

(2003/C 280 E/048)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0305/03
by Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) to the Commission

(10 February 2003)

Subject: Price increases resulting from the introduction of the euro

In his answer to Written Question E-0928/02 ⁽¹⁾, Commissioner Solbes Mira said that 'the changeover to the euro had not resulted in across-the-board price rises: the impact of the changeover on monthly inflation is estimated at between 0% and 0,16%.'

In late December 2002, the President of the European Central Bank, Wim Duisenberg, painted an entirely different picture when he 'was forced to admit that the changeover had resulted in price increases to some extent'.

Can the Commission indicate whether the data on which it based its original answer dated 5 June 2002 is still valid? If so, how does it account for the remarks made by Mr Duisenberg? If not, can it provide me with a fresh and, this time, detailed overview of price increases, one which is based on up-to-date figures from Eurostat?

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 301 E, 5.12.2002, p. 69.

Answer given by Mr Solbes Mira on behalf of the Commission

(14 March 2003)

The basis for the reply of the Commission to Written Question E-0928/02 by the Honourable Member were figures published by Eurostat on 28 February and 16 May 2002, which estimated the likely impact of the euro cash changeover on overall euro area harmonised indices of consumer prices (HICP) inflation between December 2001 and January 2002 to be within a range of 0,0 and 0,16%.

On 17 July 2002, using data for the first six months of the year compared to the last six months of 2001, Eurostat released figures showing a likely range of 0,0 and 0,2%. This latest study therefore again showed a limited impact from the changeover on overall HICP inflation.

It should be noted that the three Eurostat studies mentioned above contained a detailed account of price increases in the sectors covered by the HICP basket. In the coming weeks, Eurostat intends to publish further analysis using data for the whole of 2002.

(2003/C 280 E/049)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0313/03
by Proinsias De Rossa (PSE) to the Commission

(10 February 2003)

Subject: Compliance with EU legislation

Could the Commission identify, specifying individual complaints, the relevant EU legislation, the type of action, and the date initiated, how many legal actions (i.e. letters of formal notice, reasoned opinions, referrals to the European Court of Justice) it has initiated against Ireland under Article 10 of the EC Treaty concerning Ireland's failure to respond to Commission queries regarding its investigation into complaints since this Article entered into force?

Answer given by Mr Prodi on behalf of the Commission

(13 March 2003)

The Honourable Member is referred to the annual report on the monitoring of the application of Community law for 2001, which the Commission drafted for Parliament ⁽¹⁾.

For reasons of efficiency and effective use of resources, the Commission relies on Article 10 of the EC Treaty only as a secondary basis. It is used as the main legal basis only in the event of repeated lack of cooperation. That has not been the case with Ireland during the last three years.

(¹) COM(2002) 324 final.

(2003/C 280 E/050)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0334/03

by Cristiana Muscardini (UEN) to the Council

(10 February 2003)

Subject: NATO enlargement and the European Union's defence policy

The summit of heads of state and government of the 19 NATO countries held in Prague on 21/22 November 2002 in the presence of the leaders of the organisation's 27 partner countries meeting in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council was primarily concerned with two fundamental issues: upgrading NATO's strategic capabilities and the enlargement of NATO, three years after the accession of the first three former Soviet bloc members.

The need to overhaul the North Atlantic Alliance's political and strategic structure arises from the proliferation of potential sources of instability and insecurity (in contrast with the Soviet threat which previously predominated) and the extension of the tasks entrusted to NATO by the Strategic Concept of 1991 and 1999, which included opposition to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and action to combat international terrorism and organised crime. It appears from the results achieved in Prague that the North Atlantic Alliance is still the political and military linchpin of Europe's new security, even if the summit did not succeed in solving all the outstanding political and institutional issues to be resolved by the Alliance.

Can the Council answer the following:

1. Does it regard NATO as an alliance in the traditional sense, or as a new and more effective system of collective security in embryo?
2. Within NATO, how are relations between the European Union and the United States progressing and developing?
3. In military terms, what will be the relationship between European Union's Rapid Reaction Force and NATO's Response Force, given that 17 of the 19 NATO states are European?
4. What role is played by the WEU in this connection?
5. Is it conceivable that the 'enhanced cooperation' approach could give the participating countries the effectiveness required to ensure an autonomous defence policy?

Reply

(21 July 2003)

The Council would remind the Honourable Member that evaluating the nature or the effectiveness of another international organisation such as NATO does not lie within the Council's sphere of competence, and that relations between the European Union and the United States are the subject of a direct bilateral dialogue, which is ongoing and at all levels, in the context of the New Transatlantic Agenda.

Similarly, the Council would point out that the States which are members of both NATO and the EU may declare their forces for one or the other or for both. Units intended for rapid reaction may be declared for both organisations, and if necessary put into action according to their own procedures.