

(98/C 158/89)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3240/97**by Carmen Díez de Rivera Icaza (PSE) to the Commission***(20 October 1997)**Subject:* Traffic accidents

In view of the large number of traffic accidents which occurred in a Member State this summer, can the Commission say:

1. whether the number of traffic accidents in Spain is more than, less than or the same as in other Member States;
2. whether the financial cost of these accidents has already been estimated;
3. what changes it recommends to reduce the number of accidents and road deaths?

Answer given by Mr Kinnock on behalf of the Commission*(2 December 1997)*

In 1994, 6 248 people were killed in traffic accidents in Spain and 114 525 were injured. Based on the number killed by million inhabitants over the period 1991-1994, the position of Spain is worse than the European average, and proportionately worse than that of nine other Member States. Clearly, it is difficult to make precise comparisons between Member States as there are a number of factors, such as the quality of infrastructure, which are not comparable. The figures given above are, however, a clear indication of the relative rate of deaths and injuries.

The Commission has calculated that the direct cost of road accidents (including the cost of police and emergency services, vehicle repairs, and lost economic output), is 45 000 MECU per year for the Community as a whole. When divided by the total of 45 000 road fatalities in the Community per year, this gives a simple average of 1 MECU per death and associated injuries. In Spain, the '1 MECU test' would produce a cost for road deaths of about 6 000 MECU per year.

The Commission has adopted a communication 'Promoting road safety in the EU — The programme for 1997-2001' ⁽¹⁾ which sets out in detail the Commission's plans to build on the successes of the first action programme which ran from 1993-1996. The Commission's actions will focus on three areas: information gathering and dissemination in order to identify and to monitor the situation and thereby promote focused improvements; initiating and supporting measures to avoid accidents, with an emphasis on the human factor and its interface with environmental features like road and junction design, traffic signals etc.; and initiating and supporting measures to reduce the consequences of accidents when they occur -by means of achieving further improvements in vehicle design and crash resilience, for example. In addition, the Commission actively advocates cost-free changes in behaviour which would save a large number of lives and reduce the seriousness of injuries. If in all Member States, for instance, front and rear seat belt wearing was at the level of the countries in which it is most usual, something like 6,000 lives would be saved every year.

⁽¹⁾ COM(97) 131 final.

(98/C 158/90)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3252/97**by Mihail Papayannakis (GUE/NGL) to the Commission***(20 October 1997)**Subject:* Directive 94/80/EC

Having regard to the municipal elections to be held in Greece in about one year's time and in view of the fact that the right to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal elections in the Member State of residence derives from application of the principle of equality and non-discrimination between EU citizens, have the Greek authorities brought into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with Directive 94/80/EC ⁽¹⁾. If not, what measures will the Commission take to ensure compliance by Greece with the above directive?

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 368, 31.12.1994, p. 38.