricultural policy (CAP) to add the WFD to the cross-compliance mechanism was not retained by the EU legislator.

The polluter pays principle is embedded in EC law and economic instruments such as charges and taxes are among the appropriate tools to implement it. The decision on their application is a task for MS.

([1]) Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000).
([2]) REGULATION (EU) No 1305/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005.

The WFD requires measures to be taken to mitigate pollution from diffuse sources. Under the Pesticides Directive, ([3]) MS are required to implement Integrated Pest Management. In both cases, the measures could include buffer zones. The Nitrates Directive ([4]) also specifies the need to set provisions to protect water courses from nitrogen fertiliser runoff for fertiliser application near water courses.

([3]) DIRECTIVE 2009/128/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides (OJ L 309/71, 24.11.2009)

([4]) Council Directive 91/676/EEC of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014179/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) y Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Gestión del agua en la EU — Intercambios de derechos de agua

En noviembre de 2013, Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública e Ingenieros sin Fronteras presentaron el documento «Propuestas para la mejora de la gestión del agua en la EU».

El «Plan para salvaguardar los recursos hídricos de Europa» contempla el intercambio de derechos de agua como un instrumento que podría contribuir a racionalizar la utilización del agua y a superar el estrés hídrico.

Los intercambios de derechos entre particulares se hacen desde usuarios que por diversas circunstancias han dejado de utilizar el recurso y por eso lo ceden a otros usuarios que sí van a utilizarlo. Cuando un recurso deja de usarse sigue en el medio hídrico, desarrollando su correspondiente labor ambiental, pero si se cede a otro usuario ese agua se detrae del medio hídrico natural, dejando de ejercer su función y, por lo tanto, los intercambios de derechos entre particulares siempre van a producir un incremento de los consumos. Los intercambios de derechos entre particulares se contradicen con el principio de que el agua es un bien de dominio público, por lo que los particulares, que son titulares de una concesión no del recurso, no deberían poder venderla a terceros.

La creación de bancos públicos de agua es aceptable exclusivamente con el fin de que durante los periodos de sequía puedan adquirir agua utilizada en el regadío o la industria para garantizar los caudales ambientales y el abastecimiento a poblaciones.

¿Considera que tendría que estar incluido en la normativa comunitaria que:

1. no se puedan realizar intercambios de derechos de agua entre particulares;

2. los bancos públicos de agua que se creen funcionen exclusivamente durante los periodos de sequía, de manera temporal, para adquirir agua utilizada en el regadío y la industria y garantizar con ella los caudales ambientales y el abastecimiento a poblaciones, siempre que los intercambios se realicen únicamente dentro de la misma cuenca hidrográfica;

3. los Estados miembros puedan recurrir a la expropiación de derechos de agua cuando se ponga en riesgo el abastecimiento a poblaciones o los usos ambientales?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(25 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta conjunta que dio a las preguntas escritas E-14175/2013 y E-14177/2013 ([1]).

El Plan para salvaguardar los recursos hídricos de Europa puso de manifiesto que el intercambio de derechos de agua podría contribuir a racionalizar la utilización del agua y a superar el estrés hídrico, si se aplica un límite máximo global sostenible a la utilización de agua. El Plan proponía la elaboración de orientaciones para contribuir a la expansión del régimen de intercambio de derechos de agua en los Estados miembros que opten por utilizarlo.

Una gestión cuantitativa adecuada es esencial para la consecución de los objetivos de la Directiva Marco del Agua (DMA) ([2]), en particular en las cuencas hidrográficas que están sometidas a un uso intensivo de los recursos hídricos. Con este fin, resulta fundamental disponer de un mecanismo apropiado para la asignación de agua a los usuarios. Sin embargo, la asignación de agua y la fijación de prioridades entre los diferentes usuarios es una función que corresponde a las autoridades de los Estados miembros.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/es/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Directiva 2000/60/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de octubre de 2000, por la que se establece un marco comunitario de actuación en el ámbito de la política de aguas (DO L 327 de 22.12.2000).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014179/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) and Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Water management in the EU — water trading

In November 2013, Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública and Ingenieros sin Fronteras presented the document entitled 'Proposals for improved water management in the EU'.

The Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources considers water trading to be an instrument that could help to improve water efficiency and overcome water stress.

Water trading between individuals is carried out by users who, for various reasons, have stopped using the resource, and therefore transfer the rights to other users who are going to use it. When a resource ceases to be used it remains in the water environment, and does environmental work, but if this water is transferred to another user it is subtracted from the natural water environment, ceasing to carry out its function and, therefore, trading of rights between individuals will always lead to an increase in consumption. Trading of water rights between individuals is at odds with the principle that water is a public asset, so individuals who own a right, and not the resource itself, ought not to be able to sell it to third parties.

The creation of public water banks is only acceptable with the aim of water used for irrigation or industry being obtained to guarantee environmental flows and sufficient supply to populations, during periods of drought.

Does the Commission believe that EU legislation should include provisions laying down that:

1. Water trading between individuals be prohibited?

2. Public water banks that are created operate solely during periods of drought, on a temporary basis, to acquire water used for irrigation or industry and to guarantee environmental flows and sufficient supply to populations, provided that the exchanges are carried out solely within a single water catchment area?

3. Member States may expropriate water rights when supply to populations or for environmental uses is jeopardised?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(25 February 2014)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its joint answer to written questions E-14175/2013 and E-14177/2013. ([1])

The Water Blueprint highlighted that water trading could help to improve water efficiency and overcome water stress, if a sustainable overall cap for water use is implemented. The Blueprint proposed developing guidance to help the development of water trading in the Member States that choose to employ it.

Proper quantitative management is essential to achieve the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) ([2]), in particular in river basins which are subject to intense use of water resources. To this end, a proper mechanism for water allocation to users is essential. However, water allocation and prioritisation between different users is a task for Member States' authorities.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014180/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) y Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Gestión de las aguas en la EU — Presión agrícola

En noviembre de 2013, los grupos Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública e Ingenieros sin Fronteras presentaron el documento «Propuestas para la mejora de la gestión del agua en la EU».

El «Plan para salvaguardar los recursos hídricos de Europa» hace mención expresa a «la presión procedente de la agricultura y de la protección contra inundaciones», indicando que puede mitigarse mediante «el desarrollo de franjas de protección que proporcionan continuidad biológica entre los ríos y sus orillas, y la utilización, cuando sea posible de infraestructuras verdes».

1. ¿Considera la Comisión que tendría que estar incluido en la normativa comunitaria que se incremente, siempre que sea técnicamente posible, la anchura de los cauces, acercándose en la medida de lo posible a lo que sería la llanura de inundación natural, y se revegeten estas áreas con arbolado de ribera autóctono, y que se respeten en todo momento las condiciones naturales de las riberas y márgenes de los ríos, conservando su valor ecológico, social y paisajístico, y propiciando la recarga de los álveos y otros acuíferos relacionados con los mismos?

2. ¿Considera que se deberían establecer importantes partidas presupuestarias a nivel comunitario, para proceder a la naturalización de los encauzamientos de hormigón y escollera y demás infraestructuras grises ya existentes, sin perder la función protectora que dichas infraestructuras tenían?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de febrero de 2014)

La Directiva marco del agua (DMA) ([1]) contiene disposiciones que abordan la prevención del deterioro y la restauración de los ríos, además de la recuperación de acuíferos. Estas disposiciones deben aplicarse en los planes hidrológicos de cuenca preparados por los Estados miembros. Asimismo, en el marco de la Directiva sobre inundaciones ([2]), los Estados miembros elaboran planes de gestión del riesgo de inundación en los que se deben tener en cuenta las repercusiones de las políticas de uso del suelo, así como las vías de evacuación y las zonas con potencial de retención de las inundaciones, como las llanuras aluviales naturales. Se deben considerar enfoques de la gestión del riesgo de inundación natural (p. ej., restauración de llanuras aluviales) con anterioridad a la ejecución de proyectos que puedan provocar modificaciones de las masas de agua.

La Comisión promueve las inversiones en infraestructura verde y ha elaborado documentos de orientación para ayudar a las autoridades nacionales a este respecto, en particular en el marco de la política de cohesión ([3]). Las infraestructuras verdes pueden recibir ayuda de los fondos de la UE siempre que los Estados miembros den la debida prioridad a este tipo de inversiones en sus programas y planes.

([1]) Directiva 2000/60/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de octubre de 2000, por la que se establece un marco comunitario de actuación en el ámbito de la política de aguas (DO L 327 de 22.12.2000).
([2]) Directiva 2007/60/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de octubre de 2007, relativa a la evaluación y gestión de los riesgos de inundación (DO L 288 de 6.11.2007).
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/guide_multi_benefit_nature.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014180/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) and Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Water management in the EU — agricultural pressure

In November 2013, the groups Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública and Ingenieros sin Fronteras presented the document entitled 'Proposals for improved water management in the EU'.

The Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources expressly mentions 'pressure from agriculture and flood protection', indicating that this can be mitigated by 'developing buffer strips, which provide biological continuity between rivers and their banks and using, whenever possible, green infrastructure'.

1. Does the Commission think that EC law should include provisions for increasing, provided that this is technically possible, the width of flows, getting as close as possible to the natural flood plain, and for these areas to be replanted with riverbank native trees, and for the natural conditions of the banks and the edges of the rivers to be respected at all times, retaining their ecological, social and landscape value, and encouraging the refilling of the riverbeds and other aquifers connected to them?

2. Does it think that significant budget headings ought to be provided at EU level for the greening of concrete channels and breakwaters and other existing grey infrastructure, without losing sight of the protective function provided by that infrastructure?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) ([1]) includes provisions addressing the prevention of deterioration and restoration of rivers, as well as aquifer restoration. These provisions should be implemented in the River Basin Management Plans prepared by the Member States. Moreover, under the Floods Directive (FD) ([2]) Member States develop flood risk management plans (FRMPs) which should consider the impacts of land use policies, as well as conveyance routes and areas which have the potential to retain flood water, such as natural floodplains. Natural flood risk management approaches (e.g. restoration of flood plains) should be considered prior to projects that would cause modifications to water bodies.

The Commission promotes Green Infrastructure (GI) investments and has developed guidance documents to assist national authorities in this respect, in particular within the framework of Cohesion policy ([3]). GIs can be supported through EU funds provided Member States give adequate priority to this kind of investments in their programmes and plans.

([1]) Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000).
([2]) Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on the assessment and management of flood risks (OJ L 288, 6.11.2007).
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/guide_multi_benefit_nature.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014181/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) y Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Gestión del agua en la EU — Eficacia de irrigación

En noviembre de 2013, los grupos Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública e Ingenieros sin Fronteras presentaron el documento «Propuestas para la mejora de la gestión del agua en la EU».

El «Plan para salvaguardar los recursos hídricos de Europa» considera que en las propuestas de la Comisión relativas a la reforma de la PAC se establecen posibilidades de financiación destinada a mejorar la eficacia de la irrigación.

El consumo de agua en la agricultura resulta muy importante porcentualmente en los países del sur de Europa y en algunos de ellos supone más del 80 % del consumo total.

El incremento de la eficiencia en la utilización de regadío puede llegar a resultar contraproducente al suponer con frecuencia un aumento de la superficie regada o una mayor intensificación del cultivo.

¿Considera la Comisión que tendría que estar incluido en la normativa comunitaria que:

1. en aquellas cuencas o subcuencas donde las demandas superen o se sitúen próximas a las disponibilidades hídricas renovables no se permita el incremento de las superficies regables;

2. cuando se superen los valores de referencia establecidos en el plan hidrológico (para ese cultivo en esa comarca o región) se incremente de manera progresiva el precio del agua de tal manera que este actúe como elemento disuasorio y, al mismo tiempo, se reduzca el precio del agua cuando los consumos se sitúen por debajo de los valores de referencia establecidos;

3. la mejora de la eficiencia en la utilización del agua en los regadíos deberá estar acompañada de una disminución proporcional en las concesiones no implicando en ningún caso el aumento de la superficie regada o la intensificación de los cultivos;

4. los proyectos de mejora de la eficiencia deberán garantizar que la calidad del agua que se devuelve al medio tras su uso sea al menos igual a la calidad de agua tomada en la cabecera de la zona regable?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(10 de marzo de 2014)

La legislación de la UE prevé la realización de controles para detectar los efectos negativos que pueda tener el regadío en el estado de las masas de agua.

El artículo 46 del recientemente adoptado Reglamento sobre el Fondo Europeo Agrícola de Desarrollo Rural (Feader) ([1]) establece unas condiciones específicas para subvencionar inversiones en instalaciones de riego. Si la inversión tiene como resultado un incremento neto de la superficie irrigada, es preciso realizar un análisis medioambiental, y si el estado de la masa de agua es inferior a bueno, la subvención a la inversión se bloquea en principio, con limitadas excepciones.

En virtud de la Directiva Marco sobre el Agua (DMA) ([2]), los Estados miembros de la UE están obligados a prevenir el deterioro del estado de las masas de agua y a lograr que ese estado sea bueno antes de 2015. La extracción y la contaminación puntual y difusa son presiones significativas que deben gestionar los Estados miembros en sus planes hidrológicos de cuenca para garantizar el logro de ese buen estado.

El artículo 9 de la DMA obliga a los Estados miembros a establecer una política de precios que proporcione incentivos adecuados para que los usuarios utilicen de manera eficiente los recursos hídricos. Para financiar las inversiones realizadas en el marco de la prioridad de desarrollo rural n° 5, los Estados miembros deben demostrar que en el sector agrícola se aplican una recuperación de costes y unos precios incentivadores.

([1]) Reglamento (UE) n° 1305/2013 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 17 de diciembre de 2013, relativo a la ayuda al desarrollo rural a través del Fondo Europeo Agrícola de Desarrollo Rural (Feader).

([2]) Directiva 2000/60/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de octubre de 2000, por la que se establece un marco comunitario de actuación en el ámbito de la política de aguas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014181/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE) and Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Water management in the EU — efficient irrigation

In November 2013, the groups Ecologistas en Acción, Aigua és Vida, Som lo que Sembrem, Grup de Defensa del Ter, Plataforma de Defensa del Ebro, Marea Azul del Sur, Red Agua Pública and Ingenieros sin Fronteras presented the document entitled 'Proposals for improved water management in the EU'.

The Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources takes the view that the Commission's proposals on the reform of the common agricultural policy provide possibilities for funding to improve the efficiency of irrigation.

Water consumption in agriculture is very high in percentage terms in southern European countries, accounting for over 80% of total consumption in some of them.

Increased efficiency in the use of irrigation can end up being counterproductive, because it often leads to an increase in the area irrigated or to more intensive crop-growing.

Does the Commission believe that EU legislation should include provisions requiring that:

1. In those basins or sub-basins where demand exceeds or is close to the supply of renewable water resources, an increase in the area irrigated not be permitted?

2. When the reference values laid down in the basin management plan (for that crop in that area or region) are exceeded, the price of water be increased progressively in such a way as to act as a disincentive and, at the same time, the price of water be reduced when consumption is below the reference values laid down?

3. Improved efficiency in the use of water for irrigation be accompanied by a proportionate decrease in allocations, and must under no circumstances lead to an increase in the area irrigated or to crops being grown more intensively?

4. Plans to improve efficiency ensure that the quality of the water returned to the environment after being used is at least equal to the quality of the water taken from the headwaters of the irrigable zone?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(10 March 2014)

EU legislation provides for controls on the negative impacts irrigation can have on the status of waterbodies.

In the recently adopted Regulation on the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EARDF), ([1]) Article 46 sets out specific conditions for supporting investments in irrigation. Where this is in relation to a net increase in irrigated area an environmental analysis is required, and where the water body is in less than good status, support for the investment is blocked in principle, with limited exceptions.

Under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) ([2]) EU Member States are required to prevent deterioration in the status of water bodies and to achieve good status by 2015. Abstraction, diffuse and point source pollution are significant pressures that must be managed by Member States in their River Basin Management Plans to ensure the achievement of good status.

The WFD in Article 9 requires that Member States establish a pricing policy and that this should provide adequate incentives for users to use water resources efficiently. To finance investments carried out under Rural Development priority 5, Member States are required to prove that cost recovery and incentive pricing are in place in the agricultural sector.

([1]) REGULATION (EU) No 1305/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).
([2]) Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014182/13
to the Council (President of the European Council)
Catherine Stihler (S&D)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: PCE/PEC — Scottish independence

On 12 December 2013, President Van Rompuy made the following remarks in reply to a question regarding Catalonia's accession to the EU in the event of independence:

'If a part of the territory of a Member State ceases to be a part of that state because that territory becomes a new independent state, the Treaties will no longer apply to that territory. In other words, a new independent state would, by the fact of its independence, become a third country with respect to the Union and the treaties would, from the day of its independence, not apply anymore on its territory. Under Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union, any European State which respects the principles set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union may apply to become a member of the Union according to the known accession procedures. In any case, this would be subject to ratification by all Member States and the Applicant State.'

Can the President of the European Council clarify whether this also applies to Scotland?

Reply
(17 February 2014)

It is evident from the remarks quoted by the Honourable Member that they refer to all such situations.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014183/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(17 december 2013)

Betreft: Verdediging van de Europese waarden

In een rapport van de Franse regering wordt een radicale herziening voorgesteld van het „assimilatie"-model — dat immigranten verplicht hun cultuur op te geven voor die van Frankrijk — met inbegrip van opheffing van het verbod op het dragen van moslimhoofddoekjes op school en het vernoemen van straten en pleinen naar vooraanstaande personen van buitenlandse afkomst. Ook wordt aanbevolen de „Arabisch-oriëntaalse" dimensie van de Franse cultuur te benadrukken, de media te verbieden de etniciteit van personen te vermelden en onderwijs van Arabische en Afrikaanse talen op scholen te bevorderen ([1]).

Aan de andere kant blijkt uit een studie van onderzoeker Koopmans van het WZB Berlin Social Science Centre dat de overgrote meerderheid van de ondervraagde moslims zegt dat zij religieuze regels belangrijker vinden dan de wetten van het land waar zij leven en dat er slechts één legitieme interpretatie van de Koran is. ([2])

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van het voorstel van de Franse regering?

2. Is de Commissie het met mij eens dat dit voorstel een ernstige inbreuk vormt op artikel 2 van het Verdrag betreffende de Europese Unie, met name in het licht van bovengenoemd onderzoek dat duidelijk bevestigt dat Europese waarden dreigen te worden geschonden als niet goed wordt gereageerd op de situatie van immigranten?

3. Wat is de Commissie voornemens te doen — voordat het te laat is — om te voorkomen dat deze maatregel, die gericht is op het loslaten van de Franse cultuur, waarden en geschiedenis, die een belangrijk onderdeel vormen van de Europese waarden, wordt goedgekeurd en van kracht wordt?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(19 februari 2014)

De Commissie is niet op de hoogte van wetgevingsvoorstellen of andere beleidsmaatregelen van de Franse regering die een bedreiging zouden vormen voor de waarden van de EU.

Zoals bepaald in artikel 17 van het Verdrag van de Europese Unie, zijn de bevoegdheden van de Commissie beperkt tot het toezicht houden op de toepassing van het recht van de Unie onder de controle van het Hof van Justitie van de Europese Unie.

Het onderwerp van het onderzoeksverslag dat door het geachte Parlementslid is vermeld, valt buiten de werkingssfeer van het EU-recht.

([1]) http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/10516342/France-mulls-overhaul-of-assimilation-policy-towards-immigrants.html
([2]) http://www.wzb.eu/en/press-release/islamic-fundamentalism-is-widely-spread.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014183/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Defence of European values

A French Government report has proposed a radical overhaul of the 'assimilation' model — which requires immigrants to abandon their culture for that of France — including ending the ban on Muslim headscarves in schools and naming streets and squares after notables of foreign origin. It also recommends emphasising the 'Arab-Oriental' dimension of French identity, barring the media from mentioning a person's ethnicity and promoting the teaching of Arabic and African languages in schools ([1]).

On the other hand, a study published by Mr Koopmans from the WZB Berlin Social Science Centre shows that the overwhelming majority of the Muslims interviewed say that religious rules are more important to them than the laws of the country in which they live and that there is only one legitimate interpretation of the Koran ([2]).

1. Is the Commission aware of the French Government's proposal?

2. Does the Commission agree with me that this proposal seriously infringes Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, especially in the light of the abovementioned research which clearly confirms the danger of violating European values by not handling the situation of immigrants properly?

3. What does the Commission intend to do in order to avoid the adoption and entry into force of this measure, aiming at the abandonment of French culture, values and history, which are an important part of European values, before it is too late?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

The Commission is not aware of any proposed legislation or other policy measures of the French Government which would endanger the values of the EU.

As stated in Article 17 of the Treaty of the European Union, the powers of the Commission are limited to overseeing the application of Union law under the control of the Court of Justice of the European Union.

The subject matter of the research report mentioned by the Honourable Member of Parliament falls outside the scope of EC law.

([1]) http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/10516342/France-mulls-overhaul-of-assimilation-policy-towards-immigrants.html
([2]) http://www.wzb.eu/en/press-release/islamic-fundamentalism-is-widely-spread

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-014184/13
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(17 ta' Diċembru 2013)

Suġġett: Tniġġis akustiku

Fit-tweġiba tagħha għall-Mistoqsija bil-Miktub Prijoritarja P-012660/2013, il-Kummissjoni indikat li l-awtoritajiet nazzjonali kompetenti għandhom jikkonsultaw mal-pubbliku dwar il-pjanijiet ta' azzjoni proposti u li, skont l-Artikolu 9 tad-Direttiva 2002/49/KE, l-Istati Membri huma obbligati li jqassmu pubblikament il-mapep akustiċi u l-pjanijiet ta' azzjoni. B'rabta ma' dan, il-Kummissjoni tista' tipprovdi l-mappa akustika għar-raħal tal-Iklin f'Malta (li kellha tkun sottomessa lill-Kummissjoni mill-awtoritajiet rilevanti f'Malta), b'attenzjoni partikolari għat-triq prinċipali "Triq il-Wied" li tgħaddi eżatt minn dan ir-raħal residenzjali? X'inhi l-analiżi tal-Kummissjoni tal-livelli tal-ħsejjes f'dan il-qasam? Liema pjan ta' azzjoni qed jiġi propost mill-awtoritajiet nazzjonali kompetenti biex jimmaniġġjaw il-livelli tal-ħsejjes ambjentali ġġenerat mill-volumi għolja ta' traffiku fi Triq il-Wied biex jagħmilhom aċċettabbli għal raħal residenzjali?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Potočnik f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(14 ta' Frar 2014)

Malta ressqet il-mapep tal-istorbju għall-agglomerazzjoni tal-Belt Valletta, inklużi l-mapep tal-istorbju u pjan ta' azzjoni għal Triq il-Wied. Dawn huma disponibbli fis-sit elettroniku li ġej: http://noise.eionet.europa.eu/viewer.html. Id-dejta mhix ipproċessata tista' titniżżel ukoll minn fuq: http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/mt/eu/noise/df8.

Malta ressqet ukoll is-sommarju tal-pjan ta' azzjoni previst mill-Artikolu 10 tad-Direttiva 2002/49/KE: http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/mt/eu/noise/df10/envurzy5q/Data_Flow_7_Supplementary_report.pdf. Il-pjan ta' azzjoni sħiħ huwa disponibbli fuq: http://www.mepa.org.mt/noise-action-plan. Il-pjan ta' azzjoni, kif ukoll is-sommarju tiegħu, fihom informazzjoni dwar il-konsultazzjonijiet pubbliċi li ġew organizzati.

Rigward l-aċċettabbiltà tal-livelli ta' storbju, id-Direttiva 2002/49/KE ma tistipulax limiti ta' storbju: dawn huma stabbiliti fuq livell nazzjonali, u l-Kummissjoni ma tistax tesprimi fehma fuq dan l-aspett. Il-Kummissjoni qiegħed tieħu sehem fil-proċess ta' reviżjoni tal-Linji Gwida Komunitarji dwar l-Istorbju, immexxi mid-WHO. Ir-riżultati mistennija jaslu sa tmiem l-2014. Dawn il-linji gwida se jipprovdu ħarsa komprensiva lejn l-effetti potenzjali ta' livelli differenti ta' storbju fuq saħħet il-bniedem. Intant, l-informazzjoni disponibbli hawnhekk aktarx tkun ta' interess:
http://www.who.int/docstore/peh/noise/guidelines2.html;
www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/43316/E92845.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014184/13
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Noise pollution

In its answer to Priority Written Question P-012660/2013, the Commission indicated that the national competent authorities must consult the public about proposed action plans and that, under Article 9 of Directive 2002/49/EC, the Member States are obliged to publicly disseminate noise maps and action plans. In this connection, can the Commission provide the noise map for the town of Iklin in Malta (which should have been submitted to the Commission by the relevant authorities in Malta), paying particular attention to the main 'Triq il-Wied' road which passes right through this residential town? What is the Commission's analysis of noise levels in this area? What action plan is being proposed by the national competent authorities to manage the levels of environmental noise generated by high volumes of traffic on the Triq il-Wied road so as to render them acceptable for a residential town?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

Malta has submitted the noise maps for the agglomeration of La Valletta, including noise maps and an action plan for the 'Triq il-Wied' road. These are available on the following website: http://noise.eionet.europa.eu/viewer.html
The raw data is also downloadable: http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/mt/eu/noise/df8

Malta has also submitted the action plan summary foreseen by Art. 10 of Directive 2002/49/EC: http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/mt/eu/noise/df10/envurzy5q/Data_Flow_7_Supplementary_report.pdf and the full action plan can also be viewed: http://www.mepa.org.mt/noise-action-plan

Both the action plan and its summary report contain information on the public consultations organised.

On the acceptability of noise levels, the directive 2002/49/EC does not set noise limits: these are established at national levels and the Commission cannot express a view on this aspect. The Commission is participating in the revision process of the Noise Community Guidelines led by the WHO, with results expected by the end of 2014. These guidelines will provide a comprehensive overview on the potential effects of different noise levels on human health. Meanwhile, information available here may be of interest:
http://www.who.int/docstore/peh/noise/guidelines2.html
www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/43316/E92845.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014185/13
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(17 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Specie protette servite al ristorante

Una recente inchiesta dimostra come l'Italia fatichi ad applicare la Convenzione di Washington per il controllo del commercio degli animali e delle piante, in vigore nel nostro paese dal 1980.

Dal 2011 ad oggi, la Forestale ha contato oltre 2076 reati di bracconaggio, denunciando 1431 persone, arrestandone 12 e dando il via a 538 perquisizioni e oltre 5000 illeciti amministrativi. Numeri che danno la consistenza del problema, diffuso in tutte le regioni e che vede come vittime animali rari, protetti o di cui semplicemente è vietata la caccia e che sono serviti come pietanza costosa in maniera illegale da alcuni ristoranti. Si va dalla Stenella striata al delfino italiano, dal pettirosso ai datteri di mare, agli scoiattoli, dal ghiro ai ricci di bosco bolliti vivi e poi fritti.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. quali misure utilizza per contrastare il bracconaggio negli Stati membri?

2. Può certificare che tutti i suoi Stati membri abbiano siglato la Convenzione di Washington e invitare i paesi che non hanno ancora aderito a farlo quanto prima?

3. Non ritiene di dover uniformare i controlli e le legislazioni in tema di bracconaggio e di bando del commercio degli animali protetti negli Stati membri?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(5 marzo 2014)

Gli Stati membri sono responsabili sia dell'esecuzione delle normative dell'UE relative alle specie selvatiche [ad esempio l'articolo 7 della direttiva «uccelli» (2009/147/CE) sulla caccia agli uccelli] sia di affrontare il problema del bracconaggio sul loro territorio. Per quanto riguarda il traffico illegale di specie selvatiche, il 7 febbraio 2014 l'UE ha pubblicato una comunicazione intesa a consultare le parti interessate sull'efficacia effettiva della sua attuale politica volta a combatterlo e sulle possibilità e modalità di ulteriori sviluppi.

I 28 Stati membri dell'UE sono parti contraenti della Convenzione sul commercio internazionale delle specie di flora e di fauna selvatiche minacciate di estinzione (CITES) della quale, nei prossimi mesi, si prevede farà parte anche l'UE.

L'attuazione della CITES (compresi i divieti in materia di commercio e le misure da prendere contro il commercio illegale) è armonizzata in tutta l'UE dal regolamento (CE) n. 338/97 del Consiglio e dai regolamenti di esecuzione della Commissione. La Commissione collabora strettamente con gli Stati membri al fine di rafforzare costantemente l'esecuzione di tali norme.

Nel 2007 è stato adottato un piano per l'esecuzione delle norme sul commercio della flora e della fauna selvatiche (cfr. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri= OJ:L:2007:159:0045:0047:IT:PDF).

La cooperazione sulle questioni legate al commercio illegale delle specie selvatiche è inoltre garantita dal gruppo di esecuzione dell'UE che si riunisce due volte all'anno sotto la presidenza della Commissione europea e raccoglie funzionari responsabili dell'applicazione della legge provenienti da tutti gli Stati membri dell'UE, nonché da Europol, Eurojust, Interpol, dall'Organizzazione mondiale delle dogane e dal segretariato della CITES.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014185/13
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Protected species served in restaurants

A recent investigation has shown how Italy is struggling to apply the Washington Convention on trade in flora and fauna, in force in Italy since 1980.

Since 2011, the Italian Forestry Service has uncovered over 2 076 cases of poaching, reported 1 431 people, arrested 12, initiated 538 searches and reported over 5 000 administrative offences. These figures give an idea of the scale of a widespread problem which affects every region of Italy. The animals which are the victims are rare, protected or their hunting is simply prohibited, and yet they are illegally served as expensive dishes in certain restaurants. These victims include striped and common dolphins, robins, date mussels, squirrels, dormice and hedgehogs, the latter boiled alive and then fried.

In light of this, can the Commission answer the following:

1. which measures is it employing to combat poaching in the Member States?

2. Can it confirm that all the Member States have signed the Washington Convention and invite any countries who have not to do so as soon as possible?

3. Does it not believe that the controls and legislation concerning poaching and banning the trade in protected animals in the Member States should be standardised?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(5 March 2014)

Member States are responsible for enforcing EU legislations related to wildlife (e.g. Article 7 of the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) on bird hunting) and to tackle poaching on their territory. As for wildlife trafficking, the EU published on 7 February 2014 a communication aiming to consult stakeholders on whether its current policy against wildlife trafficking is efficient enough and whether and how it could be further developed.

The 28 EU Member States are all Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the EU is also expected to become a Party in the coming months.

The implementation of CITES (including trade prohibitions and measures to be taken against illegal trade) is harmonised across the EU through Council Regulation 338/97 and implementing Commission Regulations. The Commission works closely with the Member States to constantly strengthen the enforcement of those rules.

An EU action plan for the enforcement of EU wildlife trade rules was adopted in 2007
(see http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:159:0045:0047:EN:PDF).

Cooperation on illegal wildlife trade issues also takes place through the EU enforcement group, which meets twice a year under the chairmanship of the European Commission and gathers law enforcement officers from all EU Member States, as well as Europol, Eurojust, Interpol, the World Customs Organisation, Interpol and the CITES Secretariat.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014186/13
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(17 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Natura giuridica del Fiscal Compact

Molti critici del Fiscal Compact sottolineano criticamente — con pervicace ostinazione — il fatto che esso sia un trattato internazionale e non un trattato dell'Unione europea, come se la sua natura giuridica fosse in un certo modo difforme da quella dei trattati europei.

La Commissione:

1. Può chiarirci questa eventuale differenza?

2. In quanto trattato internazionale, il Fiscal Compact è subordinato alle norme consuetudinarie che rientrano nella disciplina della Convenzione di Vienna del 1980?

3. E quale rapporto hanno i trattati europei con questa Convenzione?

4. In caso di conflitto d'interpretazione o di applicazione quale Corte si deve adire per ottenere giustizia?

Risposta di José Manuel Barroso a nome della Commissione
(17 febbraio 2014)

Il patto di bilancio è contenuto nell'articolo 3 del trattato sulla stabilità, sul coordinamento e sulla governance nell'unione economica e monetaria (TSCG). Il TSCG è un trattato internazionale concluso tra alcuni Stati membri al di fuori dell'ordinamento giuridico dell'UE. L'Unione europea non è parte del TSCG. In quanto trattato internazionale, il TSCG è soggetto alle norme consuetudinarie internazionali sui trattati codificate dalla Convenzione di Vienna del 1980.

Esso ha tuttavia forti collegamenti con il diritto dell'Unione, fa riferimento a strumenti giuridici dell'UE e si basa in parte sul suo quadro istituzionale. A norma dell'articolo 16 del TSCG, sono adottate le misure necessarie per incorporare il contenuto del trattato nell'ordinamento giuridico dell'Unione europea. In virtù del principio del primato del diritto dell'Unione, il TSCG deve conformarsi alle disposizioni del diritto primario e secondario dell'UE. Questo è confermato dall'articolo 2 del TSCG, a norma del quale Il trattato si applica solo nella misura in cui è compatibile con il diritto dell'Unione europea.

Attraverso il meccanismo di cui all'articolo 273 del TFUE, il TSCG sancisce la competenza della Corte di giustizia a conoscere di qualsiasi controversia tra Stati membri sul fatto che abbiano adottato o meno provvedimenti in conformità del patto di bilancio (articolo 8 del TSCG).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014186/13
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Legal nature of the Fiscal Compact

Many critics of the Fiscal Compact have stubbornly continued to highlight the fact that it is an international, rather than a European Union, treaty, as though its legal nature were in some way different from that of European Treaties.

Can the Commission:

1. clarify this potential difference;

2. state whether the Fiscal Compact, as an international treaty, is subject to the customary rules which fall under the provisions of the Vienna Convention of 1980;

3. explain the relationship between the European Treaties and this Convention;

4. state which court a conflict of interpretation or application should be referred to in order to obtain justice?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(17 February 2014)

The Fiscal Compact is contained in Article 3 of the Treaty on Stability Coordination and Governance in the EMU (TSCG). The TSCG is an international treaty concluded *inter se* by some EU Member States outside the EU legal order. The European Union is not a party to the TSCG. Since it is an international treaty, it is subject to customary international laws on treaties as codified by the Vienna Convention of 1980.

However, the TSCG has strong links with EC law. It refers to EC law instruments and partially relies on the EU institutional framework. The TSCG also provides that the necessary steps will be taken in order to incorporate the content of the TSCG into the EU legal order (Article 16 TSCG). In virtue of the principle of primacy of EC law, the TSCG must comply with the provisions of EU primary and secondary law. This is confirmed by Article 2 of the TSCG which provides that the TSCG applies only insofar as it is compatible with EC law.

Via the mechanism provided for in Article 273 TFUE, the TSCG grants the European Court of Justice Jurisdiction to hear a dispute between Member States as to whether or not they have adopted the provisions in compliance with the Fiscal Compact (Article 8 TSCG).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014188/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(17 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Attività di stoccaggio di gas metano nel sottosuolo e pericolo di incremento del rischio sismico a Susegana e comuni limitrofi in provincia di Treviso

Nel nord della provincia di Treviso esiste un impianto sotterraneo di stoccaggio di gas metano denominato «Collalto Stoccaggio», che si estende per circa 90 chilometri quadrati sotto il territorio dei comuni di Susegana, San Pietro di Feletto, Nervesa della Battaglia, Pieve di Soligo e Sernaglia della Battaglia alla profondità di 1.200-1.400 metri sotto il livello del mare ([1]). La società titolare della concessione ha presentato nel 2007 un progetto di ampliamento della centrale di compressione localizzata a Susegana, comprensivo del potenziamento della capacità di stoccaggio sino a 800 milioni di metri cubi di gas ([2]). Gli oppositori al progetto, tuttavia, contestano tanto la presenza dell'impianto quanto il suo ampliamento, perché l'attività di stoccaggio di gas nel sottosuolo potrebbe causare sismicità indotta e/o accelerare eventi sismici di natura tettonica in un'area già a rischio. Guardando alla struttura geologica del sottosuolo, infatti, la zona interessata — intensamente antropizzata e industrializzata — è caratterizzata dalla presenza di una faglia attiva che, secondo l'Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia, può generare terremoti anche di grande intensità. Studi effettuati sull'attività di stoccaggio di CO_2 (il cui comportamento non presenta sostanziali differenze dal punto di vista meccanico rispetto al gas metano), in particolare, rilevano che l'iniezione di grandi volumi di tale fluido può innescare eventi sismici a causa dell'incremento di pressione ([3]); nell'ottobre 2013 a Valencia (Spagna), infatti, si è verificato un terremoto in prossimità di un impianto di stoccaggio di metano analogo a quello in esame. L'articolo 191 del TFUE sancisce il principio di precauzione; nell'interpretazione del medesimo data dalla Commissione, esso può essere invocato al fine di prendere provvedimenti per reagire rapidamente quando un fenomeno, un prodotto o un processo può avere effetti potenzialmente pericolosi per la salute umana, animale o vegetale ovvero per la protezione dell'ambiente, individuati tramite una valutazione scientifica e obiettiva, se questa valutazione non consente di determinare il rischio con sufficiente certezza.

Sulla base di quanto esposto, la Commissione:

1. è a conoscenza dell'attività di stoccaggio suesposta e del progetto di ampliamento della medesima?

2. Non ritiene che, in applicazione del principio di precauzione, non solo non andrebbe ampliata l'attività di stoccaggio, ma addirittura dovrebbe esserne valutata la sospensione da parte delle autorità competenti in virtù del rischio sismico dell'area?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(20 febbraio 2014)

La Commissione non è a conoscenza dell'esistenza di impianti di stoccaggio sotterraneo di gas metano nella provincia di Treviso e del relativo progetto di ampliamento.

La direttiva 2012/18/UE ([4]) (direttiva Seveso III) sul controllo dei pericoli di incidenti rilevanti connessi con sostanze pericolose, che sostituirà la direttiva 96/82/CE ([5]) (direttiva Seveso II) dal 1° giugno 2015, precisa che la normativa Seveso si applica agli impianti di stoccaggio sotterraneo di gas sulla terraferma. Ciò implica che il gestore di un impianto di questo tipo è tenuto a redigere un rapporto di sicurezza che consenta, tra l'altro, di individuare situazioni nelle quali potrebbero verificarsi incidenti, compresa una sintesi delle potenziali cause. La direttiva Seveso III specifica inoltre che le potenziali cause prese in considerazione dovrebbero includere quelle naturali, ad esempio terremoti e inondazioni. Inoltre, in caso di modifiche all'impianto che potrebbero avere importanti ripercussioni sul pericolo di incidenti rilevanti, gli Stati membri devono garantire che le rispettive politiche di pianificazione territoriale prevedano procedure di consultazione atte ad agevolare l'attuazione di obiettivi di prevenzione di tali incidenti. Nel caso in esame spetterebbe alle autorità nazionali competenti prendere una decisione motivata e basata sull'esito delle consultazioni del caso.

([1]) L'impianto sfrutta come serbatoi le rocce porose presenti nel sottosuolo, eredità dell'attività svolta in passato di estrazione di idrocarburi dal giacimento un tempo ivi presente e ora esaurito.
([2]) In merito a tale progetto, il Ministero dell'Ambiente con nota U. prot. DSA-2009-0006991 del 19.03.2009 ha escluso la necessità di effettuare la VIA (Valutazione di Impatto Ambientale) di cui alla direttiva 2011/92/UE.
([3]) Cfr. J.E. Streit, R.R. Hillis. «Estimating fault stability and sustainable fluid pressures for underground storage of CO_2 in porous rock».
([4]) GU L 197 del 24.07.2012, pag. 1.
([5]) GU L 10 del 14.1.1997, pag. 13.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014188/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Storage of methane gas in the subsoil and the danger of increasing the seismic risk in Susegana and neighbouring municipalities in the province of Treviso

In the north of the province of Treviso, an underground methane gas storage facility, (Collalto Stoccaggio) extends for some 90 square kilometres under the territory of the municipalities of Susegana, San Pietro di Feletto, Nervesa della Battaglia, Pieve di Soligo and Sernaglia della Battaglia at a depth of 1 200-1 400 metres below sea level ([1]). The company which owns this facility presented a project in 2007 to expand the compression station located in Susegana, which would increase its storage capacity to 800 million cubic metres of gas ([2]). However, opponents of the project are protesting against both the presence of the facility itself and its expansion, since storing gas in the subsoil could cause induced seismicity and/or accelerate seismic events of a tectonic nature in an already 'at-risk' area. Indeed, considering the geological structure of the subsoil, the affected area — heavily built-up and industrialised — is on an active fault line which, according to the Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia (Italian National Geophysics and Volcanology Institute), could trigger powerful earthquakes. Studies carried out into the storage of CO2 (the behaviour of which does not differ greatly in mechanical terms from methane) have found, in particular, that the injection of large volumes of such a fluid can trigger seismic events through an increase in pressure ([3]); in fact, in October 2013, an earthquake occurred in Valencia (Spain) close to a methane storage facility similar to that in Susegana. Article 191 TFEU lays down the precautionary principle; in the interpretation of the latter principle provided by the Commission, it may be invoked to enable a rapid response when a phenomenon, product or process may have a dangerous effect for human, animal or plant health or to protect the environment, identified by a scientific and objective evaluation, if this evaluation does not allow the risk to be determined with sufficient certainty.

In light of the above, could the Commission state:

1. whether it is aware of the aforementioned storage facility and plans for its expansion;

2. whether it believes that, in accordance with the precautionary principle, not only would it not be a good idea to expand the storage facility, but that its closure should be considered by the competent authorities in light of the seismic risk in the area?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

The Commission is not aware of the existence of the underground methane gas storage facility in the province of Treviso and related expansion plans.

The Seveso III Directive 2012/18/EU ([4]) on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances, which will replace the Seveso II Directive 96/82/EC ([5]) as from 1 June 2015, clarifies that the Seveso legislation applies to onshore underground gas storage facilities. This implies that the operator of such a facility has to establish a safety report which should, *inter alia*, identify possible accident scenarios including a summary of potential causes. The Seveso III Directive further specifies that the consideration of potential causes should include natural causes, for example earthquakes and floods. Furthermore, in the case of modifications to the facility which could have significant repercussions on major-accident hazards, Member States must ensure that appropriate consultation procedures are set up to facilitate the implementation of major-accident prevention objectives in their land-use policies. In the case at hand, it would be for the national competent authorities to take a decision that is duly motivated and based on the results of appropriate consultations.

([1]) The facility uses for storage the porous rocks present in the subsoil; a legacy of the past extraction of hydrocarbons from a now exhausted deposit.
([2]) With regard to this project, the Italian Ministry of the Environment, in note U. Protocol DSA-2009-0006991 of 19.3.2009 ruled out the need to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment pursuant to Directive 2011/92/EU.
([3]) See J.E. Streit, R.R. Hillis. 'Estimating fault stability and sustainable fluid pressures for underground storage of CO2 in porous rock'.
([4]) OJ L 197, 24.7.2012.
([5]) OJ L 10, 14.1.1997.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014189/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(17 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Disparità di trattamento tra gli inquilini degli enti pubblici e gli inquilini degli enti previdenziali privatizzati

Il decreto legislativo n. 509/94 ha dato la possibilità a tutti gli enti gestori di forme obbligatorie di previdenza e assistenza, quali Enasarco, Enpaia, Cassa Ragionieri, Cassa Avvocati e Cassa Commercialisti, di trasformarsi in persone giuridiche private rimanendo titolari di tutti i rapporti attivi e passivi (compreso il patrimonio immobiliare), a condizione di non usufruire più di finanziamenti pubblici diretti o indiretti. La condizione, nel tempo, è stata violata, dato che la contribuzione obbligatoria è stata considerata una forma indiretta di finanziamento pubblico.

Gli enti in questione sono stati privatizzati solo nella gestione ma non nelle finalità, che rimangono pubbliche, come anche specificato nello stesso decreto. Tutte le Casse sono dunque rimaste soggetti portatori di interessi pubblici e previdenziali — ragion per cui sono anche state inserite nel conto economico consolidato della pubblica amministrazione — quali individuati dall'ISTAT ai sensi dell'articolo 1, comma 3, della Legge 31 dicembre 2009, n. 196. Tale qualificazione giuridica è anche stata ribadita dal TAR del Lazio, dal Consiglio di Stato e dalla Corte di Cassazione.

In tema di dismissioni del patrimonio immobiliare da parte degli enti previdenziali, il legislatore è intervenuto inserendo obblighi e regolando le procedure di vendita per gli enti previdenziali pubblici quali INPS, INAIL, INPDAP a conferma della loro natura pubblicistica, applicando i prezzi previsti, prima, dal decreto legislativo 104/96 e, dopo, dalla legge 410/01.

Per contro, ancora oggi, la normativa italiana ha escluso gli enti previdenziali privatizzati di cui al decreto legislativo 509/94 da tale beneficio, applicando sia alle vendite che alle locazioni principi diversi e discriminatori. Infatti, alle dismissioni degli enti privatizzati si applicano prezzi di vendita ben più alti di quelli degli enti pubblici e con modalità completamente diverse rispetto a questi ultimi, determinando pertanto una disparità di trattamento tra inquilini di enti pubblici e inquilini di enti pubblici successivamente privatizzatisi.

Vi è anche da considerare che, per entrambi i soggetti, il patrimonio immobiliare è stato acquistato quasi esclusivamente quando erano entrambi enti pubblici. Tale situazione risulterebbe anche in contrasto con i principi di trasparenza, economicità e congruità della valutazione economica.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. la disparità di trattamento di cui sopra non risulta contraria alla direttiva 2004/18/CE che, tra i requisiti fondamentali stabilisce l'obbligatorietà di verifica della situazione giuridica di un organismo, ai fini della sua qualificazione come ente pubblico?

2. Qual è il quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(20 febbraio 2014)

L'onorevole deputato si riferisce a norme del diritto italiano che regolano le procedure di vendita o locazione di immobili di proprietà di enti previdenziali appartenenti alla pubblica amministrazione.

La direttiva 2004/18/CE disciplina il coordinamento delle procedure di aggiudicazione degli appalti pubblici. Tali contratti hanno per oggetto l'esecuzione di lavori, la fornitura di prodotti o la prestazione di servizi da parte di uno o più operatori economici per una o più autorità pubbliche. La vendita e la locazione immobiliare non rientrano nell'ambito di applicazione della suddetta direttiva. Le norme nazionali che regolano tali operazioni possono nondimeno esser tenute al rispetto dei principi del diritto unionale, in particolare per quanto riguarda la trasparenza e la non discriminazione.

1. La situazione descritta dall'onorevole deputato non costituisce una violazione della direttiva 2004/18/CE.

2. Alla luce di quanto sopra, la Commissione non ravvisa ragioni per monitorare tale situazione e fornirne un quadro generale.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014189/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Unequal treatment of tenants of public bodies and tenants of privatised social security bodies

Legislative Decree No 509/94 has made it possible for all bodies which handle mandatory forms of social security, such as Enasarco, Enpaia, Cassa Ragionieri, Cassa Avvocati and Cassa Commercialisti, to convert into private legal persons while remaining the owners of all their assets and liabilities (including property assets), provided that they no longer benefit from direct or indirect public funding. This condition has been breached over time, since compulsory contributions have been deemed an indirect form of public funding.

The bodies in question have been privatised only with regard to their management, but not their purposes, which remain public, as stipulated by the aforementioned decree. All the funds have therefore remained social security and public interest entities, which is the reason why they have been included in the consolidated profit and loss accounts of the public administration, as identified by ISTAT, pursuant to Article 1(3) of Law No 196 of 31 December 2009. This legal classification was also reaffirmed by the Regional Administrative Tribunal (TAR) of Lazio, the Italian Council of State and the Court of Cassation.

In terms of disposals of property assets by social security bodies, the legislator intervened, introducing requirements and regulating the sales procedure for public social security bodies such as INPS, INAIL and INPDAP in confirmation of their public nature, applying the prices set down initially by Legislative Decree No 104/96 and then by Law No 410/01.

On the other hand, Italian legislation still excludes the privatised social security bodies referred to in Legislative Decree No 509/94 from this benefit, applying different, discriminatory principles to both sales and rentals. Indeed, the sales prices applied to disposals of privatised bodies are much higher than those of public bodies, with completely different procedures, thus resulting in unequal treatment between tenants of public bodies and tenants of public bodies which are subsequently privatised.

It should also be taken into account that, for both types of entities, the property assets were acquired almost exclusively when both were public entities. This situation also seems to contravene the principles of transparency, economy and fairness of the financial valuation.

In light of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. does the aforementioned unequal treatment not contravene Directive 2004/18/EC which lays down, among the fundamental prerequisites, the requirement to verify the legal status of a body, for the purposes of its classification as a public body;

2. can it provide an overview of the situation?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

The Honourable Member refers to rules under Italian law regulating the procedures for the sale or lease of property assets owned by social security bodies.

Directive 2004/18/EC lays down provisions on the coordination of procedures for the award of public contracts. Such contracts are having as their object the execution of works, the supply of products or the provisions of services by one or more economic operators for one or more public authorities. The sale or lease of property assets does not fall within the scope of application of Directive 2004/18/EC. National rules governing these transactions, however, may have to respect the principles of EC law, in particular transparency and non-discrimination.

1. The situation described by the Honourable Member does not constitute an infringement of Directive 20014/18/EC.

2. In the light of the above, the Commission does not see reasons for monitoring this situation and providing an overview thereof.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014191/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(17 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Extracción y procesamiento de uranio con técnicas de minería a cielo abierto en Retortillo, Alameda de Gardón y Gambuta: graves impactos ambientales y para la salud

La multinacional australiana Berkeley Resources Ltd., a través de su filial española Berkeley Minera España, tiene prevista la extracción y el procesamiento de uranio a través de técnicas de minería a cielo abierto y lixiviación en el municipio de Retortillo (Salamanca) en el pueblo vecino de Alameda de Gardón y en Gambuta (Cáceres) así como en otros depósitos satélite situados en la zona.

Ante los graves impactos ambientales y para la salud que tendría la que sería la única explotación de uranio de toda Europa, Izquierda Unida se posicionó en contra alertando en las instituciones de que ya existían estudios del Consejo de Seguridad Nuclear (CSN) en los que se ponía de manifiesto que la minería de uranio tiene serias consecuencias sobre la salud de las personas que viven en los territorios. Posteriormente se ha constituido la plataforma ciudadana Stop Uranio, que acaba de alertar sobre la aprobación de la concesión minera sin tener en cuenta los informes contrarios de organismos como la Empresa Nacional del Uranio (Enusa) o el Consejo de Seguridad Nuclear.

Además, asociaciones ecologistas como SEO/BirdLife alertan de que, en este caso, a los problemas de destrucción del territorio que suponen las minas a cielo abierto, hay que añadir los efectos nocivos que supone la extracción de uranio, un metal radiactivo, acompañado de gas radón. Tras un acuerdo entre la Empresa Nacional del Uranio y la multinacional australiana para la explotación de varios yacimientos de uranio en la zona y la concesión de una de las dos autorizaciones necesarias por parte del Consejo de Seguridad Nuclear, éste rechaza otorgar la segunda autorización, y la propia Enusa da marcha atrás al considerar que el proyecto finalmente presentado por Berkeley tiene graves deficiencias como, por ejemplo, la no consideración de los residuos procedentes de la explotación como radiactivos y la inexistencia de una evaluación radiológica. A pesar de todo, la Junta de Castilla y León dictó el pasado mes de octubre una Declaración de Impacto Medioambiental (DIA) «favorable». Esta DIA está plagada de irregularidades, entre otros motivos, porque fue aprobada apresuradamente para evitar las modificaciones que se hicieron a la Directiva 92/2011/UE, porque los impactos no pueden considerarse como «asumibles» por los distintos hábitats y ecosistemas cuando estos desaparecen por completo, y porque no tiene en cuenta en ningún momento el rechazo y negativa del CSN y Enusa.

¿Está la Comisión investigando este proyecto por su posible incumplimiento de las normas comunitarias relativas a la protección del medio ambiente y de la salud humana así como de la Directiva 92/2011/UE? ¿Tiene constancia la Comisión de proyectos similares y actividades parecidas de la multinacional Berkeley Resources Ltd. en otros Estados miembros?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(27 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión ha tenido conocimiento recientemente de este asunto. Lo está siguiendo de cerca y decidirá sobre la actuación más adecuada para garantizar la conformidad del proyecto con la legislación de medio ambiente de la UE.

Los proyectos de Alameda y Retortillo fueron notificados a la Comisión en el marco del artículo 41 del Tratado Euratom. Como parte de ese procedimiento, la Comisión tratará con el inversor de todos los aspectos de los proyectos que guarden relación con los objetivos de dicho Tratado, en particular los vinculados a la protección de la población contra los peligros resultantes de las radiaciones ionizantes.

Por regla general, la Comisión no controla las inversiones de empresas privadas, pero no ha sido informada de otros proyectos o actividades similares de Berkeley Resources Ltd. en otros Estados miembros.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014191/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Extraction and processing of uranium using open-cast mining techniques in Retortillo, Alameda de Gardón and Gambuta: serious environmental and health effects

Through its Spanish subsidiary Berkeley Minera España, the Australian multinational Berkeley Resources Ltd is planning to extract and process uranium using open-cast mining techniques and leaching in the municipality of Retortillo (Salamanca), in the nearby town of Alameda de Gardón and in Gambuta (Cáceres), as well as in other satellite deposits in the area.

Given the serious effects that what would be the only uranium mining operation in all of Europe would have for the environment and health, the United Left has opposed the project, alerting institutions that there are already Nuclear Safety Council studies showing that uranium mining has serious consequences for the health of people living nearby. The citizens' platform Stop Uranio has subsequently been formed, which has just warned that the mining concession was approved without taking account of unfavourable reports by bodies such as the National Uranium Company (Enusa) or the Nuclear Safety Council.

Moreover, environmental associations such as SEO/BirdLife warn that, in this case, the harmful effects of uranium extraction, a radioactive metal, together with radon gas need to be considered in addition to the major damage done to the land by open-cast mining. Following an agreement between the National Uranium Company and the Australian multinational for the exploitation of several uranium deposits in the area and the issuing of one of the two necessary permits by the Nuclear Safety Council, the Council is refusing to issue the second permit and Enusa has backtracked, as it is of the opinion that the final project presented by Berkeley contains serious failings such as not considering waste from the site to be radioactive and the absence of any radiological assessment. Nonetheless, in October the Regional Government of Castile-León issued a 'favourable' environmental impact assessment (EIA). There are many problems with that EIA: for example, it was hastily adopted in order to avoid the amendments made to Directive 92/2011/EU, the effects cannot be considered as 'acceptable' for the various habitats and ecosystems when they disappear completely, and it takes no account whatsoever of the rejection and refusal by the Nuclear Safety Council and Enusa.

Is the Commission investigating this project for possible non-compliance with EU rules on protection of the environment and human health, as well as with Directive 92/2011/EU? Is the Commission aware of any similar projects and activities by the multinational Berkeley Resources Ltd in other Member States?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2014)

The Commission has recently been made aware of this matter. It is following the issue closely and will decide on the appropriate course of action to ensure the project is compatible with EU environmental Law.

The Alameda and Retortillo projects have also been notified to the Commission under Article 41 of the Euratom Treaty. As part of this procedure, the Commission will discuss with the investor all aspects of the projects which relate to the objectives of the Euratom Treaty, including aspects relating to the protection of the general public against the dangers arising from ionizing radiation.

Generally, the Commission does not keep track of the investments of private companies but it has not been informed of any similar projects or activities by Berkeley Resources Ltd in other Member States.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014193/13
an die Kommission
Bernd Lange (S&D)
(17. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Umsetzung der Vogelschutzrichtlinie in der EU

Zunehmend gibt es Berichte über die Tötung von Vögeln in der EU, unter anderem durch die Verwendung von Fallen, Netzen, und Leimstangen, obwohl dies seit dem Inkrafttreten der Vogelschutzrichtlinie 2009/147/EG verboten ist. Insbesondere in Frankreich werden laut Medienberichten durch diese Methoden jedes Jahr mehr als 100 Millionen Sing- und andere Vögel von Jägern und Fallenstellern getötet.

1. Welche Erkenntnisse besitzt die Kommission über die fortwährende Tötung von Vögeln in EU-Mitgliedstaaten mit diesen verbotenen Methoden?

2. Wie bewertet die Kommission den Stand der Umsetzung der Vogelschutzrichtlinie?

3. Welche Maßnahmen ergreift die Kommission, um sicherzustellen, dass die Vogelschutzrichtlinie von allen EU-Mitgliedstaaten vollständig umgesetzt und eingehalten wird?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(14. Februar 2014)

Der Einsatz von Fallen, Netzen oder anderen Mitteln, mit denen Vögel in Mengen oder wahllos gefangen oder getötet werden können, ist nach Artikel 8 der Vogelschutzrichtlinie 2009/147/EG ([1]) verboten. Die Mitgliedstaaten können nur unter sehr strengen Bedingungen von den Bestimmungen des Artikels 8 abweichen und müssen der Kommission darüber jährlich Bericht erstatten. Die Kommission prüft diese Ausnahmen und führt bei einem möglichen Verstoß weitere Untersuchungen durch. Der Kommission ist bekannt, dass Vögel in einigen Mitgliedstaaten noch immer illegal getötet oder gefangen werden.

Die Vogelschutzrichtlinie selbst haben die Mitgliedstaaten jedoch korrekt umgesetzt.

Im Falle des fortdauernden Tötens oder Fangens von Vögeln prüft die Kommission zusammen mit den Behörden des Mitgliedstaates die Wirksamkeit der Maßnahmen zur Bekämpfung dieser Praxis. Wenngleich die Durchsetzung der Bestimmungen in erster Linie den Mitgliedstaaten obliegt, kann die Kommission Informationen von dem betroffenen Mitgliedstaat anfordern, wenn sie mögliche Verstöße gegen die Vogelschutzrichtlinie feststellt. Ist die Antwort unbefriedigend, kann sie ein Vertragsverletzungsverfahren einleiten.

Zudem hat die Kommission beschlossen, das Problem der illegalen Tötung von Vögeln in der EU gemeinsam mit den beteiligten Akteuren anzugehen. Dazu hat sie eine Studie ([2]) in Auftrag gegeben und einen Fahrplan ([3]) erstellt, in dem sie Schritte zur Erhöhung der Wirksamkeit der Maßnahmen zur Bekämpfung des illegalen Tötens und Fangens von Vögeln sowie des illegalen Handels mit Vögeln in der EU darlegt.

([1]) ABl. L 20 vom 26.1.2010.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/pubs/pdf/BIO_BirdsIllegalKilling.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/illegal_killing.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014193/13
to the Commission
Bernd Lange (S&D)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Transposition of the Birds Directive in the EU

The number of reports of birds being killed in the EU using methods such as traps, nets and lime sticks is increasing, even though this has been prohibited since the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC entered into force. According to media reports, in France in particular, more than 100 million songbirds and other birds are killed each year by hunters and trappers using these methods.

1. What information does the Commission have on the continued killing of birds in EU Member States using these prohibited methods?

2. What is the Commission's assessment of how far the transposition of the Birds Directive has progressed?

3. What steps is it taking to ensure that the Birds Directive is fully transposed and complied with by all EU Member States?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

Methods such as traps and nets, or any other means used for the large-scale or non-selective capture or killing of birds are prohibited under Article 8 of the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC ([1]). Derogations from Article 8 can only be granted by Member States under very strict conditions and are reported annually to the Commission which assesses them and enquires whenever a possible infringement is identified. The Commission is aware of the persistence of illegal killing or trapping of birds in some Member States.

The Birds Directive itself has been correctly transposed by Member States.

Where illegal killing or trapping of birds persists in some Member States, the Commission investigates with the national authorities the effectiveness of the measures taken to combat these practices. Although enforcement lies primarily with Member States, when a possible breach of the Birds Directive has been identified, the Commission can ask questions to the concerned Member State. If the reply is unsatisfactory, an infringement procedure can be opened.

The Commission has also decided to address the specific issue of illegal killing of birds in the EU in collaboration with stakeholders. It commissioned a study ([2]) and has produced a Roadmap ([3]) identifying actions to increase the effectiveness of measures aimed at eliminating illegal killing, trapping, and trade of birds in the EU.

([1]) OJ L 20, 26.1.2010.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/pubs/pdf/BIO_BirdsIllegalKilling.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/illegal_killing.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014194/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(17. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Auslaufen der Subventionen für Agrosprit

Forscher der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung geben zu bedenken, dass die EU bezüglich der Ausgaben für Agrospritförderung weltweit an der Spitze liegt. In den vergangenen Jahren gab im Verhältnis gesehen keine Nation mehr Geld für die Förderung von Agrosprit aus Getreide, Soja, Raps und Palmöl aus als die EU. Acht Milliarden EUR flossen laut Internationaler Energieagentur allein im Jahr 2012, mit geringem Nutzen für das Klima und verheerenden Auswirkungen auf die Preise, so die Kritik der Forscher. 2007 etwa verteuerte die hohe US-amerikanische Nachfrage nach Mais (für Ethanol) den Maispreis dermaßen, dass sich viele Mexikaner ihre Fladenbrote nicht mehr leisten konnten.

Berechnungen zufolge müsste die EU durch eine Abkehr der EU-Förderungen für pflanzliche Treibstoffe im Jahr 2020 ganze 27 Millionen Tonnen weniger Getreide einführen und würde somit vom Nettoimporteur zum Nettoexporteur. Dies wiederum würde die Preise für Nahrungsmittel senken.

Inwieweit ist diesbezüglich eine Deckelung und später ein Auslaufen der Subventionen für Agrosprit geplant?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(27. Februar 2014)

Im Oktober 2012 hat die Kommission einen Vorschlag vorgelegt, durch den die globalen Landnutzungsänderungen für die Herstellung von Biokraftstoffen begrenzt und die Treibhausgasbilanz der in der EU verwendeten Biokraftstoffe verbessert werden sollen ([1]). Darin ist vorgesehen, die Menge der aus Nahrungspflanzen erzeugten Biokraftstoffe der ersten Generation, die auf die EU-Zielvorgaben für erneuerbare Energien angerechnet werden können, auf 5 % des Gesamtenergieverbrauchs im Verkehrssektor zu begrenzen und weitere Anreize für Biokraftstoffe, die nicht mit einem zusätzlichen Flächenbedarf verbunden sind, zu schaffen. Zudem äußerte die Kommission in dem Vorschlag die Ansicht, dass aus Nahrungspflanzen erzeugte Biokraftstoffe nach 2020 keine öffentliche Förderung mehr erhalten sollten.

Die Kommission hat dies kürzlich bekräftigt und ist nicht der Meinung, dass für den Zeitraum nach 2020 neue Zielvorgaben für erneuerbare Energien im Verkehrssektor festgelegt werden sollten ([2]). Im Rahmen eines umfassenderen und integrierten Ansatzes sollte sich die Politikentwicklung in diesem Bereich insbesondere auf eine Verbesserung der Effizienz des Verkehrssystems, die Weiterentwicklung und stärkere Verbreitung von Elektrofahrzeugen, Biokraftstoffe der zweiten und dritten Generation sowie auf sonstige alternative, nachhaltig erzeugte Kraftstoffe konzentrieren.

([1]) KOM(2012)595 endg.
([2]) KOM(2014)15 endg.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014194/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: End to subsidies for biofuels

Researchers at the Heinrich Böll Foundation note that the EU leads the world when it comes to expenditure for subsidising biofuels. In recent years, the EU has, comparatively speaking, spent more money on support for biofuels made from cereals, soya, oilseed rape and palm oil than any other country. According to the International Energy Agency, EUR 8 billion was spent in 2012 alone, with very little benefit for the climate and devastating effects on prices, according to the criticism expressed by the researchers. In 2007, for example, the high US demand for maize (for ethanol) increased the price of maize to such an extent that many Mexicans could no longer afford their flatbread.

According to calculations, if it ended its subsidies for plant-based fuels in 2020, the EU would have to reduce its import of cereals by a total of 27 million tonnes and would therefore go from a net importer to a net exporter. This, in turn, would reduce the price of food.

To what extent are there plans in this regard to cap, and later to end, subsidies for biofuels?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2014)

In October 2012, the Commission adopted a proposal to limit global land conversion for biofuel production, and raise the climate benefits of biofuels used in the EU ([1]). It proposed to limit the amount of 1st generation biofuels produced from food crops that can count towards 2020 EU renewable energy targets to 5% of overall energy consumption in transport, and to provide additional incentives for biofuels that do not create an additional demand for land. In that same proposal, the Commission presented its view that food-based biofuels should not receive public support after 2020.

The Commission confirmed this view recently and does not think it is appropriate to establish new targets for renewable energy in the transport sector after 2020 ([2]). The focus of policy development should be on improving the efficiency of the transport system, further development and deployment of electric vehicles, second and third generation biofuels and other alternative, sustainable fuels as part of a more holistic and integrated approach.

([1]) COM(2012) 595 final.
([2]) COM(2014) 15 final.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014197/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(17 décembre 2013)

Objet: EFSA — conflits d'intérêts

Un récent rapport de l'Observatoire de l'Europe industrielle mentionne que 59 % des membres de l'EFSA sont en situation de conflits d'intérêts. Plus impressionnant encore, dans le groupe analysant les produits de diététique, les produits de nutrition et les allergies, 17 des 20 membres totalisent plus de 100 conflits d'intérêts: c'est effarant.

1. La Commission a-t-elle eu vent de cette étude?

2. Quelle est son analyse de celle-ci?

3. Confirme-t-elle les chiffres mentionnés ci-dessus?

4. Comment les explique-t-elle?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(19 février 2014)

L'Honorable Parlementaire est invité à consulter la réponse de la Commission à la question écrite E- 012838/2013 ([1]) dans laquelle la Commission précise qu'elle est en désaccord avec les allégations qui sont faites.

L'Autorité européenne de sécurité des aliments (EFSA) a adopté des règles internes sur son indépendance pour se conformer aux exigences légales établies dans le règlement (CE) 178/2002 ([2]) du Parlement européen et du Conseil. Sa politique et ses règles internes ont été régulièrement révisées et actualisées. L'évaluation de la politique d'indépendance de l'EFSA entreprise par l'Observatoire de l'Europe industrielle (CEO) n'est pas fondée sur les principes du système de sécurité alimentaire de l'UE mais sur des critères fixés par le CEO. En outre, la Cour des comptes européenne a déclaré en 2012 que l'EFSA applique l'un des systèmes les plus avancés de détection et de gestion des conflits d'intérêt.

([1]) Question écrite relative aux conflits d'intérêt des experts de l'Autorité européenne de sécurité des aliments (EFSA) — E-012838/2103 et réponse http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2013-012838&language=EN
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:031:0001:0024:FR:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014197/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: EFSA — conflicts of interest

According to a recent report by Corporate Europe Observatory, 59% of the European Food Safety Authority's panel members have conflicts of interest. More disturbing still, 17 of the 20 members of the Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies have more than 100 conflicts of interest between them. This is outrageous.

1. Is the Commission aware of this study?

2. What is its assessment of it?

3. Can it confirm the figures mentioned above?

4. How does it explain them?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

The Honourable Member is invited to refer to the Commission's reply to Written Question E-012838/2013 ([1]) where the Commission made it clear that it disagreed with the allegations made.

The European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) has established internal rules on independence to comply with the legal requirements, as laid down in Regulation (EC) 178/2002 ([2]) of the European Parliament and of the Council. Its policy and internal rules have been regularly reviewed and updated. The assessment of the EFSA independence policy undertaken by Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO) is not based on the principles of the EU food safety system but on considerations by CEO. Furthermore, the European Court of Auditors reported in 2012 that EFSA has one of the most developed systems for detecting and managing conflicts of interest.

([1]) Written question — Dealing with European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Experts' conflicts of interest — E-012838/2103 and answer http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2013-012838&language=EN
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:031:0001:0024:EN:PDF

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014198/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(17 décembre 2013)

Objet: CARS 2020

1. Comment la Commission compte-t-elle coordonner de manière plus efficace ses compétences propres pour que les recommandations de «CARS 2020» deviennent réellement opérationnelles, sous le contrôle du groupe de haut niveau, afin de ne pas reproduire l'échec de la première phase du processus «CARS 21» (décembre 2005), dont les conclusions n'ont pas été suivies des mesures nécessaires?

2. La Commission pourrait-elle pour ce faire établir un calendrier clair comprenant des mesures accélérées et, dans le respect de ses compétences, se servir de son droit d'initiative, notamment en établissant des lignes directrices, afin de coordonner et de compléter l'action des États membres et des entreprises pour assurer un niveau de vie décent aux citoyens européens et pour consolider l'industrie de l'Union dans la perspective de la croissance de l'économie et de l'emploi et du redressement du secteur?

Réponse donnée par M. Tajani au nom de la Commission
(13 février 2014)

La Commission reconnaît pleinement les avantages de la coordination politique. Le processus CARS 2020 est un exemple d'élaboration des politiques globale et moderne et le groupe de haut niveau CARS 2020 constitue un forum efficace pour coordonner les travaux des différents services de la Commission. Il s'est révélé être un instrument performant qui a considérablement amélioré la coordination entre les services de la Commission et les parties prenantes.

En vue de vérifier les progrès réalisés dans la mise en œuvre des engagements pris dans le cadre du plan d'action CARS 2020, la Commission informera le groupe de haut niveau CARS 2020 des progrès accomplis en mars 2014.

Afin de limiter les interférences du marché, la Commission a estimé approprié d'utiliser, dans un certain nombre de domaines, une approche fondée sur l'autorégulation dans laquelle toutes les parties conviennent de principes et de modes de coopération communs; elle a fait des efforts importants pour parvenir à un consensus parmi les parties prenantes. Elle pourrait changer d'approche si des progrès significatifs n'étaient pas enregistrés en temps voulu, par exemple, éventuellement, dans le domaine des accords de distribution verticaux entre les constructeurs automobiles et les concessionnaires ou en matière d'anticipation des changements. À cet égard, la Commission a adopté récemment le Cadre de qualité de l'Union européenne pour l'anticipation des changements et des restructurations ([1]), qui appelle les entreprises et les pouvoirs publics à suivre certains principes dans l'objectif de faciliter l'investissement dans le capital humain et de permettre la réaffectation des ressources humaines vers des activités caractérisées par un fort potentiel de croissance et des emplois de qualité.

([1]) COM(2013) 882 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014198/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: CARS 2020

1. How will the Commission coordinate its own efforts more efficiently, in order to ensure that the CARS 2020 recommendations actually become operational and are monitored by the High Level Group in order not to repeat the failure of the first phase of the CARS 21 process (December 2005), when the conclusions reached were not followed by the necessary action?

2. Could the Commission accordingly draw up a clear schedule of fast-track measures and, within its remit, use its right of initiative, notably by drawing up guidelines, in order to coordinate and build on action by Member States and firms to ensure decent standards of living for EU citizens and to consolidate EU industries, focusing on economic and employment growth and market recovery?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(13 February 2014)

The Commission fully recognises the benefits of policy coordination. The CARS 2020 process is an example of modern holistic policy making and the CARS 2020 High Level Group provides an efficient forum for the coordination of the work of various Commission services. It has shown to be an effective tool that has significantly improved the coordination among Commission services and stakeholders.

With a view to verifying the progress in the implementation of the commitments taken in the CARS 2020 Action Plan, the Commission will inform the CARS 2020 High Level Group about progress in March 2014.

In order to limit market interferences, the Commission has deemed appropriate to use, for a number of areas, a self-regulatory approach where all parties agree upon common principles and modes of cooperation; it has made an important effort to achieve a consensus amongst stakeholders. This approach could change if any meaningful progress would not be registered in due time, e.g. possibly in the area of vertical distribution agreements between car manufacturers and car dealers, or in the area of the anticipation of changes. In particular, in relation to the latter, the Commission recently adopted the EU Quality Framework for anticipation of change and restructuring ([1]) that calls for certain principles and best practice to be followed by industry and public authorities with a view to facilitating investments in human capital and promoting the reallocation of human resources to activities with high growth potential and quality of jobs.

([1]) COM(2013) 882 final.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014200/13
à la Commission
Claude Turmes (Verts/ALE)
(17 décembre 2013)

Objet: Affaire Rakhat Aliyev et préoccupation de l'Union européenne

La police et des procureurs en Autriche, en Allemagne et à Malte enquêtent sur de graves accusations de criminalité en col blanc à l'encontre de Rakhat Aliyev, ancien ambassadeur du Kazakhstan à Vienne, ancien vice-ministre des affaires étrangères du Kazakhstan, ancien directeur des services secrets kazakhes (KNB) et ancien gendre du président du Kazakhstan. Les autorités autrichiennes ont également ouvert une enquête pénale à l'encontre de M. Aliyev pour enlèvement et assassinat. En novembre 2013, M. Aliyev a tenté d'ouvrir un compte bancaire à Chypre en utilisant un passeport autrichien d'étranger pourtant annulé par le ministère de l'intérieur en avril 2013. Le Médiateur autrichien avait entre-temps déclaré l'illégalité de la délivrance de ce passeport ainsi que d'un titre de séjour à M. Aliyev. Bien qu'en cours depuis près de trois ans en Autriche et de deux ans en Allemagne et à Malte, les enquêtes à l'échelle de l'Union européenne sur les nombreuses accusations pénales à l'encontre de M. Aliyev n'ont toujours pas permis d'engager une procédure judiciaire.

La Commission connaît-elle l'état actuel de ces enquêtes européennes et effectue-t-elle un suivi des accusations portées contre Rakhat Aliyev?

Voit-elle la moindre possibilité d'apporter une assistance juridique aux enquêtes nationales en s'appuyant sur les connaissances spécifiques d'Eurojust ou d'Europol?

La Commission est-elle consciente du risque de perte de confiance du public dans la justice de l'Union européenne face à une situation où les graves accusations d'assassinat, de corruption, de blanchiment d'argent et de falsification de documents n'aboutissent pas à une procédure judiciaire?

Ignorait-elle que la délivrance illicite d'un passeport à M. Aliyev signifiait permettre effectivement à un suspect de voyager librement dans l'Union européenne?

Réponse donnée par Mme Reding au nom de la Commission
(3 mars 2014)

La Commission est au courant des enquêtes menées à l'encontre de M. Rakhat Aliyev, notamment au motif de blanchiment de capitaux.

Même si les allégations à l'origine des enquêtes ont une dimension transfrontière, voire européenne, l'Union n'a aucune compétence pour mener elle-même une enquête pénale.

La Commission encourage systématiquement les États membres à coopérer avec Europol et Eurojust. Sa proposition concernant un nouveau règlement Europol contient d'ailleurs une disposition obligeant les États membres à fournir à Europol les données nécessaires à l'accomplissement de ses missions. Une disposition analogue figure dans la proposition de règlement de la Commission portant création d'Eurojust. De plus, la Commission, Eurojust et Europol encouragent la création d'équipes communes d'enquête.

La Commission suit les événements en cours dans les États membres d'un point de vue global et, dans les affaires transfrontières, elle observe le fonctionnement de la coopération en pratique. En revanche, elle ne contrôle pas le déroulement de telle ou telle enquête en particulier.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014200/13
to the Commission
Claude Turmes (Verts/ALE)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: The Rakhat Aliyev case and EU concern

Police and prosecutors in Austria, Germany and Malta are investigating serious white collar crime accusations against Rakhat Aliyev, former Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Austria, former Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, former KGB director and former son-in-law of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The Austrian authorities have also launched a criminal inquiry against Mr Aliyev, who is suspected of abduction and murder. In November 2013 Mr Aliyev tried to open a bank account in Cyprus with an Austrian 'Alien's Passport', which had in fact been annulled by the Ministry of the Interior in April 2013. The Austrian Ombudsman meanwhile ruled that the issuing of the passport to Mr Aliyev had been unlawful, as was his residence permit. The EU-wide investigations into numerous criminal accusations against Mr Aliyev have been in progress for nearly three years in Austria and two years in Germany and Malta, without any development that could lead to legal proceedings.

Is the Commission aware of the current status of EU-wide legal investigations against Rakhat Aliyev and is it monitoring the accusations against him?

Does the Commission see any possibility of providing legal assistance to the national investigations with the expertise of Eurojust and Europol?

Is the Commission aware of the potential damage to public confidence in EU justice when serious accusations of murder, corruption, money laundering and forgery of documents do not lead to legal proceedings?

Is the Commission aware of the fact that unlawfully issuing a passport to Mr Aliyev effectively meant allowing a criminal suspect to travel freely in the European Union?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(3 March 2014)

The Commission is aware of the investigations conducted against Rakhat Aliyev, notably related to money laundering.

Even where allegations under investigation have cross-border elements or even a European dimension, the EU has no competence to conduct criminal law investigations.

The Commission systematically encourages Member States' cooperation with Europol and Eurojust and has also introduced in its proposal for a new Europol regulation a provision obliging Member States to supply Europol with the data necessary for it to fulfil its objectives. A similar provision was retained in the Commission's proposal for a regulation establishing Eurojust. In addition, the Commission, Eurojust and Europol encourage the setting up of joint investigation teams.

While the Commission follows developments in Member States in general terms and looks into how cooperation is functioning in cross-border cases in practice, the Commission does not monitor individual investigations.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014201/13
to the Commission
Derek Vaughan (S&D)
(17 December 2013)

Subject: Mobile roaming charges outside the EU

With reference to mobile phone roaming charges, have EU representatives held discussions with any countries outside the EU regarding the cost of telecommunications for EU citizens when in a non-EU country?

Does the Commission believe there is scope for limiting roaming charges for EU citizens when travelling outside the European Union?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to the answer given in reply to Question E-006248/2012 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-014204/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Principio dell'esaurimento internazionale e tutela dei diritti di proprietà intellettuale in Russia

La recente proposta di modifica del codice civile con effetti diretti sulle regole doganali russe (valide anche per l'Unione doganale con Kazakistan e Bielorussia) in materia di proprietà intellettuale e sul mercato europeo desta non poche preoccupazioni. Finora la legislazione russa è perfettamente speculare a quella dell'UE: i prodotti di marca e i prodotti contrassegnati con marchi originari possono entrare nell'Unione doganale russa solo se il legittimo titolare dei diritti di marchio è consenziente. Tale sistema, oltre a tutelare i diritti di proprietà intellettuale, permette alle aziende interessate di investire, sviluppare nuovi prodotti e produrre in loco o altrove, sapendo di poter intervenire a tutela dei propri prodotti. Questo scenario si è recentemente incrinato: l'Autorità russa antimonopolio sostiene che l'attuale legislazione è troppo protettiva e favorevole all'industria di marca e afferma, ad esempio, che il commercio parallelo comporterebbe vantaggi consistenti per il consumatore, il quale potrebbe trovare i prodotti di marca a prezzi più bassi. A tal fine, vengono dunque proposte alcune modifiche al codice civile. Di fatto, sarebbe inserita una norma mediante il cosiddetto «principio dell'esaurimento dei diritti di marchio»: i marchi prodotti all'interno dell'Unione doganale godrebbero della tutela di esclusività, in base al quale i titolari dei diritti sul marchio possono opporsi all'immissione in commercio di prodotti con quel marchio se non provenienti dai soli canali autorizzati; per quel che riguarda invece i prodotti ottenuti fuori dall'Unione, sarebbe consentito il commercio parallelo o l'acquisto di prodotti da altri mercati, anche se non rispondenti agli standard di legge del Paese.

Considerato che:

— la proposta di modifica del codice russo potrebbe trovare accoglimento;

— il mercato europeo risentirebbe del rischio elevato di una ripresa di circolazione di marchi contraffatti e di una distorsione tra i titolari dei marchi;

— le diverse caratteristiche dei prodotti destinati ad altri mercati o le diverse politiche di assistenza nel servizio dei prodotti di qualità potrebbero determinare, già di per sé, forti tensioni commerciali nel settore dei prodotti di marca, in particolare per le produzioni di eccellenza italiane;

chiedo alla Commissione:

1. quale posizione assume rispetto all'interpretazione del cosiddetto principio dell'esaurimento nell'ordinamento comunitario;

2. se ritiene che tali modifiche possano ridurre l'attrattività del contesto di investimento in Russia, portare il titolare del marchio a perdere il controllo sul *brand*, favorire la contraffazione e l'importazione di prodotti non conformi e, infine, ridurre la certezza del diritto, cercando di introdurre disposizioni di legge protezionistiche in contrasto con le norme dell'OMC.

Risposta di Karel De Gucht a nome della Commissione
(21 gennaio 2014)

1. Nell'UE vige attualmente un regime regionale (comprendente l'intera Unione) di esaurimento dei diritti conferiti dal marchio depositato. Tale regime impedisce al detentore di un marchio depositato di proibire l'utilizzazione di un marchio in rapporto a beni che sono già stati commercializzati nell'UE. Il detentore di un marchio può tuttavia attivarsi per controllare le importazioni di tali prodotti dai paesi terzi, dal momento che l'esaurimento internazionale non è applicata all'interno dell'UE.

2. La Commissione condivide le preoccupazioni espresso dall'onorevole parlamentare per quanto riguarda possibili cambiamenti in direzione di un regime di esaurimento internazionale dei diritti conferiti da un marchio depositato nella Federazione russa. Ciò potrebbe in effetti danneggiare gli interessi delle imprese e degli investitori europei, oltre che suscitare sfiducia nei consumatori.

La Commissione ha espresso queste preoccupazioni alle autorità della Federazione russa in varie occasioni, e più di recente in una lettera del commissario De Gucht al ministro dello Sviluppo economico Sig. Belousov, nel giugno 2013, durante il dialogo UE-Russia sui diritti di proprietà intellettuale, nel novembre 2013, e durante la riunione del dialogo su commercio e investimenti (Sottogruppo commercio) del dicembre 2013.

La Commissione assicura all'onorevole parlamentare che continuerà a seguire attivamente, insieme alle sue controparti russe, gli sviluppi relativi alle norme sul regime di esaurimento dei diritti di proprietà intellettuale nella Federazione russa, al fine di proteggere gli interessi europei e, in particolare, di prevenire eventuali misure che potrebbero risultare discriminatorie contro i soggetti UE detentori dei diritti e in violazione degli impegni presi dalla Federazione russa nell'ambito dell'Organizzazione mondiale del commercio.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014204/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Principle of international exhaustion and the protection of intellectual property rights in Russia

A recent proposal to amend the Russian Civil Code which would have a direct impact on Russian intellectual property rules (as well as those of Kazakhstan and Belarus, which are in a customs union with Russia) and on the European market is causing concern both inside and outside Russia. To date, Russian legislation has been fully consistent with EU rules in this area, with branded goods being allowed into the Russian customs union only with the consent of the rights owner. This arrangement means that companies can invest and develop new products either locally or elsewhere, safe in the knowledge that they will be able to protect their intellectual property rights. However, the Russian anti-monopoly authorities are now arguing that the current legislation gives too much protection to trade-mark holders, maintaining that parallel imports would bring major benefits for consumers, lowering the cost of branded good. They are therefore proposing that the Civil Code should be amended to introduce the principle of international exhaustion of trade mark rights. Under this arrangement, branded goods produced inside the customs union would enjoy exclusive protection, meaning that a trade mark owner would be able to prevent goods bearing that trade mark from being imported unless they came from authorised sources. He would not, however, be able to prevent parallel imports into the customs union of products sourced on other markets, where the same standards do not necessarily apply.

Adoption of these changes could well result in more counterfeit goods and a distortion of competition between rights holders on the European market. Furthermore, the different standards applying to products intended for other markets and differences in after-market policies for quality goods could give rise to severe commercial tensions in the branded goods sector, in particular for Italian luxury goods.

1. How is the principle of exhaustion of rights interpreted under EC law?

2. Would the Commission agree that the proposed changes could hit investment in Russia, result in rights holders losing control over their brands, give rise to more counterfeiting and imports of non-standard goods and, lastly, undermine legal certainty, increasing the temptation to introduce protectionist measures in breach of WTO rules?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(21 January 2014)

1. The EU currently has a regional (Union-wide) trademark exhaustion regime. The regime restricts a trademark holder from prohibiting a trademark's use in relation to goods which have already been put on the market within the EU. A trademark owner may, however, still seek to control imports of their products from third countries, as international exhaustion is not applied within the EU.

Remark CB: good to be consistent in the wording in order to avoid unnecessary confusion; suggestion: use consistently trademark holder.

2. The Commission shares the concerns expressed by the Honourable Member regarding a possible change towards an international exhaustion of trademark rights in the Russian Federation. This could indeed harm the interests of European companies and investors, as well as undermine consumer confidence.

The Commission has expressed these concerns to the authorities of the Russian Federation on a number of occasions, most recently in a letter from Commissioner De Gucht to Minister of Economic Development Mr Belousov in June 2013, during the EU-Russia Intellectual Property Rights Dialogue in November 2013 and during the Trade and Investment Dialogue (Trade Subgroup) meeting in December 2013.

The Commission assures the Honourable Member that it will continue to actively follow up with its Russian counterparts any developments relating to the rules on intellectual property rights' exhaustion regime in the Russian Federation in order to protect the European interests and, in particular, to prevent any measures that could be discriminatory against EU right holders and in breach of the World Trade Organisation commitments of the Russian Federation.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014206/13
a la Comisión
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE)
(18 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Acuerdo de Asociación con Chile

El 1 de febrero de 2013 se completó la reducción arancelaria acordada entre Chile y la UE, mediante el actual Acuerdo de Asociación. Hoy son 9 595 los productos chilenos exportados a la UE que gozan de preferencias arancelarias, el equivalente al 91,8 % del total de productos chilenos negociados.

En noviembre de 2012, durante la V Cumbre UE-Chile, tanto la parte chilena como la contraparte europea manifestaron el deseo de explorar diferentes opciones con el fin de modernizar el actual Acuerdo de Asociación.

Este deseo volvió a manifestarse el pasado 3 de octubre de 2013, durante la 11ª reunión del Comité de Asociación de la UE y Chile en Bruselas.

En este contexto, ¿cuáles considera la Comisión que serían las áreas y los sectores en los que redundaría en los intereses de la Unión Europa profundizar el actual Acuerdo?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014207/13
a la Comisión
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE)
(18 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Acuerdo de Asociación con Chile

El 1 de febrero de 2013 se completó la reducción arancelaria acordada entre Chile y la UE mediante el actual Acuerdo de Asociación. Hoy son 9 595 los productos chilenos exportados a la UE que gozan de preferencias arancelarias, el equivalente al 91,8 % del total de productos chilenos negociados.

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Este deseo volvió a manifestarse el pasado 3 de octubre de 2013, durante la 11ª reunión del Comité de Asociación de la UE y Chile en Bruselas.

En este contexto, ¿cuáles considera la Comisión que serían las áreas y los sectores en los que redundaría en los intereses de la Unión Europa profundizar el actual Acuerdo?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014210/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE)
(18 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Acuerdo de Asociación UE-Chile: futuras negociaciones

Durante la V Cumbre UE-Chile, que tuvo lugar en noviembre de 2012 con motivo de la visita del Presidente Piñera a las Instituciones Europeas, tanto la parte europea como la chilena acordaron explorar las opciones para avanzar en la profundización del actual Acuerdo de Asociación UE-Chile —suscrito el 18 de noviembre de 2002— al haber transcurrido diez años desde su implementación.

Coincidiendo con el décimo aniversario del Acuerdo de Asociación UE-Chile, el pasado 3 de octubre de 2013 tuvo lugar la XI Reunión del Comité de Asociación de la Unión Europea y Chile en Bruselas.

En dicha reunión, la parte chilena entregó en forma de *non-paper* su primera propuesta sobre la posible modernización del Acuerdo para su estudio por la parte europea y se determinó que la próxima reunión del Comité de Asociación tendría lugar durante el año 2014.

En este contexto y dado que todavía no se han abierto formalmente las negociaciones para tal modernización, pregunto al Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior:

¿Cuándo considera el Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior que comenzarán dichas negociaciones?

¿Cuánto tiempo prevé el Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior que durarán las mismas?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014213/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE)
(18 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Prioridad de las posibles negociaciones sobre el Acuerdo de Asociación con Chile

La Unión Europea está negociando un Acuerdo de Libre Comercio e Inversión con los EE.UU.

Asimismo, prácticamente ha concluido las negociaciones con Canadá.

También está en negociaciones con la India, Tailandia, Vietnam y otros países.

Por último, está en pleno proceso de negociación para la actualización del Acuerdo de Asociación con México.

En este contexto, ¿podría el Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior especificar qué grado de prioridad otorga a las posibles negociaciones para la revisión y puesta al día del actual Acuerdo de Asociación con Chile?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014216/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE)
(18 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Acuerdo de Asociación UE-Chile

Durante la XVIII Reunión de la Comisión Parlamentaria Mixta Unión Europea-Chile celebrada en Valparaíso el pasado 22 de enero de 2013 se adoptaron las siguientes conclusiones en relación con el Acuerdo de Asociación entre Chile y la Unión Europea suscrito en Bruselas el 18 de noviembre de 2002 y con entrada en vigor el 1 de febrero de 2003:

«Las delegaciones del Congreso Nacional de Chile y del Parlamento Europeo […]:

— […] reiteran la importancia de profundizar el pilar comercial del Acuerdo a través de sus cláusulas evolutiva y de revisión en tanto herramientas que permiten aprovechar de modo flexible y eficaz las nuevas oportunidades que vayan surgiendo en materia de acceso a mercados de bienes y servicios, así como de flujos de capitales e inversiones, sobre la base del principio de reciprocidad y atendiendo a un adecuado equilibrio de los intereses de ambas partes;

— Reiteran su recomendación tendente a dar mayor protección y difusión a los contenidos y oportunidades del Acuerdo de Asociación en beneficio de los emprendedores y el conjunto de los ciudadanos, con particular atención a los beneficios que puede reportar para las pequeñas y medianas empresas, que son las principales generadoras de empleo en Chile y en la EU;

— Coinciden en la necesidad de modernizar el pilar de la cooperación establecido en el Acuerdo de Asociación, aprovechando las lecciones aprendidas en su exitosa implementación en su primera década, para adaptarlo a las nuevas realidades socioeconómicas de Chile y la UE, así como a su grado de desarrollo. En este sentido, destacan que se requiere reforzar el diseño de nuevos temas de cooperación en que ambas partes puedan aportar de igual manera, profundizar en los temas de interés compartidos, y buscar nuevas modalidades de asociación para la cooperación bilateral, incluyendo una mayor participación de la sociedad civil y el sector privado o el despliegue de iniciativas de cooperación triangular;

[…]

— Resaltan que esta evolución en la cooperación bilateral también debe implicar el desarrollo previsto en el artículo 22 del Acuerdo, en materia de cooperación en el sector de la energía.».

¿Podría explicar el Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior qué importancia concede al contenido de dichas conclusiones?

Respuesta conjunta de la Alta Representante/vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de febrero de 2014)

La UE valora muy favorablemente el Acuerdo de Asociación con Chile. El año pasado celebramos diez años de su entrada en vigor y el balance de aplicación es muy positivo.

La propuesta chilena de revisar el Acuerdo de Asociación es amplia y abarca asuntos institucionales, diálogos sectoriales y cuestiones comerciales. La UE celebra esta iniciativa y responderá en breve a las autoridades chilenas. En la fase actual del proceso, Chile y la Comisión ya están trabajando intensamente. La velocidad de la revisión dependerá de los sectores de cooperación. En el área institucional, por ejemplo, se podrán confiar al Comité de Asociación mayores competencias con arreglo a las normas vigentes.

La UE se propone abrir nuevos diálogos sectoriales que se basarán en cuestiones de fondo e intereses comunes de las partes. De momento, no se prevé crear nuevos subcomités.

En cuanto al capítulo comercial, constituye una contribución útil al proceso de estudio de las posibilidades de modernización del capítulo comercial del Acuerdo, si bien la EU habría acogido favorablemente una propuesta menos ambiciosa y más detallada con el fin de disponer de una base más amplia para responder y entablar un debate con Chile.

Por último, dado que toda modernización ambiciosa del Acuerdo rebasaría el ámbito de las cláusulas de revisión (sobre agricultura, servicios e inversión), la Comisión respetará los procedimientos de la UE aplicables. Esto implica la necesidad de una evaluación de impacto y propuestas de directrices de negociación antes de iniciar una posible negociación. Todo ello dependerá del resultado del proceso de consulta con Chile y de las consultas internas de la UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014206/13
to the Commission
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Association Agreement with Chile

On 1 February 2013, tariffs between Chile and the EU were lowered in accordance with the current Association Agreement. Tariff preferences are now applied to 9 595 Chilean products exported to the EU, a figure equating to 91.8% of all Chilean products subject to negotiation.

During the 5th EU-Chile Summit, which took place in November 2012, both the Chilean party and the European party expressed the desire to explore the various possible ways of modernising the current Association Agreement.

On 3 October 2013, this desire was expressed again during the 11th meeting of the EU-Chile Association Committee in Brussels.

In the opinion of the Commission, which of the EU's areas and sectors would stand to benefit if the current agreement were strengthened?

Question for written answer E-014207/13
to the Commission
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Association Agreement with Chile

On 1 February 2013, tariffs between Chile and the EU were lowered in accordance with the current Association Agreement. Tariff preferences are now applied to 9 595 Chilean products exported to the EU, a figure equating to 91.8% of all Chilean products subject to negotiation.

During the 5th EU-Chile Summit, which took place in November 2012, both the Chilean party and the European party expressed the desire to explore the various possible ways of modernising the current Association Agreement.

On 3 October 2013, this desire was expressed again during the 11th meeting of the EU-Chile Association Committee in Brussels.

In the opinion of the Commission, which of the EU's areas and sectors would stand to benefit if the current agreement were strengthened?

Question for written answer E-014210/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU-Chile Association Agreement: forthcoming negotiations

The fifth EU-Chile Summit took place in November 2012 on the occasion of President Piñera's visit to the European institutions. During this summit, both the Chilean and the European parties agreed to explore the possibility of strengthening the current EU-Chile Association Agreement, which was signed on 18 November 2002 and had therefore been in force for 10 years.

Coinciding with the 10th anniversary of the EU-Chile Association Agreement, the 11th meeting of the EU-Chile Association Committee took place in Brussels on 3 October 2013.

At that meeting, a non-paper on the possible modernisation of the agreement was submitted by the Chilean party to be studied by the European party. It was also agreed that the next meeting of the Association Committee would be held in 2014.

Given that negotiations over this modernisation process have yet to begin formally, could the European External Action Service state when they will begin and how long they are expected to take?

Question for written answer E-014213/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Priority of the possible negotiations on the new Association Agreement with Chile

The European Union is negotiating a Free Trade and Investment Agreement with the United States.

In addition, it has nearly concluded negotiations with Canada.

It is also engaged in negotiations with India, Thailand, Vietnam and other countries.

Finally, it is in the midst of negotiations to update the Association Agreement with Mexico.

In this context, can the European External Action Service specify what degree of priority it is giving to the possible negotiations to revise and update the current Association Agreement with Chile?

Question for written answer E-014216/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU-Chile Association Agreement

During the 18th Meeting of the EU-Chile Joint Parliamentary Committee, which was held in Valparaíso on 22 January 2013, the following conclusions were adopted in relation to the EU-Chile Association Agreement, which was signed in Brussels on 18 November 2002 and entered into force on 1 February 2003:

'The delegations from the Chilean National Congress and the European Parliament […]:

— […] reiterate the importance of strengthening the trade pillar of the Agreement by using its development and review clauses as tools that allow both parties to benefit, in a flexible and efficient manner, from new opportunities to access markets for goods and services and capital and investment flows on the basis of the principle of reciprocity and with the aim of establishing a suitable balance between the interests of both parties;

— Reiterate their recommendation that the contents of the Association Agreement and the opportunities that it offers should be given greater protection and disseminated more widely for the benefit of entrepreneurs and citizens as a whole. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to benefits that might assist SMEs, which are the main generators of employment in Chile and the EU;

— Agree on the need to modernise the cooperation pillar laid down in the Association Agreement, taking advantage of the lessons learnt from the first decade of its successful implementation so that it may be adapted in accordance with the new socioeconomic realities in Chile and the EU and the extent to which it has developed. In this respect, the parties stress the need to strengthen the design of new areas of cooperation in which both parties can contribute equally; to explore shared areas of interest more deeply; and to seek new forms of association to bring about bilateral cooperation, including greater participation by civil society and the private sector or the deployment of triangular cooperation initiatives;

[…]

— They stress that this development in bilateral cooperation must also involve the development of cooperation on energy, as laid down in Article 22 of the Agreement'.

In the view of the European External Action Service, how significant are these conclusions?

Joint answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

The EU has an overall very good evaluation of the Association Agreement with Chile. Last year, we celebrated 10 years since its entry into force and the balance of its implementation is very positive.

The Chilean proposal to review the Association Agreement is wide and it covers institutional issues, sectoral dialogues and trade matters. The EU welcomes this initiative and will soon provide an answer to the Chilean authorities. At this stage of the process, further in-depth work between Chile and the Commission is on-going. According to the areas of cooperation, the speed of review may differ; i.e. in the institutional part, it should be possible to entrust the Association Committee with more powers on the basis of the existing provisions.

The EU intends to start establishing new sectoral dialogues that will be guided by substance and joint interest of the parties. Establishing new Sub-Committees is not foreseen for the time being.

As far as the trade part is concerned, it is a useful contribution to the process of exploring the possibilities of modernising the trade part of the Agreement, although the EU would have welcomed a more ambitious and more detailed proposal in order to have a broader basis for replying and engaging in a discussion with Chile.

Finally, as the coverage of any ambitious modernisation of the Agreement would go beyond the scope of the review clauses (on agriculture, services and investment), the Commission will respect the relevant EU procedures. This could imply the need for an impact assessment and proposals for negotiating directives before launching any possible negotiation. This will depend on the outcome of the consultation process with Chile as well as on the internal EU consultations.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014209/13
a la Comisión
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE)
(18 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Acuerdo de Asociación UE-Chile: futuras negociaciones

Durante la V Cumbre UE-Chile, que tuvo lugar en noviembre de 2012 con motivo de la visita del Presidente Piñera a las Instituciones Europeas, tanto la parte europea como la chilena acordaron explorar las opciones para avanzar en la profundización del actual Acuerdo de Asociación UE-Chile —suscrito el 18 de noviembre de 2002— al haber transcurrido diez años desde su implementación.

Coincidiendo con el décimo aniversario del Acuerdo de Asociación UE-Chile, el pasado 3 de octubre de 2013 tuvo lugar la XI Reunión del Comité de Asociación de la Unión Europea y Chile en Bruselas.

En dicha reunión, la parte chilena entregó en forma de *non-paper* su primera propuesta sobre la posible modernización del Acuerdo para su estudio por la parte europea y se determinó que la próxima reunión del Comité de Asociación tendría lugar durante el año 2014.

En este contexto y dado que todavía no se han abierto formalmente las negociaciones para tal modernización, pregunto a la Comisión:

¿Cuándo considera la Comisión que comenzarán dichas negociaciones?

¿Cuánto tiempo prevé la Comisión que durarán las mismas?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014212/13
a la Comisión
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE)
(18 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Prioridad posibles negociaciones Acuerdo de Asociación Chile

La Unión Europea se encuentra negociando un Acuerdo de Libre Comercio e Inversión con los EE.UU.

Asimismo, ha concluido prácticamente las negociaciones con Canadá.

Se encuentra también en negociaciones con la India, Tailandia, Vietnam y otros países.

Por último, se encuentra en pleno de proceso de negociación para la actualización del Acuerdo de Asociación con México.

En este contexto, ¿podría la Comisión especificar qué grado de prioridad otorga a las posibles negociaciones para la revisión y puesta al día del actual Acuerdo de Asociación con Chile?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014215/13
a la Comisión
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE)
(18 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Acuerdo de Asociación UE-Chile

Durante la XVIII Reunión de la Comisión Parlamentaria Mixta Unión Europea-Chile celebrada en Valparaíso el pasado 22 de enero de 2013 se adoptaron las siguientes conclusiones en relación con el Acuerdo de Asociación entre Chile y la Unión Europea suscrito en Bruselas el 18 de noviembre de 2002 y con entrada en vigor el 1 de febrero de 2003:

«Las delegaciones del Congreso Nacional de Chile y del Parlamento Europeo:

— Reiteran la importancia de profundizar el pilar comercial del Acuerdo a través de sus cláusulas evolutiva y de revisión en tanto herramientas que permiten aprovechar de modo flexible y eficaz las nuevas oportunidades que vayan surgiendo en materia de acceso a mercados de bienes y servicios, así como de flujos de capitales e inversiones, sobre la base del principio de reciprocidad y atendiendo a un adecuado equilibrio de los intereses de ambas partes;

— Reiteran su recomendación tendiente a dar mayor protección y difusión a los contenidos y oportunidades del Acuerdo de Asociación en beneficio de los emprendedores y el conjunto de los ciudadanos, con particular atención a los beneficios que puede reportar para las pequeñas y medianas empresas, que son las principales generadoras de empleo en Chile y en la EU;

— Coinciden en la necesidad de modernizar el pilar de la cooperación establecido en el Acuerdo de Asociación, aprovechando las lecciones aprendidas en su exitosa implementación en su primera década, para adaptarlo a las nuevas realidades socioeconómicas de Chile y la UE, así como a su grado de desarrollo. En este sentido, destacan que se requiere reforzar el diseño de nuevos temas de cooperación en que ambas partes puedan aportar de igual manera, profundizar en los temas de interés compartidos, y buscar nuevas modalidades de asociación para la cooperación bilateral, incluyendo una mayor participación de la sociedad civil y el sector privado o el despliegue de iniciativas de cooperación triangular;

— Resaltan que esta evolución en la cooperación bilateral también debe implicar el desarrollo previsto en el artículo 22 del Acuerdo, en materia de cooperación en el sector de la energía».

¿Podría la Comisión explicar qué importancia concede al contenido de dichas conclusiones?

Respuesta conjunta del Sr. De Gucht en nombre de la Comisión

(21 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión desearía remitir a Su Señoría a la respuesta a las preguntas escritas E-014206/2013, E-014207/2013, E-014210/2013, E-014213/2013 y E-014216/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014209/13
to the Commission
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: EU-Chile Association Agreement: forthcoming negotiations

The fifth EU-Chile Summit took place in November 2012 on the occasion of President Piñera's visit to the European institutions. During this summit, both the Chilean and the European parties agreed to explore the possibility of strengthening the current EU-Chile Association Agreement, which was signed on 18 November 2002 and had therefore been in force for 10 years.

Coinciding with the 10th anniversary of the EU-Chile Association Agreement, the 11th meeting of the EU-Chile Association Committee took place in Brussels on 3 October 2013.

At that meeting, a non-paper on the possible modernisation of the agreement was submitted by the Chilean party to be studied by the European party. It was also agreed that the next meeting of the Association Committee would be held in 2014.

Given that negotiations over this modernisation process have yet to begin formally, could the Commission state when they will begin and how long they are expected to take?

Question for written answer E-014212/13
to the Commission
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Priority of the possible negotiations on the Association Agreement with Chile

The European Union is currently negotiating a Free Trade and Investment Agreement with the United States.

In addition, it has nearly concluded negotiations with Canada.

It is also engaged in negotiations with India, Thailand, Vietnam and other countries.

Finally, it is in the midst of negotiations to update the Association Agreement with Mexico.

In this context, can the Commission specify what degree of priority it is giving to the possible negotiations to revise and update the current Association Agreement with Chile?

Question for written answer E-014215/13
to the Commission
José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: EU-Chile Association Agreement

During the 18th meeting of the Chile-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee, held in Valparaíso on 22 January 2013, the following conclusions were adopted in relation to the Association Agreement between Chile and the European Union signed in Brussels on 18 November 2002, which entered into force on 1 February 2003:

'The delegations of the National Congress of Chile and of the European Parliament:

— Reiterate the importance of deepening the Agreement's trade pillar through its development and review clauses, as tools making it possible to benefit, in a flexible and effective way, from the new opportunities arising in relation to access to goods and services markets, as well as capital flows and investments, on the basis of the principle of reciprocity and paying attention to a proper balance between the interests of both parties;

— Reiterate their recommendation about giving greater protections and dissemination to the contents and opportunities of the Association Agreement, to the benefit of entrepreneurs and citizens in general, with particular reference to the benefits that may be generated for small and medium-sized enterprises, which are the main creators of employment in both Chile and the EU;

— Agree on the need to modernise the cooperation pillar included in the Association Agreement, learning the lessons from its successful implementation during its first decade, in order to tailor it to the new socioeconomic realities in Chile and the EU, as well as their level of development. In this regard, they emphasise the need to strengthen the design of new areas of cooperation to which both parties can contribute equally, and to enter more deeply into areas of shared interest, and to seek new forms of association for bilateral cooperation, including more participation by civil society and the private sector, or the development of triangular cooperation initiatives;

— Stress that this development in bilateral cooperation should also involve the development referred to in Article 22 of the Agreement, regarding cooperation in the energy sector'.

Can the Commission explain what importance it assigns to the content of these conclusions?

Joint answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission

(21 February 2014)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the answer to written questions E-014206/2013, E-014207/2013, E-014210/2013, E-014213/2013 and E-014216/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014219/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Consultation of the Best Available Techniques (BAT) Reference Document (BREF) on the Intensive Rearing of Poultry and Pigs

Copa-Cogeca, the body representing European farmers and agri-cooperatives, has been highly critical of the Commission's consultation of the BREF on the Intensive Rearing of Poultry and Pigs. For instance, Copa-Cogeca said that there was 'a lack of transparency in the choice of the work methodology and the technology proposed', that the document sent for consultation was in an 'incomplete state', and that the 'one-size-fits-all measures are not suitable for everyone in such a diversified continent as the EU.'

Copa-Cogeca called on the European Integrated Pollution Prevention Control Bureau (EIPPCB) to re-issue a complete draft with significant re-writing. Given that it is of the utmost importance to local producers in the poultry and pig sectors to be able to analyse a complete draft and make the most informed decisions, what steps will the Commission take to ensure that the EIPPCB heeds the concerns with regard to this consultation, as well as future consultations?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

The revision of the BREF for the intensive rearing of poultry and pigs (IRPP) is by no means finalised, and the consultation process is still underway. The BAT conclusions presented in the second draft of the document will be further elaborated involving all stakeholders, including Copa-Cogeca, taking into account the comments received. The Commission's European IPPC Bureau regularly informs all stakeholders of its activities and the further steps in the process to review the IRPP BREF. The final meeting of the Technical Working Group established for this process is foreseen to take place this year, with a view to adopting the BAT conclusions in 2015.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014220/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Milk conference report

In September 2013, the European Parliament hosted a dairy conference with key stakeholders to discuss the future of the dairy sector and possible tools to combat market crises after milk quotas end in April 2015. In response to issues raised at the conference, a report by six independent experts, coordinated by Ernst & Young, has concluded that the Commission should focus on reinforcing the use of existing tools and insuring incomes rather than introduce new instruments such as a buy-out scheme to cut production temporarily in times of crisis.

Given that local, especially smaller, dairy producers in my own constituency often struggle to keep up with the imposition of new rules and regulations, will the Commission now focus its efforts on the implementation and reinforcement of existing tools to the benefit of local milk producers? If this is the case, can the Commission provide a detailed summary of the steps it will take to this effect?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

Independently from the new framework brought by the CAP reform (e.g. strengthened intervention instruments, emergency measures in the event of a severe crisis in the milk sector, new rural development provisions), the Commission presented in the December 2013 Farm Council the conclusions from the conference the Honourable Member is referring to, and invited the Member States to assess whether additional measures should be considered or not to accompany the European dairy sector after the abolition of the milk quotas. Further discussions should take place within the Council in the following months.

Moreover, the Commission will report to the European Parliament and the Council by June 2014 on the milk market situation and the implementation of the Milk Package measures. The report will assess in particular the effects of these measures on milk producers and milk production in disadvantaged regions and will cover potential incentives to encourage farmers to enter into joint production agreements.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014221/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Bali accord

The conclusion of the World Trade Organisation talks in Bali on 7 December 2013 have been hailed as giving a boost to the economies of developing countries as well as to EU farmers by improving access to under-filled tariff rate quotas.

Nevertheless, Oxfam and other development non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have stated that these gains are grossly over-estimated and completely ignore the costs of implementing the Bali accord's trade facilitating measures. They said there was a long way to go before the World Trade Organisation's rules could ensure sustainable livelihoods and robust food security policies.

While I am supportive of attempts to improve market access to new and emerging markets for local producers in my own constituency, the welcome gains of this agreement ought not to come at the expense of the economies of developing countries. With this in mind, what practical measures will the Commission take to ensure that the concerns of development NGOs are addressed without inhibiting the gains of the agreement for local farmers?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

At the 9th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation in December 2013, Ministers agreed a package of decisions that fully integrate the development perspective. The trade facilitation agreement is about simplifying and modernising trade and customs procedures and is thus of benefit to all, in particular developing countries. Flexibilities are built-in for those of them that are less advanced. Implementation of the provisions concerned will not be required until they have acquired the capacity to do so. Ensuring compliance with the Agreement itself will imply limited costs; according to a World Bank study, these would be in the range of EUR 123 000 to 970 000 per country for capacity building and technical assistance (not including equipment and staff). However, in order to benefit from the full potential of trade facilitation measures, the OECD estimates funding needs from EUR 3.5 to 19.7 million per country. The Trade Commissioner and the Development Commissioner jointly stated that the EU will aim at maintaining at least the current level of support to trade facilitation over a five-year period, namely EUR 400 million.

A compromise was also found on agricultural matters, including on the so-called 'food security issue'. The EU will fully engage in the follow-up work on these issues. Ministers also agreed a series of further development-centred decisions: a Monitoring Mechanism will review the functioning of flexibilities available to developing countries and a number of decisions will support the better integration of least-developed countries in the multilateral system.

The EU remains committed to future negotiations in the context of the Doha Round, taking due account of its development dimension and of the need for fair and balanced outcomes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014222/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Local food labelling

The Commission recently published a report 'on the case for a local farming and direct sales labelling scheme', which considers the possibility of a new labelling scheme for local food and short supply chains. It is estimated that around 15% of EU farmers sell most of their produce locally, with the percentage in my own constituency likely to be much higher. Possible legislation in this area will include either a specific labelling scheme or the introduction of an optional quality term for local produce, such as 'product from my farm'.

We in Northern Ireland have a proud tradition of producing and selling local foods which are enjoyed by local consumers. While I am supportive of measures to add value to local produce, what assurances can the Commission give that local food labelling will not place unnecessary administrative burdens on local producers, nor make their products prohibitively expensive in comparison to their counterparts from further afield?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(5 February 2014)

The Commission has closely examined the issue of costs associated with the introduction of new labelling schemes, for example in the impact assessment ([1]) carried out for the regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs ([2]) and in the study on short food supply chains ([3]).

Published in December 2013, the Commission report on the case for a local farming and direct sales labelling scheme indicates that a possible labelling scheme should avoid certification and accreditation procedures which are perceived as lengthy and costly. The eventual scheme should be optional for producers, simple and unburdensome while at the same time being controllable and ensuring sufficient credibility for consumers. In that sense, the report presents a possible alternative approach of labelling by using an optional quality term, which is considered a light instrument with a relatively low administrative, control and budgetary burden ([4]).

Should an EU label for local farming and direct sales be created, its conditions of use will be developed using the expert advice as well as results of the debate, based on the report. It is for that purpose that the Commission proposed in the report to discuss how to develop an EU scheme that has the least burden for farmers, while providing sufficient guarantees for consumers.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/policy/com2009_234/ia_annex_d_en.pdf
([2]) OJ L 343, 14.12.2012.
([3]) http://ftp.jrc.es/EURdoc/JRC80420.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/local-farming-direct-sales/pdf/com-report-12-2013_en.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014223/13
à la Commission
Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: La Commission et les dangers des agences de notation

L'autorité européenne des marchés financiers vient de remettre un rapport accablant contre les agences de notation. Ce rapport pointe de nombreux manquements et insuffisances, en particulier le manque d'indépendance, notamment commerciale, et la persistance de conflits d'intérêt.

Ces critiques montrent l'inefficacité des dernières réglementations européennes des agences de notation, comme je l'ai dénoncé lors de leur vote en 2011 et en 2013 ([1]).

Les dangers pointés par l'autorité européenne des marchés résultent directement des points que j'avais alors soulevés dans mes explications de vote: désarmement des États pour sanctionner les agences, non réglementation du financement des agences, développement dangereux des notations non sollicitées.

Quand la Commission va-t-elle enfin prendre en compte ces arguments? Quelle suite précise compte-t-elle donner au rapport de l'autorité des marchés? Faudra-t-il attendre une nouvelle attaque spéculative contre un pays pour protéger enfin les États de la menace des agences?

Réponse donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(20 février 2014)

Dans l'Union européenne, la supervision des agences de notation de crédit incombe à l'Autorité européenne des marchés financiers (AEMF). À la suite de son récent rapport sur les processus de notation des dettes souveraines par les agences de notation de crédit, l'AEMF déterminera, en sa qualité d'autorité de supervision indépendante, si les constatations de ce rapport révèlent l'existence d'infractions aux dispositions du règlement sur les agences de notation ([2]) et elle prendra, le cas échéant, des mesures.

Afin d'accroître la transparence et la qualité des notes souveraines, le cadre juridique révisé des agences de notation de crédit ([3]) introduit de nouvelles règles en la matière, telles que l'obligation pour ces agences de publier un calendrier pour la notation des dettes souveraines. Ces règles sont entrées en vigueur en juin 2013. La nouvelle réglementation comporte également des mesures concernant les participations, les agences de notation de crédit étant désormais tenues, lorsqu'un actionnaire détenant 5 % ou plus de leur capital ou des droits de vote possède 5 % ou plus de l'entité notée, de rendre cette information publique. Un actionnaire détenant 10 % ou plus du capital ou des droits de vote d'une agence de notation de crédit ne peut pas détenir plus de 10 % d'une entité notée par cette même agence de notation de crédit. En outre, afin d'assurer la diversité et l'indépendance des notations de crédit, il est interdit de détenir 5 % ou plus du capital ou des droits de vote de plus d'une agence de notation, à moins que ces agences n'appartiennent au même groupe. La nouvelle réglementation a également instauré la responsabilité civile des agences de notation.

Il convient d'évaluer l'impact et l'application de ces nouvelles règles avant de proposer de nouvelles mesures. L'expérience acquise jusqu'à présent sera prise en compte dans les rapports que la Commission entend présenter à la fin de 2014 en ce qui concerne l'opportunité de développer un outil européen d'évaluation de la qualité du crédit pour les dettes souveraines, et en 2016 en ce qui concerne l'analyse de la situation sur le marché de la notation de crédit, qui évalueront en particulier si les nouvelles règles ont suffisamment atténué les conflits d'intérêts.

([1]) http://europe.jean-luc-melenchon.fr/analyses-des-textes-votes-en-session/14-17-janvier-2013/#d7
([2]) Règlement (CE) n° 1060/2009 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 16 septembre 2009 sur les agences de notation de crédit, JO L 302 du 17.11.2009.
([3]) Règlement (UE) n° 462/2013 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 21 mai 2013 modifiant le règlement (CE) n° 1060/2009 sur les agences de notation de crédit, JO L 146 du 31.5.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014223/13
to the Commission
Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: The Commission and the dangers of rating agencies

The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) has just published a damning report on rating agencies. The report highlights numerous deficiencies and shortcomings, especially the lack of independence of commercial activities, in particular, from rating activities, and persistent conflicts of interest.

These criticisms show that the latest European regulations on rating agencies are ineffective, a criticism which I myself made when the regulations were put to the vote in 2011 and 2013 ([1]).

The dangers highlighted by ESMA are the direct result of the points that I raised at the time in my explanations of vote: the Member States' powerlessness to penalise rating agencies, the failure to regulate the financing of rating agencies and the dangerous development of unsolicited ratings.

When will the Commission finally take account of these arguments? What specific action will it take in response to the ESMA report? Will we have to wait for another speculative attack against a country before the Member States are finally protected from the threat posed by rating agencies?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

Credit rating agencies (CRAs) in the EU are supervised by the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA). Further to its recent report on sovereign rating processes in CRAs, ESMA will in its capacity as independent supervisor, assess whether the findings of the report constitute infringements of the CRA Regulation ([2]) and take action, as appropriate.

The revised CRA legal framework ([3]) includes new rules on sovereign ratings in order to increase transparency and the quality of such ratings, such as for example the requirement for CRAs to publish a calendar for sovereign ratings. These rules entered into force in June 2013. The new rules also include measures linked to shareholdings, requiring CRAs to disclose publicly if a shareholder with 5% or more of the capital or voting rights holds 5% or more of a rated entity. A shareholder of a CRA who holds 10% or more of the capital or voting rights may not own more than 10% of an entity rated by that same CRA. Furthermore, to ensure the diversity and independence of credit ratings and opinions, ownership of 5% or more of the capital or the voting rights in more than one CRA is prohibited, unless the agencies concerned belong to the same group. The new regime also introduced civil liability for CRAs.

The impact and application of these new rules need to be assessed before proposing any further measures. The experience gained so far will be taken into account in the reports that the Commission intends to submit at the end of this year as regards the appropriateness of the development of a European creditworthiness assessment for sovereign debt and in 2016 as regards the review of the situation in the credit rating market, which will, in particular, assess whether the new rules have sufficiently mitigated conflicts of interest.

([1]) http://europe.jean-luc-melenchon.fr/analyses-des-textes-votes-en-session/14-17-janvier-2013/#d7
([2]) Regulation (EC) No 1060/2009 on credit rating agencies of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 on credit rating agencies, OJ L 302, 17.11.2009.
([3]) Regulation (EU) No 462/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2013 amending Regulation (EC) No 1060/2009 on credit rating agencies, OJ L 146, 31.5.2013.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014225/13
à la Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Formation paramilitaire en Libye par l'Union européenne

Depuis la mort de Mouammar Kadhafi en octobre 2011, la Libye peine à trouver le chemin de la démocratie. Tripoli a été témoin ces derniers jours d'affrontements ayant tué près de 40 personnes. Ces incidents sont parmi les plus meurtriers depuis la chute du régime.

L'enlèvement et la libération du Premier ministre, en octobre 2013, et du numéro 2 des renseignements généraux libyens ce mois-ci, attestent de la faiblesse de l'État face aux milices privées. Les milices ont réussi à s'infiltrer dans le vide sécuritaire laissé par la mort de Mouammar Kadhafi et l'actuelle faiblesse du gouvernement, qui peine à asseoir son autorité.

L'Union européenne a, dès le début de la révolution, en février 2011, tâché de soutenir le peuple libyen. Aujourd'hui, ce soutien se traduit par le versement de près de 30 millions d'euros pour veiller principalement à la réconciliation et au respect des Droits de l'homme, tout en assistant l'administration. Cependant, le contrôle des frontières est un élément majeur dans la stabilisation du pays. C'est pourquoi, l'Union, via le Service européen pour l'action extérieure, a jeté les bases de la mission européenne de surveillance des frontières libyennes par l'intermédiaire de la formation de gardes.

De nombreux éléments laissent à penser que le caractère civil de cette mission de formation de gardes peut être remis en cause. En effet, il est fait état du recrutement de personnes ayant une expertise militaire pour fournir des compétences spéciales.

Ainsi, alors que la situation dans le pays tend à la guerre civile, la Commission peut-elle clarifier le caractère civil de son intervention dans le cadre de la formation de gardes libyens?

Réponse donnée par Mme Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(18 février 2014)

La mission de l'Union européenne d'assistance aux frontières en Libye, lancée dans le cadre de la politique de sécurité et de défense commune, revêt un caractère civil. Le chef de la mission est directement responsable devant le commandant des opérations civiles. Cette mission répond à une demande de la Libye et s'inscrit dans une stratégie plus vaste de l'UE visant à soutenir la reconstruction de ce pays après le conflit qui s'y est déroulé.

L'objectif stratégique de l'EU BAM Libya consiste, à court terme, à aider les autorités libyennes à se doter des capacités nécessaires pour améliorer la sécurité au niveau des frontières terrestres, maritimes et aériennes du pays et, à plus long terme, à élaborer une stratégie plus large de gestion intégrée des frontières (GIF). L'EU BAM Libya n'exerce aucune fonction exécutive. Cette mission soutient, conseille et forme uniquement le personnel désigné par le gouvernement libyen pour faire partie des garde-frontières, des garde-côtes, de la police des frontières et des douanes. La formation dispensée est strictement liée aux questions de gestion des frontières et ne mobilise pas de compétences militaires.

En ce qui concerne les garde-frontières, leur formation n'a pas encore commencé. Les programmes de formation sont en cours d'élaboration et seront axés uniquement sur les questions relatives à la gestion des frontières. Aucune formation militaire n'est prévue.

Le coût total du programme de l'UE en Libye s'élève actuellement à 130 millions d'euros, affectés principalement à la sécurité, la relance économique, la santé, l'administration publique, la migration, la société civile et la protection des groupes vulnérables. Ce montant s'ajoute aux 80,5 millions d'euros d'aide humanitaire accordés pendant le conflit de 2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014225/13
to the Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Paramilitary training in Libya by the European Union

Since the death of Muammar Gaddafi in October 2011, Libya has struggled to establish democracy. Tripoli has been the scene of clashes in recent days which have left almost 40 people dead. These incidents are some of the bloodiest to have occurred since the fall of the regime.

The kidnapping and release of Libya's Prime Minister in October 2013, and of its deputy intelligence chief this month, demonstrate the country's weakness in the face of private militias. They have been able to exploit the security vacuum left as a result of Muammar Gaddafi's death and the current weakness shown by the government, which is struggling to assert its authority.

The European Union has tried to support the Libyan people ever since the start of the revolution, in February 2011. Today, this support consists in providing almost EUR 30 million in funding with the primary aim of ensuring reconciliation and respect for human rights, and providing assistance in the field of public administration. However, border control is a key factor in stabilising the country. That is why the EU, through the European External Action Service (EEAS), has laid the foundations for the EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya, which will train border guards.

There is substantial evidence to justify calling into question the civilian nature of this border guard training mission. Indeed, it is understood that people with military expertise have been recruited to provide specialist skills.

Therefore, at a time when the country is heading towards civil war, can the Commission clarify the civilian dimension of its operations with respect to the training of Libyan border guards?

Answer given by High-Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya is a civilian mission, launched under the Common Security and Defence Policy. The Head of Mission is directly responsible to the Civilian Operation Commander. The Mission responds to an invitation by Libya and is part of a broader EU strategy to support the Libyan post-conflict reconstruction.

The strategic objective of EUBAM Libya is to support the Libyan authorities to develop capacity for enhancing the security of their land, sea and air borders in the short term, and to develop a broader Integrated Border Management (IBM) strategy in the long term. EUBAM Libya does not carry out any executive functions. The Mission supports and advises — and also trains — exclusively personnel appointed by the Libyan government to serve as border guards, border police, customs personnel and naval coastguards. The training provided is strictly related to border management issues and does not include any military skills.

Regarding the border guards, the training has not yet started. Curricula are currently being developed and will only focus on border management issues. No military training is foreseen.

EU's total programme in Libya now stands at EUR 130 million focusing on security, economic recovery, health, public administration, migration, civil society and protection of vulnerable groups. This is in addition to EUR 80.5 million provided for humanitarian assistance during the conflict in 2011.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014226/13
à la Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Place de l'arbitrage dans les accords de libre-échange entre l'Union européenne et les États-Unis

Les négociations sur le traité de libre-échange entre l'Union européenne et les États-Unis ont pour but d'améliorer la croissance et la compétitivité de ces deux puissances dans le monde.

Néanmoins, l'inclusion dans le traité du recours à l'arbitrage en cas de différend commercial, en lieu et place de la justice traditionnelle, pose un problème du point de vue de la sécurité juridique.

En droit international privé, l'arbitrage est souvent perçu comme un mécanisme permettant d'échapper à la justice étatique. L'arbitrage peut être présent dans un contrat sous la forme d'une clause et il donne le pouvoir à un ou plusieurs arbitres de trancher le différend sans avoir recours aux procédures judicaires habituelles.

Or, sur ce point, de récentes études mettent en garde contre les dangers que constitue l'arbitrage. Par exemple, quand l'Allemagne a décidé, après la catastrophe de Fukushima, de cesser de recourir à l'énergie nucléaire, la société suédoise Vattenfall a invoqué un traité d'investissement bilatéral pour réclamer 700 millions d'euros de dommages et intérêts en raison de la fermeture de ses réacteurs nucléaires.

Par ailleurs, le risque de conflits d'intérêts est croissant, dans la mesure où les avocats qui travaillent pour les grandes entreprises sont aussi ceux qui collaborent étroitement avec les États.

Ainsi, la Commission peut-elle préciser le rôle que l'arbitrage aurait à jouer dans les accords de libre-échange entre l'Union et les États-Unis?

Réponse donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(4 mars 2014)

Le Conseil a autorisé la Commission à négocier le règlement des différends tant d'État à État qu'entre investisseurs et États dans le cadre de l'Accord de partenariat transatlantique de commerce et d'investissement. Alors que le règlement des différends d'État à État s'applique à la violation de toute disposition de l'accord de libre-échange, le règlement des différends entre investisseurs et États (RDIE) ne concerne que la violation d'un nombre restreint d'obligations en matière de protection des investissements, telles que la non-discrimination et l'absence d'expropriation illégale.

L'arbitrage a été depuis des décennies le mécanisme normal de règlement des différends portant sur des accords commerciaux internationaux. Il y est fait recours multilatéralement, dans le cadre de l'Organisation mondiale du commerce et du Mémorandum d'accord sur le règlement des différends; bilatéralement, dans tous les accords de libre-échange conclus par l'Union et d'autres pays; ainsi que dans les 3 000 accords d'investissement déjà existants (dont 1 400 s'appliquent aux États membres de l'UE). Comme les accords internationaux ne sont pas directement applicables en droit interne, l'arbitrage est le mode de règlement des différends internationaux.

La Commission a connaissance de l'affaire en cours à laquelle l'Honorable parlementaire fait référence. Aucune information n'est disponible au sujet des arguments avancés par l'investisseur ou par l'Allemagne.

La Commission est bien consciente des préoccupations que cette affaire a soulevées auprès du public. Depuis 2010, la Commission a apporté des améliorations importantes aux dispositions concernant tant la protection des investissements que le règlement des différends entre investisseurs et États. Les accords d'investissement de l'UE, y compris l'Accord de partenariat transatlantique de commerce et d'investissement, préciseront que des mesures réglementaires, adoptées à des fins de politique publique, ne peuvent pas être invoquées pour garantir le succès d'un recours. La pleine transparence des procédures sera garantie et de nouvelles règles contraignantes relatives à la sélection et au comportement éthique des arbitres seront appliquées. Ces changements ont déjà été introduits dans le projet d'accord de l'UE avec le Canada.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014226/13
to the Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Role of arbitration in the free trade agreements between the European Union and the United States

The aim of the negotiations on the free trade agreement between the European Union and the United States is to boost the growth and competitiveness of these two world powers.

However, the inclusion in the agreement of arbitration in the event of trade disputes, in place of traditional judicial procedures, is problematic from a legal certainty point of view.

In private international law, arbitration is often perceived as a mechanism for bypassing national courts. It can appear in a contract in the form of a clause, and empowers one or more arbitrators to settle a dispute without having recourse to the usual judicial procedures.

In this respect, however, recent studies warn against the dangers of arbitration. For example, when Germany decided to stop using nuclear power after the Fukushima disaster, the Swedish firm Vattenfall cited a bilateral investment treaty in order to claim EUR 700 million in compensation for the closure of its nuclear reactors.

Furthermore, there is a growing risk of conflicts of interest, since lawyers who work for large companies also cooperate closely with States.

Can the Commission therefore clarify the role that arbitration would be required to play in the free trade agreements between the European Union and the United States?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2014)

The Council has authorised the Commission to negotiate both state-to-state dispute settlement and investor-to-state dispute settlement in TTIP. While state to state dispute settlement applies to a breach of any provision of the free trade agreement investor-to-state dispute settlement (ISDS) only applies to a breach of a limited number of investment protection obligations, such as non-discrimination and no unlawful expropriation.

Arbitration has been the standard dispute resolution mechanism for international trade agreements for decades. It is used multilaterally, in the World Trade Organisation in the Dispute Settlement Understanding and bilaterally in all Free Trade Agreements concluded by the Union and other countries and in the 3 000 investment agreements already in existence (of which 1 400 apply to EU Member States). As international agreements are not directly enforceable in domestic law, international dispute settlement in the form of arbitration is required.

The Commission is aware of the ongoing case referred to by the Honourable Member. No information is available about the arguments put forward by the investor or Germany.

The Commission is aware of the concerns that this case has raised in the public. Since 2010 the Commission has been making significant improvements to the provisions both on investment protection and on ISDS. EU investment agreements, including TTIP will make clear that regulatory measures, which are adopted to pursue public policy purposes cannot form the basis for a successful claim. Full transparency of the proceedings will be ensured and new binding rules on the selection and ethical conduct of arbitrators will apply. These changes are already a reality in the EU's envisaged agreement with Canada.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014227/13
alla Commissione
Carlo Fidanza (PPE)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Discarica di Soltarico (LO) — Rischio inquinamento ambientale in prossimità di SIC

In località Soltarico (Lodi-Italia) nel maggio del 1993 è diventata operativa (nonostante parere negativo di una perizia geologica, che indicava il terreno non idoneo a causa della grande permeabilità dovuta alla conformazione del suolo) una discarica di rifiuti speciali non pericolosi per un conferimento massimo di 273mila tonnellate ed un'altezza di 4 metri. La discarica si trova a 120 metri dal Sito di Importanza Comunitaria SIC Lanca di Soltarico (dichiarato tale nel 2000 — seconda lanca naturale più grande d'Europa). Nel corso degli anni la discarica è stata ampliata più volte, per cui ad oggi la stessa ha raggiunto un peso di 1.600.000 tonnellate e un'altezza di 26 metri. A pochi metri di profondità sotto questo peso stimato, che aumenta nelle stagioni più piovose, scorrono le falde acquifere facenti parte del complesso sistema delle zone umide che costituiscono il vasto Parco dell'Adda. La discarica poggia su una base di argilla ricoperta da teli impermeabili. Si consideri che a poca distanza, a 20 km da Soltarico, in località Coste Fornaci, nel 2012 in un'altra discarica con identiche caratteristiche di impermeabilizzazione e conferimento rifiuti, a seguito dei controlli delle acque di falda, si è riscontrata la presenza di percolato e altri 7 agenti chimici altamente dannosi a causa della rottura dei teli impermeabili, dovuta al peso eccessivo dei rifiuti.

Allo stato attuale, la società che gestisce la discarica ha presentato l'ennesimo progetto di ampliamento che comporterebbe lo sversamento di ulteriori 135mila mc di materiale in altezza (3 metri).

Esistono quindi le condizioni per prevedere un collasso dello strato isolante del fondo della discarica e conseguente inquinamento delle falde, in un contesto che appare già compromesso.

Si precisa che il territorio circostante la discarica è composto da terreni agricoli altamente fertili e produttivi. Si tenga presente che il sito fa parte della rete Natura 2000, che sul territorio non esiste un'emergenza rifiuti, dato che le ottime percentuali di differenziata raggiunte permettono attualmente il trattamento nei termovalorizzatori, e quindi non vi è alcun motivo per l'ampliamento se non addirittura per il mantenimento di una discarica indifferenziata e che vi sono le basi per il superamento stesso del concetto di discarica.

Alla luce di quanto sopra può la Commissione precisare quanto segue:

1. è a conoscenza della vicenda e come intende intervenire per evitare che vi siano conseguenze peggiori per la zona?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(24 febbraio 2014)

Le decisioni in merito all'autorizzazione di discariche, comprese le eventuali proroghe, sono adottate dalle autorità competenti degli Stati membri. La Commissione non può interferire con tali decisioni a condizione che siano conformi alle disposizioni pertinenti del diritto dell'UE, in particolare per quanto riguarda i rifiuti ([1]), le discariche di rifiuti ([2]) e la valutazione dell'impatto ambientale di determinati progetti pubblici e privati ([3]). Alla fase attuale la Commissione non ha potuto riscontrare alcuna violazione della normativa dell'UE.

([1]) Direttiva 2008/98/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 19 novembre 2008, relativa ai rifiuti e che abroga alcune direttive, GU L 312 del 22.11.2008, pag. 3.
([2]) Direttiva 1999/31/CE del Consiglio, del 26 aprile 1999, relativa alle discariche di rifiuti, GU L 182 del 16.7.1999, pag. 1.
([3]) Direttiva 2011/92/UE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 13 dicembre 2011, concernente la valutazione dell'impatto ambientale di determinati progetti pubblici e privati, GU L 26 del 28.1.2012, pag. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014227/13
to the Commission
Carlo Fidanza (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Landfill at Soltarico (LO) — Risk of environmental pollution in the vicinity of an SCI

In May 1993, a landfill for special, non-harmful waste came into operation in Soltarico (Lodi, Italy), despite the negative opinion expressed in a geological survey, which stated that the land was unsuitable due to the high permeability resulting from the structure of the soil. The maximum amount of waste to be received was 273 thousand tonnes, with a maximum height of 4 metres. The landfill lies 120 metres from the Lanca di Soltarico site of Community importance (SCI) (so declared in 2000 — the second largest oxbow lake in Europe). Over the years, the landfill has been enlarged several times, so much so that it now weighs 1 600 000 tonnes and is 26 metres high. Aquifers, part of the complex system of wetlands which comprise the vast Parco dell'Adda, flow just a few metres below this estimated mass, which increases during more rainy seasons. The landfill rests on a base of clay covered by waterproof sheets. In 2012, in another landfill with identical waterproofing and waste reception characteristics, located just 20 km from Soltarico, at Coste Fornaci, the presence of 7 extremely harmful chemical agents was detected following checks on groundwaters, caused by the tearing of the waterproof sheets through the excessive weight of the waste.

As things stand, the company which runs the landfill has presented yet another enlargement project, which would involve a further 135 thousand cubic metres being deposited in the landfill up to a height of 3 metres.

Thus, all the conditions are in place for the insulating layer under the landfill to collapse, with the resulting pollution of the aquifers, in a context which already appears at risk.

The area around the landfill consists of highly fertile and productive farmland and the site is part of the Natura 2000 network. There is no waste crisis in the local area, given that the high percentage of selective waste collection currently allows disposal to take place in waste-to-energy plants, and there is thus no justification for enlarging or even maintaining the landfill. In fact the premises exist for the landfill concept to be superseded.

In light of the above, could the Commission state:

1. Whether it is aware of these circumstances and how it intends to act to prevent more serious consequences for the local area?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(24 February 2014)

Decisions about the authorisation of landfills, including their possible extensions, are taken by the competent authorities of Member States. The Commission cannot interfere with such decisions provided that they comply with the relevant requirements of EC law, particularly regarding waste ([1]), the landfill of waste ([2]) and the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment ([3]). At this stage, the Commission cannot identify a breach of EU legislation.

([1]) Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives, OJ L 312/3, 22.11.2008.
([2]) Council Directive 1999/31/EC of 26 April 1999 on the landfill of waste, OJ L 182/1, 16.7.1999.
([3]) Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, OJ L 26/1, 28.1.2012.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014228/13
alla Commissione
Carlo Fidanza (PPE)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Difesa della dieta mediterranea rispetto al sistema di «etichettatura a semaforo» britannico

Lo scorso giugno la Gran Bretagna ha introdotto sulle etichette alimentari un sistema per classificare i prodotti sul mercato come più o meno salutari in base ai contenuti di grassi, sale e zucchero; su ogni etichetta si trova un piccolo semaforo che indica col verde gli alimenti sani, col giallo quelli da mangiare con moderazione e col rosso quelli poco sani.

La raccomandazione è già stata adottata da buona parte della grande distribuzione britannica, col serio rischio di ostacolare da un lato la libera circolazione dei prodotti alimentari in Europa, dall'altro di creare confusione negli altri mercati UE a causa delle molteplici etichette.

Tale sistema rischia di essere fuorviante per i consumatori e dannoso per la filiera agricola in quanto in contrasto con la normativa UE sulle DOC e IGP; inoltre, applicando la raccomandazione alle lettera, la cosiddetta dieta mediterranea, patrimonio culturale dell'UNESCO e da sempre riconosciuta come sinonimo di alimentazione corretta e sana, verrebbe definita completamente malsana, in quanto i semafori non tengono conto di come e in che misura i prodotti vengono combinati tra loro.

Si interroga quindi la Commissione per sapere:

1. La raccomandazione britannica è conforme alla normativa europea vigente?

2. Come intende intervenire per difendere la dieta mediterranea?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(17 febbraio 2014)

1. Il regolamento (UE) n. 1169/2011 relativo alla fornitura di informazioni sugli alimenti ai consumatori ([1]) consente, a certe condizioni, agli operatori del settore alimentare di usare forme supplementari di espressione e presentazione della dichiarazione nutrizionale. Conformemente alle stesse regole, le autorità degli Stati membri possono raccomandare l'uso di tali forme addizionali di espressione e presentazione. I dettagli della raccomandazione del Regno Unito sull'uso di una codifica a colori quale forma addizionale di espressione della dichiarazione nutrizionale sono pervenuti alla Commissione il 6 dicembre 2013. In seguito ad una denuncia, la Commissione sta esaminando da vicino il funzionamento di tale sistema.

2. La Commissione caldeggia e sostiene attivamente le iniziative degli Stati membri volte a promuovere un'alimentazione equilibrata e stili di vita attivi. Tali forme di alimentazione possono essere diverse e includere la dieta mediterranea.

([1]) GU L 304 del 22.11.2011, pag. 18.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014228/13
to the Commission
Carlo Fidanza (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Defending the Mediterranean diet against the British 'traffic light' labelling system

In June, Great Britain introduced a food labelling system to rate the healthiness of products on the basis of their fat, salt and sugar content; each label features a small traffic light which indicates green for healthy food, amber for food which should be eaten in moderation and red for unhealthy food.

This recommendation has already been adopted by many large retailers in Britain, with a serious risk of both hindering the free movement of foodstuffs in Europe and creating confusion in other EU markets through a proliferation of labels.

This system could mislead consumers and damage the agriculture sector insofar as it contravenes EU legislation on PDO and PGI products; furthermore, by applying the recommendation to the letter, the 'Mediterranean diet', recognised as intangible cultural heritage by Unesco and which has always been acknowledged as synonymous with proper and healthy nutrition, would be defined as completely unhealthy, since the traffic lights do not take account of how and in what measures products are combined with each other.

1. Does the British recommendation comply with the EU legislation in force?

2. How does the Commission intend to defend the Mediterranean diet?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(17 February 2014)

1. Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on food information to consumers ([1]) allows under certain conditions for the use by food business operators of additional forms of expression and presentation of the nutrition declaration. According to the same rules, Member States' authorities may recommend the use of such additional forms of expression and presentation. The details of the UK recommendation on the use of colour coding as an additional form of expression of the nutrition declaration were received by the Commission on 6 December 2013. Following a complaint, the Commission is currently examining closer the functioning of the scheme.

2. The Commission welcomes and actively supports Member States' initiatives aimed at promoting a balanced diet and active lifestyles. Such diets can be diverse and include the Mediterranean diet.

([1]) OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014229/13
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Automatismi ingannevoli

Con l'aumento della disoccupazione il reddito pro-capite italiano è diminuito notevolmente, attestandosi sui valori del 1986, mentre la pressione fiscale rimane al livello del 44,3 %, uno dei più alti in Europa. Questa situazione, con la precarietà e la povertà in aumento, si traduce in una netta diminuzione dei consumi che nel 2012 hanno registrato un crollo del 4,25. Molti politici, e fra questi anche degli economisti, sostengono che l'aumento dei consumi farebbe scattare la molla della ripresa economica, il che è parzialmente vero, poiché in questo genere di cose gli automatismi non sempre funzionano. Ne abbiamo una prova nel settore del credito dove l'abbassamento del tasso di sconto fino a zero attuato dalla BCE non ha prodotto nuovi crediti per gli investimenti, per le imprese e per le famiglie. La detassazione sul lavoro, invece, potrebbe portare a un aumento dei salari e delle pensioni delle fasce più deboli, aumento che sarebbe destinato ai consumi.

La Commissione:

1. Non ritiene che, oltre alla diminuzione del carico fiscale e alla detassazione sul lavoro come certuni auspicano, bisognerebbe puntare sullo sviluppo?

2. Non crede che l'austerità abbia già provocato danni sociali enormi e che la politica dello sviluppo dovrebbe prendere l'avvio il più presto possibile?

3. L'aumento del credito alle banche, non essendo stato destinato nella maggioranza dei casi alle imprese e alle famiglie, quale vantaggi ha portato alla soluzione della crisi economica?

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(11 febbraio 2014)

L'analisi annuale della crescita per il 2014 ha stabilito le priorità per promuovere la crescita e l'occupazione, raccomandando un risanamento di bilancio differenziato e favorevole alla crescita che tenga conto dell'effetto della politica di bilancio sulla crescita, dell'efficienza del settore pubblico e dell'equità sociale. Una delle priorità dell'analisi annuale della crescita per il 2014 è garantire che il settore bancario possa finanziare le attività produttive.

La Commissione ha sollevato a più riprese il problema della frammentazione del mercato finanziario e dell'accesso ai finanziamenti per le PMI. Per questo motivo la Commissione ha avviato l'iniziativa PMI e il Consiglio europeo ha ribadito più volte la necessità di un'ampia partecipazione. La Commissione ha assicurato che le condizioni propedeutiche a questa iniziativa sono già soddisfatte o lo saranno a breve.

Inoltre, al fine di sbloccare l'erogazione di prestiti è essenziale risolvere i problemi che gravano ancora sul settore bancario. A tale proposito nell'autunno di quest'anno sono previste sia una rigorosa revisione della qualità degli attivi, sia prove di stress.

Per quanto riguarda il programma di riforme dell'Italia, il Consiglio, su proposta della Commissione, ha raccomandato all'Italia non solo di perseguire un risanamento di bilancio favorevole alla crescita, ma anche di anticipare le riforme strutturali per stimolare la concorrenza nei mercati del prodotto, di fare fronte alle principali carenze nel mercato del lavoro, di affrontare alcune lacune del sistema di istruzione, di migliorare il contesto in cui operano le imprese e di facilitare l'accesso delle imprese ai finanziamenti.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014229/13
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Misleading automatic responses

With the rise in unemployment, Italian per capita income has dropped considerably, falling to the levels of 1986, while the tax burden remains at 44.3%, one of the highest rates in Europe. This situation, together with increased job insecurity and poverty, has resulted in a net reduction in consumer spending, which fell by 4.25 points in 2012. Many politicians, some of whom are also economists, claim that an increase in consumer spending would trigger an economic recovery, which is partly true, since automatic responses do not always work in these situations. We have proof of this in the credit sector, where the reduction of the discount rate to zero, introduced by the ECB, has not produced new credit for investors, companies and families. On the other hand, a cut in employment taxes could lead to a rise in salaries and pensions for the most vulnerable, a rise which would boost consumer spending.

1. Does the Commission not believe that, in addition to the reduction of the tax burden and the cut in employment taxes which certain people advocate, we also need to focus on development?

2. Does it not believe that austerity has already caused enormous social damage and that we need to initiate a policy of development as soon as possible?

3. Since, in most cases, the increased credit provided to banks has not found its way to businesses and families, how has it helped resolve the economic crisis?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

The Annual Growth Survey for 2014 set the priorities to promote growth and jobs. It recommends differentiated, growth-friendly fiscal consolidations that take into account the effect of fiscal policy on growth, public sector efficiency and social equity. Making sure that the banking sector provides finance to productive activities is one of the priorities of the Annual Growth survey for 2014.

The Commission has pointed out many times the problems of financial market fragmentation and access to finance for SMEs. This is why the Commission set up the SME initiative and the European Council has repeatedly called for broad participation. The Commission has assured that all enabling conditions for this initiative have been put in place or are well advanced.

Moreover, in order to unlock lending it is crucial to address the remaining weaknesses in the banking sector. Rigorous Asset Quality Review and stress test this autumn will be lay in this respect.

Concerning Italy's reform agenda, the Council, upon proposal of the Commission, recommended Italy not only to pursue a growth-friendly fiscal consolidation but also to bring forward structural reforms to foster competition in product markets, address the main weaknesses in the labour market, address some shortcomings in the education system, improve the business environment and ease firms' access to finance.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014230/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Security of energy supply in Member State regions

In my own constituency, compliance with the EU Emissions Directive is due to take effect from January 2016. This will require the withdrawal of 510 MW of generation capacity at Ballylumford power station and place restrictions on generation at the Kilroot power plant, unless appropriate measures are taken to upgrade it. Meanwhile, a fault in the Moyle Interconnector has reduced its capacity to 250 MW. Temporary repairs will increase this capacity to 450 MW by the end of 2014, though a more permanent upgrade will not be in place until late 2017.

The combination of the EU Emissions Directive and the fault in the Moyle Interconnector thus represents a potential risk to the security of energy supply in Northern Ireland from the beginning of 2016 until late 2017, as well as a supply deficit from 2021. Given that there would be substantial penalties for any derogation from the directive, what contingencies does the Commission have in place to ensure that the security of energy supply in Member State regions will not be put at risk by the directive?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2014)

Directive 2010/75/EU on industrial emissions (IED) ([1]) was adopted on 24 November 2010 and had to be transposed by 1 January 2013.

Its provisions regarding large combustion plants fully allow a smooth transition towards compliance, thus avoiding that the security of electricity supply within Member States or their regions would be endangered, as feared by the Honourable Member.

The new IED emission limit values for existing combustion plants will apply from 1 January 2016 onwards. This extended transitional period gives Member States and operators sufficient time to plan investments and implement measures needed to ensure compliance.

The IED provides for a number of additional flexibilities, such as the possibility for plants with a limited operational life-time to 'opt out' from the limits until end 2023. Member States may also set up a transitional national plan (TNP) allowing, under certain conditions, a linear decrease of the total emissions from a selection of combustion plants without imposing the new limits to each individual plant concerned before 30 June 2020.

At the same time, the full completion of the internal energy market by 2015, including building of interconnectors, should further lower the risk of energy supply disruptions.

([1]) Directive 2010/75/EU of the European parliament and the Council on industrial emissions (OJ L 334, 17.12.2010).

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-014231/13
aan de Raad (Voorzitter Europese Raad)
Mark Demesmaeker (Verts/ALE)
(18 december 2013)

Betreft: PCE/PEC — De invulling van de functie van voorzitter van de Europese Raad

Op 9 december verwelkomt de voorzitter van de Europese Raad in een persmededeling het jongste gemeenschappelijk standpunt binnen de Raad over de lopende herziening van de detacheringsrichtlijn. U schrijft dat „*I encourage the European Parliament and the Council to reach a common agreement as soon as possible*". Op 12 december uit de voorzitter van de Europese Raad enkele bedenkingen bij het voor volgend jaar aangekondigd referendum in Catalonië. U schrijft „*it is not for me to express a position on questions of internal organisation related to the constitutional arrangements in a Member State*" om vervolgens aan te geven dat „*in such a scenario*" (onafhankelijkheid), Catalonië buiten de Unie zal vallen en dat u er vertrouwen in heeft dat Spanje verenigd blijft.

1. Kan de voorzitter aangeven hoe beide persmededelingen, en de daarin aangesneden onderwerpen, binnen het kader van zijn bevoegdheid vallen zoals voorgeschreven in artikel 15, lid 6 VEU? Namens wie voert u het woord in de persmededelingen? En kan u aangeven waarom u het woord voert?

2. Over de detacheringsrichtlijn: vindt u het passend de twee takken van de Europese wetgevingsautoriteit uw bedenkingen over te maken en welke gronden ziet u om dit te doen terwijl het wetgevend proces loopt? Hoe past dit binnen uw bevoegdheidsomschrijving in het Verdrag?

3. Over Catalonië:

3.1. vindt u uw uitspraak — dat u er vertrouwen in heeft dat Spanje verenigd zal blijven — compatibel met a) de verdragsregel dat de Unie de nationale identiteit die besloten ligt in de lidstatelijke politieke en constitutionele basisstructuren, eerbiedigt (artikel 4, lid 2 VEU) en b) uw eigen uitspraak dat „*it is not for me to express a position on questions of internal organisation*"? Indien u zulks vindt, vindt u dan ook dat instellingen van de Europese Unie de bevoegdheid hebben zich uit te spreken over interne lidstatelijke aangelegenheden?

3.2. op welke gronden precies baseert u zich dat Catalonië buiten de EU zal vallen als het voor onafhankelijkheid kiest? Op welk artikel in de Europese Verdragen en/of op welke rechtspraak steunt uw uitspraak precies?

3.3. impliceert de onafhankelijkheid van Catalonië volgens u ook het verlies van de door het Verdrag en Europees Hof gewaarborgde burgerrechten voor Catalaanse ingezetenen?

3.4. u schrijft dat „*the creation of a new State would not be neutral as regards the EU Treaties*". Is deze uitspraak toepasselijk op elk proces van staatsvorming?

Antwoord
(10 februari 2014)

1. Wat de detacheringsrichtlijn betreft, wordt het geachte parlementslid erop gewezen dat de rol van de Europese Raad er uit hoofde van artikel 15, lid 1, VEU in bestaat impulsen te geven aan de Unie en de prioriteiten van de Unie te bepalen. De voorzitter van de Europese Raad is ten volle bevoegd om het Parlement en de Raad ertoe aan te zetten zo spoedig mogelijk overeenstemming te bereiken.

2. Aangaande de situatie die zou ontstaan indien een nieuwe staat wordt gevormd door afscheiding van een deel van een lidstaat, vestigde de voorzitter, naar aanleiding van een vraag, de aandacht op het algemene kader met betrekking tot lidmaatschap van de Unie.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014231/13
to the Council (President of the European Council)
Mark Demesmaeker (Verts/ALE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: PCE/PEC — manner in which the President of the European Council performs his duties

In a press release dated 9 December, the President of the European Council welcomed the latest common position of the Council on the current revision of the directive on posting of workers, writing: 'I encourage the European Parliament and the Council to reach a common agreement as soon as possible.' On 12 December, the President of the European Council expressed reservations about the referendum scheduled for next year in Catalonia. He wrote: 'it is not for me to express a position on questions of internal organisation related to the constitutional arrangements in a Member State', going on to say that 'in such a scenario' (independence), Catalonia would fall outside the Union and that he was confident that Spain would remain united.

1. Can the President indicate how these two press releases and the subjects with which they deal fall within his remit as prescribed by Article 15(6) TEU? In whose name was he speaking in the press releases? And can the President indicate why he was speaking about these matters?

2. With regard to the directive on posting of workers, does the President consider it appropriate to express his reservations to the two arms of the European legislative authority, and what grounds does he see for doing so while the legislative process is in progress? How can this be reconciled with the powers which the Treaty assigns to him?

3. With regard to Catalonia:

3.1. Does the President consider his statement — that he is confident that Spain will remain united — to be compatible with (a) the rule of conduct that the Union respects the national identities inherent in the fundamental structures, political and constitutional, of the Member States (Article 4(2) TEU) and (b) his own statement that 'it is not for me to express a position on questions of internal organisation'? If he takes this view, does he therefore consider that the EU institutions have the power to express views on the internal affairs of the Member States?

3.2. On what grounds exactly does the President believe that Catalonia will fall outside the EU if it opts for independence? On what article of the European Treaties and/or what case-law exactly is this statement based?

3.3. In the President's view, does independence for Catalonia also imply loss of the civil rights guaranteed by the Treaty and the European Court for citizens of Catalonia?

3.4. The President writes that 'the creation of a new State would not be neutral as regards the EU Treaties'. Does this statement apply to every State-building process?

Reply
(10 February 2014)

1. With regard to the directive on posting of workers, the Honourable Member is reminded that the role of the European Council under Article 15(1) TEU is to give impetus to the Union and define its priorities. Its President is fully entitled to encourage the Parliament and the Council to reach agreement as soon as possible.

2. With regard to the situation that would arise in the event of a new state being created by secession from a Member State, the President, in response to a question, drew attention to the general framework in respect of Union membership.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014232/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: EU food labelling and country of origin

The British Agriculture Bureau (BAB) has welcomed the adoption of EU Regulation No 1169/2011, which provides for more food information to consumers, including the mandatory indication of country of origin. The BAB believes that origin labelling should include where the animal was born, reared and slaughtered.

Despite this welcome improvement, the Commission's definition of 'reared in,' appears to be at odds with consumer expectations. The Commission considers the rearing period to refer to the months an animal spends in a country before slaughter, rather than the period after birth, which is what consumers expect. It has been argued that some Member States would prefer the rearing period to be as short as possible so that they can import animals for the final stage of life and then label the meat as reared and slaughtered in their own country.

There are concerns from the BAB, representatives from the agricultural sector, and local farmers from my own constituency that this practice may occur and undercut the price of local produce. In view of this, what measures will the Commission take to ensure that consumers are provided with reliable and accurate information on where their food comes from, from birth to slaughter?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(10 March 2014)

Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the provision of food information to consumers ([1]), empowers the Commission to adopt implementing rules for the mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for fresh and frozen meat from swine, poultry, sheep and goat, following an impact asessment. The impact assessment ([2]) had to consider options for expressing this taking into account the principle of proportionality and the administrative burden for both operators and authorities.

According to this mandate, and building on the result of the impact assessment, the Commission adopted on 13 December 2013 the Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1337/2013 ([3]). It provides for the compulsory indication of the Member State or third country of rearing and slaughter based on a minimum rearing period for each species taking into account its own characteristics so that animals have to spend the substantial part of their life in the country indicated as place of rearing. This regulation also provides for producers the option of replacing the indication of the place of rearing and of slaughter by the indication, as origin, of the Member State or third country where animals were born, reared and slaughtered when operators can prove it. A compulsory indication of the place of birth, for the species in question would render a reinforcement of the identification systems of pigs, sheeps and fowls necessary. This would involve disproportionate costs for farmers, processors and administrations.

The new system results from a satisfactory compromise and will provide consumers with enhanced transparency on the basis of common requirements for the whole Union.

([1]) OJ L 304, 22.11.2011.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/impact/ia_carried_out/docs/ia_2013/ia_meat_origin_labelling.pdf
([3]) OJ L 335, 14.12.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014233/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: 16th EU-China summit

As Scotland seeks to increase trade and economic activity with China, what assessment has been made of the likely positive consequences for Member States of the 16th EU-China summit that took place on 21 November 2013 in Beijing?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

At the 16th EU-China Summit an EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation was agreed: it includes important provisions on trade and investment and demonstrates the joint commitment to the bilateral relationship. It was also announced at the Summit that negotiations for an EU-China Investment Agreement would be launched: the first round was held in Beijing on 21-23 January 2014.

A comprehensive EU-China investment agreement will benefit both the EU and its Member States as well as China by ensuring that markets are open to investment in both directions The EU sees an investment agreement with China as an important element towards closer trade and investment ties between our economies.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014234/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Adult literacy

26.7% of the Scottish population may face occasional challenges and have their opportunities constrained due to literacy problems. What is the Commission doing on a Europe-wide basis to improve adult literacy skills?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

Improving literacy, numeracy, science and technology skills-as a foundation for further learning and gateway to employment and social inclusion-are essential to achieving the Europe 2020' strategy seeks to promote smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth. ([1])

In 2010, EU Ministers set an agenda for European policy cooperation on basic skills. ([2]) Subsequently, a Commission High-Level Group on Literacy, comprised of academics and policy-makers, prepared a report which underlines the importance of literacy across ages, as well as the need to ensure political ownership and cooperation so as to foster better and more targeted policies in this area. ([3])

The Commission is also working on implementing the European Agenda for Adult Learning, ([4]) which prioritises low-skilled adults-including their literacy skills-and works closely with the OECD on the PIAAC survey of adult skills. ([5])

The European Commission will launch a European Policy Network of National Literacy Organisations in February 2014. The Network will raise awareness and facilitate exchange of best practices on policies, campaigns and initiatives to promote literacy.

Since 2000, the Commission has also supported hundreds of organisations working on adult literacy through grants to projects and staff development under the Lifelong Learning Programme and will continue to provide such funding support through the Erasmus + programme. ([6])

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010XG1130%2801%29:EN:NOT
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/doc/literacy-report_en.pdf
([4]) http://new.eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2011.372.01.0001.01.ENG
([5]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-922_en.htm
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/adult-learning/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014236/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Commission in a less formal setting

The Scottish Parliament runs a successful scheme of 'Parliament Days' that aim to take Parliament out of Edinburgh, allowing people to see the Parliament at work, be it 'official' parliamentary business or on a less formal level. Does the Commission participate in any similar programmes, taking its work outwith the Brussels environment to bring it to the public in a less formal setting?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

The Commission reaches out to citizens to explain its activities and how they affect the daily lives of citizens in all Member States and in Brussels.

Starting in September 2012 the President of the Commission and almost all members of the College have participated in a series of more than 50 'Citizens' Dialogues' in all Member States, replying to hundreds of questions, thousands of voices and many strong opinions and ideas, engaging with citizens in a dialogue about where the EU should go in the coming years.

The Commission also extensively uses its long established network of 37 Representations and Regional Offices in the capitals and regions of Member States. These Representations are the voice of the Commission in the Member States and they communicate EU affairs at both national and local levels.

For further details regarding forthcoming activities at the Regional Office in Scotland, please consult the link in the footnote. ([1])

([1]) https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanCommissionInScotland

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014237/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Commission steps to provide access to information

The Scottish Parliament is a member of 'Happy to Translate', a national initiative developed to promote equal access to services by overcoming language barriers. Beyond the 24 official and working languages, what steps does the Commission take to provide access to information to as many people as possible?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(17 February 2014)

Facilitating citizens' access to information — in the EU official language of their choice — about the political and legislative process of the EU, its results and, importantly, on how EU policy directly affects their daily lives is one of the Commission's top priorities.

Amongst the main tools deployed to inform citizens, the Commission runs a website, Europa.eu, which offers Europeans information on how the EU works, the latest news and events, as well as links to information on other websites of the EU institutions and agencies.

Easy-to-read general information for the general public is also regularly published using other tools such as DVD, video and print.

The Commission facilitates citizens' access to clear and practical information about their rights under EC law by making available a one-stop source of information via (1) Your Europe ([1]), (2) Europe Direct ([2]) and (3) the multilingual Europe Direct Contact Centre ([3]).

At national level, the 37 Representations and Regional Offices of the Commission in the Member States strive to bring the EU closer to the citizens, multipliers, media, politicians and other stakeholders by providing them, at local level, with clear information about the EU in the official languages of the Member States.

The Commission is aware that there are languages other than the official EU languages, whose status is recognised by the constitution of a Member State in the whole or the part of its territory or whose use as a national language is authorised by law. As a result, it has for instance taken the step to entitle any citizens or residents of the UK to address their written communication to the Commission also in Welsh or Scottish Gaelic, by way of an administrative arrangement with the UK Government concluded in 2009.

([1]) The multilingual web portal which provides citizens and businesses with practical information on their rights and opportunities within the Single Market.
([2]) The network of 500 Europe Direct Information Centres available to citizens looking for advice or help in their neighbourhood.
([3]) Which answers all sorts of questions on EU-related matters by phone (Freephone 00800 6 7 8 9 10 11) or e-mail.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014238/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Drink driving in Europe

One in eight deaths on Scottish roads involve drivers who are over the legal drinking limit. What is the Commission doing to discourage drink driving in Europe?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The Commission is aware that driving under the influence of alcohol is one of the most common traffic accident factors in the EU. Therefore, the Commission issued a recommendation on the maximum blood alcohol content for drivers of motor vehicles which recommends a lower value than the limit set by the current UK legislation.

It is, however, competence of the Member States to establish legal limits to blood alcohol content and to apply enforcement measures to ensure that they are respected. In relation to EU-wide enforcement, Directive 2011/82/EU on cross-border enforcement ([1]) includes drink driving as a major offence to road safety rules; therefore the Member States' authorities will be able to identify the holders of vehicles registered in other Member States which have comitted a major offence and issue a fine.

([1]) Directive 2011/82/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 facilitating the cross-border exchange of information on road safety related traffic offences, OJ L 288, 5.11.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014239/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Emission-reducing measures in European households

Every household in Scotland could save up to GBP 60 per year if the thermostat was turned down by one degree. This measure would also result in a 10% drop in emissions from housing in Scotland. What does the Commission do to encourage simple emission-reducing measures in European households?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

The Commission is aware of the potential of European households to reduce energy use and therefore emissions in a cost effective manner. To tap the potential for energy savings in buildings, which account for 40% of total energy consumption in the Union, Directive 2010/31/EU ([1]) strengthened the requirements for energy performance of existing and new buildings. The Commission is following progress by the Member States to complete the transposition of this directive.

In addition, the Energy Efficiency Directive (2012/27/EU) requires Member States to promote and facilitate an efficient use of energy by domestic consumers. Measures by Member States must include the promotion of behavioural change such as the example provided by the Honourable Member. This directive must be transposed into national law by 5 June 2014.

Moreover, the new Multiannual Financial Framework foresees 23 billion euros to be spent under the Structural Funds in the areas of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

([1]) Directive 2010/31/EU on the energy performance of buildings.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014240/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Encouraging greener journeys in Europe

It is estimated that if everyone in Scotland drove five miles less every week, 190 000 tonnes of CO_2 would be saved annually. What does the Commission do to encourage greener journeys on a Europe-wide basis?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(25 February 2014)

A priority issue for the Commission is to render transport more resource-efficient, as outlined in Europe 2020 ([1]) and the 2011 Transport White Paper ([2]). This is essential to move towards the goal of reducing its CO_2 emissions by 60% compared to 1990 levels.

The Commission is committed to fostering where possible a shift towards cleaner and more efficient transport modes such as rail, public transport, walking and cycling ([3]).

With its Clean Power for Transport package ([4]), the Commission aims to reduce CO_2 emissions from transport and facilitate the development of a single market for sustainable alternative fuels and propulsion systems for all transport modes in Europe.

The Commission adopted a new Urban Mobility Package ([5]) to reinforce its supporting measures by showcasing best practice with regard to sustainable urban mobility plans, by providing financial support through the European structural and investment funds, by calling on the Member States to create the right conditions for towns and cities to develop and implement sustainable urban mobility plans and by helping to ensure coordinated action on urban logistics, urban access regulation, deployment of intelligent transport system solutions, and urban road safety.

European Mobility Week ([6]) takes credit for raising awareness about issues related to sustainable urban mobility and encouraging a shift away from the use of private cars in cities towards more sustainable means of transport by increasing the availability of greener alternatives.

Greener journeys in the urban environment are also promoted by its sister campaign 'Do the Right Mix' ([7]) which focuses on multimodality. The campaign video highlights ways to reduce our transport CO_2 emissions and is being broadly disseminated in 32 countries.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/strategies/2011_white_paper_en.htm
([3]) See recent Commission proposals:.
— Fourth Railways Package: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/packages/2013_en.htm
— shif2Rail: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/news/shift-to-rail_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/urban/cpt/index_en.htm
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/urban/ump_en.htm
([6]) http://www.mobilityweek.eu/
([7]) www.dotherightmix.eu

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014241/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Festivals in the European Union

The Edinburgh Festival takes place every year, hosting 25 000 artists, delivering 40 000 performances and attracting visitors from 74 different nations. What does the Commission do to support various festivals that take place across the European Union?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

The European Union has been supporting cultural festivals for more that a decade for their role in providing access to culture for a large number of citizens and raise their awareness of Europe's cultural diversity.

In 2011, a strand dedicated to festivals was created under the former Culture programme 2007-2013 of the European Commission. Under the new Creative Europe programme 2014-2020 ([1]), support to festivals is no longer limited to a specific strand. Now organisers may seek funding under different sections of the Culture sub-programme of Creative Europe, such as the cooperation projects-which require a minimum number of partners from different participating countries. ([2])

Furthermore, the Commission is co-financing a pilot project for a European Platform for Festivals, ([3]) which aims to reward European cultural festivals for their outstanding contribution to European cultural life and their sustainable impact on societal development.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/calls/index_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/pilot-project-for-platform-for-festivals_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014243/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: In-season food

The Scottish Government has a campaign to encourage the eating of in-season food. In-season food takes less energy to produce, and food producers pass on these savings in the form of lower prices. What does the Commission do to promote in-season food?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

The European Commission allocates today roughly EUR 50 million annually in financial support for campaigns to promote farm products and inform consumers about how they were produced.

On 21 November 2013, the Commission adopted a reform proposal to further enhance its promotion policy for agricultural products. This new promotion policy will benefit from a more substantial budget, which should assist in opening up new markets to EU agricultural products but which also aims to make consumers more aware of the efforts made by European farmers to provide quality products. Among others, one of the aims of reformed system is to better inform consumers and enable them to make informed choices taking into account the quality and nutritional value of products. It is hoped that this reform proposal, once adopted, will offer enhanced possibilities to inform consumers about different aspects agricultural products such as the benefits of in- season food.

Already today, there are campaigns co-financed by the European information and promotion policy on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for the internal market aiming to encourage the eating of in-season food such as the programmes submitted by Austria ('Agrarmarkt Austria Marketing GesmbH'), Germany ('5 am Tag e.V.') and Denmark ('Gartnerbrugets Afsætningsudvalg (GAU)').

With the reform proposal, the European Union will be able to even better underline that European Union farm products are unique in their quality and diversity.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014244/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Nelson Mandela legacy in Europe

What steps are being taken to mark and commemorate the life of former South African President Nelson Mandela so that his legacy may play a role in guiding European nations as they seek to promote the virtues of peace, understanding and racial harmony in Europe?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2014)

The EU is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights and aims to promote these values as well as peace.

Mandela's legacy of dialogue instead of confrontation and of deep and true democracy are the underlying principles that guide the Union among the peoples of Europe. They are a constant source of inspiration for all those who work on international relations as the High Representative/Vice-President Ashton underlined in her personal letter of condolences addressed to the South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation.

The EU's strategic relationship with South Africa honours these common values especially through its formal dialogue on Human Rights and equally through its development cooperation programmes. On the day of Mandela's funerals, all EU institutions commemorated the life of Nelson Mandela by observing a minute of silence. Moreover, discussions are underway with the European Parliament for the organisation of a joint EU celebration in 2014 in honour of Mandela.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014245/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Winter tourism in the European Union

Edinburgh has recently been included in a list suggesting the top ten best cities for a winter vacation. What does the Commission do to promote winter tourism in the European Union?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

In line with the EU's competence to complement, support, and coordinate the actions of the Member States, the Commission promotes and encourages the diversification of the tourism offer, including in the field of 'winter tourism'.

Transnational projects (gathering partners from several European countries) promoting winter tourism, amongst others, could possibly be co-funded under the Commission's calls for proposals on sustainable transnational thematic tourism products ([1]). In this sense, a call for proposals on the topic 'Diversifying the EU tourism offer and products — Sustainable transnational tourism products' is planned to be launched in the first half of 2014 under the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME) ([2]).

Moreover, tourism-related initiatives at local and/or regional level are eligible for funding, as part of a territorial strategy, under the European Structural and Investment Funds, including in the case of the ERDF, small-scale and sustainable tourism infrastructure, provided they contribute to the thematic priorities and objectives of the funds ([3]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/contracts-grants/calls-for-proposals/index_en.htm
([3]) It is of particular importance that the investments are embedded in integrated, place-based development strategies and that they have a sound economic rationale in terms of their growth and jobs impact and long-term sustainability.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014246/13
à la Commission
Robert Goebbels (S&D)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Compensation des émissions de CO_2 liées aux voyages de service

La Commission prend-elle à la charge de son budget des compensations pour les émissions de CO_2 occasionnées par des voyages de service

1. de fonctionnaires européens?

2. de membres de la Commission?

Si cela devait être le cas, quels sont les montants respectifs et à quelles organisations ces compensations éventuelles sont-elles adressées?

Réponse donnée par M. Šefčovič au nom de la Commission
(24 février 2014)

La Commission a mis en place le système de management environnemental et d'audit (EMAS). Il s'agit d'un système volontaire permettant aux organisations d'analyser, de faire connaître et d'améliorer leurs performances environnementales. Ce système est défini par le règlement EMAS (1221/2009). Pour de plus amples informations, voir:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm

Dans ce contexte, la Commission réduit ses émissions en appliquant le système EMAS et les mesures associées. La Commission n'applique aucune mesure EMAS pour compenser les émissions liées aux voyages de service.

Par ailleurs, les émissions de carbone sont compensées grâce au système d'échange de quotas d'émission de l'UE (SEQE-UE) qui, depuis le 1er janvier 2012, couvre les émissions de dioxyde de carbone produites par les vols d'aéronefs.

Dans le cadre du SEQE-UE, les exploitants d'aéronefs doivent restituer un nombre de «quotas» équivalents aux émissions de dioxyde de carbone imputables aux vols qu'ils opèrent (un quota correspondant à l'émission d'une tonne de CO_2), afin de compenser celles-ci. Bien qu'à l'achat de billets d'avion, rien n'indique aux passagers qu'il existe des frais supplémentaires associés aux quotas du SEQE-UE, ces derniers font partie intégrante du prix global du billet.

Par conséquent, depuis le 1er janvier 2012, les émissions de dioxyde de carbone liées aux voyages de service de la grande majorité des fonctionnaires et des membres de la Commission sont également comprises dans le prix du billet, comme c'est le cas pour les autres passagers.

Il est également intéressant de noter que le SEQE-UE a atteint l'objectif fixé pour 2012, qui était de ramener les émissions de dioxyde de carbone à 97 % de leurs niveaux de 2005; depuis 2013, cet objectif est fixé à 95 %.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014246/13
to the Commission
Robert Goebbels (S&D)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Offsetting of CO_2 emissions from official travel

Does the Commission budget cover the offsetting of CO_2 emissions from official travel by either

1. European officials or

2. members of the Commission?

If so, what are the sums concerned and to which organisations are they paid?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(24 February 2014)

The Commission has put in place the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), which is a voluntary scheme for organisations to evaluate report and improve their environmental performance. The scheme is set out in the EMAS Regulation (1221/2009). Further information can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm

In this context, the Commission is reducing its emissions through the EMAS environmental management system and the associated actions. The Commission has no EMAS action to offset officials' travels.

In addition, carbon off-setting is achieved in association with the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) which from the 1 January 2012 includes emissions of carbon dioxide from aircraft flights.

Under the EU ETS, aircraft operators have to surrender an equivalent number of 'allowances' to compensate for the quantity of carbon dioxide emitted from the flights that they operate (where one allowance is equal to one tonne of carbon dioxide). Although those purchasing aircraft flights do not see a separate charge made in relation to the EU ETS allowances involved, the cost is included as an intrinsic part of the overall fare for the flight.

Consequently, from the 1 January 2012, the carbon dioxide emissions linked to the official travel of the vast majority of officials and Members of the Commission have also been part of ticket prices paid, as is the case for other passengers on the flights.

It may also be of interest to know that the EU ETS fulfilled the 2012 target to reduce aviation carbon dioxide emissions to 97% compared to 2005 levels and from 2013 onwards a target of 95% is set.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-014247/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Armut in Österreich nimmt zu

Der jüngste EU-Sozialbericht SILC lässt aufhorchen: Demnach waren im Jahr 2012 mehr als 15 % der österreichischen Bevölkerung armutsgefährdet — und dazu zählen auch die Ein-Eltern-Haushalte!

EU-weit waren 124,5 Millionen Menschen von Armut betroffen.

1. In der Annahme, dass die Kommission den Umstand klar vor Augen hat, dass in einem so „reichen" Land wie Österreich gute 15 % der Bevölkerung armutsgefährdet sind: Welche Schritte, Programme usw. gedenkt die Kommission zu unternehmen bzw. zu empfehlen, um die Abwärtsspirale aufzuhalten — gerade in den sogenannten „besser gestellten" Ländern?

2. Welche Entwicklung erwartet die Kommission — in Anbetracht der Entwicklung in den vorangegangenen Jahren — im kommenden Jahr und in den kommenden 3 bzw. 5 Jahren, dies auch und besonders unter dem Blickwinkel der nach wie vor steigenden Arbeitslosigkeit?

3. Welche Entwicklung im Bereich der Armutsgefährdung der Bevölkerung erwartet die Kommission in den kommenden Jahren für die Eurozone?

4. Welche Entwicklung im Bereich der Armutsgefährdung der Bevölkerung erwartet die Kommission in den kommenden Jahren für die Europäische Union?

Antwort von László Andor im Namen der Kommission
(24. Januar 2014)

Im Herbst 2013 hat die Europäische Kommission das Paket zu Sozialinvestitionen ([1]) angenommen; darin wird die Notwendigkeit wirksamerer und effizienterer sozialpolitischer Maßnahmen hervorgehoben, auch in denjenigen Mitgliedstaaten, die sozialpolitisch besser aufgestellt sind, wie Österreich.

In der neuen ESF-Verordnung ([2]) für die Jahre 2014-2020 ist vorgesehen, dass alle Mitgliedstaaten, d. h. auch Österreich, 20 % der ESF-Mittel für die Bekämpfung von Armut und sozialer Ausgrenzung aufwenden. Im Rahmen des Europäischen Semesters richtet der Rat Empfehlungen an die Mitgliedstaaten mit der Aufforderung, sich gegebenenfalls mit dem Thema der sozialen Inklusion zu befassen.

Österreich wird in den länderspezifischen Empfehlungen aufgefordert, bestimmte Diskriminierungsfragen anzugehen (z. B. geschlechterspezifische Lohn- und Pensionsschere, Diskriminierung beim Zugang zur Bildung sowie zu Vollzeitarbeitsplätzen und qualifizierten Stellen), da hierdurch das Armutsrisiko gesenkt würde.

Die Kommission erstellt keine offiziellen Prognosen zu Armutsquoten. Angesichts der Entwicklungen auf dem Arbeitsmarkt in den letzten Jahren kann jedoch davon ausgegangen werden, dass sich die soziale Lage in der EU noch weiter verschlechtern wird. Es ist damit zu rechnen, dass die Armutsindikatoren für 2013 infolge der Einkommenssituation im Jahr 2012 steigen werden.

Es lässt sich nur schwer vorhersagen, in welchem Maße und wie schnell sich die 2013 beobachtete Stabilisierung des Arbeitsmarktes und die für 2014-2015 prognostizierte Verbesserung ([3]) auf die soziale Lage auswirken werden. Wie sich das Beschäftigungswachstum auf die Armut auswirken wird, hängt insbesondere von der Qualität der geschaffenen Arbeitsplätze sowie davon ab, wem sie am meisten zugutekommen ([4]). Daher müssen die Entwicklungen im Bereich der Armutsgefährdung künftig genau beobachtet werden.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=de
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=67&langId=de&newsId=8229
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2013/pdf/ee7_en.pdf
([4]) Weitere Einzelheiten finden Sie im Anhang.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014247/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Rising poverty in Austria

The EU's most recent SILC (Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) report contains one alarming statistic: in 2012 more than 15% of Austrians — including the members of single-parent households — were at risk of poverty.

EU-wide 124.5 million people were affected by poverty.

1. Assuming that the Commission is aware of the fact that in a country as 'rich' as Austria some 15% of the population are at risk of poverty, what steps, programmes, etc. is it planning to take or recommend in order to halt the general decline in living standards, even in countries which are 'better off'?

2. In the light of trends in recent years, how does the Commission expect the situation to develop over the next one, three and five years, particularly in view of the ongoing rise in unemployment?

3. What developments in the 'at-risk-of-poverty' rate does the Commission expect to see in the eurozone in the next few years?

4. What developments in the 'at-risk-of-poverty' rate does the Commission expect to see in the European Union in the next few years?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(24 January 2014)

The European Commission adopted in 2013 the Social Investment Package ([1]),which emphasises the need for more effective and efficient social policies, including for Member States (MS) which perform better on social outcomes such as Austria.

The new ESF regulation ([2]) for 2014-2020 provides for all MS, including Austria, to use 20% of the ESF for measures tackling poverty and social exclusion. Within the European Semester the Council adopts recommendations to Member States to address social inclusion issues when necessary.

Specific Recommendations for Austria asks the country to address a number of discrimination related issues (e.g. gender and pension gap, discrimination in education and in access to full-time and qualified jobs) as this would help to reduce the at-risk-of-poverty level.

The Commission does not produce official forecasts of the poverty rates. However, further deterioration of the EU's social situation may be expected, given the labour market trends over recent years. Poverty indicators for 2013 are expected to rise reflecting the income situation in 2012.

It is difficult to predict how much and how fast the labour market stabilisation observed in 2013 and its forecast improvement ([3]) for 2014-2015 will affect the social situation. The impact of employment growth on poverty notably depends on the quality of the jobs created and on who will benefit most from them ([4]). Therefore, the developments in the at-risk-of-poverty will need to be carefully monitored in the future.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=en
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=67&langId=fr&newsId=8229
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2013/pdf/ee7_en.pdf
([4]) See more details in annex.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-014248/13
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Aéroports régionaux

La Commission est en passe de réviser en profondeur les lignes directrices concernant le financement public des aéroports régionaux.

A-t-elle procédé à une étude d'impact précise pour définir ces nouveaux critères? Si oui, peut-elle m'en fournir une copie?

Réponse donnée par M. Almunia au nom de la Commission
(24 janvier 2014)

La Commission est en train de finaliser le rapport d'analyse d'impact des lignes directrices révisées relatives aux aides d'État en faveur des aéroports et des compagnies aériennes. Ce rapport sera rendu accessible au public dès que les nouvelles règles auront été adoptées par la Commission.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014248/13
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Regional airports

The Commission is conducting a thoroughgoing revision of its guidelines on public funding of regional airports.

Did it carry out a detailed impact assessment in preparation for setting these new criteria? If so, could it provide me with a copy of the findings?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(24 January 2014)

The Commission is finalysing the impact assessment report on the revised Guidelines on state aid to airports and airlines. The report will be publicly available once the the new rules have been adopted by the Commision.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014249/13
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Appréciation de la concurrence déloyale par les citoyens européens au sein de l'Europe

C'est un fait indiscutable: une bonne partie de l'opinion publique a de plus en plus de mal à apprécier l'Europe, à comprendre l'Europe lorsqu'elle voit des entreprises et des usines délocaliser de l'ouest à l'est de l'Europe. Le niveau des salaires et de la fiscalité, qui y est beaucoup plus faible, en est la principale raison. Et c'est ce qui touche l'opinion. Le débat actuel sur l'application de la directive sur le détachement des travailleurs remet en lumière cette concurrence déloyale. Je suis partisan d'un serpent social et fiscal qui pousserait tous les États membres à ne plus utiliser ces outils comme une arme de compétitivité, venant fausser le bon déroulement du marché.

Dans sa réponse à la question écrite E-007028/2012, la Commission affirmait que «les disparités salariales ne constituent pas en tant que telles une concurrence déloyale».

1. Au vu des éléments que je viens d'exposer, la Commission confirme-t-elle ce propos?

2. Peut-elle ou prévoit-elle alors de mener une étude précise pour faire la lumière sur ce débat et apporter des éléments précis et chiffrés?

Réponse donnée par M. Andor au nom de la Commission
(19 février 2014)

La Commission est bien consciente des disparités salariales importantes entre l'ouest et l'est de l'Europe, puisqu'elle contrôle régulièrement l'évolution des salaires, notamment dans le contexte de la procédure concernant les déséquilibres macroéconomiques et tout au long du semestre européen de la coordination des politiques.

Elle accomplit cette tâche dans le but de promouvoir la surveillance multilatérale, de soutenir une évaluation globale de la situation au niveau de l'UE et d'empêcher l'apparition de déséquilibres macroéconomiques. Elle a aussi récemment proposé de créer un tableau de bord d'indicateurs clés en matière d'emploi et de situation sociale, afin de surveiller et d'empêcher les déséquilibres sociaux. Elle utilise à cette fin les données qui sont aisément accessibles dans les bases de données d'Eurostat.

Les disparités salariales entre les États membres sont dues à un ensemble de facteurs dont les plus importants sont la productivité et les caractéristiques institutionnelles de la fixation des salaires, y compris le salaire minimum. Ces disparités varient en fonction de l'ampleur des différences entre ces facteurs.

La réduction des divergences entre les États membres en matière de productivité et d'emploi et de performances sociales figure parmi les priorités de la Commission dans ses efforts pour appliquer la stratégie Europe 2020. Cette stratégie promeut explicitement une croissance intelligente, durable et inclusive et vise ainsi à soutenir l'accroissement fort et durable de la productivité dans tous les États membres et leur convergence vers le haut sur le plan socioéconomique.

La Commission conclut en conséquence que les disparités salariales ne constituent pas en tant que telles une concurrence déloyale, mais reflètent une absence de convergence vers le haut, qui nécessite la mise en œuvre sans plus attendre de la stratégie Europe 2020.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014249/13
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Awareness among EU citizens of unfair competition within Europe

There can be no getting around the fact that many members of the public are finding it ever harder to understand Europe and recognise its value when they see businesses and factories relocating from Western to Eastern Europe. Significantly lower wages and taxes are the main reason behind these relocations, and this is what causes public consternation. The current debate on the application of the Posted Workers Directive has highlighted this unfair competition. I am in favour of a 'social and tax snake' which would force all of the Member States to stop using these tools as a weapon of competitiveness which distorts the proper functioning of the market.

In its answer to Written Question E-007028/2012, the Commission stated that 'Differences in wages do not constitute per se unfair competition'.

1. In the view of the information I have provided above, does the Commission still hold this view?

2. Is it able or planning to carry out a detailed study with a view to shedding light on this debate and obtaining accurate and quantified information?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

The Commission is well aware that wages differ significantly between Western and Eastern Europe as it regularly monitors wage developments, including in the context of the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure and throughout the European Semester for policy coordination.

It performs this task with a view to promote multilateral surveillance, support an overall assessment of the situation at EU level and prevent the emergence of macroeconomic imbalances. It also recently proposed the setup of a Scoreboard of key employment and social indicators in order to monitor and prevent social imbalances. For this purpose it makes use of the data that are readily available in the Eurostat databases.

The wage differences between the Member States are driven by a variety of factors of which productivity and the institutional characteristics of wage setting including minimum wage are the most important. To the extent that these factors differ from each other there will be differences between wages.

Tempering the divergence in productivity and employment and social performances across Member States is high on the agenda of the Commission in its efforts to implement the Europe 2020 strategy. This strategy promotes explicitly smart, sustainable and inclusive growth — whereby fostering strong and sustainable productivity growth in all Member States and upward socioeconomic convergence are at the heart of the strategy.

As a consequence, the Commission concludes that differences in wages do not constitute per se unfair competition, but a lack of upward convergence — which calls for the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy without any further delay.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014250/13
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Automobile — CARS 2020 — Réglementation

Le Parlement européen a adopté à une très large majorité le rapport «CARS 2020», le 10 décembre 2013. En tant que rapporteur, je suis fier de voir que mes collègues ont soutenu deux propositions fondamentales: réévaluer l'impact des normes en vigueur qui viendraient détériorer la compétitivité du secteur et imposer un moratoire sur celles à venir. Cette dernière position vient en soutien d'une proposition du commissaire chargé de l'industrie.

Quelles suites compte donner la Commission à ces deux recommandations?

Réponse donnée par M. Tajani au nom de la Commission
(17 février 2014)

La Commission s'est engagée, dans le cadre de la réglementation intelligente, à réexaminer l'ensemble du corpus législatif dans certains domaines d'action au moyen de «bilans de la qualité», afin de mettre en évidence les charges excessives, les chevauchements, les lacunes, les incohérences et/ou les mesures obsolètes qui ont pu apparaître au fil du temps. Dans le secteur automobile, le plan d'action CARS 2020 a prévu, comme première étape du réexamen, un bilan de la qualité du cadre de réception par type des véhicules à moteur. Dans sa conclusion, il ressort que les principes de base du cadre juridique sont appropriés et adaptés à leurs fins, à l'exception des dispositions relatives à la surveillance du marché. Conformément à ses engagements, la Commission présentera cette année une proposition de révision du cadre de réception par type des véhicules à moteur. D'autres mesures visant une réévaluation de l'impact d'autres règlements en vigueur seront arrêtées d'un commun accord avec les parties prenantes.

Un marché intérieur sain et dynamique tire profit de règlements appropriés qu'il faut continuer d'adapter aux évolutions et aux nouvelles conditions du marché. Plus concrètement, les règlements, par exemple dans le domaine de la sécurité et de l'environnement, peuvent contribuer à maintenir l'avance technologique de notre industrie. L'harmonisation technique permet de réaliser des économies d'échelle et de réduire les coûts de développement et d'homologation. Grâce à une activité réglementaire anticipatrice, il est possible de devancer les pays tiers et les concurrents. Le fait d'être un «pionnier» est donc clairement un avantage. La Commission a veillé et continue de veiller notamment à ce que le travail législatif n'impose aucune charge inutile à l'industrie. Toute initiative future fera l'objet soit d'un examen de l'incidence sur la compétitivité, soit d'une analyse économique proportionnée.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014250/13
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Automotive sector — CARS 2020 — regulations

Parliament adopted the CARS 2020 report on 10 December 2013 by a very large majority. As rapporteur, I was proud to see my fellow Members lend their support to two crucially important proposals: reevaluating the impact of current regulations which have reduced the sector's competitiveness, and placing a moratorium on new legislation. The moratorium was initially proposed by the Commissioner for Industry.

How does the Commission intend to respond to these two recommendations?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(17 February 2014)

As part of smart regulation, the Commission committed to review the entire body of legislation in selected policy fields through 'fitness checks'. The objective has been to identify excessive burdens, overlaps, gaps, inconsistencies and/or obsolete measures which may have appeared over time. For the automotive sector the CARS 2020 Action plan announced, as a first step of the review, a fitness check of the type-approval framework for motor vehicles. In its conclusion, the basic principles of the legal framework were found to be appropriate and fit-for purpose with the exception of the provisions on market surveillance. In line with its commitment, the Commission will table this year a proposal for reviewing the type-approval framework directive for motor vehicles. Further steps aiming at re-evaluating the impact of other regulations in force will be agreed jointly with the stakeholders.

A healthy and dynamic Internal Market benefits from appropriate regulations that must continue to be adapted to changing market conditions and developments. Concretely, regulations, e.g. in the area of safety and environment, can help maintain our industry's technological lead. Technical harmonisation leads to economies of scale and reduces development and homologation costs, while anticipative regulatory activity may lead to a situation where third countries and competitors follow. There is therefore a clear advantage in being the first mover. The Commission has been and remains vigilant, in particular, so as not to create any unnecessary burden for industry resulting from legislative work. Any future initiative is either subject to competitiveness proofing or a proportionate economic analysis.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014251/13
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Baisse des tarifs d'itinérance (roaming)

Grâce à l'Union européenne, les consommateurs ont vu leurs factures, lorsqu'ils se déplacent en Europe, diminuer drastiquement. La Commission avait établi un calendrier précis instaurant de fait une diminution progressive des tarifs. Pourrait-elle préciser si les tarifs vont, par conséquent, encore diminuer dans les années à venir?

Réponse donnée par Mme Kroes au nom de la Commission
(14 février 2014)

La Commission renvoie l'Honorable Parlementaire à la réponse qu'elle a donnée à la question E-009914/2013 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/fr/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014251/13
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Reduction in roaming fees

Consumers who travel within Europe have seen a huge drop in their mobile phone bills thanks to the European Union. The detailed timetable drawn up by the Commission provided for gradual reductions in roaming fees. Can it state whether roaming fees will therefore be reduced further in future?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to the answer given in reply to Question E-009914/2013 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014252/13
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Diversité linguistique — normes des agences européennes

Certaines agences européennes produisent des textes qui ont force de loi dans les États membres ainsi que certains outils de coordination (plates-formes internet régulièrement mises à jour), surtout auprès des autorités administratives de régulation et de sécurité ainsi que d'organes publics. Je pense notamment à l'Agence européenne de la sécurité aérienne. La langue de travail est souvent unique et il s'agit de l'anglais. Parfois, ces textes et ces outils ne sont pas traduits et demeurent en anglais.

La Commission peut-elle me préciser le régime et la valeur légale de ces textes et outils? Ont-ils force de loi dès leur entrée en vigueur ou doivent-ils d'abord être traduits dans la langue officielle de l'État membre avant d'y être appliqués, et ce afin de respecter la diversité linguistique de l'Union?

Réponse donnée par M. Šefčovič au nom de la Commission
(24 février 2014)

Les règles générales relatives au régime linguistique appliqué par les institutions et organes de l'Union sont énoncées à l'article 24 du TFUE, à l'article 41, paragraphe 4, de la Charte des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne, ainsi que dans le règlement n° 1 du 15 avril 1958, et sont adoptées sur la base de l'article 342 du TFUE. Conformément aux articles 3 et 4 du règlement n° 1/1958, les documents juridiquement contraignants de portée générale doivent être rédigés dans toutes les langues officielles de l'Union et les documents adressés à un État membre en particulier doivent être rédigés dans la langue de cet État.

Les actes établissant des agences décentralisées peuvent définir des règles plus détaillées, tout en respectant les traités et le règlement n° 1/1958. En ce qui concerne l'Agence européenne de la sécurité aérienne (AESA), le législateur a eu recours à cette possibilité en précisant, à l'article 32 du règlement (CE) n° 216/2008 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 20 février 2008 concernant des règles communes dans le domaine de l'aviation civile et instituant une Agence européenne de la sécurité aérienne ([1]), quels documents établis par l'AESA doivent être présentés dans toutes les langues officielles de l'Union.

La Commission ne centralise pas les informations relatives aux textes produits par les différentes agences décentralisées ou aux outils de coordination dont ces agences sont responsables et elle invite donc l'Honorable Parlementaire à adresser toute demande spécifique à l'agence décentralisée concernée.

([1]) JO L 79 du 19.3.2008, p. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014252/13
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Linguistic diversity — standards for European agencies

A number of European agencies produce texts which are legally binding in the Member States, whereas others are responsible for coordination tools such as regularly updated Internet platforms, which are primarily used by administrative authorities in charge of regulatory and security matters and public bodies. I am thinking specifically of the European Aviation Safety Agency English is often the sole working language. Sometimes these texts and tools are not translated and remain available in English only.

Can the Commission provide details of the rules governing these texts and tools and their legal status? Are they legally binding as soon as they enter into force, or must they first be translated into the official language of the Member State in question in order to ensure that the linguistic diversity of the EU is respected?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(24 February 2014)

The general rules governing the languages to be used by the institutions and bodies of the Union are laid down in Article 24 TFEU and Article 40(4) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, as well as in Regulation No 1 of 15 April 1958, adopted on the basis of Article 342 TFEU. In accordance with Articles 3 and 4 of Regulation No 1/1958, legally binding documents of general application must be drafted in all official languages, and documents addressed to a particular Member State are drafted in the language of that state.

The acts establishing decentralised agencies may provide for more detailed rules, while respecting the Treaties and Regulation No 1/1958. With respect to the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), the legislator has made use of this possibility, by specifying in Article 32 of Regulation (EC) No 216/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 February 2008 on common rules in the field of civil aviation and establishing a European Aviation Safety Agency ([1]), which of the documents established by the EASA have to be established in all official languages of the Union.

The Commission does not centralise information on the texts produced by individual decentralised agencies, or on the coordination tools for which these agencies are responsible, and therefore invites the Honourable Member to address any specific request to the decentralised agency concerned.

([1]) OJ L 79, 19.3.2008, p. 1.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014253/13
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Diversité linguistique

La diversité linguistique est un des piliers de la construction européenne. La Commission pourrait-elle énumérer les programmes qui, à partir de 2014, viendront la soutenir, au niveau européen comme national ou local?

Réponse donnée par Mme Vassiliou au nom de la Commission
(14 février 2014)

Au cours de ces dernières années, la Commission a cofinancé de nombreux projets couronnés de succès dans le domaine des langues par le biais du programme pour l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie ([1]). Elle continuera à promouvoir le multilinguisme dans son nouveau programme pour l'éducation, la formation, la jeunesse et le sport: Erasmus+ (2014-2020) ([2]).

L'apprentissage des langues et la diversité linguistique constituent l'un des objectifs spécifiques du programme Erasmus+. La Commission soutiendra l'apprentissage linguistique dans le cadre d'actions de mobilité portant sur toutes les langues utilisées dans l'enseignement et sur le lieu de travail. Des projets encourageant l'apprentissage des langues et la diversité linguistique pourront aussi bénéficier d'un soutien au moyen d'actions centrées sur la coopération en faveur de l'innovation et l'échange de bonnes pratiques, telles que des partenariats stratégiques. Erasmus+ continuera également d'encourager des projets innovants en matière d'apprentissage des langues, aux niveaux local et international, grâce au Label européen des langues ([3]).

Le programme Culture a également soutenu la diversité linguistique en finançant la traduction d'œuvres littéraires de grande qualité d'une langue européenne dans une autre ([4]). Depuis 2007, plus de 2 700 livres d'auteurs européens ont été traduits de 36 langues européennes vers 32 langues européennes. Le nouveau programme de financement dans le domaine de la culture, Europe créative, continuera d'apporter son soutien à la traduction littéraire ([5]).

([1]) Pour de plus amples informations sur le programme, consultez le site: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/index_en.php
Vous trouverez une description des projets dans le domaine des langues à l'adresse suivante: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/results_projects/project_compendia_en.php
([2]) Pour de plus amples informations, consultez le site: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/strategic-framework/language-label_en.htm
([4]) http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/index_fr.php
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/index_fr.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014253/13
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Linguistic diversity

Linguistic diversity is one of the cornerstones of European integration. Can the Commission provide a list of programmes aimed at furthering this integration from 2014 onwards at European, national and local level?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

In recent years, the Commission has co-financed many successful projects in the field of languages through the Lifelong Learning Programme. ([1]) The Commission will continue to promote multilingualism in its new programme for education, training, youth and sport: Erasmus+ (2014-2020). ([2])

Language learning and linguistic diversity are one of the specific objectives of Erasmus+. The Commission will support language learning in mobility actions for all languages used for instruction and work. In addition, projects fostering language learning and linguistic diversity can be supported through activities aimed at cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices, such as strategic partnerships. Erasmus+ will also continue to encourage projects, at a local and national level, in the field of innovative language learning through the European Language Label. ([3])

The Culture Programme has also supported linguistic diversity by funding the translation of high-quality literary works from one European language into another. ([4]) Since 2007, more than 2,700 books by European authors have been translated from 36 European languages into 32 European languages. The new funding programme in the field of culture, Creative Europe, will continue to provide support for literary translation. ([5])

([1]) For more information on the programme, please see http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/index_en.php
You can find a description of language projects at the following address: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/results_projects/project_compendia_en.php
([2]) For more information please refer to http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/strategic-framework/language-label_en.htm
([4]) http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.php
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/index_en.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014255/13
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: FEDER — aéroports régionaux

Certains concitoyens de mon eurocirconscription m'ont alerté sur le fait que les aéroports régionaux — ceux atteignant moins d'un million de passagers par an — risquaient de ne plus bénéficier d'aucun soutien financier de la Commission dans les prochaines années. Je parle notamment du FEDER pour 2014-2020.

La Commission peut-elle me donner plus d'informations?

Réponse donnée par M. Hahn au nom de la Commission
(20 février 2014)

En principe, la réglementation relative à la période 2014-2020 n'interdit pas les investissements dans les aéroports (les aéroports régionaux ne sont pas traités à part). Il existe néanmoins plusieurs conditions essentielles auxquelles tous les investissements dans des infrastructures aéroportuaires doivent satisfaire.

Une condition à remplir obligatoirement en vue du financement d'infrastructures aéroportuaires par le Fonds européen de développement régional pendant la période 2014-2020 est que ces investissements soient liés à la protection de l'environnement ou qu'ils s'accompagnent d'investissements nécessaires à l'atténuation ou à la réduction de leur incidence négative sur l'environnement. L'investissement en question doit soit faire partie du réseau RTE-T, soit contribuer à l'élaboration et à l'amélioration de systèmes de transport respectueux de l'environnement (y compris les systèmes peu bruyants), et à faibles émissions de carbone.

Les investissements doivent au préalable avoir fait l'objet d'une évaluation approfondie concernant des questions telles que la viabilité économique et la concurrence (par exemple la question de savoir si des opérateurs privés pourraient financer l'investissement envisagé).

Enfin, ces investissements doivent respecter la conditionnalité ex ante d'une stratégie globale en matière de transports. Le plan global de transport devrait servir de base à la définition des priorités d'investissement dans le domaine des transports, tant pour le réseau central que pour le réseau global du RTE-T.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014255/13
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: ERDF — regional airports

Some of the members of my constituency have alerted me to the fact that regional airports serving fewer than one million passengers per year are at risk of losing their eligibility for future funding from the Commission. I am thinking in particular of the 2014-2020 ERDF.

Can the Commission provide any information on this issue?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

In principle, the regulations for the 2014-2020 period do not prohibit investments into airports (regional airports are not addressed specifically). There are, however several critical conditions that all airport investments need to be in line with.

A necessary condition for the funding of airport infrastructure by the European Regional Development Fund in the 2014-2020 period is that such investments are either related to environmental protection or are accompanied by investments necessary to mitigate or reduce their negative environmental impact. The investment would have to be part of the TEN-T network; or would have to contribute to developing and improving environment-friendly (including low-noise) and low-carbon transport systems.

Investments need to be subject to a prior detailed assessment of issues including economic viability and competition (e.g. whether private operators could finance the investment).

Finally, investments should comply with the *ex-ante* conditionality of a comprehensive transport strategy. The Comprehensive Transport Plan should serve as a basis for the choice of transport investment priorities both in the core and in the comprehensive TEN-T network.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014256/13
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Fonds structurels — Languedoc-Roussillon

Maintenant que nous venons d'adopter le paquet «Fonds structurels», les accords de partenariats entre la Commission et les États et, en France, les programmes opérationnels pourront entrer en vigueur. En France, il est entendu que ces programmes opérationnels régionaux rentrent dans une phase active à partir de la mi-2014.

1. La Commission peut-elle me dire quand l'accord-cadre avec la France sera officiellement signé?

2. Peut-elle me dire, de même, quand devrait entrer en vigueur le programme opérationnel FEDER/FSE pour le Languedoc-Roussillon?

Sur le terrain, je croise souvent des porteurs de projets qui posent beaucoup de questions sur le calendrier. Mi-2014 semble très éloigné pour ceux qui ont des projets à court terme.

3. La Commission a-t-elle une quelconque compétence lui permettant d'accélérer la procédure de mise en place?

Réponse donnée par M. Hahn au nom de la Commission
(20 février 2014)

Les États membres doivent présenter officiellement leurs accords de partenariat (AP) pour le 22 avril au plus tard. La France a présenté officiellement son AP le 14 janvier. La Commission transmettra ses observations sur les AP dans les 3 mois suivant la présentation de chacun d'entre eux. Une fois que l'État membre a dûment tenu compte de ces observations et présenté une nouvelle fois son AP, la Commission peut procéder à l'adoption.

Les programmes doivent être soumis dans les 3 mois suivant la présentation de l'AP, soit, pour la France, le 14 avril au plus tard. La Commission transmettra ses observations sur chaque programme dans un délai de 3 mois. Une fois que l'État membre a dûment tenu compte de ces observations et présenté une nouvelle fois son programme, la Commission peut procéder à l'adoption. Comme aucune échéance n'a été fixée pour la deuxième présentation, par les États membres, de leur AP ou de leurs programmes, il est difficile de prédire à quelle date l'AP et les programmes français pourraient être adoptés. Tout dépend de la vitesse à laquelle la France prendra en compte les observations de la Commission et procédera à une deuxième présentation.

Le délai général fixé pour l'adoption par la Commission est, pour les AP, de quatre mois et, pour les programmes, de six mois à compter de la date de présentation. Néanmoins, ce délai s'applique à la Commission, et il ne commence pas à courir tant que les États membres n'ont pas réagi aux observations. Aucun programme ne peut être adopté pour un État membre tant que l'AP correspondant n'a pas été adopté. Étant donné le stade avancé de la période de programmation, la seule manière d'accélérer le processus consiste désormais, pour les États membres, à prendre en compte les observations de la Commission dans les plus brefs délais. En 2012, la Commission a proposé aux États membres d'examiner leurs avant-projets d'AP et de programmes. Certains pays ont déjà pris en compte le retour d'information initial reçu de la Commission à cette occasion, ce qui permet d'avoir moins de problèmes à régler maintenant durant la procédure officielle et de pouvoir passer plus rapidement à l'adoption.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014256/13
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Structural Funds — Languedoc-Roussillon

The adoption of the Structural Funds package means that it will now be possible for the partnership agreements between the Commission and the Member States and, in France, the operational programmes to enter into force. The regional operational programmes in France are expected to take effect from mid-2014.

1. Can the Commission state when the framework agreement with France will be officially signed?

2. Can it also state when the ERDF/ESF operational programme for Languedoc-Roussillon will come into force?

When out and about I often meet project managers who have lots of questions about the likely timetable. Mid-2014 seems a long way off for those managing short-term projects.

3. Does the Commission hold any powers which would allow it to speed up this procedure?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

Member States must submit their Partnership Agreements (PAs) formally by 22 April. France formally submitted its PA on 14 January. The Commission will provide observations on the PA within 3 months of submission. Once the Member State has adequately taken into account these observations and resubmitted the PA, the Commission can proceed with adoption.

Programmes must be submitted within 3 months of the submission of the PA, which, for France, means by 14 April. The Commission will provide observations on the programme within 3 months. Once the Member State has adequately taken into account these observations and resubmitted the programme, the Commission can proceed with adoption. As no deadline has been set for Member States to resubmit either their PA or programmes, it is difficult to say when the French PA and programmes could be adopted. It depends on how fast the Commission's observations are taken into account and resubmission is made.

The overall deadline for the Commission to adopt the PA is four months from the date of submission and for programmes six months. Nevertheless, this deadline applies to the Commission and time is not counted while the Member State is responding to observations. No programme can be adopted for a Member State where the PA has not yet been adopted. Given the late stage of programming, the only way of speeding up the process now is for the Member State to take account of the Commission's observations as rapidly as possible. In 2012, Commission offered Member States the possibility to review early draft PAs and programmes. Some countries have already taken into account the Commission's earlier feedback, which leaves fewer issues to be covered now, during the formal process, and will speed up adoption.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014257/13
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Financements européens et gares ferroviaires

Maintenant que nous connaissons le cadre exact des financements européens, la Commission peut-elle me dire si une gare ferroviaire d'une LGV d'envergure internationale, spécifiquement pour la région Languedoc-Roussillon, peut bénéficier de fonds européens? Si oui, de quel(s) fonds et sous quelles conditions?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(20 février 2014)

Conformément aux orientations RTE-T ([1]), les gares ferroviaires sont considérées comme faisant partie du RTE-T et peuvent donc bénéficier d'un financement au titre du MIE ([2]). Selon les perspectives financières actuelles (2014-2020), la priorité sera accordée à la partie infrastructure (construction ou modernisation de voies, équipements ERTMS au sol, etc.). Aussi les travaux en gare, lorsqu'ils concernent l'infrastructure en tant que telle (quais devant être modifiés à cause d'une nouvelle voie par exemple), pourraient-ils être cofinancés par l'UE. Cela pourrait également s'appliquer à l'installation d'un équipement particulier, par exemple d'un ascenseur sur un quai pour en améliorer l'accessibilité.

La construction de gares proprement dite ne sera sans doute pas l'une des priorités régissant l'octroi des subventions au titre du MIE, mais les gares, en tant que points d'interconnexion le long du RTE-T, pourraient recevoir une aide par l'intermédiaire d'instruments financiers innovants ou pour des études connexes et leur phase de conception. Les études pour la construction des gares de Nîmes et de Montpellier, sur la nouvelle ligne à grande vitesse mixte du contournement ferroviaire de ces deux villes (NJC), ont ainsi bénéficié d'un soutien, sur la ligne budgétaire RTE-T, dans le cadre pluriannuel 2007-2013.

Concernant les Fonds ESI ([3]) et notamment le FEDER ([4]), les investissements au cours de la période 2014-2020 devraient d'abord servir à atteindre les objectifs de la stratégie Europe 2020. C'est pourquoi l'aide du FEDER ira en priorité à des projets concernant la recherche et l'innovation, les TIC, la compétitivité des PME, l'efficacité énergétique, l'emploi et l'insertion sociale. Le FEDER continuera à soutenir les transports mais en France, vu les besoins recensés, il s'agira surtout d'un soutien en faveur de projets relatifs aux transports urbains propres. Ce soutien permettra aussi d'aider les régions à élaborer des stratégies territoriales de réduction des émissions de carbone (en particulier dans les régions de l'UE les moins développées et en transition).

([1]) Règlement (UE) n° 1315/2013 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 11 décembre 2013 sur les orientations de l'Union pour le développement du réseau transeuropéen de transport et abrogeant la décision n° 661/2010/UE, JO L 348 du 20.12.2013.
([2]) Règlement (UE) n° 1316/2013 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 11 décembre 2013 établissant le mécanisme pour l'interconnexion en Europe, modifiant le règlement (UE) n° 913/2010 et abrogeant les règlements (CE) n° 680/2007 et (CE) n° 67/2010, JO L 348 du 20.12.2013.
([3]) Fonds structurels et d'investissement européens.
([4]) Fonds européen de développement régional.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014257/13
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: European funding and railway stations

Now that we know what the exact European funding framework is, can the Commission tell me whether a railway station for an international high-speed line (LGV), specifically for the Languedoc-Roussillon region, is eligible for European funds? If so, what funds are available and under what terms?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

According to the current TEN-T Guidelines ([1]) railway stations are considered as part of the TEN-T and therefore are eligible to receive funding from the CEF ([2]). In the current financial perspectives 2014-2020, the preference will be given to the infrastructure part (construction or upgrade of tracks, ERTMS track-side equipment etc.). This implies that works in stations, when they are part of the infrastructure as such (platforms that have to be modified because of a new track for instance), could be co-funded by the EU. This could also include special equipment, e.g. elevator to the platform, in order to improve accessibility to all users.

However, the construction of stations as such are not likely to be part of the priorities for grants under the CEF but they could receive support from innovative financial instruments or for related studies and design phase, as interconnecting points along TEN-T. The studies for the construction of the Nimes and Montpellier stations on the new mixed high speed line of the Nimes and Montpellier (NJC) bypass have been awarded support by the TEN-T budget line in the 2007-2013 multiannual framework.

Concerning the ESIF ([3]) and in particular the ERDF ([4]) the investments during the 2014-2020 period should be first used to meet the objectives of the Europe2020 strategy. For this reason, the ERDF support will go in priority to projects in research and innovation, ICT, competitiveness of SMEs, energy efficiency, employment and social inclusion. The ERDF will keep supporting transport but in France, in view of the needs identified, it will mostly be on clean urban transport-related projects. It will be also used to help the regions develop territorial low carbon strategies (in particular in the transition and most developed EU regions).

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network and repealing Decision No 661/2010/EU, OJ L 348, 20.12.2013.
([2]) Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010, OJ L 348, 20.12.2013.
([3]) European Structural and Investment Funds.
([4]) European Regional Development Fund.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014258/13
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Industrie — «réglementation intelligente»

La Commission européenne admet de plus en plus la nécessité de mettre en œuvre une «réglementation intelligente». On la définit communément comme un cadre normatif qui sait être plus stable, simple et prévisible. Et je tiens d'ailleurs à saluer les efforts de la Commission, notamment dans le domaine industriel.

Peut-elle me donner des exemples concrets de la mise en place de cette «réglementation intelligente»?

Réponse donnée par M. Tajani au nom de la Commission
(20 février 2014)

Pour ce qui concerne des exemples spécifiques d'une réglementation plus intelligente, la consultation «Top 10» des PME a dégagé une série de propositions visant à simplifier la législation de l'UE et à réduire les charges qui pèsent sur les PME. Il s'agit notamment de propositions relatives à la sécurité des produits de consommation, aux procédures de passation des marchés publics, aux modalités de remboursement de la TVA, à l'appareil de contrôle des transports par route (tachygraphe) et à la reconnaissance des qualifications professionnelles dans le domaine du détachement des travailleurs. C'est ainsi que, dans le cadre de la directive REACH sur les produits chimiques, par exemple, la Commission a réduit les droits d'enregistrement pour les PME.

Dans la communication sur le Programme pour une réglementation affûtée et performante (REFIT) d'octobre 2013, la Commission a décidé de ne pas entreprendre d'action dans certains domaines; elle a proposé un certain nombre d'abrogations et de retraits d'actes législatifs et elle a recensé environ 50 domaines dans lesquels la législation devrait être revue. Au total, cela représente plus de 110 initiatives réglementaires à forte empreinte intelligente. La Commission rendra compte de l'avancée du projet au moyen d'un tableau de bord annuel et elle annoncera de nouvelles propositions REFIT dans son programme de travail annuel.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014258/13
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Industry — 'smart regulation'

The Commission is increasingly willing to acknowledge the need for 'smart regulation'. This term is generally understood to mean a more stable, simple and predictable regulatory framework. I would also like to applaud the Commission's efforts in this respect, particularly in the industrial sector.

Can the Commission provide any specific examples of the use of 'smart regulation'?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

Specific examples of smarter regulation are those which emerged from the 'Top Ten' consultation of SMEs which are aimed at simplifying EU legislation and reducing burdens for SMEs. These include proposals on consumer product safety, public procurement, VAT refunds, recording equipment in road transport (tachograph) and professional qualifications in the area of posting of workers. Concerning the REACH chemicals legislation for example, the Commission has reduced the registration fees for SMEs.

In the communication on the regulatory fitness programme (REFIT) of October 2013, the Commission decided not to take action in certain areas, proposed a number of repeals and withdrawals of legislation and identified around 50 areas where legislation should be reviewed. This amounts to a total of over 110 initiatives with a Smart Regulation focus. The Commission will report on progress through an annual scoreboard and identify further REFIT initiatives in its annual work programme.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014259/13
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: LGV: corridor méditerranéen

Le gouvernement français vient d'annoncer qu'il remettait à 2030 la construction de la LGV Montpellier-Perpignan, dernier tronçon de la LGV entre Amsterdam et Séville. La Commission et le Parlement européen, bien conscients des priorités, en ont pourtant fait récemment un axe prioritaire. C'est une question essentielle pour l'avenir des territoires, ainsi que pour le développement économique entre l'Espagne et la France.

La Commission va-t-elle ouvrir un dialogue avec la France afin d'annuler ce report et ainsi tenir le calendrier de la construction de cette ligne?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(10 février 2014)

Le projet de ligne ferroviaire à grande vitesse de Montpellier à Perpignan s'inscrit dans le cadre du corridor méditerranéen, et donc du réseau central RTE-T, conformément à un nouveau règlement adopté récemment par le Parlement européen et le Conseil ([1]). Les États membres se sont engagés à achever le réseau central pour 2030. En ce qui concerne la section Montpellier-Perpignan, la Commission ne doute pas que le gouvernement français honorera son engagement de mettre à niveau cette section du réseau, conformément au nouveau règlement. La Commission suit de près les décisions arrêtées au niveau national et a pris acte de la décision du ministre français des transports du 15 décembre 2013 ([2]), qui fixe le cap pour la poursuite du développement de la ligne à grande vitesse Montpellier-Perpignan, notamment en imposant la fin de l'année 2015 comme date cible pour la définition de l'alignement, en désignant deux nouvelles gares, à Béziers et à Narbonne, et en définissant le tracé de la nouvelle ligne, vouée à la fois au transport de passagers et de marchandises.

([1]) Règlement (UE) n° 1315/2013 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 11 décembre 2013 sur les orientations de l'Union pour le développement du réseau transeuropéen de transport et abrogeant la décision n° 661/2010/UE (JO L 348 du 20.12.2013).

([2]) http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/CP_-_TGV_France_Espagne_-_15_12_2013v2.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014259/13
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: LGV: Mediterranean corridor

The French Government has just announced that it intends to postpone construction of the LGV Montpellier-Perpignan, the last section of the high-speed rail line between Amsterdam and Seville, to 2030. The Commission and Parliament have however recently made the line a priority axis in view of its significance. It is of key importance for the future of the areas concerned and for economic development in Spain and France.

Does the Commission intend to engage in dialogue with France with a view to overturning the postponement decision and keeping to the original timetable for construction of the line?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

The planned Montpellier-Perpignan high-speed railway line forms part of the Mediterranean corridor and thus of the TEN-T Core Network based on a new Regulation recently adopted by the European Parliament and the Council ([1]). The Member States have committed themselves to complete the Core Network by 2030. As regards the Montpellier-Perpignan section the Commission trusts that the French Government will honour its commitment to upgrade this part of the network in accordance with the new Regulation. The Commission monitors closely the decisions taken at national level and has noted the decision of the French Minister of transport of 15 December 2013 ([2]) which sets the course for the further development of the Montpellier-Perpignan high-speed line, notably by setting the end of 2015 as target date for the definition of the alignment , by designating two new stations at Béziers and Narbonne, and by designing the new line both for passenger and freight transport.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network and repealing Decision No 661/2010/EU; OJ L 348, 20.12.2013.

([2]) http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/CP_-_TGV_France_Espagne_-_15_12_2013v2.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014260/13
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Lutte contre les déserts médicaux

Les territoires les plus reculés sont touchés de plein fouet par un phénomène malheureusement en pleine expansion: la désertification médicale. De nombreux médecins, principalement généralistes, laissent leur cabinet sans repreneur lors de leur départ à la retraite.

Suite à ma question écrite E-007656/2012, la Commission peut-elle me dire si des évolutions dans la lutte contre un tel phénomène ont eu lieu au niveau européen (textes, moyens)?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(21 février 2014)

En réponse à la question écrite E-007656/2012 de l'Honorable Parlementaire, la Commission européenne est consciente de la situation difficile dans laquelle se trouve le personnel de santé dans de nombreuses régions de l'UE.

Comme indiqué dans le plan d'action en faveur des personnels de santé de l'Union ([1]), la Commission a lancé un certain nombre d'initiatives nouvelles destinées à aider les États membres à élaborer des mesures politiques spécifiques pour garantir la viabilité des effectifs des personnels de santé.

L'action commune sur les prévisions des besoins en personnels de santé et la planification des effectifs, cofinancée par le programme Santé, a été lancée en avril 2013. L'action réunit 28 pays européens et plus de 20 parties prenantes et organisations internationales pour partager les meilleures pratiques sur l'amélioration de la planification des effectifs en prévision des besoins futurs.

La Commission mène actuellement deux études destinées à transférer des connaissances et des bonnes pratiques entre les États membres: un examen des systèmes de formation professionnelle continue pour professionnels de la santé dans l'UE et une cartographie des stratégies innovantes et efficaces de recrutement et de fidélisation des professionnels de la santé dans l'UE ([2]). Les résultats de ces études seront disponibles respectivement en octobre 2014 et en mai 2015.

([1]) Document de travail des services de la Commission, SEC(2012) 93 final du 18.4.2012.
([2]) Programme Santé 2013 — http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/health/tenders2013.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014260/13
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Fight against shortages of medical practitioners

The remotest areas of the EU have been hit hardest by a problem which is unfortunately on the increase: shortages of medical practitioners. Many doctors, particularly GPs, cannot find a replacement to take over their practices when they retire.

Following on from my Written Question E-007656/2012, can the Commission state whether there have been any new developments in the form of texts or other measures in the fight against this problem at European level?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

With reference to the reply to the Honourable Member's Written Question E-007656/2012, the European Commission is f aware of the difficult situation facing the health workforce in many parts of the EU.

As set out in the action plan for the EU Health Workforce ([1]), the Commission has launched a number of new initiatives to assist Member States in developing specific policy measures to ensure a sustainable health workforce:

The Joint Action on health workforce planning and forecasting, co-funded by the Health Programme, was launched in April 2013. The Joint Action brings together 28 European countries and more than 20 stakeholders and international organisations to share best practice on improving workforce planning so as to meet future needs.

The Commission is carrying out two studies to transfer knowledge and good practice between Member States: a review of continuous professional development systems for health professionals in the EU and a mapping study on innovative and effective recruitment and retention strategies of health professionals in the EU ([2]). The findings of these studies will be available in October 2014 and May 2015 respectively.

([1]) Commission Staff Working Document, SWD (2012) 93 final of 18.04.2012.
([2]) Health Programme 2013 — http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/health/tenders2013.html

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014262/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Arrest in Pakistan of EU citizen from the Ahmadiyya community

I wish to draw to the attention of the High Representative the recent detention of a British citizen who has been arrested and jailed in Pakistan.

Dr Masood Ahmad is a highly respected 72-year-old widower, who runs a medical clinic in Lahore. Two men came to the clinic under the pretence of requiring medicine and started asking Dr Ahmad questions about his faith, fully knowing that he belonged to the Ahmadiyya community. They secretly filmed the conversation so that it could be used as evidence against him in a criminal court. Under Pakistani law, Ahmadis cannot call themselves Muslims, and they cannot 'pose as Muslims' or 'preach or propagate their faith'. Dr Ahmad has now been arrested under Section 298-C of Ordinance XX, in a clear case of entrapment by the police.

Can the High Representative raise the matter urgently via the EU Head of Delegation in Islamabad with the Pakistani Government and question how such conduct by Pakistan's law enforcement officers is compatible with Pakistan's stated undertaking to respect fundamental human rights, including tolerance towards peaceful practice by all faiths and religious minorities? Pakistan is also expected to show full regard for due process as envisaged under the GSP+ agreement, which was recently approved by the EU with Parliament's assent but only after much debate on account of such human rights concerns.

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(13 February 2014)

The HR/VP is aware of Dr Ahmad's situation. The EU Delegation in Pakistan has been in contact with the British High Commission which is providing consular support to Dr Ahmad.

Ordinance XX introduces amendments to the Pakistan Penal Code that target members of the Ahmadi community and impose punishments specific to members of this group for adopting behaviour or expressions normally attributed to the practice of the Muslim faith. Accusations under this law were extremely frequent in the four years following its enactment in 1984, but have subsided since then. Nevertheless discrimination against and intimidation of the Ahmadi community persists.

The EU has, in its contacts with the Government of Pakistan, repeatedly expressed grave concern over the discrimination against the Ahmadi community. The situation of religious minorities and freedom of or religion and belief is a priority in the EU's dialogue and cooperation with Pakistan. Moreover, Mr Michael Gahler MEP, Chief Observer for the EU's Electoral Observation Mission to Pakistan in 2009 and 2013, has frequently raised the unequal and discriminatory treatment of Ahmadi voters in his meetings with the Government and parliamentarians. The EU will, as appropriate, raise Dr Ahmad's case in upcoming human rights dialogues, including in the context of monitoring compliance with the human rights conventions covered by GSP+.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014263/13
to the Commission
Brian Simpson (S&D)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Road safety and drivers' vision

In adopting Directive 2009/113/EC ([1]), the European Union recognised the importance of drivers' vision, including visual acuity, in ensuring road safety. Concerns have continued to be raised, however, about the varying implementation of the directive's vision requirements across the Member States. Of particular concern is the continued use in some Member States of the number plate test and the lack of ongoing vision assessment for all drivers.

1. Has the Commission investigated Member States' compliance with the visual requirements for Group 1 drivers, in particular whether the number plate test is an acceptable manner of determining whether an applicant has adequate visual acuity of at least 0.5?

2. Has the Commission also investigated Member States' compliance with the requirement for Group 2 drivers to demonstrate that they have adequate vision upon each licence renewal?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(27 January 2014)

The directive requires all applicants for a driving licence to undergo an appropriate investigation to ensure that they have adequate visual acuity. The directive leaves, however, flexibility to the Member States in the choice of the specific investigation method.

The Commission is aware that questions have been raised as regards the suitability of the so called 'number plate test'. Nevertheless, the Commission would like to draw the attention of the Honourable Member to the fact that no information available to it suggests a correlation between the use of the number plate test and an increase in road accident rates. Moreover, it appears that some of the Member States where this method is used, rank consistently among the safest in the road safety statistics.

As regards drivers in group 2, they are required to undergo a medical examination upon renewal covering all relevant health issues, including vision. In an ongoing work of checking transposition of this directive , transposition of this provision is checked, and where necessarry appropriate steps will be taken to ensure correct transposition and application.

The Commission will continue to be very attentive as regards the correct implementation of the directive by the Member States.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:223:0031:0035:EN:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014264/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Keith Taylor (Verts/ALE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Implementation of EU guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities for EU grants, prizes and financial instruments

Given that:

— The EU is bound by UNSC Resolution 242 concerning 'the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war'; consequently it recognises that Israeli settlements in the OPT and Golan are illegal; and furthermore, it notes that Article 2 of the EU-Israel Association Agreement obliges the EU to exclude collaboration with Israeli settlements in the OPT and Golan.

— In July 2013 the EU published guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities for EU grants and financial support. These were intended to prevent EU funds from being used to support illegal Israeli activity in the OPT and the Golan.

— In November 2013, Israel refused to accept these conditions: the EU and Israel 'agreed to differ', resulting in an absurd situation where the parties to an 'agreement' are working according to differing and incompatible rules.

— One example of relevant Israeli activity in occupied territory is Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories, which has been a partner in several Framework 7 projects.

— Ariel University is located in an illegal settlement ([1]) but claims to be actively collaborating with a number of Israeli institutions that receive EU support.

Will the High Representative:

1. Explain the EU's attitude to Israeli entities that collaborate with entities in the OPT?

2. Confirm that any Israeli University that collaborates with Ariel University will not be permitted to use EU funds or EU-funded resources in any such collaboration?

3. Confirm that Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories will not be eligible for EU funding under Horizon 2020, despite the location of its registered office inside Israel?

4. Explain how the EU will police the implementation of its policy, bearing in mind that Israel will have a different policy as a result of the 'agree to differ' arrangement?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(3 March 2014)

The EU guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities for EU grants, prizes and financial instruments, published in July 2013, and in force since 1 January 2014, spell out the EU's policy regarding Israeli entities and their activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, established or which carry out activites in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Ariel University, are not eligible to participate (including on a no-cost basis) in Union programmes and receive EU funding from suck programmes.

According to the 'guidelines', Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories are not eligible for EU funding for activities in the OPT.

The understanding that the EU and Israel have 'agreed to differ' is incorrect. The Commission will implement the guidelines and must be consistent in following the agreed EU political positions and in honoring its responsibility to diligently implement the EU budget. The Israeli unilateral statement which will be attached to the memorandum of understanding expresses a 'principled position against' the EU guidelines but at the same time Israel has acknowledged that its participation will be governed by the rules and implementation procedures established by the Commission.

([1]) http://www.ariel.ac.il/research/en/research-activities

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande P-014265/13
till kommissionen
Christian Engström (Verts/ALE)
(18 december 2013)

Angående: Parafering av Marrakeshavtalet

Var och när paraferade kommissionen Marrakeshavtalet ([1])?

Svar från Michel Barnier på kommissionens vägnar
(28 januari 2014)

Kommissionen vill upplysa parlamentsledamoten om att kommissionen paraferade, på Europeiska unionens vägnar, Marrakechfördraget om att underlätta tillgången till publicerade verk för personer som är blinda, synsvaga eller har annat läshandikapp vid avslutandet av diplomatkonferensen i Marrakech den 28 juni 2013.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-627_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014265/13
to the Commission
Christian Engström (Verts/ALE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Initialling of the Marrakesh Treaty

Where and when did the Commission initial the Marrakesh Treaty ([1])?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(28 January 2014)

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that the Commission initialed, on behalf of the European Union, the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled at the conclusion of the Diplomatic Conference in Marrakesh, on 28 June 2013.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-627_en.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-014266/13
à la Commission
Jacky Hénin (GUE/NGL)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Industrie aéronautique et spatiale

L'entreprise EADS a annoncé la suppression de 5 800 postes en Europe. Avec cette annonce, est lancée la négociation d'un plan de compétitivité visant à diminuer ou à geler les salaires et à augmenter le temps de travail des salariés qui conserveront leur emploi. Le secteur aéronautique et spatial est loin d'être en crise: 30 000 aéronefs seront construits dans les 20 prochaines années. Les carnets de commandes ne désemplissent pas. L'objectif est clairement affiché: augmenter les dividendes des actionnaires. L'État français et l'État espagnol, qui se sont récemment désengagés du capital de l'entreprise, portent leur part de responsabilité.

Le Parlement européen a adopté le mardi 10 décembre le rapport 2013/2092(INI) (P7_TA(2013)0534), qui insiste sur la nécessité d'une politique spatiale européenne ambitieuse. La force de la filière aérospatiale repose sur le savoir-faire de milliers de travailleurs hautement qualifiés. Une politique spatiale et aéronautique ambitieuse doit passer par un investissement public national et européen coordonné de manière efficace, contrôlé par les élus européens, nationaux et locaux, ainsi que les représentants du personnel.

Comment, dans les conditions évoquées, la Commission espère-t-elle mener une coopération européenne permettant la découverte de solutions innovantes et permettant de conserver une indépendance technique européenne vis-à-vis des concurrents américains?

Alors que le niveau de chômage ne cesse d'augmenter au sein de l'Union européenne, quelles mesures la Commission envisage-t-elle de prendre face à des entreprises, en l'occurrence détenues partiellement par des capitaux publics, qui licencient dans l'objectif d'augmenter les dividendes?

Réponse donnée par M. Tajani au nom de la Commission
(30 janvier 2014)

À propos de la première partie de la question de l'Honorable Parlementaire, les décisions économiques prises par des entreprises individuelles ([1]) n'entrent pas dans le domaine de compétence de la Commission.

En ce qui concerne la deuxième partie de la question, la communication de la Commission sur la politique industrielle spatiale de l'Union ([2]) définit des mesures et actions susceptibles de favoriser le potentiel de croissance économique dans le secteur spatial.

La compétitivité de l'industrie spatiale et la création de croissance et d'emplois dans le secteur spatial est l'objectif transversal sous-jacent de la communication. Celle-ci souligne que le déploiement de Galileo et d'EGNOS (programmes européens de radionavigation par satellite) devrait générer des bénéfices économiques et sociaux de l'ordre de 60 à 90 milliards d'euros au cours des vingt prochaines années. De même, lorsqu'il sera pleinement opérationnel, le programme Copernicus (programme européen visant à mettre en place une capacité européenne d'observation de la Terre) devrait créer près de 48 000 emplois pendant la période 2015-2030, et les bénéfices associés attendus jusqu'en 2030 sont estimés à 34,7 milliards d'euros.

Les prochaines perspectives financières pluriannuelles pour la période comprise entre 2014 et 2020 proposent plusieurs lignes d'action: encourager l'expansion internationale du GNSS européen et de la capacité européenne d'observation de la terre en développant des marchés pour des applications et services spatiaux soutenant la recherche et l'innovation, qui représentent des éléments clés de la compétitivité de l'industrie spatiale, de la croissance économique durable et de la compétitivité mondiale.

Sous le thème consacré à l'espace, le programme «Horizon 2020» vise à développer une capacité spatiale multifonctionnelle, puisqu'il traite des technologies, applications et produits spatiaux qui présenteront de l'intérêt pour les acteurs du secteur spatial et d'autres secteurs, ce qui devrait encore promouvoir une économie spatiale durable et inclusive.

([1]) Y compris les entreprises détenues en partie.
([2]) COM(2013) 108 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014266/13
to the Commission
Jacky Hénin (GUE/NGL)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: The aerospace industry

The company EADS has announced that it is shedding 5 800 jobs in Europe. This announcement is the company's opening gambit in negotiating a competitiveness plan aimed at reducing or freezing wages and increasing the working time of those employees who will be keeping their jobs. The aerospace industry is far from being in crisis: 30 000 aircraft are due to be built over the next 20 years. Order books are always full. The objective is clear: to increase shareholder dividends. The French and Spanish governments, which recently withdrew their stake in EADS' capital, bear their share of the responsibility.

On Tuesday, 10 December 2013 the European Parliament adopted report 2013/2092 (INI) (P7_TA (2013) 0534) which emphasised the need for an ambitious European space policy. The strength of the aerospace industry lies in the expertise of the thousands of highly skilled workers it employs. An ambitious aerospace policy requires a public investment by Member States and the EU which is effectively coordinated and is controlled by European, national and local elected representatives and staff representatives.

How does the Commission hope, under the conditions adumbrated above, to spearhead European cooperation so as to produce innovative solutions and enable the EU to retain its technical independence vis-à-vis its US competitors?

Given the steadily increasing level of unemployment in the European Union, what measures does it intend to take in respect of companies, in particular companies part-owned by public shareholders, that dismiss workers with the aim of increasing dividends?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2014)

As regards the first part of the question by the Honourable Member, economic decisions by individual undertakings ([1]) are not within the Commission's remit.

With respect to the second part of the question, the Commission's Communication on EU Space Industrial Policy ([2]), identifies measures and actions likely to facilitate the potential for economic growth in the space sector.

The competitiveness of the space industry and the creation of growth and jobs in the space sector is the underlying cross-cutting objective of the communication. It underlines that the deployment of Galileo and EGNOS (satellite navigation programmes) is expected to generate economic and social benefits worth around EUR 60-90 billion over the next 20 years. Similarly, a fully-fledged operational Copernicus programme (European Programme for the establishment of a European capacity for Earth Observation) is expected to generate around 48 000 jobs over the period 2015-2030 and the related benefits arising through 2030 are estimated at EUR 34.7 billion.

There are several lines of action proposed in the next Multiannual Financial Perspective 2014-2020: fostering the international expansion of European GNSS and Earth Observation capabilities by developing markets for space applications and services supporting research and innovation, which are key elements of space industrial competitiveness and sustainable economic growth and global competitiveness.

The Space theme under Horizon 2020 is aimed at developing multipurpose space capability, as it addresses space technologies, products and applications that will be of interest to actors in both the space and non-space sectors, which should further promote a sustainable and inclusive space based economy.

([1]) Including partly owned undertakings.
([2]) COM(2013) 108 final.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014267/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(18 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Deuda española con la Agencia Espacial Europea (ESA)

La crisis ha impactado de lleno en la participación española en las principales organizaciones científicas internacionales. España arrastra 200 millones de euros en deudas con el CERN (el centro del gran colisionador de Ginebra en el cual se descubrió el bosón de Higgs), la Agencia Espacial Europea (ESA) y la Fundación Europea de la Ciencia (ESF). Además, el Gobierno español está negociando recortar, o ya ha recortado, su cuota de participación en diversas organizaciones, lo que podría afectar a la presencia española en proyectos como el del mayor telescopio del mundo, el telescopio E-ELT, que se construirá en Chile ([1]). Las ciencias del espacio son también víctimas de la austeridad. España debe 164 millones de euros a la Agencia Espacial Europea (ESA), según datos de Industria. Además, el Gobierno recortó el 75 % de su participación en los programas llamados opcionales (como la observación de la Tierra, las telecomunicaciones, la navegación por satélite y el transporte espacial) en la última reunión de los ministros europeos implicados, en noviembre de 2012. Con respecto al Observatorio Meridional Europeo (ESO), localizado en Chile, España está en regla con sus 10,6 millones de euros de cuota anual, pero no está claro si en la próxima década añadirá los 40 millones de euros necesarios para poder ser promotora del que será el mayor telescopio del mundo, el E-ELT. «Invertir en ciencia es la única manera de salir de la crisis» dice Octavi Quintana Trias, Director del Área Europea de Investigación ([2]).

¿Incluirá la Comisión en sus recomendaciones sobre el presupuesto de 2014 del Gobierno español una disminución en la inversión, por ejemplo en el ejército, a cambio de aumentar la inversión en I+D para hacer efectivo el pago de la deuda con la ESA?

¿Considera la Comisión que reducir la inversión en I + D, como está haciendo el Gobierno español, ayuda a la consecución de los objetivos marcados en el Pacto de Estabilidad y Crecimiento, ayuda a hacer una Europa más competitiva y ayuda al cumplimiento de los objetivos de Europa 2020?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014268/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(18 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Deuda española con el CERN

La crisis ha impactado de lleno en la participación española en las principales organizaciones científicas internacionales. España arrastra 200 millones de euros en deudas con el CERN (el centro del gran colisionador de Ginebra en el cual se descubrió el bosón de Higgs), la Agencia Espacial Europea (ESA) y la Fundación Europea de la Ciencia (ESF). Además, el Gobierno español está negociando recortar, o ya ha recortado, su cuota de participación en diversas organizaciones, lo que podría afectar a la presencia española en proyectos como el del mayor telescopio del mundo, el telescopio E-ELT, que se construirá en Chile.

El recorte más preocupante parece ser la deuda del Estado español con el CERN, ya que a fecha de mayo de 2013 aún se deben 36 millones de euros de su cuota de 2012 y ha reservado solo 51 de los 76,5 millones que debería pagar en 2013 ([3]). La preocupación de los físicos españoles es enorme ya que temen quedar fuera de programas de investigación por culpa de la deuda de su país con ese centro de investigación europeo.

«Invertir en ciencia es la única manera de salir de la crisis» dice Octavi Quintana Trias, Director del Área Europea de Investigación ([4]).

¿Incluirá la Comisión en sus recomendaciones sobre el presupuesto de 2014 del Gobierno español una disminución en la inversión, por ejemplo en el ejército, a cambio de aumentar la inversión en I+D para hacer efectivo el pago de la deuda con el CERN?

¿Considera la Comisión que reducir la inversión en I + D, como está haciendo el Gobierno español, ayuda a la consecución de los objetivos marcados en el Pacto de Estabilidad y Crecimiento, ayuda a hacer una Europa más competitiva y ayuda al cumplimiento de los objetivos de Europa 2020?

¿Tendrá en cuenta la Comisión las deudas del Estado español con el CERN, la ESA y la ESF cuando elabore las recomendaciones específicas para España?

([1]) http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/sociedad/las-deudas-apartan-ciencia-espanola-los-centros-europeos-2395149
([2]) http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/sociedad/invertir-ciencia-unica-manera-salir-crisis-2924741
([3]) http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/sociedad/las-deudas-apartan-ciencia-espanola-los-centros-europeos-2395149
([4]) http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/sociedad/invertir-ciencia-unica-manera-salir-crisis-2924741

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014269/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(18 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Deuda española con la Fundación Europea de la Ciencia (ESF)

La crisis ha impactado de lleno en la participación española en las principales organizaciones científicas internacionales. España arrastra 200 millones de euros en deudas con el CERN, la Agencia Espacial Europea (ESA) y la Fundación Europea de la Ciencia (ESF). ([5]) «La incertidumbre genera desconfianza en la comunidad científica respecto al compromiso de España con las organizaciones internacionales», dice Saúl Arés García, un investigador en física del Centro Nacional de Biotecnología (CNB) de Madrid. Arés descubrió la situación de la Fundación Europea de la Ciencia en marzo, cuando se le denegó la financiación esperada para organizar una conferencia en Barcelona. Arés lo denunció en su blog, y poco después la ESF publicó una corta nota, en la cual anunciaba la suspensión temporal de todas las actividades en España a partir de julio, porque el país no había cumplido sus compromisos financieros. Sin embargo, de los 1,5 millones de euros de la cuota española del 2013, solo está asegurado el pago de 490 000 euros por parte de la Secretaría de Estado, según el acuerdo alcanzado.

«Invertir en ciencia es la única manera de salir de la crisis» dice Octavi Quintana Trias, Director del Área Europea de Investigación ([6]).

¿Incluirá la Comisión en sus recomendaciones sobre el presupuesto de 2014 del Gobierno español una disminución en la inversión, por ejemplo en el ejército, a cambio de aumentar la inversión en I+D para hacer efectivo el pago de la deuda con el ESF?

¿Considera la Comisión que reducir la inversión en I + D, como está haciendo el Gobierno español, ayuda a la consecución de los objetivos marcados en el Pacto de Estabilidad y Crecimiento, ayuda a hacer una Europa más competitiva y ayuda al cumplimiento de los objetivos de Europa 2020?

¿Pedirá la Comisión el pago inmediato de las deudas del Estado español con la ESF?

Respuesta conjunta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(19 de febrero de 2014)

De conformidad con el artículo 7 del Reglamento (UE) n° 473/2013, la Comisión adoptó el 15 de noviembre de 2013 un dictamen sobre el proyecto de plan presupuestario de España para 2014, que se puede consultar en la siguiente dirección de Internet:
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/pdf/dbp/es_2013-11-15_co_es.pdf

El dictamen se refiere sobre todo a los objetivos presupuestarios, de conformidad con lo dispuesto en el Pacto de Estabilidad y Crecimiento.

La Comisión siempre ha hecho hincapié en la importancia de la calidad y la compatibilidad de las cuentas públicas con el crecimiento. En especial, la Comisión subraya en su Estudio Prospectivo Anual sobre el Crecimiento de 2014 que los Estados miembros han de encontrar el modo de preservar o fomentar el gasto público que mejore su potencial de crecimiento, como ocurre con las inversiones en I + D, e insta a los Estados miembros a acelerar la modernización de sus sistemas de investigación nacional en consonancia con los objetivos del Espacio Europeo de Investigación. No obstante, son los Estados miembros los que deben encontrar la combinación de políticas adecuada que les permita avanzar en la consecución de los objetivos de Europa 2020 en este período de restricciones presupuestarias. La Comisión sabe que el gasto público en investigación e innovación ha disminuido notablemente durante los cuatro últimos años en España. Al mismo tiempo, la Comisión también ha observado que hay margen para mejorar la eficiencia del gasto público en I + D con más instrumentos de financiación basada en los resultados, incluyendo a las universidades y las organizaciones que realizan actividades de investigación.

([5]) http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/sociedad/las-deudas-apartan-ciencia-espanola-los-centros-europeos-2395149
([6]) http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/sociedad/invertir-ciencia-unica-manera-salir-crisis-2924741

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014267/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Spain's debt to the European Space Agency (ESA)

The financial crisis has directly affected Spain's participation in the main international scientific organisations. Spain owes EUR 200 million to CERN (the Geneva-based centre that houses the large hadron collider in which the Higgs boson was discovered), the European Space Agency (ESA), and the European Science Foundation (ESF). The Spanish Government is also negotiating to cut, or has already cut, its stake in various organisations, potentially affecting Spain's ability to participate in projects such as the construction of the world's largest telescope, the E-ELT, in Chile ([1]). The space sciences have also been adversely affected by cuts. According to industry data, Spain owes EUR 164 million to the European Space Agency (ESA). In November 2012, at the most recent meeting of European ministers associated with the field, the Government reduced by 75% its stake in so-called optional programmes such as the Earth observation system, telecommunications, satellite navigation and space transport. With regard to the European Southern Observatory (ESO) in Chile, Spain's annual quota of EUR 10.6 million has been paid but it is not clear whether, in the next decade, it will be able to add the EUR 40 million required to develop what will be the world's largest telescope, the E-ELT. In the words of Octavi Quintana Trias, the Director of the European Research Area, 'investing in science is the only way to emerge from the crisis' ([2]).

When the Commission makes its recommendations on the Spanish Government's budget for 2014, will it recommend reducing the amount allocated to the army, for instance, in exchange for an increase in the amount invested in R&D so that Spain can pay off its debt to the ESA?

Does the Commission believe that the Spanish Government's decision to cut investment in R&D will help to make Europe more competitive and make it easier to achieve the targets set down in the Stability and Growth Pact and Europe 2020?

Question for written answer E-014268/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Spain's debt to CERN

The financial crisis has directly affected Spain's participation in the main international scientific organisations. Spain owes EUR 200 million to CERN (the Geneva-based centre that houses the large hadron collider in which the Higgs boson was discovered), the European Space Agency (ESA), and the European Science Foundation (ESF). The Spanish Government is also negotiating to cut, or has already cut, its stake in various organisations, potentially affecting Spain's ability to participate in projects such as the construction of the world's largest telescope, the E-ELT, in Chile.

The most worrying cut seems to involve the Spanish state's debt to CERN: in May 2013, EUR 36 million of Spain's 2012 quota had not yet been paid and only EUR 51 million of the EUR 76.5 million that it should pay in 2013 has been set aside ([3]). Spanish physicists are greatly concerned that they will be excluded from research programmes as a result of their country's debt to this European research centre.

In the words of Octavi Quintana Trias, the Director of the European Research Area, 'investing in science is the only way to emerge from the crisis' ([4]).

When the Commission makes its recommendations on the Spanish Government's budget for 2014, will it recommend reducing the amount allocated to the army, for instance, in exchange for an increase in the amount invested in R&D so that Spain can pay off its debt to CERN?

Does the Commission believe that the Spanish Government's decision to cut investment in R&D will help to make Europe more competitive and make it easier to achieve the targets set down in the Stability and Growth Pact and Europe 2020?

When the Commission draws up specific recommendations for Spain, will it take the Spanish state's debts to CERN, the ESA and the ESF into account?

([1]) http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/sociedad/las-deudas-apartan-ciencia-espanola-los-centros-europeos-2395149
([2]) http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/sociedad/invertir-ciencia-unica-manera-salir-crisis-2924741
([3]) http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/sociedad/las-deudas-apartan-ciencia-espanola-los-centros-europeos-2395149
([4]) http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/sociedad/invertir-ciencia-unica-manera-salir-crisis-2924741

Question for written answer E-014269/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Spain's debt to the European Science Foundation (ESF)

The financial crisis has directly affected Spain's participation in the main international scientific organisations. Spain owes EUR 200 million to CERN, the European Space Agency (ESA), and the European Science Foundation (ESF). ([5]) 'Owing to the climate of uncertainty, the scientific community lacks trust in Spain's commitment to international organisations' says Saúl Arés García, a research physicist at the National Biotechnology Centre (CNB) in Madrid. Arés became aware of the situation in March, when the European Science Foundation refused him the funding that he was expecting to use to organise a conference in Barcelona. Arés criticised the situation on his blog. Shortly afterwards, the ESF published a short note announcing that, from July onwards, all of its activities in Spain would be temporarily suspended as the country had failed to meet its financial commitments. However, the Secretariat of State has guaranteed to pay only EUR 490 000 of the EUR 1.5 million quota that Spain has agreed to pay for 2013.

In the words of Octavi Quintana Trias, the Director of the European Research Area, 'investing in science is the only way to emerge from the crisis' ([6]).

When the Commission makes its recommendations on the Spanish Government's budget for 2014, will it recommend reducing the amount allocated to the army, for instance, in exchange for an increase in the amount invested in R&D so that Spain can pay off its debt to the ESF?

Does the Commission believe that the Spanish Government's decision to cut investment in R&D will help to make Europe more competitive and make it easier to achieve the targets set down in the Stability and Growth Pact and Europe 2020?

Will the Commission call on the Spanish state to pay off its debts to the ESF immediately?

Joint answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

In accordance with Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 473/2013, on 15 November 2013, the Commission adopted an opinion on Spain's Draft Budgetary Plan for 2014 which can be found at the following Internet address: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/budgetary_plans/index_en.htm The opinion addressed primarily the budgetary targets, in line with the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact.

The Commission has always stressed the importance of minding the quality and growth-friendliness of public finances. In particular, in its Annual Growth Survey 2014, the Commission underlines that Member States need to find ways to protect or promote public spending that reinforces their growth potential, as is the case of R&D investments, and calls on Member States to accelerate the modernisation of national research systems in line with the objectives of the European Research Area . However, it is for the Member States to find the right policy mix that would allow them to advance on the Europe 2020 targets in times of fiscal constraints. The Commission is aware that public spending for research and innovation has markedly decreased over the last four years in Spain. At the same time, the Commission also noted that there is scope for improving the efficiency of public expenditure in R&D with more elements of performance based funding, including for universities and research-performing organisations.

([5]) http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/sociedad/las-deudas-apartan-ciencia-espanola-los-centros-europeos-2395149
([6]) http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/sociedad/invertir-ciencia-unica-manera-salir-crisis-2924741

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014271/13
an die Kommission
Horst Schnellhardt (PPE)
(18. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Alkoholprävention bei Minderjährigen

Die wissenschaftliche Fachliteratur ist sich darüber einig, dass die Unterstützung der Eltern ein wichtiger Faktor ist, um den Alkoholkonsum Minderjähriger zu verringern. In Deutschland leistet die Initiative „Klartext reden!", die vom Bundesverband der Spirituosenindustrie zusammen mit dem BundesElternRat initiiert wurde, einen wichtigen Beitrag. Die Initiative stützt sich auf drei Komponenten: Eltern-Workshops, einen Ratgeber sowie einen Internetauftritt inklusive Online-Training. Im Rahmen dieses Online-Trainings erhalten die Eltern in vier unterschiedlichen Kursen — je nach Alter des Kindes — individuelle Erziehungstipps. Das Programm wird von der Drogenbeauftragten der Bundesregierung ausdrücklich unterstützt und auch die Evaluierung der bislang durchgeführten Workshops bestätigte deren nachhaltige Wirksamkeit. Eltern zeigten sich nach der Teilnahme deutlich motivierter, mit ihren Kindern über das Thema Alkohol zu sprechen. 85 % der befragten Eltern, die noch keinen Workshop besucht hatten, gaben an, gerne eine Informationsveranstaltung an einer Schule besuchen zu wollen.

Ich frage daher die Kommission:

1. Beabsichtigt die Kommission, Mitgliedstaaten zu ähnlichen Initiativen wie dem individualisierten Online-Training zu bewegen, um zur Bekämpfung des Alkoholkonsums bei Minderjährigen beizutragen?

2. Bestärkt die Kommission andere Mitgliedstaaten darin, Eltern-Workshops oder ähnliche Präventionsprogramme durchzuführen?

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(12. Februar 2014)

Die Kommission teilt die Besorgnis des Herrn Abgeordneten über den Alkoholkonsum junger Menschen. Deshalb wurde der Schutz von Kindern und jungen Menschen in der EU-Strategie gegen Alkoholmissbrauch ([1]) als ein Bereich identifiziert, in dem vorrangig Handlungsbedarf besteht. Darin wird zwar anerkannt, dass die Zuständigkeit für die einzelstaatliche Alkoholpolitik hauptsächlich bei den Mitgliedstaaten liegt, doch die Strategie enthält auch Beispiele guter Praxis wie etwa die bessere Durchsetzung von Verkaufsregelungen sowie von Beschränkungen der Verfügbarkeit und des Absatzes an junge Menschen, kommunale Aktionen unter Einbeziehung der Eltern, anderer Akteure und der jungen Menschen selbst.

Aufgabe der Kommission ist es, die Mitgliedstaaten zu unterstützen und bei der Koordinierung ihrer Maßnahmen mitzuhelfen, insbesondere durch Ermittlung und Verbreitung von Beispielen guter Praxis. In diesem Zusammenhang hat die Kommission im Jahr 2007 den Ausschuss „Nationale Alkoholpolitik und -maßnahmen" geschaffen, um den Austausch von Meinungen und Beispielen guter Praxis zwischen den Mitgliedstaaten zu fördern. Im Januar 2014 wurde eine gemeinsame Maßnahme eingeleitet, um die Mitgliedstaaten bei der Erstellung gemeinsamer Prioritäten in Übereinstimmung mit der EU-Strategie gegen Alkoholmissbrauch zu unterstützen; diese Maßnahme wird einen Beitrag zur Erreichung der betreffenden Ziele leisten.

Im Europäischen Forum „Alkohol und Gesundheit", das im Zuge der Umsetzung der Strategie geschaffen wurde, setzt sich die Kommission ebenfalls gemeinsam mit zahlreichen Beteiligten — darunter die Medien, die Werbebranche, die Hersteller alkoholischer Getränke sowie im Bereich Jugend und öffentliche Gesundheit aktive Nichtregierungsorganisationen und medizinische Kreise — für Maßnahmen ein, mit denen alle Beteiligten in ihrem jeweiligen Wirkungskreis gegen alkoholbedingte Schäden vorgehen können.

([1]) Mitteilung vom 24. Oktober 2006: Eine EU-Strategie zur Unterstützung der Mitgliedstaaten bei der Verringerung alkoholbedingter Schäden (KOM(2006)625 endg.).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014271/13
to the Commission
Horst Schnellhardt (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Prevention of alcohol consumption by minors

The scientific literature is in agreement that parental support is an important factor in reducing the alcohol consumption of minors. In Germany, the initiative '*Klartext reden!*' [Plain talking], set up by the Bundesverband der Spirituosenindustrie [Federal Association of the Spirits Industry] together with the BundesElternRat [Federal Parent's Board], is playing an important role. The initiative is made up of three components: workshops for parents, an advice service and an Internet presence, including online training. In this online training, parents receive individual education tips in four different courses according to the age of the child. The programme is expressly supported by the Federal Government's Drug Commissioner, and the evaluation of the workshops conducted to date also confirms their lasting effectiveness. After taking part, parents were clearly more motivated to talk to their children about alcohol. Of the parents who had not yet attended a workshop, 85% of those asked said they would like to attend an information event at a school.

1. Does the Commission intend to prompt Member States to implement initiatives similar to the individualised online training in order to help to combat alcohol consumption by minors?

2. Is it encouraging other Member States to conduct workshops for parents or implement similar prevention programmes?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

The Commission shares the Honourable Member's concerns over alcohol consumption by young people. This is why protecting children and young people is identified as a priority area for action in the EU Alcohol Strategy ([1]). Whilst recognising that Member States have the main responsibility for national alcohol policy, this Strategy highlighted examples of good practices such as better enforcement of regulations on sales, reduced availability and marketing to young people, and community-based actions involving parents, stakeholders and young people themselves.

The Commission's role is to support and help coordinate national actions, in particular by identifying and disseminating good practice. In this context, in 2007, the Commission set up the Committee on National Alcohol Policy and Action, to facilitate exchange of views and good practices between Member States. A Joint Action to support Member States in taking forward work on common priorities in line with the abovementioned EU alcohol strategy was launched in January 2014 and will contribute to reach these goals.

Within the European Alcohol and Health Forum set up under the strategy, the Commission is also actively engaging with a broad range of stakeholders — including the media, advertising and alcohol industries, youth and public health NGOs and the medical community — to encourage them to take action to address alcohol related harm in their respective fields.

([1]) Communication of 24 October 2006, An EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol related harm (COM(2006) 625 final).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014272/13
alla Commissione
Fiorello Provera (EFD) e Charles Tannock (ECR)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Rischio di uno scoppio della poliomielite in Europa

All'inizio di novembre 2013, varie fonti di informazione hanno riferito la comparsa di casi di poliomielite in Siria. Secondo la rivista medica *The Lancet*, molti medici temono che la malattia potrebbe essere reintrodotta in regioni in cui è scomparsa da decenni. I profughi che sfuggono al conflitto siriano potrebbero spostarsi in paesi europei portando con sé il virus. In paesi che non registrano casi di poliomielite da decenni, il vaccino comunemente usato è un vaccino antipolio inattivo che non è efficace quanto la versione viva. Attualmente l'ONU sta cercando di vaccinare il massimo numero di profughi siriani al fine di controllare lo scoppio della malattia. Prima del 2011, era stato vaccinato il 95 % dei bambini siriani, ma ora almeno mezzo milione non è stato sottoposto ad immunizzazione.

Secondo il *Daily Telegraph* britannico, le associazioni sanitarie e l'ONU hanno invitato vivamente il governo siriano e le forze ribelli ad accettare dei «cessate il fuoco per la vaccinazione». Il Professor Martin Eichner dell'Università di Tübingen, autore del rapporto del Lancet, è giunto alla conclusione che gli sforzi per vaccinare i siriani non si possono considerare adeguati. Il problema della poliomielite è che solo una su 200 persone infette non vaccinate svilupperà i sintomi, il che significa che essa può diffondersi subdolamente.

1. Quali sono oggi le iniziative che la Commissione sta attuando per controllare se i profughi siriani che entrano nell'UE siano vaccinati contro il virus della polio?

2. È la Commissione disposta a sostenere l'ONU a sollecitare un numero maggiore di «cessate il fuoco per la vaccinazione» in Siria, al fine di dare agli operatori sanitari l'opportunità di vaccinare i bambini?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(10 marzo 2014)

Dal settembre 2013 la Commissione opera nell'ambito del Comitato per la sicurezza sanitaria (CSS) per seguire la situazione della poliomielite in Siria e valutare il rischio di diffusione nell'Unione europea. Il Comitato per la sicurezza sanitaria è l'organismo responsabile di coordinare la risposta degli Stati membri alle minacce sanitarie in forza della decisione 1082/2013 ([1]). Queste attività sono sostenute a livello tecnico dal Centro europeo per la prevenzione e il controllo delle malattie (ECDC), nonché dall'Organizzazione mondiale della sanità.

La Commissione e i membri del Comitato per la sicurezza sanitaria scambiano regolarmente, per il tramite del Sistema di allarme rapido e di reazione, informazioni aggiornate sui tassi di copertura nazionale della vaccinazione antipolio, sulla sorveglianza della patologia e sulle capacità di laboratorio, sulle raccomandazioni a coloro che si recano in paesi in cui vi sono focolai di poliomielite, sulla valutazione dello status di vaccinazione dei rifugiati e dei migranti che arrivano nell'UE dai paesi in cui la poliomielite è endemica e sui piani di predisposizione operativa per la vaccinazione antipolio qualora in futuro fosse necessario reagire a una situazione di emergenza.

La Commissione sollecita attivamente l'attuazione della dichiarazione presidenziale del Consiglio di sicurezza delle Nazioni Unite del 2 ottobre 2013 che invita tutte le parti del conflitto ad assicurare un accesso sicuro e completo alla campagna di immunizzazione antipolio su tutto il territorio della Siria, anche nelle aree assediate e difficili da raggiungere.

Per quanto concerne i finanziamenti, la Commissione era preparata a reagire a una simile minaccia sanitaria e, per il solo tramite del suo bilancio umanitario relativo alla Siria, ha già stanziato circa 28 milioni di euro per l'assistenza sanitaria e 29 milioni di euro per progetti relativi all'approvvigionamento idrico e al risanamento ai fini della prevenzione della diffusione di malattie, tra cui finanziamenti finalizzati a sostenere la campagna di vaccinazione antipolio.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:293:0001:0015:IT:PDF.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014272/13
to the Commission
Fiorello Provera (EFD) and Charles Tannock (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Risk of polio outbreak in Europe

In early November 2013, various news sources reported that cases of polio have emerged in Syria. According to the health journal *The Lancet*, many doctors worry that the disease could be reintroduced to areas where it has been eradicated for decades. Refugees fleeing from the conflict in Syria could move into European countries bringing the virus with them. In countries which have not seen cases of polio for decades, the vaccine commonly used is an inactivated polio vaccine, which is not as effective as the live version. At present, the UN is trying to vaccinate as many Syrian refugees as possible in order to control the outbreak. Before 2011, 95% of Syrian children had been vaccinated, but now at least half a million Syrian children have not been immunised.

According to the UK *Daily Telegraph*, health charities and the UN have appealed to the Syrian Government and rebel forces to adhere to 'vaccination ceasefires'. The author of the Lancet report, Professor Martin Eichner, from the University of Tübingen, concludes that the efforts to vaccinate Syrians should be judged inadequate. The problem with polio is that only one in every 200 unvaccinated people infected will develop symptoms, which means that it can spread undetected.

1. At present, what initiatives are being implemented by the Commission to check if Syrian refugees entering the EU are vaccinated against the polio virus?

2. Is the Commission prepared to support the UN in pushing for more 'vaccination ceasefires' to take place in Syria, in order to allow healthcare workers the opportunity to vaccinate children?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(10 March 2014)

Since September 2013 the Commission works within the Health Security Committee (HSC) to follow the polio situation in Syria and to assess the risk of spreading to the European Union. The Health Security Committee is the body responsible for coordination of Member States' response to health threats, under Decision 1082/2013 ([1]). These activities are supported at a technical level by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), as well as by the World Health Organisation.

The Commission and the Health Security Committee members are regularly sharing through the Early Warning and Response System updated information on national coverage rates for polio vaccination, on surveillance and laboratory capability, on recommendations to travellers to polio affected countries, on assessing the vaccination status of refugees and migrants arriving from the polio endemic countries into the EU and on preparedness plans of polio vaccination in case of a need to respond to an emergency situation.in the future.

The Commission actively urges implementation of the UNSC Presidential Statement (PRST) of 2 October 2013 which calls on all parties to the conflict to allow safe and full access for the polio immunization campaign throughout Syria, including to besieged and hard to reach areas.

Funding-wise, the Commission was prepared for such a health threat and, through its humanitarian budget focusing on Syria only, has already committed around EUR 28 million to healthcare and EUR 29 million to water and sanitation projects, relevant to the prevention and spread of diseases, including funding directed to support the polio vaccination campaign.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:293:0001:0015:EN:PDF

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014274/13
al Consiglio
Fiorello Provera (EFD) e Charles Tannock (ECR)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Designazione di gruppi islamici nigeriani come organizzazioni terroristiche da parte degli USA

Il 13 novembre 2013, il governo USA ha annunciato che avrebbe designato i gruppi islamici nigeriani Boko Haram e Ansaru come organizzazioni terroristiche. La Boko Haram si è resa responsabile della morte di 3.000 persone dal 2009; ha tentato di scatenare una guerra contro i cristiani e cerca di imporre la sharia in tutta la Nigeria nordorientale. Il generale Carter Ham, comandante dell'Africa Command statunitense, ha avvertito il Congresso USA che elementi della Boko Haram «aspirano a un livello regionale più ampio di attacchi comprendente interessi USA ed europei». Il gruppo ha già attaccato chiese, moschee e un collegio agrario in cui sono stati uccisi cinquanta studenti nei propri dormitori. Nel 2011 l'organizzazione si è resa responsabile dell'attacco bomba suicida del palazzo dell'ONU ad Abuja.

Il governo USA intende ormai attivarsi per impedire che gruppi come la Boko Haram accedano ad enti finanziari USA. I membri saranno soggetti al congelamento dei beni e al divieto di circolazione. Lisa Monaco, consulente per la sicurezza interna e l'antiterrorismo, ha precisato che gli USA darebbero forte sostegno alla lotta della Nigeria contro il terrorismo e ai suoi sforzi per affrontare le sfide in materia di sicurezza nel nord del paese «tagliando fuori le organizzazioni terroristiche dagli enti finanziari USA e consentendo alle banche di congelare i beni detenuti negli Stati Uniti».

1. Qual è la posizione del Consiglio per quanto riguarda la decisione USA di designare Boko Haram e Ansaru come organizzazioni terroristiche?

2. Sta considerando attualmente l'opportunità di seguire l'esempio del governo USA e di inserire gli stessi gruppi nella lista nera?

3. Come valuta la minaccia nei confronti degli interessi UE in regioni come la Nigeria settentrionale dove la Boko è più attiva?

Risposta
(3 marzo 2014)

Il Consiglio ha preso atto della decisione degli Stati Uniti di designare Boko Haram e Ansaru nel quadro delle sanzioni USA contro il terrorismo. Secondo una prassi consolidata, il Consiglio non si pronuncia sulla sua eventuale intenzione di inserire persone o entità nell'elenco nel quadro delle sanzioni dell'UE.

Il peggiorare del livello della violenza perpetrata da Boko Haram nella Nigeria settentrionale e i crescenti collegamenti con AQIM nel Sahel e con Al Shabab suscitano preoccupazione nell'UE. Gli attacchi costituiscono una reale minaccia alla stabilità del paese e rendono attualmente estremamente difficoltosi, se non impossibili, gli investimenti e le attività di sviluppo, indipendentemente dal fatto che siano intrapresi da fonti nigeriane o da partner internazionali.

L'UE collabora con la Nigeria per aiutarla a far fronte alla sfida posta dalla creazione di una sicurezza durevole e ad affrontare i fattori che portano alla radicalizzazione e alla violenza. Lo fa mediante un dialogo politico continuo sulle strategie appropriate per fronteggiare i problemi nonché con aiuti mirati ed assistenza tecnica. Nella riunione ministeriale UE-Nigeria del febbraio 2012 si è avviato un dialogo sulla sicurezza a livello locale. Nel 2013 l'UE ha condotto su Boko Haram una ricerca sul campo approfondita, finanziata mediante lo strumento per la stabilità, per comprendere meglio tale movimento e i fattori che alimentano la radicalizzazione nonché i potenziali punti di accesso per gli aiuti alla lotta all'estremismo violento (CVE) ed il pacchetto di assistenza antiterrorismo che è in preparazione. L'UE sostiene gli sforzi delle autorità nigeriane per applicare una strategia più globale — non soltanto incentrata sulla sicurezza, ma comprendente anche elementi di sviluppo e di governance, nel pieno rispetto dei diritti umani e dello Stato di diritto.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014274/13
to the Council
Fiorello Provera (EFD) and Charles Tannock (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: USA's designation of Nigerian Islamist groups as terrorist organisations

On 13 November 2013, the US Government announced that it would designate Nigerian Islamist groups Boko Haram and Ansaru as terrorist organisations. Boko Haram has been responsible for the deaths of 3 000 people since 2009; it has sought to wage a war against Christians and seeks to impose Sharia law across north-eastern Nigeria. General Carter Ham, who is the commander of US Africa Command, has warned the US Congress that Boko Haram elements 'aspire to a broader regional level of attacks including US and European interests'. The group has already attacked churches, mosques and an agricultural college in which fifty students were murdered in their dormitories. In 2011 they were responsible for the suicide bombing of the UN building in Abuja.

The US government will now work to prevent groups such as Boko Haram from accessing US financial institutions. Members will be subject to asset freezes and travel bans. Lisa Monaco, who is a homeland and counter-terrorism advisor, said the USA would be demonstrating strong support for Nigeria's fight against terrorism and its efforts to address security challenges in the north of the country 'by cutting off these terrorist organisations from US financial institutions and enabling banks to freeze assets held in the United States'.

1. What is the position of the Council regarding the US decision to designate Boko Haram and Ansaru as terrorist organisations?

2. Is the Council currently looking follow the example of the US government and blacklist the same groups?

3. What is the assessment regarding the threat posed to EU interests in areas such as northern Nigeria, where Boko is most active?

Reply
(3 March 2014)

The Council has noted the decision of the United States to designate Boko Haram and Ansaru under US counter-terrorist sanctions. As a matter of established practice, the Council does not comment on whether it is considering listing individuals or entities under EU sanctions.

The worsening level of violence perpetrated by Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria and the growing links with AQIM in the Sahel and Al Shabab are of concern to the EU. The attacks constitute a real threat to the stability of the country and are making investments and development activities — whether undertaken by Nigerian sources or by international partners — very difficult, if not impossible at present.

The EU is working with Nigeria to help it tackle the challenge of creating lasting security and deal with the factors leading to radicalisation and violence. It is doing so through continuous political dialogue on appropriate approaches to the problems, as well as targeted aid and technical assistance. At the EU-Nigeria ministerial meeting in February 2012, a local security dialogue was established. Financed by the Instrument for Stability, in 2013, the EU carried out an in-depth field study on Boko Haram to gain a better understanding of the movement and the drivers of radicalisation, as well as potential entry points for CVE (Countering Violent Extremism) assistance and for a CT (Counter Terrorism) assistance package, which is under preparation. The EU is supporting the Nigerian authorities' efforts to apply a more comprehensive approach — one that is not only security centred but also includes development and governance elements, while fully respecting human rights and the rule of law.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014276/13
alla Commissione
Fiorello Provera (EFD) e Charles Tannock (ECR)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Fondi impegnati dall'UE e dalla Banca mondiale per la regione del Sahel

Il 4 novembre 2013 diverse fonti della stampa, tra cui il *Financial Times*, hanno riferito che la Banca mondiale e l'Unione europea si erano impegnate a devolvere 8 miliardi di dollari statunitensi alla regione del Sahel, segnatamente a Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Ciad, Senegal e Niger. I donatori hanno dichiarato che lo sviluppo economico in questa regione è l'elemento essenziale per migliorare la sicurezza globale. La sola Unione europea ha impegnato 5 miliardi di EUR per il Sahel fino al 2020, mentre il Presidente della Banca mondiale, Jim Yong Kim, ha osservato che «sviluppo economico e sicurezza vanno di pari passo».

La regione del Sahel è stata destabilizzata in seguito all'afflusso di grandi quantitativi di armamenti provenienti dal conflitto libico e dispersi nel territorio, anche a causa della permeabilità delle frontiere che caratterizza questa zona. Gran parte del Sahel rimane «zona di non diritto», soprattutto il Mali settentrionale, dove recentemente due giornalisti francesi sono stati uccisi da al-Qaeda. Il Commissario europeo per lo sviluppo, Andris Piebalgs, ha affermato che quanto l'UE si appresta a fare per il Sahel è «senza precedenti» e ha aggiunto: «il Sahel rappresenta una priorità per l'UE. Siamo determinati a proseguire e ad aumentare il nostro sostegno. Il Mali, nello specifico, riceverà aiuti per 615 milioni di EUR». La Banca mondiale intende utilizzare la maggior parte del denaro per sostenere progetti che contribuiscano alla produzione di elettricità e all'irrigazione, con l'obiettivo di accrescere la produzione agricola.

1. Come intende la Commissione distribuire i 5 miliardi di EUR fra le sei nazioni del Sahel?

2. Alla luce della recente uccisione di due giornalisti francesi nel Mali settentrionale, quali iniziative sta adottando la Commissione per monitorare i rischi esistenti per gli altri cittadini dell'UE che si trovano nella regione per motivi di lavoro?

3. In che modo la Commissione prevede di creare sviluppo economico nel Sahel? Quali progetti specifici intende sostenere?

Risposta di Andris Piebalgs a nome della Commissione
(20 febbraio 2014)

1. I 5 miliardi di EUR a favore del Sahel annunciati per il 2014-2020 consistono per la maggior parte in assegnazioni dell'11 º FES per i paesi del Sahel e la regione dell'Africa occidentale. L'importo rimanente è costituito da assegnazioni finanziate dalla dotazione intra-ACP, da linee di bilancio tematiche e dallo strumento per la stabilità nonché da missioni PSDC nella regione. Per tutte le dotazioni a favore dello sviluppo si segue un approccio basato sulle necessità.

2. Per quanto riguarda il monitoraggio dei rischi per i cittadini dell'UE che lavorano nella regione del Sahel, gli Stati membri dell'UE sono responsabili della sicurezza dei loro cittadini all'estero. Questo comprende il monitoraggio della situazione dal punto di vista della sicurezza e gli avvisi ai viaggiatori.

3. Nel campo specifico della cooperazione allo sviluppo, la Commissione ha definito una risposta globale ai problemi della regione del Sahel. A livello nazionale, i principali ambiti individuati insieme ai governi sono la governance e lo Stato di diritto, l'agricoltura e la sicurezza alimentare, comprese la resilienza e le infrastrutture rurali, e i servizi sociali. Questo è in linea con il Programma di cambiamento ([1]) e contribuirà a promuovere la crescita economica e la creazione di posti di lavoro.

La Commissione lavora inoltre con l'ECOWAS e l'UEMOA per individuare le misure a sostegno della pace e della sicurezza, dello sviluppo sostenibile nonché della cooperazione e dell'integrazione economica a livello regionale. Il programma regionale finanzierà prevalentemente azioni volte a sviluppare le interconnessioni infrastrutturali regionali e a sostenere lo sviluppo del settore privato. L'iniziativa AGIR ([2]) continuerà a fornire sostegno a livello nazionale e regionale per migliorare la resilienza.

([1]) COM(2011) 637 definitivo.
([2]) Partenariato mondiale dell'UE per la resilienza del Sahel: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/resilience/agir_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014276/13
to the Commission
Fiorello Provera (EFD) and Charles Tannock (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: EU and World Bank pledge funds for the Sahel region

On 4 November 2013, various news sources, including the *Financial Times*, reported that the World Bank and the EU had pledged to give USD 8 billion to the six countries of the Sahel region, namely Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Chad, Senegal and Niger. Donors have said that economic development in this area was the key to improving global security. The EU alone has pledged EUR 5 billion for the Sahel until 2020 as the President of the World Bank, Jim Yong Kim, noted that 'economic development and security go together'.

The Sahel has been destabilised after stockpiles of weapons from the Libyan conflict were dispersed across the region, aided by the porous borders that exist there. Much of the Sahel remains lawless, particularly in northern Mali, where two French journalists were recently murdered by al-Qaeda. The European Commissioner for development, Andris Piebalgs, has said that what the EU is going to do for the Sahel is 'without precedent'. He continued by adding that 'the Sahel is a priority for the EU. We are determined to continue and increase our support. Mali specifically will receive EUR 615 million in aid'. The World Bank intends to use most of the money to support projects that aid electricity generation and boost irrigation, with the aim of increasing agricultural production.

1. How does the Commission intend to distribute the EUR 5 billion among the six nations in the Sahel?

2. In light of the recent killing in northern Mali of two French journalists, what steps is the Commission taking to monitor the risks for other EU citizens working in this region?

3. In what ways does the Commission hope to generate economic development in the Sahel? What specific projects does it plan to support?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

1. The EUR 5 billion announced for 2014-2020 for the Sahel consists mainly of 11th EDF country allocations for the Sahel countries and the West Africa region. The remainder includes relevant allocations under the Intra-ACP envelope, thematic budget lines and the Instrument for Stability as well as CSDP missions in the region. A needs-based approach is used for all development envelopes.

2. With regard to the monitoring of risks for EU citizens working in the Sahel region, EU Member States are in charge of the safety and security of their citizens abroad. This includes the monitoring of the security situation and the issuance of travel warnings.

3. On development cooperation specifically, the Commission has developed a comprehensive response to the challenges of the Sahel region. At national level, the main sectors identified with the governments are governance and rule of law, agriculture and food security including resilience and rural infrastructures and finally social services. These will be in line with the Agenda for Change ([1]) and will contribute to boosting economic growth and job creation.

In addition, the Commission is working with Ecowas and WAEMU to identify support for peace and security, sustainable development challenges and regional economic cooperation and integration. The regional programme will mainly finance actions to develop regional infrastructure interconnections and support for private sector development. The AGIR initiative ([2]) will continue to provide support at both national and regional levels to improve resilience.

([1]) COM(2011) 637 final.
([2]) Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/resilience/agir_en.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014278/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) e Charles Tannock (ECR)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Sequestri di cristiani egiziani

Nel sud dell'Egitto, negli ultimi due anni, più di 100 persone sono state sequestrate e tenute in ostaggio: la maggior parte di esse sono cristiani. Le vittime, gli attivisti e gli operatori ecclesiastici affermano che la polizia ha ampiamente ignorato il problema. Il Christian Science Monitor riferisce che il più alto prelato della Chiesa ortodossa copta nel Governatorato di Minya, Monsignor Makarios, ha affermato che, sebbene la chiesa si limiti tradizionalmente ad un ruolo spirituale, il fatto che lo Stato non stia affrontando seriamente la questione dei rapimenti significa che la chiesa deve intervenire per proteggere i cristiani. Minya è diventata la «capitale dei sequestri» in Egitto.

I cristiani vivono nella paura di scomparire lungo una buia strada di campagna. Alcune comunità rurali stanno subendo una riduzione dell'accesso alle cure sanitarie perché i medici cristiani hanno paura di recarsi presso le loro cliniche fuori città. Da tempo, purtroppo, i crimini contro i cristiani restano sistematicamente impuniti e questo ha creato un'aura di impunità. Si ritiene che il recente aumento nel numero di sequestri sia stato determinato dagli islamisti che accusano i cristiani di sostenere i manifestanti e il colpo di stato militare contro Mohamed Morsi.

1. È l'Alto Rappresentante/Vicepresidente disposto a chiedere alle autorità egiziane, in particolare al Ministro dell'interno Mohamed Ibrahim Moustafa, di adottare misure per condurre i responsabili dei sequestri di cristiani dinanzi alla giustizia e migliorare la risposta delle forze di polizia locali nei confronti dei casi che riguardano i cristiani?

2. Allo stato attuale, può dire se l'UE fornisce un aiuto specifico alle esigenze della comunità cristiana in Egitto?

3. Qual è, secondo i funzionari dell'UE in Egitto, l'impatto sociale dei rapimenti in luoghi come Minya?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(4 marzo 2014)

L'UE è a conoscenza delle vessazioni subite da diverse minoranze religiose in Egitto, esprime profonda preoccupazione al riguardo e condanna ogni forma di intolleranza, discriminazione e violenza nei confronti delle persone per motivi di religione o di credo, in ogni parte del mondo e indipendentemente dalla religione. L'AR/VP ha ripetutamente esortato le autorità egiziane a garantire la libertà di religione e di credo nel paese.

La delegazione dell'UE al Cairo segue da vicino i casi di violenza settaria e nei suoi contatti con le autorità egiziane insiste sull'importanza di evitare discriminazioni per motivi religiosi. Per contribuire ad aumentare il rispetto della libertà di religione e di credo in Egitto, l'AR/VP è pronta a impegnarsi con tutte le parti interessate del paese e con le organizzazioni regionali e internazionali che condividono i valori e gli obiettivi dell'UE su questo tema.

L'UE sostiene inoltre progetti in loco volti a promuovere il dialogo interculturale e ad affrontare il problema della discriminazione nei confronti delle minoranze religiose.

L'UE ritiene che la cooperazione e il dialogo politico siano i canali più appropriati per fare pressione sulle autorità e incoraggiarle a intraprendere azioni concrete per difendere la libertà di religione e di credo in tutto il paese.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014278/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) and Charles Tannock (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Kidnappings of Egyptian Christians

In southern Egypt, more than 100 people have been kidnapped and held to ransom in the last two years, most of them Christians. Victims, activists and church officials say that police have largely ignored the problem. The Christian Science Monitor reports the highest Coptic Orthodox Church official in the Governorate of Minya, Bishop Makarios, as saying that although the church traditionally confines itself to a spiritual role, the fact that the state is not taking the issue of kidnapping seriously means that the church must step in to protect Christians. Minya has become the 'kidnappings capital' of Egypt.

Christians — live in fear of disappearing on a dark rural road. . Some communities in rural areas are suffering from decreased access to healthcare because Christian doctors are afraid to travel to their clinics outside the city. Unfortunately, crimes against Christians have long gone routinely unpunished, and this has created an aura of impunity. There are suggestions that the recent spike in the number of kidnappings has been driven by Islamists, who accuse Christians of supporting the protestors and military coup against Mohamed Morsi.

1. Is the High Representative/Vice-President prepared to ask the Egyptian authorities, in particular the Minister of the Interior Mohamed Ibrahim Moustafa, to take measures to bring those responsible for kidnapping Christians to justice and improve the response of local police forces towards cases involving Christians?

2. At present, does the EU provide aid specific to the needs of Egypt's Christian community?

3. According to EU officials in Egypt, what is the social impact of kidnappings in places such as Minya?

Answer given by High-Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2014)

The EU is aware and concerned about the constraints that different religious minorities face in Egypt and condemns all forms of intolerance, discrimination and violence against persons because of their religion or belief, wherever it takes place and regardless of the religion. The HR/VP repeatedly called on the Egyptian authorities to ensure freedom of religion or belief in the country.

The EU Delegation in Cairo is closely following cases of sectarian violence and emphasises the importance of avoiding discrimination on religious grounds in its contacts with Egyptian authorities. In order to support the improvement of freedom of religion or belief in Egypt, the HR/VP is keen to engage with the relevant stakeholders in the country as well as with the regional and international organisations sharing EU values and objectives in this respect.

The EU is also supporting projects on the ground which aim at promoting intercultural dialogue and challenging discrimination against religious minorities.

The EU considers that cooperation and political dialogue are the most appropriate channels to encourage and put pressure on the authorities so that it will undertake concrete actions in order to protect the freedom of religion and belief throughout the country.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014279/13
alla Commissione
Fiorello Provera (EFD) e Charles Tannock (ECR)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Rischio di attacchi di Al-Shabaab in Etiopia

Il 5 novembre 2013 vari notiziari hanno riferito che la polizia e i servizi di sicurezza in Etiopia sono stati messi in massima allerta in seguito a prove emerse secondo le quali il gruppo militante somalo Al-Shabaab intende attaccare il paese. Al-Shabaab ha giurato di vendicarsi contro l'Etiopia per aver inviato truppe in Somalia per combattere i gruppi connessi ad Al-Qaeda, insieme ad altri membri dell'Unione africana.

In una dichiarazione congiunta, il Servizio di intelligence e sicurezza nazionale e la polizia federale etiopi hanno comunicato che esistono validi elementi di prova per ritenere che Al-Shabaab e i gruppi terroristici sostenuti dall'Eritrea si stiano preparando a sferrare a breve attacchi in Addis Abeba e in altre zone del paese. Tre settimane prima di tale minaccia, alcuni ufficiali etiopi avevano informato che due attentatori suicidi somali si erano fatti esplodere per errore mentre si preparavano a colpire i tifosi durante la partita di calcio Etiopia contro Nigeria di qualificazione al campionato mondiale.

1. Qual è la valutazione della Commissione sulla vulnerabilità dell'Etiopia agli attacchi orchestrati da Al-Shabaab?

2. Intende l'UE offrire sostegno alle autorità etiopi per aiutarle a sventare eventuali attacchi come quello avvenuto a Nairobi in Kenya?

3. Può indicare alcune delle attuali operazioni antiterroristiche in cui sono impegnate le forze dell'UE nel Corno d'Africa?

4. Quali progressi sono stati compiuti per evitare che Al-Shabab penetri nei paesi vicini alla Somalia?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(18 febbraio 2014)

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente è a conoscenza delle notizie relative alla possibile minaccia che le milizie di al-Shabaab rappresentano per l'Etiopia e, più in generale, per il Corno d'Africa. Il SEAE sta monitorando da vicino la situazione, mentre l'INTCEN dell'UE fornisce al SEAE, al Consiglio e alla Commissione rapporti analitici regolarmente aggiornati sulla situazione nel Corno d'Africa.

La delegazione dell'UE ha discusso della questione nel quadro delle sessioni di dialogo politico con le autorità etiopi. Nel 2012, l'UE ha adottato una strategia anti-terrorismo relativa al Corno d'Africa e allo Yemen, che è attualmente in corso di attuazione. Inoltre l'UE svolge la funzione di co-presidenza del gruppo di lavoro sul Corno d'Africa all'interno del Forum globale contro il terrorismo (Global Counter Terrorism Forum), il forum internazionale incaricato di coordinare le misure antiterrorismo.

L'UE si è inoltre impegnata a cooperare con i paesi della regione in programmi di lotta al terrorismo. Nel quadro dello Strumento per la stabilità a lungo termine, stiamo finanziando due progetti di antiterrorismo che riguardano il Corno d'Africa, uno di lotta contro il finanziamento del terrorismo e uno di lotta contro la radicalizzazione e il reclutamento. In Somalia, l'UE sostiene con notevoli risorse l'AMISOM attraverso il Fondo per la pace in Africa (APF) e addestrando le forze di sicurezza somale nel quadro dell'EUTM. In Kenya, l'UE fornisce alle autorità keniote aiuti volti a prevenire gli attacchi terroristici e a rispondere ad essi, in particolare nel quadro della lotta contro la proliferazione delle armi leggere e della lotta contro il finanziamento del terrorismo.

L'Etiopia e altri paesi limitrofi alla Somalia hanno avviato colloqui al fine di intensificare la cooperazione in materia di intelligence che si prefiggono, tra l'altro, di arginare le infiltrazioni delle milizie di al-Shabaab. I servizi di intelligence e di sicurezza dell'UE stanno inoltre cooperando strettamente tra loro e con altri servizi partner per contrastare i rischi rappresentati da gruppi terroristici come al-Shabaab.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014279/13
to the Commission
Fiorello Provera (EFD) and Charles Tannock (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Ethiopia at risk from Al-Shabaab attacks

On 5 November 2013, several news services reported that police and security services in Ethiopia have been put on high alert, as evidence has emerged that the Somali militant group Al-Shabaab is planning to attack the country. Al-Shabaab has vowed to exact revenge on Ethiopia for sending troops to Somalia to fight groups linked to Al-Qaeda, along with other members of the African Union.

The country's National Intelligence and Security Service and the federal police said in a joint statement that 'There is strong evidence that indicates Al-Shabaab and terrorist groups backed by Eritrea are preparing to carry out attacks in Addis Ababa and other areas of the country soon'. Three weeks before this threat emerged, Ethiopian officials said two Somali suicide bombers accidently blew themselves up while preparing to kill football fans during Ethiopia's World Cup qualifying match against Nigeria.

1. What is the assessment of the Commission regarding Ethiopia's vulnerability to attacks orchestrated by Al-Shabaab?

2. Is the EU planning to offer support to the Ethiopian authorities to help thwart attacks similar to the one that took place in Nairobi, Kenya?

3. Can the Commission list some of the current anti-terror operations being conducted by EU forces in the Horn of Africa?

4. What success has been achieved in stemming Al-Shabaab infiltration into countries neighbouring Somalia?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The HR/VP is aware of the reporting regarding a possible threat posed by Al Shabaab to Ethiopia and, more widely, in the Horn of Africa. The EEAS is closely monitoring the situation and the EU INTCEN provides the EEAS, Council and Commission with regularly updated analytical reports of the situation in the Horn of Africa.

The EU Delegation has discussed this issue during political dialogue sessions with Ethiopian authorities. In 2012, the EU adopted a Counter terrorism strategy encompassing the Horn of Africa and Yemen, currently under implementation. Morever, the EU co-chairs the Horn of Africa working group of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum, an international forum to coordinate counterterrorism measures.

The EU is aso engaged with the countries of the region on counter terrorism cooperation. We are financing two Counter Terrorism projects addressing the Horn of Africa, on terrorist financing and on counter-radicalisation and recruitment under the long-term IfS instrument. In Somalia, the EU is strongly supporting Amisom through the APF and the building of Somali security forces through the EUTM. In Kenya, the EU supports Kenyan authorities in preventing and responding to terrorist attacks, notably in the fight against proliferation of small arms and in counter-terrorist financing.

Ethiopia and other countries neighbouring Somalia have engaged in talks to increase cooperation on intelligence matters in order to, *inter alia*, stem Al Shabaab infiltration. EU intelligence and security services are also cooperating closely among themselves as well as other partner services to counter the risks posed by foreign terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014280/13
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Publicité du soutien de l'Europe

Les porteurs de projets, sur le terrain, ont une obligation contractuelle de mettre en évidence la participation et le soutien de l'Europe lorsqu'ils en bénéficient.

La Commission peut-elle rappeler les conditions exactes? Ont-elles été améliorées pour la période 2014-2020?

Réponse donnée par M. Hahn au nom de la Commission
(27 février 2014)

Pour la période 2007-2013 ([1]), les bénéficiaires dont les projets au titre du FEDER et du Fonds de cohésion dans les domaines des infrastructures ou de la construction reçoivent une aide publique supérieure à 500 000 euros sont tenus de mettre en place des panneaux d'affichage (durant la réalisation du projet) et des plaques permanentes (après l'achèvement du projet). Ces plaques et panneaux doivent comporter l'emblème de l'Union européenne et mentionner l'Union européenne et le Fonds ayant contribué au projet. Chaque document lié à un projet doit faire état du soutien accordé par l'Union européenne. Lorsqu'une opération bénéficie d'un financement au titre d'un programme opérationnel cofinancé par le FSE, le bénéficiaire doit s'assurer que les participants à l'opération ont été informés de ce financement.

Pour la période 2014-2020 ([2]), les règles en matière d'information et de communication ont été clarifiées et améliorées, donnant ainsi une meilleure visibilité à la contribution de l'UE. Elles s'appliquent aux actions financées par le Fonds européen de développement régional (FEDER), le Fonds social européen (FSE) et le Fonds de cohésion. Toute action d'information ou de communication menée par le bénéficiaire devra faire mention du soutien octroyé par les Fonds. Internet est désormais mentionné explicitement. Le bénéficiaire doit ajouter sur son site Internet (s'il en possède un) une brève description du projet qui présente, entre autres, ses objectifs et ses résultats et met en avant le soutien financier de l'UE pendant toute la période de réalisation du projet. Les règles pour les panneaux et les plaques s'appliquent également aux actions financées par le FEDER et le Fonds de cohésion. Pour les projets FSE et FEDER recevant une aide publique inférieure à 500 000 euros, une affiche (format A3 au minimum) doit être apposée en un lieu aisément visible par le public. Dans le cas des actions soutenues par le FSE, il demeure obligatoire d'informer les participants de la source de financement.

([1]) Voir l'article 8 du règlement (CE) nº 1828/2006 de la Commission.

([2]) Voir les articles 115, 116 et 117 et l'annexe XII du règlement (UE) nº 1303/2013 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 17 décembre 2013 portant dispositions communes relatives au Fonds européen de développement régional, au Fonds social européen, au Fonds de cohésion, au Fonds européen agricole pour le développement rural et au Fonds européen pour les affaires maritimes et la pêche, portant dispositions générales applicables au Fonds européen de développement régional, au Fonds social européen, au Fonds de cohésion et au Fonds européen pour les affaires maritimes et la pêche, et abrogeant le règlement (CE) n º 1083/2006 du Conseil (JO L 347 du 20.12.2013).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014280/13
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Publicising support from Europe

Project promoters on the ground are contractually obliged to spotlight the involvement of and support from Europe whenever they receive it.

Can the Commission remind us of the precise terms for this? Have they been improved for the 2014-2020 period?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2014)

For the 2007-13 period ([1]), beneficiaries with ERDF and Cohesion Fund projects in the field of infrastructure or construction with a public contribution above EUR 500 000 have to set up billboards (during the implementation of a project) and permanent plaques (after completion of the project). These have to include the emblem of the European Union, a reference to the EU and the fund concerned. Any document concerning a project has to acknowledge the EU support received. Where an operation receives funding under an operational programme co-financed by the ESF the beneficiary shall ensure that those taking part in the operation have been informed of that funding.

For the 2014-2020 period ([2]), the information and communication rules have been clarified and improved, thus giving more visibility to the contribution of the EU. They apply to the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund. All information and communication measures provided by the beneficiary shall acknowledge support from the Funds. The Internet is now explicitly mentioned: the beneficiary has to add a short description of the project, including its aims and results, highlighting the financial support from the EU, on the beneficiary's website (where such a website exists) during the implementation of the project. The same rules for billboards and plaques apply for the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund; for the ESF and ERDF projects below EUR 500 000 of public support, a poster (minimum size A3) has to be displayed at a location readily visible to the public. For operations supported by the ESF the obligation remains that participants have to be informed of the source of funding.

([1]) See Commission Regulation 1828/2006, Articles 8.
([2]) See Articles 115-117 and Annex XII of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the ERDF, the ESF, the EAFRD and the EMFF and laying down general provisions on the ERDF, the ESF, the Cohesion Fund and the EMFF and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006; JO L 347, 20.12.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014281/13
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: EU Parkinson's Disease Standards of Care Consensus Statement

Parkinson's disease is a progressive, chronic and complex neurodegenerative disease that has no cure. It affects all aspects of daily living and is the most common neurodegenerative disease after Alzheimer's. At a conservative estimate there are 1.2 million people living with Parkinson's in Europe and this number is forecast to double by 2030, primarily as a result of the ageing population. The economic consequences of Parkinson's across Europe are considerable. The estimated annual total cost of the disease is EUR 13.9 billion and this figure will increase as the number of people with Parkinson's in Europe continues to grow.

The European Parkinson's Disease Standards of Care Consensus Statement is the first document of its kind to support and encourage the drive for equality and optimisation of Parkinson's treatment at both a European and a national level. It has been developed, reviewed and endorsed by European Parkinson's specialists, people with Parkinson's, carers and 45 national Parkinson's organisations.

Will the Commission recommend the European Parkinson's Disease Standards of Care Consensus Statement as a model of good practice across the EU to help Member States better focus their needs, structures and resources on this chronic disease?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

The Commission welcomes the successful establishment of the European Parkinson's Disease Standards of Care Consensus Statement in 2011, with an update in 2012.

The Commission was not involved in the preparation of such standards and is not in a position to promote it as a model of good practice of care. The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that Member States are responsible for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-014282/13
à Comissão
Ana Gomes (S&D)
(18 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: Proposta da UE sobre o aprovisionamento responsável de minerais

O roteiro da Comissão intitulado «A comprehensive EU supply chain initiative for responsible sourcing of minerals originating in conflict-affected and high-risk areas» (Uma iniciativa abrangente da cadeia de abastecimento da UE para o aprovisionamento responsável de minerais provenientes de zonas afetadas por conflitos e de elevado risco), de abril de 2013, incide sobre uma eventual resposta da UE que proteja a escolha livre, mas responsável do aprovisionamento dos operadores da UE. O roteiro indica que os operadores económicos da UE — ao longo da cadeia de abastecimento dos minerais em causa — estão cada vez mais conscientes da necessidade de determinar, de forma responsável, a origem a partir de zonas afetadas por conflitos e de elevado risco e reconhece que a atual situação regulamentar internacional não inclui uma resposta coletiva da UE, a qual facilitaria o comércio legítimo e responsável de minerais.

Contudo, após a conclusão da consulta pública realizada pela DG Trade sobre este tema, esta DG esclareceu que propõe visar apenas os intervenientes a montante e que não se prevê ter em vista as empresas sedeadas na UE, a jusante.

A DG Trade refere igualmente que a Comissão está a ponderar a elaboração de uma lista «branca» de fundições na qual as fundições ou as refinarias possam ser elencadas caso a sua atuação seja, de alguma forma, considerada responsável.

Um regime baseado em incentivos que não imponha obrigações incontornáveis de devida diligência às empresas teria um impacto extremamente limitado na forma como a maioria das firmas europeias realiza as práticas de devida diligência, no quadro da sua cadeia de abastecimento, e as comunica.

1. Concorda a Comissão que as empresas de processamento de minerais a jusante (refinarias ou fundições) têm a responsabilidade de determinar a origem dos recursos naturais que utilizam, de uma forma que não contribua para os conflitos ou para as violações dos direitos humanos, e que as empresas da UE devem, no mínimo, respeitar os mesmos requisitos de devida diligência referidos na Secção 1502 da Dodd Frank Act norte-americana?

2. Concorda a Comissão que medidas de cariz voluntário e regimes baseados em incentivos terão um impacto muito limitado sobre a forma como a maioria das empresas na UE determina a origem das suas matérias-primas e recursos naturais?

3. Ao adotar um mecanismo que exige a aplicação da devida diligência em matéria de cadeia de abastecimento pelos transformadores de metal, a UE influenciaria menos de 4,5 % das trocas comerciais de estanho, tântalo e tungsténio. Um mecanismo mais amplo, capaz de exigir que os fabricantes e os comerciantes verifiquem as suas cadeias de abastecimento, poderia influenciar 85 % das trocas comerciais, a nível mundial. Não deveria a Comissão visar empresas suficientemente a jusante na cadeia de abastecimento, de forma a influenciar, o mais amplamente possível, as trocas comerciais a nível mundial, não permitindo que as empresas e fabricantes a jusante sejam livres de prosseguir a compra de recursos naturais que podem ter financiado violações de direitos humanos?

Resposta dada por Karel De Gucht em nome da Comissão
(27 de fevereiro de 2014)

As partes interessadas que responderam à consulta pública da Comissão Europeia em 2013 referiram, na sua esmagadora maioria, a *OECD Due Diligence Guidance for responsible supply chains of minerals from conflict-affected and high-risk areas* como sendo o modelo de devida diligência adequado para as empresas se abastecerem responsavelmente em regiões de conflito. Essas orientações constituem atualmente o mais amplo consenso internacional possível sobre a questão.

A consulta pública, que será publicada juntamente com a proposta da Comissão Europeia, indica igualmente que uma grande parte das empresas da UE a jusante já está (direta ou indiretamente) sujeita à secção 1502 do Dodd Frank Act dos EUA. O cumprimento desta lei constitui um desafio, dada a extensão das cadeias de abastecimento, sendo que a identificação da unidade de fundição/refinaria é considerada um ponto fraco nos sérios esforços empresariais em curso para adotar a devida diligência.

Na atual fase do processo de tomada de decisão, a Comissão não pode aprofundar as outras questões suscitadas na pergunta da Senhora Deputada, mas gostaria de sublinhar que o objetivo dos atuais trabalhos é desenvolver uma abordagem integrada a nível da UE em matéria de aprovisionamento responsável de minerais, tendo em conta sobretudo as necessidades socioeconómicas dos países produtores em desenvolvimento.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014282/13
to the Commission
Ana Gomes (S&D)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: EU proposal on responsible mineral sourcing

The Commission's roadmap entitled 'A comprehensive EU supply chain initiative for responsible sourcing of minerals originating in conflict-affected and high-risk areas' (April 2013) refers to a possible EU response that 'safeguards the free but responsible choice of supply of EU operators'. It states that 'EU economic operators — throughout the supply chain of the minerals concerned — are increasingly aware of the need to responsibly source from conflict-affected and high-risk areas' and acknowledges that 'the present international regulatory environment lacks a collective EU response that would facilitate legitimate and responsible trade in minerals.'

Since the completion of DG Trade's public consultation on the same subject, however, DG Trade has made clear that it proposes to target upstream actors only and that targeting EU-based downstream companies is 'not envisaged'.

DG Trade has also stated that the Commission is considering a 'white list of smelters' on which smelters or refiners may be listed if they are considered somehow 'responsible'.

An incentive-based scheme that fails to impose mandatory due diligence obligations on companies would have an extremely limited impact on the way that the majority of European businesses undertake and report on their supply chain due diligence practices.

1. Does the Commission agree that companies downstream of mineral processors (the refiners or smelters) have a responsibility to source the natural resources that they use in a way that does not contribute to conflict or human rights abuses and that EU companies should at the very least meet the same supply chain due diligence requirements of Section 1502 of the US Dodd Frank Act?

2. Does the Commission agree that voluntary measures and incentive-based schemes will have a very limited impact on how the majority of companies within the EU source their raw materials and natural resources?

3. By adopting a mechanism that requires metal processors to undertake supply chain due diligence, the EU would influence less than 4.5% of global trade flows for tin, tantalum and tungsten. A broader mechanism that requires manufacturers and traders to check their supply chains could influence 85% of global tantalum trade flows. Should the Commission not target companies sufficiently far down the supply chain in a way that influences global trade flows to the greatest possible extent, not in a way that leaves downstream companies and manufacturers free to continue buying natural resources that may have funded human rights abuses?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2014)

Stakeholders responding to the European Commission's public consultation in 2013 overwhelmingly referred to the *OECD Due Diligence Guidance for responsible supply chains of minerals from conflict-affected and high-risk areas* as the appropriate due diligence model for companies to source responsibly from conflict regions. The Guidance represents the broadest possible international consensus on the issue today.

The public consultation, which will be published together with the European Commission proposal, also indicates that a large share of EU downstream companies is already (directly or indirectly) subject to Section 1502 of the US Dodd Frank Act. Compliance is challenging due to the sheer length of supply chains and the identification of the smelter/refiner is considered a weak spot in ongoing serious business efforts to undertake due diligence.

At the present stage of decision-making, the Commission cannot engage further on other matters raised in the Honourable Member's question but would wish to emphasise that the intent of current work is to develop an integrated EU approach to responsible sourcing of minerals with the socioeconomic needs of developing producer countries foremost in mind.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014283/13
alla Commissione
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Abolizione dei dazi doganali per il Pakistan e difficoltà per il settore tessile italiano

In seguito a una proposta della Commissione europea, il Parlamento europeo ha approvato l'estensione, dal 1 º gennaio 2014 sino a fine 2017, del Sistema generalizzato delle preferenze (Sgp), a favore di alcuni paesi extra europei tra i quali il Pakistan.

Nella pratica, questo provvedimento si tramuterà nella quasi totale abolizione dei dazi doganali applicati ai prodotti tessili, destinati all'UE, realizzati in Pakistan. Come sottolineato da diverse associazioni di categoria e rappresentanti del mondo imprenditoriale, vi è il concreto rischio che questo atto normativo comporti dei gravi danni per l'occupazione nel settore tessile europeo e in particolar modo in Italia. Secondo le stime più autorevoli potrebbero essere 120 mila i posti di lavoro a rischio in tutta l'Unione e 40 mila nella sola Italia.

Alla luce di questi dati, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. intende applicare la clausola di salvaguardia che prevede la possibilità di ripristinare i dazi doganali per i prodotti la cui importazione può provocare gravi difficoltà ai produttori europei?

2. Ritiene, in quanto l'UE è il primo donatore di aiuti umanitari al mondo, di rivedere la propria strategia di cooperazione con i paesi terzi tenendo presente le gravi difficoltà economiche che interessano molte delle sue regioni?

3. Intende tutelare la propria industria manifatturiera stilando una lista di settori da proteggere, tra i quali il tessile, alla luce della evidente disparità di regole a cui devono sottostare i produttori europei a differenza dei loro concorrenti extraeuropei?

Risposta di Karel De Gucht a nome della Commissione
(4 marzo 2014)

La Commissione rinvia l'Onorevole deputato alla propria risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-14286/2013.

La Commissione ritiene inoltre che innanzi ai problemi incontrati dall'industria dell'UE esposta alla competizione globale il protezionismo settoriale non sia la risposta appropriata. In sua vece, le azioni imperniate sulla politica industriale dell'UE possono dimostrarsi più efficaci. In proposito, l'iniziativa per la politica industriale specifica che tutte le proposte politiche aventi ripercussioni significative sull'industria dovrebbero essere sottoposte a un'analisi ex-ante per verificarne l'impatto sulla competitività. Nello stesso contesto la Commissione dovrebbe effettuare valutazioni ex-post degli effetti che la legislazione ha sulla competitività (ad esempio, impatto cumulativo della legislazione sulla competitività industriale).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014283/13
to the Commission
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Abolition of customs duties for Pakistan and difficulties for the Italian textile sector

Following a proposal made by the European Commission, the European Parliament has approved the extension, from 1 January 2014 until the end of 2017, of the generalised system of preferences (GSP) for certain non-European countries, including Pakistan.

In practice, this measure will lead to an almost complete abolition of customs duties applied to textile products made in Pakistan and destined for the EU. As various trade associations and business representatives have pointed out, there is a real risk that this legislative measure will seriously harm employment in the European textile sector and Italy in particular. According to the most authoritative projections, 120 thousand jobs could be at risk across the Union and 40 thousand in Italy alone.

In light of this data, could the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Does it intend to apply the safeguard clause, which provides for the possibility of restoring customs duties for imported products that might cause major difficulties for European producers?

2. Does it believe, since the EU is the largest humanitarian aid donor in the world, that it should review its cooperation strategy with third countries, taking into account the major economic difficulties affecting many people in its regions?

3. Does it intend to safeguard its manufacturing industry by drawing up a list of sectors to protect, including the textile sector, in light of the clear disparity of regulations to which European producers are subject in comparison with their non-European competitors?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2014)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the answer to Written Question E-14286/2013.

Also, the Commission considers that sectorial protectionism is not the appropriate response to the problems faced by the EU industry against global competition. In exchange, actions, focused on EU industrial policy can prove more effective. In this regard, the industrial policy initiative specifies that all policy proposals with significant impact on the industry should undergo an *ex-ante* analysis of their impact on competitiveness. Within the same context, the Commission should carry out *ex-post* evaluation of effects of legislation on competitiveness (e.g. cumulative impact of legislation on industrial competitiveness).

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014284/13
aan de Commissie
Patricia van der Kammen (NI) en Lucas Hartong (NI)
(18 december 2013)

Betreft: Niet nakomen van EU-regels door Griekenland wordt niet of nauwelijks bestraft

In het antwoord van commissaris Cioloş op vragen van de parlementaire commissie Begrotingscontrole ([1]) blijkt dat Griekenland vrijwel ongestraft de regels met betrekking tot de landbouwsubsidies aan zijn laars kan blijven lappen. Griekenland heeft uitstel gekregen voor het terugbetalen van 504 miljoen euro aan onterecht gekregen landbouwsubsidies, onder voorwaarde dat het moet zorgen dat de tekortkomingen in zijn landpercelen-identificatiesysteem worden verholpen.

Nu na een audit blijkt dat deze tekortkomingen niet zijn verholpen, wordt Griekenland slechts „gestraft" met een verminderd uitstel van terugbetaling van 25 miljoen euro.

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte dat Griekenland zich nog steeds niet aan de regels houdt om in aanmerking te komen voor landbouwsubsidies([1])?

2. Denkt de Commissie dat de symbolische straf van een verminderd uitstel met 25 miljoen euro de Grieken zal aansporen zich nu wel aan de regels te gaan houden?

3. Waarom brengt de Commissie het bedrag van 504 miljoen euro niet direct in mindering op de landbouwbijdrage of andere bijdragen dan wel EU-steun aan Griekenland?

4. Vindt de Commissie net als de PVV dat het zich blijvend niet houden aan de subsidieregels van sommige lidstaten een zware belediging is voor de belastingbetalers van met name de netto-betalende lidstaten, die dat geld immers hebben opgebracht? Zo nee, hoe omschrijft de Commissie dat dan wel?

5. Is de Commissie nu ook eindelijk tot de conclusie gekomen dat de zeggenschap over het landbouwbeleid inclusief de bijbehorende financiële middelen terug moet naar de lidstaten? Zo nee, waarom niet?

Antwoord van de heer Cioloş namens de Commissie
(24 februari 2014)

In tegenstelling tot wat de geachte Afgevaardigden beweren, is de situatie in Griekenland steeds zeer nauwlettend gevolgd en is Griekenland de lidstaat met relatief het hoogste bedrag aan financiële correcties, zoals ik reeds zowel mondeling als schriftelijk tijdens de Commissie begrotingscontrole van 17 december 2013 heb meegedeeld.

1 en 2. De niet-naleving door Griekenland van de subsidiabiliteitsregels heeft betrekking op een beperkt deel van het landbouwareaal in dat land. Griekenland legt momenteel de laatste hand aan een herziening van de subsidiabiliteit van die landbouwpercelen in het landbouwpercelenidentificatiesysteem („LPIS") ([2]). De teruggevorderde 25 miljoen euro was het volledige bedrag van de opgeschorte financiële correctie in verband met de kwestie van het blijvend grasland. De Commissie beschikt niet over wettelijke middelen om een hoger bedrag terug te vorderen.

3. De Commissie is gebonden aan wettelijke regels die het niet toelaten te handelen zoals de geachte Afgevaardigden voorstellen, want dat zou in feite een dubbele straf betekenen. De opgeschorte correcties worden teruggevorderd en weer in de EU-begroting opgenomen overeenkomstig de geplande termijnen die expliciet in het opschortingsbesluit zijn vastgesteld.

4 en 5. De Commissie is het niet met de geachte Afgevaardigden eens en bevestigt dat zij alle noodzakelijke maatregelen heeft genomen om de EU-begroting te beschermen in de lidstaten waar tekortkomingen of een aanzienlijk aantal fouten zijn geconstateerd, zoals uitvoerig is gerapporteerd in de twee mededelingen die zij tot het Europees Parlement heeft gericht in het kader van de kwijting van de begroting voor 2012 ([3]). Wanneer de lidstaten deze regels niet naleven, worden de belastingbetalers beschermd via de financiële nettocorrecties die de Commissie oplegt om ten onrechte uitgekeerd steungeld terug te vorderen. De lidstaten de volledige zeggenschap geven over het landbouwbeleid, inclusief de daarmee samenhangende financiering, zou niet tot minder fouten leiden.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201312/20131216ATT76142/20131216ATT76142EN.pdf

([2]) Het LPIS is een databank waarin het gehele landbouwareaal (de referentiepercelen) van een lidstaat, alsmede de respectieve subsidiabele oppervlakten van elk referentieperceel, zijn opgeslagen. Het LPIS is gebaseerd op een geografisch informatiesysteem (GIS) met digitaal en geografisch vastgelegde perceelgrenzen, bij voorkeur aan de hand van orthofotografie (luchtfoto's).

([3]) Mededeling van de Commissie aan het Europees Parlement van 30 september 2013 inzake bescherming van de begroting van de Europese Unie tot eind 2012 [COM(2013) 682 final] en Mededeling van de Commissie aan het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 13 december 2013 inzake toepassing van financiële nettocorrecties op de lidstaten in het landbouwbeleid en het cohesiebeleid [COM(2013) 934 draft].

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014284/13
to the Commission
Patricia van der Kammen (NI) and Lucas Hartong (NI)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Non-compliance with EU rules by Greece goes unpunished (or virtually so)

It is evident from Commissioner Cioloş's answer to questions from Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control ([1]) that Greece can continue to turn a blind eye to the rules on agricultural subsidies with scarcely any punishment at all. Greece was granted a deferral on the reimbursement of EUR 504 million in improperly awarded agricultural subsidies, on condition that it took action to remedy the deficiencies in its Land Parcel Identification System.

Following the finding in an audit that these deficiencies have not been remedied, Greece is only being 'punished' with a EUR 25 million reduction in the amount of its reimbursement sum that it may defer.

1. Is the Commission aware that Greece is still failing to comply with the eligibility rules for agricultural subsidies?

2. Does the Commission believe that the symbolic punishment of reducing the deferral by EUR 25 million will encourage the Greeks to actually follow the rules from now on?

3. Why does the Commission not simply reduce the amount of agricultural and other subsidies that Greece receives from the EU by the EUR 504 million overpaid?

4. Does the Commission agree with the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) that the continued failure of some Member States to comply with subsidy rules represents a serious insult to taxpayers, specifically those of the net contributor Member States who, after all, generated that money? If not, how would the Commission describe it?

5. Has the Commission now finally come to the conclusion that control over agricultural policy, including the appurtenant funding, must be returned to the Member States? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(24 February 2014)

Contrary to the Honourable Members' assertion and as already stated orally and in writing to the CONT Committee of 17 December 2013, the situation in Greece has been very closely monitored and Greece is the Member State for which the relative amount of financial corrections is the highest.

1 and 2. Greece's non-compliance with the eligibility rules refers to a limited proportion of its agricultural land. Greece is now finalising the work to re-qualify the eligibility of such land within the LPIS ([2]). The EUR 25 million revoked was the full amount of deferred financial correction relating to the permanent pasture issue. The Commission could not legally have revoked a higher amount.

3. The Commission is bound to act in accordance with its legal rules, which do not allow it to act as suggested by the Honourable Members which would in effect be a double penalty. The deferred corrections will be clawed back to the EU budget, in line with the schedule of instalments expressly provided for in the deferral decision.

4 and 5. The Commission cannot agree with the Honourable Members and confirms it has taken all necessary measures to protect the EU budget in the Member States where deficiencies or material level of errors have been detected, as extensively reported in the two Communications it addressed to the European Parliament within the framework of the Budgetary Discharge for the year 2012 ([3]). When Member States fail to respect the rules, tax payers are protected via the net financial corrections imposed by the Commission to claw back unduly spent aid. Giving full control to the Member States over agricultural policy including the associated funding would not result in less error.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201312/20131216ATT76142/20131216ATT76142EN.pdf

([2]) The Land Parcel Identification System is a database which contains a record of the entire agricultural area (reference parcels) of a Member State and the respective eligible areas of every reference parcel. The LPIS is based on a Geographical Information System (GIS) containing digitised and geo-referenced parcel boundaries which should preferably be based on ortho-imagery (aerial photographs).

([3]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament of 30 September 2013 on the Protection of the EU budget [COM(2013) 682] and Communication of the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of 13 December 2013 on the Application of net financial corrections on Member States for Agriculture and Cohesion Policy [COM(2013) 934].

(Slovenska različica)

Vprašanje za pisni odgovor E-014285/13
za Komisijo
Romana Jordan (PPE)
(18. december 2013)

Zadeva: Seznam sektorjev in delov sektorjev, ki veljajo za izpostavljene tveganju premestitve emisij CO_2

Evropska komisija je napovedala, da bo v okviru zakonodaje o sistemu za trgovanje z emisijami (ETS) pripravila revizijo seznama sektorjev in delov sektorjev, ki veljajo za izpostavljene visokemu tveganju premestitve emisij CO_2 (angl. carbon leakage list) (v nadaljevanju: seznam).

Komisijo sprašujem:

1. Ali komitološki postopek za spremembo seznama že poteka? Če ne, kdaj se bo začel?

2. Kdaj bo novi sklep oziroma seznam objavljen?

3. Katere spremembe seznama pričakuje Komisija?

Odgovor Connie Hedegaard v imenu Komisije
(20. februar 2014)

Evropska komisija je pravno zavezana določiti seznam v zvezi s selitvami emisij CO_2, ki bo veljal od leta 2015 do leta 2019.

O novem seznamu se bo odločilo po postopku komitologije, ki vključuje trimesečni pregled s strani Evropskega parlamenta. Komisija bo seznam dokončno sprejela predvidoma pred koncem leta 2014.

Komisija je v sporočilu Okvir podnebne in energetske politike za obdobje 2020–2030 ([1]) navedla, da si bo prizadevala za zagotovitev stalnosti pri sestavi seznama. Zato namerava Komisija v kratkem Odboru EU za podnebne spremembe predložiti predlog sklepa o pregledu seznama v zvezi s selitvami emisij CO_2, ki bi večinoma ohranil sedanja merila in obstoječe predpostavke.

([1]) COM(2014)0015 z dne 22. januarja 2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014285/13
to the Commission
Romana Jordan (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: The list of sectors or subsectors deemed to be exposed to a risk of carbon leakage

The European Commission has announced that it will prepare, within the framework of the emissions trading scheme (ETS), an audit of the list of sectors and subsectors deemed to be exposed to a significant risk of carbon leakage (hereinafter: the list).

1. Is the comitology procedure for amending the list already underway? If not, when will it begin?

2. When will the new decision, or rather the list, be published?

3. What amendments to the list does the Commission expect?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

The European Commission has a legal obligation to determine a new carbon leakage list to be valid from 2015 to 2019.

The new list will be decided via the comitology procedure, which includes a three-months scrutiny by the European Parliament. Final adoption by the Commission is foreseen before the end of 2014.

The Commission has made clear in its communication on a 2030 policy framework for climate and energy ([1]) that it will strive to guarantee continuity in the composition of the list. To this end the Commission intends shortly to present to the EU Climate Change Committee a draft decision on the review of the carbon leakage list which would by and large maintain the current criteria and existing assumptions.

([1]) COM(2014) 15 of 22 January 2014.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014286/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Eliminati i dazi sulle importazioni di prodotti tessili dal Pakistan: a rischio 40 000 posti di lavoro in Italia

Nel 2010 la Comunità europea ha concesso al Pakistan, in seguito alle fortissime alluvioni che avevano colpito il paese, l'annullamento temporaneo dei dazi sulle esportazioni verso l'UE di prodotti tessili e di abbigliamento. Oggi tale concessione è stata resa definitiva.

La federazione «Sistema Moda Italia» denunciò allora e torna a gran voce a denunciare oggi quanto questa decisione metterà ulteriormente in difficoltà il settore del tessile e dell'abbigliamento europeo già fortemente in crisi: le stime denunciano che ben 120 000 posti di lavoro saranno messi a rischio in tutta Europa, 40 000 dei quali solo in Italia.

Considerando quanto sopra esposto;

preso atto che secondo l'ISTAT il prossimo anno il 30 % dei cittadini italiani rischia di precipitare sotto la soglia di povertà e che il nostro indicatore che monitora il fenomeno è di 5,1 punti percentuali più elevato rispetto a quello medio europeo (pari al 24,8 %);

può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se non ritiene che con queste concessioni si crei uno squilibrio nel mercato interno e quindi sia necessario rivedere il sistema di dazi concesso al Pakistan?

2. come tutelerà le aziende e i lavoratori europei e italiani che, ugualmente in crisi rispetto a quelli pakistani, saranno colpiti da tali decisioni?

3. se non crede sia giunto il momento di sostenere il manifatturiero europeo con fatti, con decisioni politiche e tecniche atte a tutelare il mercato interno e i propri cittadini, piuttosto che solo con parole seguite da proposte normative esclusivamente in favore di paesi terzi, ove, tra l'altro, costantemente si continuano a calpestare ed ignorare i diritti fondamentali dell'uomo?

Risposta di Karel De Gucht a nome della Commissione
(11 febbraio 2014)

Il Pakistan ha diritto a fruire del Sistema delle preferenze generalizzate SPG+ poiché ottempera ai criteri stabiliti nel regolamento (UE) n. 978/2012 sul SPG. Tutti i beneficiari del SPG+ sottostanno al meccanismo di monitoraggio accresciuto stabilito nell'ambito delle regole del SPG riformato per consentire al sistema di corrispondere all'obiettivo prefissato, segnatamente di promuovere, attraverso gli scambi, il rispetto dei diritti umani e del lavoro e lo sviluppo sostenibile nei paesi in via di sviluppo.

Se le preferenze dovessero causare un grave deterioramento della situazione finanziaria dei produttori unionali di certi prodotti, può essere avviata un'inchiesta di salvaguardia ai sensi dell'articolo 22 del regolamento che potrebbe concludersi con il ripristino delle tariffe doganali normali. Il regolamento delegato (UE) n. 1083/2013 della Commissione stabilisce le regole procedurali per tale indagine.

La Commissione sostiene attivamente l'industria europea del tessile e dell'abbigliamento: di recente è stato presentato un piano d'azione per i settori della moda e dei prodotti d'alta gamma che è stato sottoscritto dall'industria.

Il programma COSME prevede un'azione concreta, in cui rientrano misure volte a incoraggiare la diffusione di soluzioni creative tra le PMI legate al settore della moda accrescendo il ruolo del design nelle imprese manifatturiere. Nell'ambito del COSME la Commissione finanzierà diversi progetti finalizzati all'internazionalizzazione delle PMI europee del settore tessile mediante studi sulle opportunità di mercato nei paesi terzi e l'organizzazione di incontri d'affari all'estero.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014286/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Import duties on textile products from Pakistan abolished: 40 000 jobs at risk in Italy

In 2010, following the very heavy floods that struck Pakistan, the European Union temporarily suspended duties on textile products and clothing exported to the EU. This suspension has now been made permanent.

The 'Sistema Moda Italia' federation was critical at the time and it is now once again vocally critical of how much this decision will cause further difficulties for the European textile and clothing sector, which is already deep in crisis: according to estimates, some 120 000 jobs will be at risk in Europe, including 40 000 in Italy alone.

According to Istat, in 2014 30% of Italian citizens will be at risk of falling under the breadline and our poverty indicator is 5.1% higher than the European average (24.8%).

1. Does the Commission not think that these concessions distort the Italian market and that therefore the system of duties granted to Pakistan needs to be reviewed?

2. How will it protect European and Italian companies and workers which, just as much in crisis as their Pakistani counterparts, will be affected by these decisions?

3. Does the Commission not think that it is high time to support European manufacturing with action and with political and technical decisions that safeguard the internal market and EU citizens, rather than merely with words followed by legislative proposals that only benefit third countries, where, among other things, fundamental human rights are oppressed and disregarded.

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

Pakistan is entitled to receive GSP+ preferences because it complies with the criteria that are provided in Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 on GSP. All GSP+ beneficiaries are subject to the enhanced monitoring mechanism that has been established under the reformed GSP rules to allow the scheme to serve its intended purpose, namely, to promote through trade, the respect of human, labour rights and sustainable development in developing countries.

If preferences were to cause a serious deterioration of the financial situation of the EU producers of certain products, a safeguard investigation may be opened under Article 22 of the regulation, which could end with the reinstatement of the normal tariff duties. The Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1083/2013 sets out the procedural rules of such an investigation.

The Commission actively supports the European textile and clothing industry: an Action Plan for the fashion and high-end industries has recently been presented and is endorsed by the industry.

The COSME programme foresees concrete action, including measures to encourage the uptake of creative solutions by fashion-led SMEs by increasing the role of design in manufacturing companies. Under COSME, the Commission will finance a number of projects aiming at the internationalisation of European SMEs of the textile sector via market opportunity studies on third countries and the organisation of business meetings abroad.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014287/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Adozioni internazionali: ventisei coppie, tra le quali una di Treviso, italiane bloccate in Congo

Dal 13 Novembre ventisei coppie italiane, tra le quali una di Treviso, sono bloccate in un orfanotrofio di Kinshasa, nella Repubblica democratica del Congo e non possono rientrare in Italia con i trentadue bambini, che hanno adottato nel rispetto delle normative internazionali vigenti in tema di adozioni. Questa situazione, secondo l'Ufficio immigrazione della Repubblica democratica del Congo, che ha deciso di non firmare i visti di uscita dei bambini, si deve alle irregolarità procedurali di alcune nazioni, tra le quali non figura però l'Italia.

Genitori e figli bloccati nell'orfanotrofio congolese stanno vivendo una situazione ai limiti dell'emergenza: chiusi in uno stanzone sono privi di acqua e di elettricità, alcuni hanno terminato le scorte dei medicinali salva-vita e, come se non bastasse, chi aveva preso un paio di settimane di ferie per andare a prendere il figlio è stato licenziato.

Può la Commissione precisare quanto segue:

1. È a conoscenza di questi gravissimi fatti?

2. Come intende agire presso il governo africano per sbloccare la situazione e consentire alle coppie di ritornare in Italia con i bambini che hanno adottato seguendo la normale procedura per le adozioni internazionali?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014288/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Adozioni internazionali: ventisei coppie, tra le quali una di Treviso, italiane bloccate in Congo

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Può l'Alto Rappresentante precisare quanto segue:

1. È a conoscenza di questi gravissimi fatti?

2. Come intende agire presso il governo africano per sbloccare la situazione e consentire alle coppie di ritornare in Italia con i bambini che hanno adottato seguendo la normale procedura per le adozioni internazionali?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014350/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Mario Borghezio (NI)
(19 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Intervento umanitario per l'adozione di bambini congolesi

In riferimento al caso umano in cui si vengono a trovare sia i genitori adottandi, sia i bambini congolesi il cui trasferimento in Italia presso le famiglie di adozione è tuttora bloccato, senza reali motivi, dalle autorità di governo della Repubblica Democratica del Congo (RdC);

può l'Alto Rappresentante intervenire sul caso con le autorità della RdC, al fine di ottenere, se possibile, una rapida soluzione positiva che consenta alle famiglie e ai bambini congolesi adottandi di poter felicemente trascorrere le festività natalizie in Italia?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014445/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(23 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Adozioni internazionali — Famiglie italiane bloccate in Congo

26 famiglie italiane sono bloccate nella Repubblica democratica del Congo da quasi due mesi. Infatti, il 25 settembre 2013 le autorità congolesi hanno deciso di sospendere tutte le procedure di adozione internazionale già avviate, comprese quelle riguardanti genitori adottivi italiani. La situazione si è poi complicata e aggravata per il fatto che alcuni visti dei genitori italiani sono giunti a scadenza e altri lo saranno a breve.

Ne consegue che alcuni cittadini italiani potrebbero essere rimpatriati a breve, senza i figli che hanno adottato e che si aspettano di essere accolti dalla famiglia che considerano già la propria.

Il benessere di ogni bambino e la tutela degli interessi e dei diritti dei minori sono aspetti di assoluto rilievo e principi cardine dell'Unione europea.

Considerando che la tutela del diritto del minore a una vita famigliare e il far sì che i bambini non siano costretti a vivere in orfanotrofio sono elementi prioritari per il Parlamento europeo, ribaditi nella sua risoluzione del 19 gennaio 2011 sull'adozione internazionale nell'Unione europea, può l'Alto Rappresentante per la Politica estera rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. come intende fare chiarezza sulla situazione?

2. Quali iniziative intende porre in essere al fine di sbloccare tale situazione e permettere ai cittadini italiani di rientrare in Italia con i bambini adottati?

3. Quali iniziative intende promuovere al fine di creare un quadro legislativo chiaro nell'ambito delle adozioni internazionali?

Risposta congiunta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(27 febbraio 2014)

La delegazione dell'UE a Kinshasa segue da vicino la situazione delle famiglie oggetto dell'interrogazione scritta. Attualmente non esiste una legislazione a livello di Unione europea in materia di adozioni. La questione è regolamentata dalle leggi nazionali e da convenzioni internazionali. Spetta alle autorità nazionali di ogni Stato membro stabilire le regole in materia di misure preparatorie, decisione di adozione o il suo annullamento.

In qualità di membro della Conferenza dell'Aja sul diritto privato internazionale, l'Unione europea partecipa attivamente allo sviluppo e alla promozione di strumenti giuridici multilaterali per tutelare i diritti dei bambini. In particolare, la Commissione sorveglia gli sviluppi in relazione alla convenzione dell'Aja del 1993 sulla protezione dei minori e sulla cooperazione in materia di adozione internazionale, di cui tutti gli Stati membri dell'Unione europea sono parti. L'UE in quanto tale non è autorizzata a firmare e ratificare la convenzione.

Attualmente, gli Stati membri interessati non hanno chiesto all'UE di svolgere un ruolo di mediatrice. La Commissione continuerà a seguire la situazione da vicino, in collaborazione con le ambasciate dell'UE a Kinshasa.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014287/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: International adoptions: 26 Italian couples, including a couple from Treviso, being held in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Since 13 November 2013, 26 Italian couples, including a couple from Treviso, have been held at an orphanage in Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and are not able to return to Italy with the 32 children they have adopted in accordance with applicable international law on adoption. According to the Immigration Office of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has decided not to sign the children's exit visas, this situation is down to procedural irregularities on the part of several countries; Italy, however, is not one of them.

The parents and children held in the Congolese orphanage are in a situation bordering on an emergency: they are being kept in a large room, with no water or electricity, some have run out of vital supplies of medication and, as if that were not enough, those who had taken a couple of weeks' holiday to go to collect their child have lost their jobs.

1. Is the Commission aware of this very serious situation?

2. What action will it take vis-à-vis the Congolese Government to resolve the situation and allow the couples to return to Italy with the children they have adopted in accordance with the normal procedure for international adoptions?

Question for written answer E-014288/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — International adoptions: 26 Italian couples, including a couple from Treviso, being held in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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The parents and children held in the Congolese orphanage are in a situation bordering on an emergency: they are being kept in a large room, with no water or electricity, some have run out of vital supplies of medication and, as if that were not enough, those who had taken a couple of weeks holiday to go to collect their child have lost their jobs.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of this very serious situation?

2. What action will she take vis-à-vis the Congolese Government to resolve the situation and allow the couples to return to Italy with the children they have adopted in accordance with the normal procedure for international adoptions?

Question for written answer E-014350/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Mario Borghezio (NI)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Humanitarian action for the adoption of Congolese children

With reference to the situation faced by both prospective adoptive parents and Congolese children, whose transfer to their adoptive families in Italy is still being blocked by government authorities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for no real reason;

can the Vice-President/High Representative intervene with the authorities in the DRC to reach a quick and positive outcome that will enable these families and the Congolese children to spend the Christmas holidays happily together in Italy?

Question for written answer E-014445/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — International adoptions — Italian families stranded in the Democratic Republic of Congo

On 25 September 2013, the Congolese authorities suspended all international adoption procedures that had already been initiated, including those involving prospective adoptive parents from Italy. As a result, 26 Italian families have now been stranded in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for almost two months. The situation has now been further complicated by the fact that the visas of some of the Italian parents have expired, and others will do so in the near future.

Consequently, a number of Italian citizens could soon be forced to return to Italy without their adopted children, who have been looking forward to the day when they are welcomed into families which already regard them as one of their own.

The welfare of every child and the protection of children's interests and rights are two of the European Union's most fundamental principles.

Given that protecting a child's right to a family life and ensuring that no child is forced to live in an orphanage form two of the European Parliament's key priorities, as it reaffirmed in its resolution of 19 January 2011 on international adoption in the European Union, can the High Representative answer the following questions:

1. How does she intend to clarify the situation?

2. What steps does she plan to take in order to resolve this situation and enable the Italian citizens currently stranded in the DRC to return to Italy with their adopted children?

3. How does she intend to foster the establishment of a clear legal framework on international adoptions?

Joint answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2014)

The EU Delegation in Kinshasa closely follows the situation of the families referred to in the question. There is currently no European Union legislation on adoption. This matter is regulated by national laws and international conventions. It is for the national authorities in each EU Member State to establish rules regarding preparatory measures, adoption to adoption or its annulment.

As a member of the Hague Conference on Private International Law, the European Union is actively involved in developing and promoting multilateral legal instruments for the protection of children's rights. In particular, the Commission monitors the developments in relation to the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption, to which all the Member States of the European Union are party. The EU as such is not entitled to sign and ratify the Convention.

For the time being, the EU has not been requested by the concerned Member States to play any mediating role. The Commission will continue to follow the situation closely in liaison with EU Embassies in Kinshasa.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014290/13
to the Commission
Robert Sturdy (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Broadband for all

On 17 October 2013 the Commission announced that 100% of the EU had broadband coverage, thanks to the ability of satellite broadband to reach remote areas. Now that this has been achieved, some are concerned that there will be less focus on continuing to develop other methods of supplying broadband (fixed or mobile) and more time and resources will be dedicated to other areas of the Digital Agenda. This is worrying because satellite broadband can in some cases be subject to higher installation fees and other costs when compared to other types of broadband such as fixed line or mobile broadband.

1. What is the Commission doing to continue to develop and improve fixed and mobile broadband?

2. Has there been a cost assessment of the ability of EU citizens to access satellite broadband? If so, is satellite broadband affordable for all EU citizens?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

The broadband policy of the Commission is technology neutral and targets all European territory. Concerning the broadband coverage in the EU the Commission has set out an ambitious target for (i) basic broadband to be available to all Europeans by 2013 and by 2020, (ii) for all Europeans have access to much higher Internet speeds of above 30 Mbps and (iii) for 50% or more of European households subscribe to Internet connections above 100 Mbps. To achieve these goals, the Commission has measures to promote investment in NGA networks while enhancing competition, reducing the cost of roll-out of high speed networks and the coordination of radio spectrum in Europe. In addition the Commission published the revised first guidelines for the application of EU State aid rules to the broadband sector in January 2013. Moreover, Cohesion policy funding envisaged for ICT and broadband-related investments in the period 2007-2013 amounts to EUR 14.5 billion. In the next programming period ICT and broadband will be one of the four main areas on which Member States will have to concentrate the use of European Structural Funds, which should lead to larger expenditures on ICT than in in the last period.

Retail prices of commercial offerings of satellite based products vary: some have dropped significantly during the past years (around 20 Euro per month for 2 Mbps download), but some providers still keep satellite-based retail products at little higher prices compared to fixed technologies. The website http://www.broadbandforall.eu gives information about the satellite providers and their prices in each EU country.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014291/13
à la Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Ré-industrialisation de l'Europe

Alors que la réindustrialisation de l'Europe est une priorité dans nombre d'États membres, l'Union européenne a décidé de prendre des mesures (seulement provisoires) anti-dumping contre les panneaux solaires chinois.

D'autres industries et secteurs sont en danger (acier, aluminium, etc.) face à la concurrence des États n'appliquant pas les normes sociales, fiscales, environnementales élevées de l'Europe, la zone économique la moins protégée du monde.

Quelles mesures fortes et pérennes pour nos emplois, la Commission compte-t-elle prendre?

Réponse donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(26 février 2014)

Quelque 30 millions d'emplois dans l'UE dépendent de nos ventes dans le reste du monde. La crise économique a montré que le commerce peut contribuer à la croissance économique sans pour autant peser sur des finances publiques soumises à des contraintes sévères. Toutefois, l'efficacité des flux d'investissement et des flux commerciaux qui générèrent de la croissance dépend du degré d'ouverture et d'équité des marchés. Si les négociations entamées en matière d'échanges et d'investissements sont essentielles en vue d'ouvrir de nouveaux débouchés aux entreprises de l'Union, la Commission est également déterminée à veiller à la bonne mise en œuvre des droits que les réglementations existantes confèrent à l'Union.

La Commission agit avec fermeté contre les pratiques déloyales et n'hésite pas à prendre des mesures lorsque de telles pratiques sont constatées, notamment en cas de stratégies de tarification anti-concurrentielle, de subventions ou d'autres distorsions induites par un État. L'engagement d'ouvrir les marchés est tenu grâce à la capacité d'agir contre les pratiques commerciales anti-concurrentielles, en ayant recours — si nécessaire — à des mesures antidumping et antisubvention. La Commission continuera d'appliquer pleinement sa stratégie d'accès aux marchés afin de surveiller la situation et de prendre les mesures requises pour faire obstacle aux décisions des pays tiers qui sont en infraction avec les engagements bilatéraux ou les engagements pris dans le cadre de l'Organisation mondiale du commerce (OMC). En cas d'échec de toute autre forme d'intervention, la Commission défend également les intérêts de l'UE à travers le système de règlement des différends de l'OMC.

La politique commerciale que la Commission met en œuvre vise non seulement à améliorer l'accès des exportateurs européens au marché, mais aussi à faire en sorte que les pays tiers respectent les règles et que les importations entrant dans l'UE soient commercialisées à des prix équitables. Dans le cas de l'acier par exemple, sept enquêtes antidumping sont en cours, et 39 mesures sont actuellement en vigueur (qu'il s'agisse de mesures antidumping ou antisubvention).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014291/13
to the Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Reindustrialisation of Europe

At a time when several Member States are making the reindustrialisation of Europe a priority, the European Union has decided to adopt (only temporary) anti-dumping measures against Chinese solar panels.

Other industries and sectors (steel, aluminium etc.) are under threat from competition from states which do not apply the high social, fiscal and environmental standards that Europe does, which is the least protected economic area in the world.

What tough, sustainable measures does the Commission intend to take?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(26 February 2014)

Around 30 million jobs in the EU depend on sales to the rest of the world. The economic crisis has highlighted that trade can contribute to increase economic growth without drawing on severely constrained public finances. However, efficient investment and trade flows that generate growth are dependent on open markets and a level playing field. While the trade and investment negotiations that have been launched are essential to provide new opportunities for EU businesses, the Commission is also committed to ensure the robust enforcement of the EU's rights under existing rules.

The Commission keeps a firm hand against unfair trade, and does not hesitate to take action when unfair trade practices occur, such as anti-competitive pricing behaviours, subsidies or other state-induced distortions. The commitment to open markets is upheld by the capacity to act against anti-competitive trade practices, using anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures when necessary. The Commission will continue to make full use of its Market Access Strategy to monitor, and take appropriate action to challenge measures by third countries that violate World Trade Organisation (WTO) or bilateral commitments. When all other interventions fail, the Commission also defends EU interests through the WTO dispute settlement.

Through the implementation of its Trade policy, the Commission, in addition to improving market access to European exporters, is also ensuring that third countries are playing by the rules and that the imports that enter the EU are traded at fair prices. As an example, for steel, there are 7 ongoing anti-dumping investigations, with 39 measures currently in force (both in terms of anti-dumping and anti-subsidy).

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014292/13
à la Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Étiquetage des produits bovins issus d'animaux clonés

L'étiquetage des produits bovins issus d'animaux clonés (viande et lait) est en débat parce que visiblement les citoyens européens en consomment déjà sans le savoir.

La Commission doit présenter un nouveau paquet législatif sur le sujet.

Considérant les impératifs de santé publique, le souhait des consommateurs d'une agriculture enracinée localement et de qualité, le refus massif des pratiques contraires à la nature, telles que le clonage ou les productions OGM, qu'attend la Commission pour interdire purement et simplement l'importation de cette viande et sa consommation?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(7 février 2014)

Le clonage pour la production alimentaire n'est pas pratiqué dans l'Union, mais il l'est dans certains pays tiers sur des animaux d'élite ayant des performances remarquables en matière de production de matériel de reproduction (sperme, ovules, embryons).

Dans l'Union, les aliments issus d'animaux clonés font l'objet d'une procédure d'autorisation préalable à la mise sur le marché, conformément à la législation en vigueur ([1]). Une telle demande d'autorisation n'a encore jamais été engagée et, par conséquent, aucune autorisation de cette nature n'a été accordée. C'est pourquoi aucun aliment issu d'animaux clonés n'a été commercialisé dans l'Union.

Le 18 décembre 2013, la Commission a adopté deux propositions ([2]) de directive sur le clonage. Ces directives interdiraient le recours à la technique du clonage dans l'Union pour les animaux d'élevage (des espèces bovine, porcine, ovine, caprine et équine), les importations d'animaux clonés et la mise sur le marché de l'Union de denrées alimentaires obtenues à partir de ces animaux.

([1]) Règlement (CE) n° 258/97 du Parlement et du Conseil du 27 janvier 1997 relatif aux nouveaux aliments et aux nouveaux ingrédients alimentaires, (JO L 43 du 14.2.1997).
([2]) COM(2013) 893 final et COM(2013) 892 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014292/13
to the Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Labelling beef and veal products from cloned animals

The labelling of beef and veal products from cloned animals (meat and milk) is being debated because European citizens are obviously already consuming these products without being aware of this.

The Commission must table a new legislative package on this matter.

In view of public health requirements, consumers' desire for good-quality agriculture with strong local roots, and the large-scale rejection of practices incompatible with nature, such as cloning or GMO production, what is stopping the Commission from quite simply banning the importation of this meat and its consumption?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(7 February 2014)

Cloning for food production is not taking place in the Union. Yet it is performed in some third countries on elite animals with outstanding performance to produce reproductive material (semen, ova, embryos).

In the Union food from animal clones is under current law ([1]) subject to a pre-market authorisation. No such application has ever been submitted. So no authorisation was granted. Therefore food from animal clones has never been marketed in the Union.

On 18 December 2013 the Commission adopted two proposals ([2]) for directives on cloning. These directives would prohibit the use of the cloning technique in the Union for farm animals (bovine, ovine, caprine, porcine and equine species), imports of animal clones and the marketing of their food in the Union.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 258/97 of Parliament and of the Council of 27 January 1997 concerning novel foods and novel food ingredients, OJ L 43, 14.2.1997.
([2]) COM(2013) 893 final and COM(2013) 892 final.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014293/13
à la Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Procédure budgétaire contre la Croatie

La Commission a proposé d'ouvrir une procédure budgétaire contre la Croatie, pays entré dans l'Union européenne, rappelons-le, le 1er juillet 2013.

Le déficit du gouvernement croate a atteint 5 % du PIB en 2012 et la dette publique s'élève à 55,5 % du PIB national.

1. Les institutions européennes connaissaient-elle la situation économique et financière de la Croatie avant l'élargissement? Pourquoi n'en ont-elles pas tiré les conséquences avant?

2. Pourquoi ne pas avoir retardé l'entrée de la Croatie dans l'Union et ainsi, évité de faire peser sur elle le risque de sanctions financières?

Réponse donnée par M. Rehn au nom de la Commission
(12 février 2014)

Avant son adhésion à l'UE le 1er juillet 2013, la situation économique et financière de la Croatie était évaluée tous les ans dans les rapports de suivi inclus dans les «paquets élargissement» de la Commission. La situation économique de la Croatie était également abordée dans le cadre de l'évaluation par la Commission du programme économique de préadhésion remis chaque année par le gouvernement croate entre 2004 et 2012, évaluation rendue publique. Ces évaluations effectuées par la Commission pointaient régulièrement la nécessité que la Croatie prenne des mesures afin de parvenir à une viabilité budgétaire à moyen terme. Les critères économiques d'adhésion ne comprennent aucun objectif chiffré en matière de finances publiques.

Chaque année à l'automne, les «paquets élargissement» étaient transmis au Parlement européen et au Conseil.

Pendant le premier semestre de 2013, la Croatie a participé de manière informelle et volontaire au Semestre européen, le cycle de coordination des politiques économiques de l'UE. Cette année, la Croatie participera pleinement au Semestre européen et devra soumettre ses programmes de réforme nationale et de convergence en avril 2014. Le 28 janvier 2014, le Conseil a décidé d'ouvrir une procédure de déficit excessif, fixant l'échéance pour la correction du déficit à 2016 au plus tard ([1]).

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ecofin/140823.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014293/13
to the Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Budgetary proceedings against Croatia

The Commission has proposed instituting budgetary proceedings against Croatia, which joined the European Union, lest we forget, on 1 July 2013.

Croatia's government deficit reached 5% of GDP in 2012, with its government debt amounting to 55.5% of GDP.

1. Were European institutions aware of Croatia's economic and financial situation prior to enlargement? Why did they fail to draw the consequences from this beforehand?

2. Why did they not delay Croatia's accession to the EU, thereby averting the risk of having financial sanctions hanging over it?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

Prior to the accession to the EU on 1 July 2013, the economic and financial situation in Croatia was assessed on an annual basis in the progress reports which form part of the Commission's so-called 'enlargement packages'. The economic situation was also part of the Commission's publicly available assessments of the Pre-accession Economic Programmes which the Croatian government submitted to the Commission each year from 2004 to 2012. The Commission's assessments regularly pointed out that Croatia needed to take measures to achieve medium-term fiscal sustainability. The economic criteria for accession do not include numerical targets for public finances.

The 'enlargement packages' were transmitted to the European Parliament and the Council each year in the autumn.

In the first half of 2013, Croatia participated informally and on a voluntary basis in the European Semester, the EU economic policy coordination cycle. This year Croatia will fully participate in the European Semester and has to submit its National Reform and Convergence programme in April 2014. On 28 January 2014, the Council decided to open an Excessive Deficit Procedure, setting a deadline for deficit correction by 2016 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ecofin/140823.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014294/13
à la Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Production alimentaire en danger et législation européenne

Les autorités danoises de l'alimentation ont annoncé la mise en œuvre d'une directive qui impose aux boulangers de réduire l'usage d'un dérivé de la cannelle dans leur pâtisserie traditionnelle, appelée kanelsnegl.

La directive applique la limite de 15 mg/kg dans les produits cuits et 50 mg/kg pour les gâteaux saisonniers et traditionnels. Or, le kanelsnegl, qui ne peut pas être considéré comme traditionnel, devra donc être modifié et, selon les boulangers, perdre en goût.

La Commission pourrait-elle préciser ce qui justifie cette règle?

Combien encore de spécialités et produits alimentaires forts en goût vont-ils disparaître en raison des insipides directives européennes?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(7 février 2014)

La coumarine est une substance indésirable naturellement présente dans la cannelle. Selon l'évaluation de l'EFSA ([1]), la coumarine peut causer des lésions hépatiques; l'EFSA lui a attribué une dose journalière admissible de 0,1 mg/kg de poids corporel (en 2004 et 2008). Sur la base de cette évaluation, le règlement (CE) n° 1334/2008 ([2]) relatif aux arômes et à certains ingrédients alimentaires possédant des propriétés aromatisantes fixe des teneurs maximales applicables à la coumarine dans certains aliments afin de protéger le consommateur. Les teneurs établies prennent en considération les produits traditionnels et saisonniers.

Le Danemark est responsable de l'application du règlement sur son territoire. Cela comporte, par exemple, la définition des produits qui doivent être considérés comme traditionnels, ou saisonniers ou non saisonniers au Danemark.

Il existe sur le marché plusieurs types de cannelle ayant des teneurs en coumarine différentes. La Commission estime qu'il est possible de continuer à produire au Danemark de la pâtisserie ayant un goût spécial en respectant les limites fixées dans le règlement et que ces produits peuvent donc continuer d'être mis à la disposition des consommateurs.

([1]) Autorité européenne de sécurité des aliments.
([2]) JO L 354 du 31.02.2008, p 34.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014294/13
to the Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Food production under threat and European legislation

The Danish food authorities have announced the implementation of a directive forcing bakers to reduce the amount of a cinnamon derivative used in their traditional pastry, the *kanelsnegl* (cinnamon whirl).

The directive imposes a limit of 15 mg/kg for baked goods and 50 mg/kg for seasonal and traditional cakes. However, this means that the cinnamon whirl, which cannot be considered traditional, will have to be modified, detracting from its taste in the bakers' view.

Could the Commission explain the justification for this regulation?

How many more distinctive-tasting specialities and food products are going to disappear due to bland European directives?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(7 February 2014)

Coumarin is a naturally occurring undesirable substance present in cinnamon. EFSA ([1]) evaluated coumarin indicating that it can cause liver damage and allocated an Acceptable Daily Intake of 0.1 mg/kg body weight (in 2004 and 2008). On the basis of this assessment Regulation (EC) No 1334/2008 ([2]) on flavourings and certain food ingredients with flavouring properties lays down maximum levels for coumarin in certain foods in order to protect the consumer. The levels established take into account traditional and seasonal products.

Denmark is responsible for enforcing the regulation in its territory. This includes for example the decision about which products are to be considered traditional or seasonal or not in Denmark.

Several kinds of cinnamon exist on the market with different contents of coumarin. The Commission considers that it is possible to continue producing the distinctive tasting pastry in Denmark complying with the limits laid down in the regulation and that therefore these products can continue being available to consumers.

([1]) European Food Safety Authority.
([2]) OJ L 354/34, 31.2.2008.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014295/13
à la Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: Rapport du Conseil européen — Droits de l'homme

Nils Muižnieks, commissaire aux Droits de l'homme du Conseil de l'Europe, a présenté un rapport intitulé «Safeguarding Human Rights under Austerity», dans lequel il indique que l'austérité appliquée en réponse à la crise économique a provoqué des «dommages collatéraux» pour les groupes les plus vulnérables.

Le rapport présente des recommandations visant à réintroduire la question des Droits de l'homme dans les politiques mises en œuvre par les gouvernements, l'Union européenne, les organisations nationales, le FMI et la Banque mondiale, entre autres.

La Commission fait partie de la troïka qui a imposé ces coûteuses politiques aux États membres dans le seul but de faire survivre son projet fédéral européen ainsi que la monnaie unique — l'euro –, par idéologie.

Dans quelle mesure, la Commission se considère-t-elle comme responsable de cette situation?

Réponse donnée par M. Rehn au nom de la Commission
(28 février 2014)

La Commission a connaissance du récent rapport du Conseil de l'Europe intitulé «Safeguarding Human Rights under Austerity». Mais elle est globalement consciente et se soucie des défis posés par la crise et par les mesures d'assainissement budgétaire qui sont nécessaires pour faire face aux déficits budgétaires publics, au regard des difficultés que de telles mesures entraînent et de la cohésion sociale. Elle accorde une grande attention à l'évolution de la situation sociale et à l'impact social des mesures arrêtées dans les États membres, y compris dans les pays participant aux programmes, et elle est pleinement déterminée à soutenir adéquatement les catégories les plus vulnérables de la société.

Comme le soulignent les enquêtes annuelles sur la croissance pour 2013 et 2014, la Commission recommande aux États membres de concevoir l'assainissement budgétaire de telle sorte qu'il soit possible de réduire au minimum les effets négatifs qu'il risque d'avoir sur les catégories à faible revenu, notamment en prêtant attention à l'influence de la politique budgétaire sur l'équité sociale, et de préserver les perspectives de croissance, notamment en protégeant les investissements dans l'éducation et en modernisant les systèmes de protection sociale. Les responsables politiques ont les moyens d'influer sur les effets distributifs de l'assainissement budgétaire grâce à des choix judicieux concernant le dosage des mesures en matière de dépenses et de recettes, leur conception et leur ciblage.

La Commission rappelle également à l'Honorable Parlementaire que les programmes d'ajustement économique adoptés en réaction à la crise économique et financière actuelle sont conçus dans le plein respect des droits fondamentaux. Il convient d'ajouter que même si les États membres sont tenus, lorsqu'ils appliquent la législation de l'UE, de respecter les dispositions de la Charte des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne, la conformité des mesures nationales adoptées dans le cadre de ces programmes avec les autres obligations internationales prévues en matière de Droits de l'homme relève de leur responsabilité exclusive.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014295/13
to the Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Council of Europe report on human rights

Nils Muižnieks, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, presented a report entitled 'Safeguarding Human Rights under Austerity', in which he states that the austerity measures implemented in response to the economic crisis have inflicted 'collateral damage' on the most vulnerable groups.

The report puts forward recommendations aimed at reintroducing the issue of human rights as part of the policies implemented by governments, the European Union, national organisations, the IMF and World Bank, to name a few.

The Commission is part of the troika which has imposed these damaging policies on Member States with the sole aim of maintaining the survival of its European federal project and of the single currency — the euro — out of ideological conviction.

To what extent does the Commission believe that it is responsible for this situation?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

The Commission is aware of the recent report by the Council of Europe on 'Safeguarding Human Rights under Austerity'. But the Commission is overall aware and sensitive to the challenges posed by the crisis and by the fiscal consolidation measures necessary to address public budget deficits, in terms of hardship and social cohesion. It is paying great attention to social developments and to the social impact of measures decided in Member States, including in programme countries, and is fully committed to ensuring adequate support the most vulnerable groups of society.

As stressed in the Annual Growth Surveys for 2013 and 2014, the Commission recommends Member States to devise fiscal consolidation in such a way to minimise adverse effects on low-income groups, notably by paying attention to the influence of fiscal policy on social equity, and to preserve future growth potential, including by protecting investment in education and by modernising social protection systems. Policy-makers do have options to affect the distributional impact of consolidation by selecting the appropriate mix of expenditure and revenue measures, their design and targeting.

The Commission also recalls the Honourable Member that the economic adjustment programmes adopted in response to the current economic and financial crisis are designed in full respect of fundamental rights. Moreover, while when implementing EC law Member States have to respect the provisions of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the compliance of national measures adopted in the framework of these programmes with other international human rights obligations falls under the sole responsibility of Member States.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014296/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Irregolarità nella procedura di Valutazione Ambientale Strategica in Friuli-Venezia Giulia

A Stregna, un comune italiano della provincia di Udine in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, nel 2012 l'amministrazione comunale ha avviato l'iter per una variante al Piano Regolatore Generale Comunale. Il documento, da poco approvato, prevede di rendere edificabile una vasta porzione di territorio agricolo inizialmente inedificabile, comprese ampie superfici a prato stabile e boschive. Fin da subito sono state presentate numerose osservazioni di contrarietà alla variante urbanistica, anche da alcune associazioni del territorio, compresa la maggiore rappresentanza provinciale degli agricoltori. Tra i dubbi sollevati, si segnala che la variante sostanziale non è supportata da una corretta e completa procedura di Valutazione Ambientale Strategica, così come prevedono la direttiva 2001/42/CE e il decreto legislativo n. 152/2006 di recepimento, in particolare:

— non contiene una valutazione corretta e oggettiva degli impatti ascrivibili alle azioni della variante;

— non riconosce il valore e la vulnerabilità degli ambiti assoggettati alla variante, interessati dalla presenza di speciali caratteristiche paesaggistiche e ambientali (habitat di interesse comunitario da salvaguardare ai sensi della direttiva comunitaria habitat 92/43/CEE);

— è priva di valutazioni attendibili in ordine ai criteri fondamentali fissati dall'allegato II della direttiva comunitaria e dall'allegato 1 alla parte seconda del decreto legislativo n. 152/2006 di recepimento;

— è priva degli atti di competenza dell'autorità competente e non prevede alcuna richiesta di pareri dei soggetti competenti in materia ambientale;

— non è stata preventivamente messa a disposizione del pubblico interessato affinché possa esprimersi.

Nonostante ciò, pur recependo le riserve regionali e riducendo l'edificabilità a circa 20 ettari di territorio agricolo, la variante urbanistica è stata approvata e confermata dalla giunta regionale.

In considerazione di quanto sopra indicato, può la Commissione far sapere se nel caso in esame:

1. ritiene che la direttiva 2001/42/CE sia stata correttamente considerata e applicata nella procedura di variante sostanziale;

2. se il mancato recepimento della direttiva 2001/42/CE possa invalidare l'atto di approvazione della variante?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(20 febbraio 2014)

Dalle informazioni fornite dall'onorevole deputato risulta che la procedura di valutazione ambientale strategica (VAS) ([1]) di modifica del Piano Regolatore Generale Comunale di Stregna è stata condotta e conclusa con un parere favorevole sulla compatibilità ambientale.

Sulla base delle informazioni fornite e in mancanza di elementi chiari e sostanziali che comprovino l'esistenza di errori nelle valutazioni ambientali effettuate dalle autorità competenti, la Commissione non ha potuto riscontrare, in questa fase, alcuna violazione della direttiva VAS.

Qualora la Commissione dovesse ricevere elementi chiari e concreti a riprova del fatto che la direttiva VAS non è stata applicata correttamente, potrebbe decidere di dare ulteriore seguito alla questione.

([1]) Come previsto dall'articolo 3 della direttiva 2001/42/CE concernente la valutazione degli effetti di determinati piani e programmi sull'ambiente (direttiva VAS), GU L 197 del 21.7.2001.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014296/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Irregularities in the strategic environmental assessment procedure in Friuli-Venezia Giulia

In 2012 in Stregna, an Italian municipality in the province of Udine in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, the municipal authorities started the procedure for amending the Municipal Urban Management Plan. The document, which was recently adopted, permits construction on a vast section of agricultural land on which construction was originally prohibited, including whole swathes of permanent pasture and woodland. Many objections to the urban planning amendment were immediately submitted, including from regional associations, among them the largest provincial farmers' body. Among the concerns raised is that no proper and complete strategic environmental assessment procedure was carried out for the substantial amendment, as laid down by Directive 2001/42/EC and Legislative Decree No 152/2006, which transposed it, and in particular:

— it contains no proper and objective assessment of the impact the amendment would have;

— it does not recognise the value and vulnerability of the environments affected by the amendment, which have special landscape and environmental features (habitats of Community interest to be safeguarded under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC);

— it contains no reliable assessments regarding the fundamental criteria laid down by Annex II to the directive and Annex 1 to the second part of Legislative Decree No 152/2006, transposing it;

— it has no documents pertaining to the competent authority and includes no request for opinions from competent parties in environmental matters;

— it was not made available to the public concerned in advance, so that they could express their views on it.

Nonetheless, despite taking on board regional reservations and reducing the area on which construction can take place to around 20 hectares of farmland, the amendment to the plan was approved and confirmed by the regional council.

1. Does the Commission think that directive 2001/42/EC has been properly taken into consideration and implemented in the substantial amendment procedure?

2. Does it think that failure to transpose Directive 2001/42/EC may invalidate approval of the amendment?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

From the information provided by the Honourable Member it appears that the SEA ([1]) procedure for the amendment of the Municipal Urban Management Plan of Stregna has been carried-out and concluded with a favourable opinion of environmental compatibility.

Based on the information provided and in the absence of clear and substantial evidence of error committed within the environmental assessments carried out by the competent Authorities, the Commission could not at this stage identify any evidence of a breach of the SEA Directive.

Should the Commission receive clear and concrete evidence that the SEA Directive has not been correctly applied, it may decide to pursue the matter further.

([1]) As required by Art. 3 of the SEA Directive 2001/42/CE on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, OJ L 197, 21.7.2001.

ISSN 1977-0871 (elektronisk udgave)
ISSN 1725-2393 (papirudgave)

Den Europæiske Unions Publikationskontor
2985 Luxembourg
LUXEMBOURG

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