

The Commission considers that proof of identity with an indication of a bank, giro account, or credit card number could normally be sufficient for the operators concerned, a possibility which is being offered by at least one of the operators active on the Belgian market. Finally, it should be noted that complaints from individuals regarding their relations with Belgian telecommunication operators can be submitted to the Belgian Ombudsman for telecommunications matters ('service de médiation des télécommunications') who is competent to treat them.

(¹) See *Roman Angonese v. Cassa di Risparmio di Bolzano SpA*, Decision of 6 June 2000, case C-281/98, paragraphs 32 to 36.

(²) OJ L 101, 1.4.1998.

(2002/C 40 E/004)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4159/00

by Wolfgang Ilgenfritz (NI) to the Commission

(16 January 2001)

Subject: BSE crisis

In its 2001 budget, the Union has allocated € 65,5 million for BSE testing and a further € 6 billion to support beef farmers. It is already known that these amounts will certainly not be enough, as the cost of the BSE crisis in Europe is rather higher than was assumed.

Will the Commission therefore state:

1. Whether it will take steps to ensure that Parliament and the Council adopt a supplementary budget making additional funds available to deal with the BSE crisis?
2. If so, what amount will it propose?
3. Whether estimates or more accurate calculations of the expected cost of dealing with the BSE crisis in Europe in 2001 and subsequent years are already available?
4. Whether estimates or more accurate forecasts already exist as to the categories of people or interest groups in Europe that will suffer most as a result of the BSE crisis and will therefore need additional assistance from the Member States and the European Union?
5. Whether any definite ideas have been formulated (in negotiations or talks) on how the funds made available by the Union to deal with the BSE crisis are to be divided out amongst the Member States and as to the proportion of the cost which the various Member States will have to bear themselves?
6. In what proportions the budget appropriations available now, and to be made available in future (supplementary budget), are to be allocated to the affected groups?
 - (a) How much of the total amount are the affected cattle farmers to receive?
 - (b) How much of the total amount are the affected feed manufacturers to receive?
 - (c) How much of the total amount are other producers, such as in the beef-processing sector (meat-processing plants, sausage factories, slaughterhouses, etc.) to receive?
 - (d) How much of the total amount are other affected groups to be paid?
7. Whether any ideas have been formulated or decisions taken as to when and in what form the payments are to be made to the groups that have suffered losses?

Will the Commission take steps to ensure that particular categories such as farms, slaughterhouses, beef-processing firms, feed manufacturers, etc., who have been particularly hard hit by the BSE crisis and have ended up in this situation through no fault of their own, receive emergency assistance so as to prevent them going out of business (bankruptcy owing to lengthy closure)? An emergency assistance fund ought to be set up for this purpose.

**Supplementary answer
given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission**

(3 September 2001)

The measures taken to deal with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) did not and will not make it necessary to propose a supplementary budget to cover the costs. The financing of such measures have to a large extent been provided through a system of Community co-financing.

Apart from the costs arising from the testing of animal, the direct cost related to BSE for the Community-budget concerns public intervention, the purchase scheme under Regulation (EC) No 2777/2000 adopting exceptional support measures for the beef market⁽¹⁾ and the measures adopted by the Council under the so-called 7-point plan in June 2001.

As far as the purchase scheme is concerned, the Community-budget for 2001 has provided for a total cost of could be € 700 million, based on the assumption that 530 000 tonnes would be purchased under the scheme. In reality, however, only 240 000 tonnes were bought at the end of the scheme.

The 7-point plan is expected to lead to higher Community-budget costs until 2003 including extra intervention buying-in. After 2003 the measures related to the reduction in density criteria and in premium ceilings etc. will lead to savings for the Community-budget.

No Community aid measures have been provided for a particular category of people or interest groups. Where national aid is envisaged, it is up to the Commission to assess the compatibility of such aid, notably in the light of the provisions concerning the Common Agricultural Policy.

The funds made available by the Commission for the management of the BSE crisis is not a-priori divided out amongst Member States. Under the purchase schemes laid down in Regulations (EC) No 2777/2000 and (EC) No 690/2001⁽²⁾ the Community is financing 70% of the purchase price while Member States are financing all other costs related to the operation of the schemes.

The Commission has no information as to how the benefits from the support measures specifically are shared between the market players.

The Commission has neither the legal basis nor the financial possibilities to establish an emergency assistance fund.

Instead, efforts have been concentrated on obtaining a general recovery of the beef market, particularly through:

- purchases of meat fit for human consumption,
- specific purchase schemes as referred to above,
- supplementary food safety measures with particular reference to BSE,
- information campaigns in the Community and in third countries.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 321, 19.12.2000.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 95, 5.4.2001.

(2002/C 40 E/005)

**WRITTEN QUESTION P-0056/01
by Carlos Coelho (PPE-DE) to the Commission**

(16 January 2001)

Subject: e-Europe 2002 Action Plan: on-line health care

The Feira Council adopted the e-Europe 2002 Action Plan which, despite its limited scope, represents a means of improving the health of the EU's population.

Would the Commission therefore provide all available information regarding the action plan and the stage reached in the process of making the electronic medical register compatible in the various EU countries — something which will assist the movement of persons and information in the health sector?