

Answer given by Mr Byrne on behalf of the Commission

(18 March 2003)

Further to the answer given to the Honourable Member's Written Question E-2809/02, the Commission would point out that Directive 2000/13/EC⁽¹⁾ lists the particulars which must be shown on the labelling of foodstuffs intended for supply to end users, restaurants, hospitals, canteens and other similar mass caterers.

The labelling obligations therefore apply to foodstuffs purchased by restaurants for the preparation of dishes, but not to the actual dishes served in these restaurants.

The Directive in question does not specify the minimum size of print to be used on food packaging with regard to ingredient labelling, but Article 13 states that the particulars on labels must be marked in such a way as to be easily visible, clearly legible and indelible.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 March 2000 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs, OJ L 109, 6.5.2000.

(2003/C 268 E/104)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0458/03**by Bernd Lange (PSE) to the Commission**

(19 February 2003)

Subject: Commission activities and cooperation relating to alternative fuels

Work is clearly being carried out in the various Commission departments in the field of alternative fuels, which will undoubtedly be of great importance for their future development. It appears, for example, that there is a high-level working group on hydrogen in DG Research, several working groups on alternative fuels in DG Transport, as well as related activities in DG Environment.

1. What activities are being undertaken by the Commission's various departments in the field of alternative fuels?
2. Are these activities coordinated at all and, if so, how is this being done?
3. What is the strategy behind these activities?

Answer given by Mrs de Palacio on behalf of the Commission

(14 April 2003)

Alternative fuels are part of a wider Commission policy aiming at security of energy supply and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Energy efficiency and alternative fuels are considered as the two most important pillars. The Commission has outlined its view on alternative fuels for road transportation in a Communication⁽¹⁾, with the objective to attain a 20% market share by 2020, as outlined in the Green Paper on the security of energy supply⁽²⁾ and the White Paper on a common transport policy⁽³⁾. Proposals on the promotion of biofuels⁽⁴⁾ are presently in the interinstitutional process.

The activities on alternative fuels are well co-ordinated within the Commission. The services involved in these activities are the Directorates General Energy and Transport, Research, Environment, Enterprise and Taxation and Customs Union. All initiatives promoted by these various services are subject to interservice consultations.

More specifically:

- The Contact Group Alternative Fuels, which was established by the Commission in June 2002, following the announcement in the Communication on alternative fuels, consists of experts from stakeholders, academia and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and has as mission to give advice on the technical and economical basis for further developments in the field of alternative fuels for road transport. The Contact Group has formed Topic Groups on natural gas and hydrogen, respectively. An Interim Report will be submitted by end of March 2003. A further Progress Report is foreseen for end 2003. The Group is co-ordinated and chaired by Directorate General Energy and Transport. Representatives of other Commission services concerned are participating in its work.
- The High Level Group on Hydrogen and Fuel Cells has been promoted by the Commission and was established on 10 October 2002. The group, composed of senior stakeholders, is assisted by the Commission that provides the secretariat, and is managed by Directorate General Research and Directorate General Energy and Transport in common. It has the objective to develop a broad and long-term vision of a hydrogen economy. A report will be prepared by April 2003 and presented in the frame of a large public conference mid June 2003. It is expected that the vision and recommendations of the High Level Group may provide the basis for considering more specific initiatives, such as a Technology Platform in the field of Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technologies.
- Research and Development Framework Programme projects on renewable energy sources and alternative fuels are co-ordinated and managed by Directorate General Research and Directorate General Energy and Transport in common. A large number of research and demonstration projects as well as studies on alternative fuels and renewable energy sources are funded through the Research and Technological Development Framework Programme and the Energy Framework Programme/Intelligent Energy for Europe. The world's largest hydrogen demonstration project in the automotive sector, CUTE, comprises 27 hydrogen powered buses in nine European cities, to start with the first bus delivery to Madrid in May 2003.
- Directorate General Environment has launched a study on renewable fuels for cross border transportation in June 2002. The final report will be delivered mid-April 2003. The other Commission services involved in alternative fuels have participated in preparation and guidance of the study.
- In addition, the Directorate General Environment is preparing work on the review of fuel quality specifications, including alternative fuels, as a part of the implementation of the recently amended Directive 98/70/EC. For this purpose it is planned to set up still in 2003 an expert group on fuel quality.

⁽¹⁾ COM(2001) 547.

⁽²⁾ COM(2000) 769.

⁽³⁾ COM(2001) 370.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 103 E, 30.4.2002.

(2003/C 268 E/105)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0462/03

by Kyösti Virrankoski (ELDR) to the Commission

(19 February 2003)

Subject: Action C-240/00 brought by the Commission against Finland before the Court of Justice

On 15 June 2000 the Commission brought an action (Case C-240/00) against Finland before the Court of Justice for failure to fulfil obligations under Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds and their habitats⁽¹⁾. The Advocate-General put forward his proposed solution on 25 April 2002, but there is still no word of a final decision.

1. What is delaying the final judgment in the case?
2. What steps will the Commission take to enable a decision to be reached as quickly as possible?