

(1999/C 370/223)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1043/99**by Ilona Graenitz (PSE) to the Commission**

(20 April 1999)

Subject: Screening the candidate countries' environmental legislation

What date has been taken as the basis in the screening of the candidate countries' environmental legislation?

Will this date be adjusted to allow for the length of the negotiations?

Answer given by Mr van den Broek on behalf of the Commission

(7 May 1999)

The screening of the environmental acquis takes into account all Community measures adopted by 1 January 1999. Measures adopted by the Community after this date are also to be screened in order to evaluate their transposition and implementation in the candidate countries. The Commission will therefore discuss the newly adopted measures with the candidate countries at an appropriate moment in the negotiation process.

(1999/C 370/224)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1060/99**by Carlos Bru Purón (PSE) to the Commission**

(20 April 1999)

Subject: Commission fees in exchange transactions

As a future precaution, this year certain banks in the euro zone have begun taking the opportunity to charge commission fees on exchange transactions in European currencies which exceed 25 % in some cases. Moreover, they are operating a regressive system, since it is the high rates which are applied to exchange transactions involving small sums.

Does the Commission intend to warn banks and banking associations in the Member States participating in economic and monetary union of the harmful effects which this eleventh-hour dash for profits will have on their future business?

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission

(7 May 1999)

The Commission wishes to inform the Honourable Member that it has indeed already contacted banks and banking associations concerning charges levied by banks for euro area banknote exchange. In a letter to the main European banking federations in January 1999, the Commission emphasised that it is of paramount importance that public confidence in the introduction of the euro and the credibility of the banking system as a whole should not be undermined by financial institutions drawing unfair benefit from increases in charges for transactions between former national currencies within the euro zone. Again on 5 February 1999, in a press statement ⁽¹⁾ the Commission called on banks to further increase transparency by making publicly available information showing changes in the total level of charges (before and after the introduction of the euro) for exchanging euro zone banknotes and cross border cheques, transfers and card payments. The Commission has also recently made publicly available an analysis of complaints received through its specially created e-mail and fax service announced in IP/99/90. The banking associations have also been asked to react to the information contained in this analysis.

The Honourable Member may also refer to the Commission's answers to Written Questions E-3825/98 by Mr Caudron ⁽²⁾ and P-52/99 by Mr Tamino ⁽³⁾ and to the answer to Oral Questions O-29/99 by