

(2000/C 280 E/205)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0113/00**by Camilo Nogueira Román (Verts/ALE) to the Council**

(31 January 2000)

Subject: Cancellation of debt of the poorest countries by EU Member States

Is the Council taking any initiatives, or will it take such initiatives in the near future, with a view to ensuring that all the Member States of the European Union cancel the debts owed to them by the poorest countries as part of far-reaching measures which will help launch a more balanced phase of world development, eradicating the extreme poverty from which many countries now suffer?

Reply

(28 March 2000)

At the annual World Bank/IMF meetings in Washington in September 1999, the donor community took an ambitious set of political decisions closely linking poverty alleviation strategies, structural adjustment programmes and the debt reduction initiative.

In this context, the ACP-EU Council of Ministers decided in December 1999 that unallocated programmable resources from the eighth European Development Fund and earlier Funds could be used in the form of grants for meeting the outstanding debt and debt servicing obligations to the Community of the ACP countries which qualify under the highly indebted poor countries initiative (EUR 320 million) and for contributing to the overall financing of the highly indebted poor countries initiative for the ACP by providing up to EUR 680 million for the highly indebted poor countries Trust Fund managed by the World Bank.

Separate decisions will be adopted in accordance with the appropriate procedures to deal with the external indebtedness of highly indebted poor countries other than members of the ACP group, and budget resources will be used for this purpose as part of the Community's development aid policy for the countries of Asia and Latin America.

(2000/C 280 E/206)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0114/00**by Camilo Nogueira Román (Verts/ALE) to the Council**

(31 January 2000)

Subject: EU plans with regard to the WTO following the failure of the Seattle Summit

Is it the case that, as has been reported in the media, fresh negotiations between the various economic blocs of industrialised countries and the poorest and developing countries are to recommence with a view to reopening the Millennium Round negotiations following the failure of the WTO Summit in Seattle?

If so, what provision will the Council make for Parliament's participation in drawing up the European position in the light of the new situation, and given the changes which have since occurred in European and world public opinion?

Reply

(28 March 2000)

1. In its Conclusions of 26 October 1999, the Council established the position of the European Union on the preparation for the Third WTO Ministerial Conference in Seattle. On that occasion, the Council reiterated its firm conviction that a comprehensive round of trade negotiations was the best way to address the challenges resulting from the current economic changes, to manage the globalisation process effectively, to expand opportunities for international trade and growth, and to respond in a balanced manner to the interests of all WTO members, especially the developing countries.