

(2002/C 40 E/142)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1900/01**by Brian Simpson (PSE) to the Commission**

(28 June 2001)

Subject: Plans for future outbreaks of diseases like foot-and-mouth

Can the Commission indicate what plans it has in the event of future outbreaks of diseases such as foot-and-mouth with regard to containment of the disease and the slaughter and disposal of infected and potentially infected animals, bearing mind that, in future, burial and/or burning of carcasses is likely to be very unpopular amongst the population and may be banned altogether?

Answer given by Mr Byrne on behalf of the Commission

(31 July 2001)

In case of the occurrence of certain animal diseases such as foot and mouth disease, (FMD) Community legislation provides for a number of control measures, including:

- preparation and implementation of contingency plans in each Member State, so that all necessary disease control measures may be properly and rapidly applied;
- slaughtering and destruction of animals in infected and, if necessary, suspected farms, as these animals may very easily spread the infection to healthy animals in other farms;
- restrictions of movements of animals in the infected areas, as these animals may be incubating the disease;
- use of vaccine, if it is deemed that the measures above are insufficient to contain the outbreak.

The Commission will carry out a thorough review of the Community policy on FMD once the current outbreak has been eradicated. In this framework the use of FMD vaccines will also be re-examined, taking into account the most recent knowledge and experience and the development of new diagnostic tools.

(2002/C 40 E/143)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1901/01**by Christopher Heaton-Harris (PPE-DE) to the Commission**

(28 June 2001)

Subject: Town twinning application

Could the Commission confirm in detail its reasons for refusing to grant funding to Oundle District Council, East Midlands, UK, for a town-twinning project with Germany, following the Council's application earlier this year?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission

(11 September 2001)

In 2001 the town of Oundle, the host town, applied for funding from the first tranche of the Community support initiative for actions to promote town-twinning. Its application was not accepted by the selection committee because the dossier presented was incomplete with regard to point 7.1. of the call for proposals governing the awarding of support for actions to promote town-twinning⁽¹⁾. This point stipulates that 'only dossiers that include all the documents referred to in points (a) to (e) below, submitted within the approved deadlines, duly filled in and accompanied by the necessary supporting documents, will be taken into consideration'.

In this case, the dossier submitted by the town of Oundle was not accompanied by the detailed schedule of the meeting, as specified in point 7.1.(c) of the above-mentioned call for proposals. Since there was no schedule of the proposed meeting, the selection committee was unable to assess the quality or the European interest of the project submitted.

The new procedure for awarding support for actions to promote town-twinning was adopted following consultation of national associations representing the twinning movement in October 2000. This procedure, which is based on the principles behind the awarding of subsidies under other Community measures, aims to make the system more transparent and effective, and to guarantee equal treatment of all those concerned.

⁽¹⁾ Call for proposals DG EAC No 75/00 (OJ C 320, 9.11.2000).

(2002/C 40 E/144)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1905/01

by Pere Esteve (ELDR) to the Commission

(28 June 2001)

Subject: Unsatisfactory treatment of two Scottish tourists in Majorca

In May 2001 two elderly Scottish tourists were robbed on their arrival at Palma de Majorca airport and their handbags, documentation and passports were taken.

The two women wished to report the theft to the Spanish police at the passport control terminal of the airport. They also asked to contact their consulate in order to obtain a provisional passport, since their passports had been stolen.

The Spanish authorities refused to listen to the arguments put by these two European citizens, or the explanations given by the tour representatives. The Spanish police merely informed the two tourists that they must leave the island and the Spanish state because they had no passports. They were thus informed of their immediate deportation on the next flight to Scotland, which was due to leave the next day at 5 a.m. local time.

One of the women, who is 92, had to spend the night on a hard chair in the airport under Spanish police guard. She has still not recovered from the trauma suffered that night.

As a result of the theft of their documentation and the negligent attitude of the Spanish authorities, these two European tourists were unable to continue their journey, received unsatisfactory treatment and were deported.

On other occasions the EU has adopted special measures in favour of tourists, facilitating the crossing of borders and enhancing their safety and that of their property. The European Parliament has called for greater protection of tourists' interests.

The European Parliament has also spoken in favour of securing the greatest possible freedom for all individuals at the Union's internal borders.

Given the serious incident at Palma de Majorca airport, and bearing in mind the *acquis communautaire* with regard to both tourism and the free movement of persons, what is the Commission's view of the above incident, assuming that the facts are confirmed? Will the Commission lodge a formal complaint with the government representative in the Balearics, who is responsible for the Spanish police? Would it consider it appropriate for the Spanish police or authorities to compensate for the harm caused to these elderly Scottish tourists, or to rectify it in some way?

Answer given by Mr Vitorino on behalf of the Commission

(7 September 2001)

The Commission regrets the treatment which, according to the Honourable Member, was received by two Scottish tourists from the Spanish authorities following the theft of their passports and documentation on arriving at Palma de Majorca airport in May 2001.