

The Commission is obviously aware of the fact that prices as low as those at Mercamadrid signalled by the Honourable Member may occur. However the Commission only relies on official statistics (FAO Globefish) and according to them, seabass and seabream average European prices recovered in December 2001 and were since then above the production costs every month, with the exception of seabream prices for a short period (January-March 2002).

The trend to reducing prices for seabass and seabream in the last three years might be due either to the fact that the industry is approaching maturity, or to a structural overproduction of these fish. The latter hypothesis was denied by all the Member States representatives attending the special meeting of 16 May 2002. To try to clarify this aspect, a new special meeting with Member States and producers representatives will take place in November 2002 in Brussels. In addition, in the incoming months the Commission will finance a study on the market of seabass and seabream.

The Commission will inform the Honourable Member of the evolution of this issue in the future.

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(2003/C 110 E/196)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-3169/02**

**by Eluned Morgan (PSE) to the Commission**

(6 November 2002)

*Subject:* CAP dairy payments

Under the Common Agricultural Policy dairy (milk and milk products) regime, what overall annual level of payments has been made to dairy processing and exporting companies in the EU over the last ten years? What is the breakdown of these payments by type of subsidy, by company, by product and by EU Member State?

**Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission**

(13 December 2002)

As the Honourable Member can see from the tables that have been sent direct to her and to Parliament's Secretariat, budget expenditure on milk in the last decade has fallen remarkably. The same is true for all the budget subheadings. So, while the budget for milk in 1991 accounted for 17,6 % of the total EAGGF budget, by 2001 it represented only 6 %, a fall in expenditure of EUR 3 billion.

The Commission does not have any information on the breakdown of aid by company as requested in the second part of the question.

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(2003/C 110 E/197)

**WRITTEN QUESTION P-3172/02**

**by Daniel Varela Suanzes-Carpegna (PPE-DE) to the Commission**

(30 October 2002)

*Subject:* 'Heavily fisheries-dependent' regions, relative stability and access to fisheries resources

In its reply to my questions E-0650/02 <sup>(1)</sup>, E-2096/02, E-2097/02 and E-2098/02 <sup>(2)</sup>, the Commission failed to answer the specific points I raised, thereby obliging me to pursue this matter further. I had asked the Commission to say what the criteria were for a European region to be classified as 'heavily fisheries-dependent' for the purpose of allocating fishing opportunities and whether it thought it necessary, in accordance with the Community legal concept of the progressivity principle, to update the list of 'heavily fisheries-dependent' regions, since the current one had been in force for 20 years, and to include new regions dependent on fisheries, following the various accessions of new Member States such as Spain and