

supplies in general, this is a challenge for the Union, to which the Green Paper seeks to provide an initial response.

- (<sup>1</sup>) 'Proved reserves' are the quantities one may consider with reasonable certainty to be recoverable in the future, from known oilfields, under current economic and operating conditions. It is not a fixed estimate of total reserves: newly discovered reserves can be added or the figure can increase when technological improvements allow more of the oil already found to be recovered.
- (<sup>2</sup>) COM(2000) 769 final.

(2003/C 28 E/232)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-2217/02**

**by Ioannis Marínos (PPE-DE) to the Commission**

(22 July 2002)

*Subject:* Oil pipelines and their financial benefits

It is known that plans are being envisaged to lay oil pipelines from the Caspian Sea to the European Union Member States, with preference apparently being given to three possible solutions, the Baku-Ceyan pipeline, the Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline and the 'AMBO' (Albanian-Macedonian-Bulgarian Oil) pipeline crossing the northern Greek border and linking Burgas and Avlonas. If this last pipeline is built, it will run through three countries (some of which are highly unstable) and will be 898 km long.

In the Commission's opinion, what are the financial benefits of these three pipelines? Has it launched any studies into their macro-economic advantages or the dangers they would present to the Union in terms of its energy self-sufficiency? Would it not be more realistic to build a pipeline passing through only one country (an EU Member State) for example between Alexandroupolis and the port of Igoumenitsa (which is currently being modernised and enlarged using Community funding) so as to ensure unobstructed and secure oil supplies to the principal Member States of the Union? Is there any prospect of Community funding (for example loans from the European Investment Bank or other forms of funding) for the realisation of one of the above projected pipelines?

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

(13 September 2002)

The Commission cooperates, in the framework of security of supply within the EU, with the main neighbouring producer countries, including Russia and the countries of the Caspian Sea. The EU's position on Caspian Sea resources was laid down by the General Affairs Council in May 1998, namely that the EU is in favour of multiple pipeline routes, with the choice of routes and construction entirely in the hands of the private sector.

The Commission has recognised, in the framework of the Inogate technical assistance programme, the importance of the transit of resources from Russia and the Caspian Sea through the Central and Eastern European countries, in particular the Ukraine (Odessa-Brody-Gdansk), Romania (Constantza-Belgrade-Omisalj-Trieste) and Bulgaria (Burgas-Alexandroupolis).

With regard to Community co-funding, the Commission has allocated EUR 3,55 million under the Community initiative programme Interreg II for the period 1994-1999 for feasibility studies on the Burgas-Alexandroupolis project. The project is aimed at linking the Bulgarian port of Bourgas to the Greek port of Alexandroupolis and will enable oil from the Russian terminal in Novorossisk to be transported to the European markets. No Community funding is planned for the construction of the oil pipeline.