

(2003/C 52 E/111)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1741/02**by Camilo Nogueira Román (Verts/ALE) to the Council**

(19 June 2002)

Subject: The views of the UK Foreign Minister, Jack Straw, concerning the decisions to be taken about the enlargement of the Union to include new countries

The British Foreign Minister not only hopes that the Council under the Danish presidency next December will decide on the accession of ten new States but considers that it will be possible to give a new impetus to the negotiations with Bulgaria and Romania, examine Turkey's application and consider to the same end the reforms needed in Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, claiming that all these matters are priorities for the Danish presidency. Do these views accurately reflect the stage reached on this issue in the European Council?

Reply

(5 November 2002)

The Council never comments on declarations released by national authorities. The European Council in Seville on 21 and 22 June 2002 reaffirmed that, if progress in negotiations and reforms is maintained, the European Union is determined to conclude the negotiations with Cyprus, Malta, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic and Slovenia by the end of 2002, if those countries are ready, the objective remaining that these countries should participate in the elections of the European Parliament in 2004 as full members.

The European Council reiterated its commitment to give Bulgaria and Romania full support in their preparation for accession. To this end, an updated road map and a revised and enhanced pre/accession strategy should be adopted in Copenhagen for the candidate countries still engaged in negotiations. An increase in pre-accession financial aid could also be contemplated. Furthermore, if the current pace is maintained, a more precise timetable could be set for these countries' accession process by the end of the year.

Furthermore, the European Council concluded that new decisions could be taken in Copenhagen on the next stage of Turkey's candidature in the light of developments in the situation between the Seville and Copenhagen European Councils, on the basis of the regular report to be submitted by the Commission in October 2002 and in accordance with the Helsinki and Laeken conclusions.

(2003/C 52 E/112)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1762/02**by Patricia McKenna (Verts/ALE) to the Commission**

(19 June 2002)

Subject: Promotion of hydrogen fuel derived from renewable energy sources and regional programmes

To progress a sustainable transport policy, which not only reduces city pollution and CO₂ emissions, it is clearly necessary to support the use of alternative fuels, derived from renewable energy sources, through the regional / structural programmes of the EU. One promising fuel type is hydrogen, which also has the benefit of noise reduction when used in fuel cells. It can be derived from any form of electricity, as well as biomass, natural gas, and various chemical processes.

Is the Commission encouraging the use of hydrogen fuel as part of the EU's regional programmes, for example in funding public transport programmes? Given that the programmes emphasise renewable sources of energy for various reasons, does the Commission favour the use of hydrogen derived from renewable sources in the regional / structural programmes?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission

(31 July 2002)

The Structural Funds' regional programmes may include measures to expand use of renewable energy sources. In the energy section of the guidelines for programmes in the period 2000 to 2006⁽¹⁾ the Commission discusses these sources and calls on Member States to use Community funding to develop them. The priorities centre on investment to promote use of renewable energy sources, investment aid to reduce emissions of sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and carbon dioxide (CO₂), using energy audits and promoting efficient energy management in small and medium-sized enterprises as well as in towns and cities. In accordance with the subsidiarity principle, the national and regional managing authorities are responsible both for the selection of projects to be part-financed and for their implementation.

Use of hydrogen as a fuel represents a future alternative to hydrocarbons, particularly if the hydrogen comes from renewable energy sources. Currently the technologies for producing this fuel and the techniques for using it safely are still at the development stage, however. Considerable effort will be devoted to this under the Sixth Framework Programme for Research, and use of hydrogen could be promoted through pilot projects.

⁽¹⁾ Commission communication concerning the Structural Funds and their coordination with the Cohesion Fund — guidelines for programmes in the period 2000 to 2006 (OJ C 267, 22.9.1999).

(2003/C 52 E/113)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1784/02**by Nelly Maes (Verts/ALE) to the Commission**

(24 June 2002)

Subject: Cervical cancer screening in the EU

The new 'Health Action Plan' no longer makes any mention of SANCO (Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection) and no longer lists cancer screening among the objectives. Old objectives have simply been scrapped.

How is cancer screening to be incorporated into this new and more horizontal approach? How will the Commission ensure that existing programmes can be continued in the future?

Answer given by Mr Byrne on behalf of the Commission

(20 August 2002)

Although the new public health action plan does not explicitly mention as a separate objective cervical cancer screening, or, in other words, secondary prevention of cervical cancer mortality by screening, it is clear that cancer including cervical cancer is one of the major diseases, which is addressed by the heading of section 3. of the action plan's annex: 'To promote Health and Prevent Disease through Action on Health Determinants across all Community Policies and Activities'⁽¹⁾ in conjunction with objectives 1.2 and 1.7 of section 1. of the action plan's annex.

Nevertheless, cervical cancer screening is only one example of early detection of disease. Thus the aim under the new public health action plan will be to exploit best practice developed under the existing public health programmes for several diseases, e.g. breast cancer, to improve and extend screening at European level for diseases wherever possible.

⁽¹⁾ PE-CONS 3627/02.