

(2002/C 81 E/238)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2674/01
by Raffaele Costa (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(24 September 2001)

Subject: Fraud against the EU

63 people have been arrested in Calabria (Italy) for engaging in fraud against the EU. They include businessmen, military personnel from the 'Guardia di Finanza' and members of the Mafia. In addition to this, there have been press reports that '43 employees and officials' of the Calabria Region have been arrested. The amount involved is believed to be ITL 6 billion (amount already in the hands of the perpetrators).

What inspection measures were taken by the Italian Ministry of Finance, the Calabria Region, OLAF, the European Union in general and the Department for Community Policies? What provisions have been adopted by the Department for Community Policies and the Department for the Regions? Was negligence involved? Is it possible for 43 people — all employed by the Region — to be involved in fraud without the relevant aldermen, regional officers or supervisory bodies noticing the slightest thing? Who will now provide the Italian government, the EU and the Calabria Region with financial compensation? Have the European Union, the Region or the Ministry of Finance adopted adequate provisions to protect the public interest? Does the regional alderman with responsibility in this field intend to tender his resignation?

Answer given by Ms Schreyer on behalf of the Commission

(17 October 2001)

The Commission and the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) (which brought the matter to the Commission's attention) are aware of the case referred to by the Honourable Member.

To judge from the press reports referred to by the Honourable Member, this case concerns the guarantee section of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) and more specifically aid for citrus fruit.

The Commission has contacted the national authorities with a view to obtaining more detailed information and deciding what course of action to take.

(2002/C 81 E/239)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2676/01
by Raffaele Costa (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(2 October 2001)

Subject: Patents on genetic tests

The European Patent Office recently granted the American company Myriad Genetics a monopoly on patents on genetic tests to screen for predisposition to breast and ovarian cancer. The Institut Curie, a well-known French research centre which has the backing of the French Government, has decided to take legal action in the matter, arguing that the existing patents system is ill-suited to deal with public health issues. What position does the Commission intend to adopt on this matter and what action does it intend to take?

Answer given by Mr Bolkestein on behalf of the Commission

(14 November 2001)

The Commission considers that there are no compelling reasons for it to lodge opposition, since the disputed patent does not seem to violate basic ethical standards but concerns rather the scope of protection which can be granted to an invention relating to a DNA sequence.