

**Answer given by Mrs de Palacio on behalf of the Commission**

(3 September 2001)

The Commission has recognised the value of developing a European network of long distance cycling routes and has in the past co-financed the development of the EuroVelo network, which is a network of long distance cycling routes. Individual links in this network continue to be financed through Commission programmes such as Interreg — for example, the North Sea Cycle Routes.

The Commission recognises the contribution that cycling can make to reducing congestion, pollution and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the links between these problems and wider environmental and health issues. As well as promoting leisure and tourist cycling, the EuroVelo network certainly makes a contribution to this, since its routes pass through towns.

Moreover, through the National Cycling Policy Benchmark Initiative, which the Commission is co-funding with four national authorities (Netherlands, Finland, United Kingdom and Czech Republic), the Commission is helping national authorities learn from each others efforts to introduce national cycling plans. Through the European Local Transport Information Service ([www.eltis.org](http://www.eltis.org)), the Commission is putting together a database of good practice in local and regional transport that already includes more than 100 examples of good practice in cycling.

Bicycles are used for shorter journeys and the Trans-European Transport (TEN-T) Network is a multimodal network for mainly international freight and passenger transport. Due to the principle of subsidiarity there are no plans to include cycle routes in the TEN-T network.

Arrangements for bicycles to be carried on trains are a matter for individual rail operators and national authorities. Where rail operators judge this to be uneconomic, competent authorities in the Member States have the power under Regulation (EEC) no 1191/69 of the Council of 26 June 1969 on action by Member States concerning the obligations inherent in the concept of a public service in transport by rail, road and inland waterway <sup>(1)</sup> (amended by Council Regulation (EEC) no 1893/91 of 20 June 1991 <sup>(2)</sup>) to include the obligation to carry bicycles in contracts with rail operators, meeting the additional costs. It is a matter for the authorities in question whether they choose to make use of this power.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 156, 28.6.1969.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ L 169, 29.6.1991.

(2002/C 40 E/122)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-1852/01****by Rosa Miguélez Ramos (PSE) to the Commission**

(26 June 2001)

*Subject:* Fisheries negotiations with a view to Lithuanian accession

The Commission and the Lithuanian Government have concluded the negotiations on fisheries with a view to Lithuania's accession to the Union. The Lithuanian Minister has expressed satisfaction because Lithuania will be able to export its fishery products without tariff restrictions.

After enlargement, will fisheries relations between Lithuania and the present Member States be close to the extent that the existing Community fleet will be able to fish in Lithuanian fishing grounds?

Is the Commission allowing for the possibility that the Community fleet will be able to fish in the fishing grounds of the countries that will join the Union and vice versa?

**Answer given by Mr Verheugen on behalf of the Commission**

(31 July 2001)

The Conference on Lithuania's Accession to the Union decided at its meeting on 11/12 June 2001 to provisionally close the negotiation chapter on fisheries.

The negotiations on this chapter did, however, not concern trade issues. In the pre-accession framework, the Commission and Lithuania have already concluded technical discussions with a calendar for full liberalisation.

Lithuania fully accepts the *acquis* on the Common Fisheries Policy, including the principles of exclusive Community competence, equal access to waters and relative stability.

This means that, upon accession, fishermen from Lithuania and other Member States for which quotas have been fixed in the Baltic Sea can fish in the enlarged Community waters, with certain limitations on access within 12 nautical miles of baselines.

Towards the end of the accession negotiations with Lithuania, the relative stability that will apply for Lithuania as a Member State will be fixed on the basis of a reference period, recent and representative of Lithuanian activities in Community waters, as well as waters of third countries and in waters covered by regional fisheries organisations.

(2002/C 40 E/123)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-1853/01**

**by Pere Esteve (ELDR) to the Commission**

(26 June 2001)

*Subject:* Carriage of dangerous goods by sea

On 12 December 1999 the oil tanker 'Erika' broke up off Brittany, contaminating more than 450 km of the French coast. It is a deplorable fact that accidents resulting from the carriage of toxic and dangerous goods by sea occur regularly everywhere.

In the Mediterranean area, toxic goods such as oil are routinely carried by sea.

The Balearic Islands rely on tourism for over 80% of their GDP. Apart from the irreparable environmental costs, another disaster of the 'Erika' type would destroy the economy of a region like the Balearics, one of Europe's main tourist destinations.

What information does the Commission have about the carriage of toxic or dangerous goods in the Mediterranean? What does it intend to do about this kind of carriage, bearing in mind the high risk involved and the fact that, for economic reasons, the peoples living on the shores of the Mediterranean need the environment to be as clean as possible?

**Answer given by Mrs de Palacio on behalf of the Commission**

(18 September 2001)

The Commission agrees with the Honourable Member of the importance of safety of maritime transport, in particular of transport of dangerous and toxic goods, such as oil and chemicals, as a means of protecting the marine environment, as well as protecting the coastal zones. In that respect, the Commission presented two packages of proposals in 2000. The 'Erika I' proposals<sup>(1)</sup>, includes proposals for strengthening of the Port State Control Directive 95/21/EC, on improvements of common rules for classification societies and the role of maritime administrations (revision Council Directive 94/57/EEC) and