

years until now. I would be grateful to receive the details of projects entirely focusing on this issue but also projects partly focusing on this issue.

I would also like to know the proportion of Commission funding, a description of the project and activities involved, partners in the project, targeted population, and under which budget line they are financed?

Answer given by Mr Nielson on behalf of the Commission

(16 April 2003)

The Community provides funding for projects in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights and in the field of population issues from a variety of sources, i.e.:

- the budget line specially created for that purpose (B7-6312);
- the budget line used to cofinance operations with NGOs (B7-6000);
- regional and national cooperation programmes financed from the general budget (ALA/MED) or the European Development Fund (ACP).

A list of 38 projects funded by the Commission from budget line B7-6312 (ex 6212) between 1998 and 2002 is sent directly to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's Secretariat. In addition to the title, which contains information on the subject of the operation, details are also provided of the location and amount. The Community funding is less than 90 % of the total project cost in every case.

The second list contains projects in the same fields financed from budget line B7-6000, intended for cofinancing of operations with NGOs. The beneficiary NGOs are also listed. The Commission contribution accounts for 80 % at most of the total project cost.

For projects funded under other programmes, the Honourable Member is invited to refer to the evaluation report on EC aid in the health sector in the ACP/ALA/MED countries (2002) which can be found on the Internet at the following address: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/evaluation/reports/sector/951589.pdf>.

Annex 2 of the report classifies projects and programmes according to the sectors concerned, including 'Family planning and reproductive health' and 'HIV/AIDS and STDs'. 33 projects out of a total 115 include activities in one or the other of these sectors.

For the sake of completeness, mention should also be made of a new project approved by the Commission in 2002 to be financed from the European Development Fund. The project involves a joint EC/ACP/UNFPA/IPPF programme for reproductive and sexual health which is described in a document also sent directly to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's Secretariat.

An evaluation is currently under way of operations carried out by the Commission in the area of population policy. The first phase of the study is already complete and the final report is expected to be ready at the end of 2003.

(2003/C 268 E/117)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0657/03

by Alexandros Alavanos (GUE/NGL) to the Commission

(6 March 2003)

Subject: Reparation of damage caused by natural disasters in the Cyclades

Incalculable damage has been caused by the continuous torrential rainfall over the last few days in most of the islands of the Prefecture of the Cyclades where a state of emergency has been declared. Virtually the entire road network has been destroyed by landslides and subsidence, and flood water from streams has

almost entirely destroyed small dams, walls and terracing, so that large areas of farmland and towns and villages are submerged.

Since this catastrophic flooding has affected the major part of the population, with serious and lasting repercussions on living conditions and the economic stability of the region,

Will the Commission say:

1. Will the EU consider allocating funding to the above regions on the basis of the provisions of Article 2, paragraph 2, of Regulation (EC) 2012/2002⁽¹⁾ which provides for the granting of aid under the European Union Solidarity Fund to a region affected by an extraordinary disaster even if the quantitative criteria laid down in the Regulation are not met, as is the case of the island region of the Cyclades?
2. May Structural Fund resources be used to repair the damage?
3. May funds from the agricultural development programme be used in particular to repair the terracing and regulate the streams?

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 311, 14.11.2002, p. 3.

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission

(9 April 2003)

The Commission sympathises with the inhabitants of the islands in the Cyclades and other affected regions in Greece following the recent severe weather conditions.

The European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) can only be mobilised on the basis of an application for assistance from the national authorities of the country concerned. The Greek authorities have announced that it is their intention to make such an application. In accordance with the EUSF Regulation⁽¹⁾ applications must be made within 10 weeks of the date of the first damage caused by the disaster.

The Honourable Member has indicated that the disaster does not qualify as a 'major disaster' within the meaning of the Council Regulation, implying that the damages caused do not meet the threshold of EUR 3 billion or 0,6 % of the gross national income (GNI). The Honourable Member has referred to the provisions of Article 2(2) of the EUSF Regulation as a basis for the Union to allocate funds to the affected areas. This article provides that under exceptional circumstances a region can benefit from assistance from the fund, where that region has been affected by an extraordinary disaster affecting the major part of the population with serious and lasting repercussions on living conditions and the economic stability of the region.

If on the basis of the information provided the Commission is satisfied that the criteria are met, it then must make a proposal for the mobilisation of the Solidarity Fund to the Budgetary Authority.

Under the rules governing the Structural Funds, Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999⁽²⁾ and the agreements in both the Community support framework (CSF) for Greece and the Operational Programme for the southern Aegean for 2000-06, funds could also be provided by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to restore public infrastructure damaged by the recent bad weather in the Cyclades.

The Commission has not received to-date any information from the Greek authorities concerning the impact on terracing and dams in the Cyclades Prefecture caused by the adverse weather conditions. Community support under the European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) can be used to help restore agricultural production potential in the affected areas. This applies to the repair of terracing as well as to the regulation of streams.

Decisions on the use of the ERDF and the EAGGF will be taken as appropriate by the Greek authorities in accordance with the procedures governing the management of the operational programmes in Greece.

⁽¹⁾ Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 of the 11 November 2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 161, 26.6.1999.