

The Commission has no intention to propose similar measures for species such as pigs, sheep and cattle. Such animals are normally raised exclusively for food production and are subject to identification requirements under Community law taking into account relevant production conditions.

The Commission is of course aware of difficulties in implementing Decision 2000/68/EC in certain Member States. However, the horses of the feral or semi-feral breeds referred to by the Honourable Member are registered with their respective breeding organisation approved in accordance with Directive 90/427/EEC of 26 June 1990 on the zootechnical and genealogical conditions governing intra-Community trade in equidae⁽¹⁾. Registered horses born after 1 January 1998 must have a passport in accordance with Commission Decision 93/623/EEC of 20 October 1993 establishing the identification document (passport) accompanying registered equidae⁽²⁾. The use of the passport for horses in Camargue has proven valid for example in 2000, when during the movement restrictions due to West Nile Fever in that area, traceability had to be maintained also for horses used to herd semi-feral Camarguese cattle, which, as other bovine animals, are fully traceable through double ear-tags, passport and cattle database.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 125, 23.5.1996.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 311, 28.11.2001.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 224, 18.8.1990.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 298, 3.12.1993.

(2004/C 78 E/0020)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0622/03

by Brice Hortefeux (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(3 March 2003)

Subject: Combating cartels

As a member of Parliament's Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, I am following with great interest all Mr Monti's efforts against unlawful agreements, abuse of a dominant position and the formation of cartels.

I should therefore particularly like to thank him for taking an often courageous stance, even though the companies concerned sometimes seek support from Members of Parliament, claiming that what has happened is incomprehensible.

Could the Commission provide a list of European companies against which action has been taken since 1999 and the amounts they have been fined?

Could it also indicate the collection rate?

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission

(2 April 2003)

Because of the length of the answer, which includes a number of tables, the Commission is sending it direct to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's Secretariat.

(2004/C 78 E/0021)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0682/03

by María Sornosa Martínez (PSE) to the Commission

(7 March 2003)

Subject: Dam building project in Rivas de Tereso (La Rioja-Spain)

Since 1997, the Minister of Agriculture has been planning to build an irrigation dam in Párganos (Laguardia district), as stated in the Boletín Oficial de la Rioja 13/10/1998, whose main promoter is the

Rioja Alavesa y Sonsierra 'Irrigators' Community'. In a Summary Memorandum on assessing the environmental impact, a fresh option is mentioned, namely Rivas de Tereso, which appears to be preferred, claiming that the Párganos option faced social opposition, was apparently a threat to the people of Párganos should the dam break, and would cost more in terms of expropriations. The 38 metre high dam would hold 2,8 hectometres and mean the loss of at least 25 hectares of arable land (under cereals and vines).

The people of the San Vicente district and the Sonsierra area have been voicing opposition to the scheme, since:

- social opposition in Rivas has been the same or even stronger, a fact the impact assessment does not reflect at all,
- no rigorous evaluation was made of the land to be expropriated, which moreover accounted for a tiny part of the total cost of building the dam, and does not therefore constitute a major factor in deciding its location; what would be required is a study globally costing the building of dams in each of the potential sites,
- the dam's closeness to the village (some 50 metres), combined with low water levels in the summer months, would mean serious problems for the village in terms of smells, insects and salubrity,
- the dam would have a severe economic and social impact on the area, thanks to the disappearance of the arable land already mentioned, (which represents one-tenth of the entire arable land in Rivas),
- negative environmental repercussions on the (highly sensitive) vines, for example, have not been given due weight in assessing the impact (mist, temperature changes, earth moving, mud and waste, etc.).

It is felt that existing alternatives have not been taken into account (such as building a series of smaller dams) which would be better suited to maintaining the economic and ecological equilibrium of the area.

Can the Commission guarantee that the environmental impact assessment, particularly its third stage (irrigation dams), was carried out in accordance with the provisions of Directive 85/337/EEC⁽¹⁾ and its later amendments, given the obligatory requirement that more than environment-friendly alternatives should be investigated? Does the Commission not believe that there has been a clear violation of legislation on public access to environmental information?

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 175, 5.7.1985, p. 40.

Answer given by Mrs Wallström on behalf of the Commission

(16 April 2003)

The papers which the Honourable Member has provided in connection with this question do not include the full environmental assessment prepared for the Spanish authorities. It is, therefore, not possible for the Commission to say whether the assessment was carried out in accordance with the provisions of Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, as amended by Council Directive 97/11/EC of 3 March 1997⁽¹⁾.

As regards the question whether there has been a violation of the provisions of Council Directive 90/313/EEC of 7 June 1990 on the freedom of public access to environmental information⁽²⁾, the Commission wants to point out that this Directive obliges public authorities to reply to requests for access to environmental information. Apart from the obligation to provide general information to the public on the state of environment, this Directive does not contain obligations for public authorities to actively disseminate environmental information. The information put forward by the Honourable Member does not contain any information as to the fact that a request for access to environmental information was addressed to the competent public authorities and whether or not access was given. In the absence of such information, the Commission can not say that the provisions of this Directive have been violated.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 73, 14.3.1997.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 158, 23.6.1990.