On 19 December 2001 the Commission informed the Greek authorities that payments for the project would be blocked since it did not appear possible to terminate it within the time limit set under the amending decision (31 December 2001). By 31 October 2001 only 41 % of the work had been completed.

On 29 November 2002 the Commission asked the Greek authorities for detailed information on the state of advance of the project on two fronts: physical realisation and financial management.

On 23 December 2002 the Greek authorities informed the Commission that the paying authority had been asked to check the project on the spot and that on receiving the report they would transmit particulars of the state of advance and prospects for completion.

These have not yet been received.

(2004/C 33 E/251) **WRITTEN QUESTION P-2275/03**

by Georges Berthu (NI) to the Commission

(7 July 2003)

Subject: Agriculture — drought and set-aside land

Some parts of France are currently suffering from serious drought, and grass for use as cattle fodder is becoming scarce. Would it be possible in such cases for derogations to be granted so that set-aside land might be used for the growing of animal fodder crops, with a view not only to coping with the current crisis but also to combating the droughts which are likely to occur in the future?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission

(29 July 2003)

The Commission is aware of the fact that the drought became worse in several regions of the Community in June 2003 and, following a favourable opinion of the Management Committee for Cereals delivered on 3 July 2003, has decided to authorise the use of set-aside land for fodder in the regions concerned in Germany, France, Italy and Austria in the 2003/04 marketing year. This measure applies from 4 July 2003.

The use of set-aside land for animal feed must remain an exceptional measure to be adopted only where specific regional circumstances so require.

(2004/C 33 E/252) **WRITTEN QUESTION P-2287/03**

by Herbert Bösch (PSE) to the Commission

(7 July 2003)

Subject: VAT rates for soy products

Soy products are mainly used as substitutes for milk products of animal origin (often in case of lactose intolerance or milk protein allergy) since they are able to provide an equivalent nutritional value to dairy products, which leads to the fact that soy and dairy products are directly competing on the market.

Whereas all Member States apply reduced VAT rates on dairy products, several Member States apply the standard VAT rate — which is considerably higher — on soy products (e.g. Spain and Austria).