

English edition

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Note to our Swedish and Finnish readers (see inside back cover)

I

(Information)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

WRITTEN QUESTIONS WITH ANSWER

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2767/92

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)

to the Commission

*(16 November 1992)**(94/C 371/01)**Subject:* The protection of the acropolis of ancient Eressos

The walls of the Eressos acropolis are crumbling daily as a result of the unauthorized construction of a road approximately three years' ago on the side of the hill of the acropolis; this is a matter of concern for the local department of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities which last year drafted a report on saving the walls. As yet, however, the Ministry of Culture has not moved towards financing the works in question. Does the Commission propose to call upon the Greek Ministry of Culture to protect this site which forms part of the cultural heritage of Lesbos, Greece and Europe in general?

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

(7 July 1993)

The Commission's role in the protection and conservation of Europe's cultural heritage is spelled out in the conclusions of the Council meeting of 12 November 1992 laying down 'guidelines for Community cultural action' and in the new Article 128 inserted in the EC Treaty by the Maastricht Treaty, which is in the process of being ratified.

Community action is to encourage cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, to support and supplement

their action. The role of the Member States in this area is preponderant, and action by the Community is subsidiary.

Accordingly, the funding of consolidation work on the acropolis for Eressos on Lesbos is purely a matter for the competent Greek authorities, in this case the Ministry of Culture.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3130/92

by Mihail Papayannakis (GUE)

to the Commission

*(6 January 1993)**(94/C 371/02)**Subject:* Cement distribution plant in Peristera Distomou (Viotia)

On Distomon beach, 20 metres from the village of Peristera, a complex has been under construction since August 1992 for the storage and distribution of bulk materials (chalk, cement kaoline, alumina, ash) in powdered form. The environment and quality of life in the surrounding area have already suffered greatly as a result of other activities, including an aluminium factory, a bauxite loading wharf and heavy lorry traffic. The coordinating committee opposing this project (local residents, aluminium workers union, elected representatives etc.) are highly critical of the serious environmental implications, a number of irregularities and infringements in connection with the environmental impact assessment (which does not even

acknowledge the existence of Peristera) and the permits authorizing the project.

1. Is the Commission aware of the above facts and what view does it take of the decision to authorize the above project nevertheless?
2. What steps will it make to check that the above project complies with Community environmental legislation and to prevent further damage to the environment and quality of life in this area?

**Supplementary answer given by Mr Paleokrassas
on behalf of the Commission**

(25 April 1994)

Further to its answer ⁽¹⁾, the Commission would inform the Honourable Member that, according to the information provided by the Greek authorities, the plant in Peristera Distomou (Viotia) is a cement storage complex and has never been used for production.

Furthermore, the local authorities have just withdrawn the promoters' licence because they had illegally occupied a wooded area.

The Commission therefore considers that there are no longer any grounds for instituting infringement proceedings against Greece in respect of environmental impact assessment in the case in question.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 264, 29. 9. 1993.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-901/93

by Pierre Lataillade (RDE)

to the Commission

(27 April 1993)

(94/C 371/03)

Subject: Major crisis in the fisheries sector

In view of the results of its study concerning regions which are highly dependent on fishing, does the Commission consider that the existing, Structural Fund-related aid schemes to assist the conversion of such regions are capable of dealing with all situations, or can the problem be solved only by means of a special procedure such as was once envisaged in the form of an Objective 6, specific to fisheries?

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

(12 January 1994)

The Commission considers that the Structural Funds aid mechanisms which are currently in place to assist the conversion of regions dependent on fisheries can cover most situations arising under Structural Funds Objectives 1 to 5(b) within the limits of each Fund's purposes. Specific provisions to this end were also introduced in the Structural Funds Regulation, in particular with regard to Objectives 2 and 5(b). Moreover, in the Green Paper on future Community initiatives the Commission discusses the possibility of dealing with these issues in a broader context.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1197/93

by Laura González Álvarez (GUE)
and Alonso Puerta (GUE)

to the Commission

(18 May 1993)

(94/C 371/04)

Subject: Application in Spain of the EEC Directive on environmental impact assessment

The Commission has opened infringement proceedings against Spain (Article 169) for failure to incorporate Directive 85/337/EEC ⁽¹⁾ fully into national law. One aspect of this case concerns projects jointly financed by Community Funds which are known to have damaging environmental implications and have not been subjected to an environmental impact assessment in conformity with the Directive.

However, replying on behalf of the Commission to Written Question No 2013/90 ⁽²⁾ on 14 January 1991, Mr Christophersen said:

'... Lastly, where the Commission possesses proof that, in the case of one or more measures, Community policies, particularly environmental policy, have not been or are not being complied with, and without prejudice to any legal action, it terminates the payments from the Community Fund to the measure or measures in question and notifies the Member State responsible for implementation of the programme accordingly. This provision is specified in the decisions on the grant of aid for operational programmes.'

1. Can the Commission provide a list of projects jointly financed with Community funds in Spain which have not duly complied with Directive 85/337/EEC?
2. Is the Commission aware of any project in Spain which has not complied with Community measures on the environment and for which it has suspended payments from the Community Funds?

(¹) OJ No L 175, 5. 7. 1985, p. 40.

(²) OJ No C 70, 18. 3. 1991, p. 27.

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

(5 January 1994)

1. Before taking a decision on projects presented for financing under the Structural Funds, the Commission checks that the competent authorities have made an environmental impact assessment where required under Directive 85/337/EEC. If these conditions are not met, no Community assistance is granted.
2. To date no project financed in Spain has given rise to the need for the recovery of undue payments as a result of failure to comply with Community measures on the environment.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1388/93

by Klaus Hänsch (PSE)

to the Commission

(8 June 1993)

(94/C 371/05)

Subject: Results of the EC policy of aid to the European steel industry

1. What public aids and what amounts have been approved by the Commission and/or Council since 1987?

2. What aids and what amounts were granted in the form of capital increases for state enterprises?
3. What reductions in production capacity were achieved as a result, and in which Member States?

**Answer given by Herrn Van Miert
on behalf of the Commission**

(26 November 1993)

1. The State aid authorized by the Commission for the ECSC sector of the steel industry in the EC is shown in the table below. Aid not coming under the Steel Aid Code was authorized with the unanimous assent of the Council pursuant to Article 95 of the ECSC Treaty. In the case of Spain and Portugal aid for adaptation was authorized for a transitional period after their accession.
2. No aid in the form of capital injections has been granted to State enterprises.

However, since 1987 the public authorities have taken capital holdings in ECSC enterprises on six occasions. In all of these cases Neue Maxhütte (Bavaria) (1987 and 1992), DHS (Saarland) (1989), Aberneath Industry (Wales) (1989), Usinor-Sacilor (France) (1990) and Usinor-Sacilor (Crédit Lyonnais) 1991) the Commission found that the capital operations were equivalent to a genuine provision of private capital according to the practice in a market economy and consequently did not constitute the granting of aid.

The reduction of hot-rolling capacity linked to the grant of aid under Article 95 of the ECSC Treaty amounted, in the case of Spain, to 5 047 000 tonnes together with a further reduction in such capacity of 2 380 000 tonnes resulting from the closure of crude steel plant in Bagnoli. There has been no reduction in the case of Portugal but agreement was reached, in connection with certain aid measures, on the abandonment of the plan for expansion.

Authorized aid (direct grants only)

(in millions of ecus) (*)

Member States	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Belgium						
Denmark						
Germany	2,47 (¹) 0,33 (²)	3,75 (¹) 120,2 (³)	0,1 (¹)			29,2 (⁴) (former GDR)
Greece					0,55 (⁴)	

Member States	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Spain (**)	1 995,2 ⁽⁵⁾ ⁽⁶⁾ (Ensidesa, AHV, Acenor, Foarsa, Reinosa)	292,4 ⁽³⁾ (30 enterprises)	1,79 ⁽¹⁾ 3,0 ⁽²⁾ 1,1 ⁽²⁾	0,6 ⁽²⁾ 19,1 ⁽³⁾		
France		20,4 ⁽¹⁾	72,3 ⁽³⁾			
Ireland						
Italy		3 223 ⁽⁷⁾			2,5 ⁽¹⁾	3,2 ⁽¹⁾
Luxembourg	1,5 ⁽¹⁾	0,65 ⁽⁷⁾	5,8 ⁽¹⁾	4,2 ⁽¹⁾	4,1 ⁽¹⁾	0,25 ⁽¹⁾
Portugal (**)	80,1 ⁽⁵⁾ 129,4 ⁽⁵⁾ 301,9 ⁽⁵⁾ (Siderurgia Nacional)					
United Kingdom		0,15 ⁽⁸⁾				

⁽¹⁾ R&D aid.

⁽²⁾ Aid for environmental protection.

⁽³⁾ Aid for closures.

⁽⁴⁾ Regional investment aid (all aid under the Steel Aid code).

⁽⁵⁾ Aid authorized in connection with the transitional period for Spain and Portugal (OJ No L 302, 15. 11. 1985).

⁽⁶⁾ Including ECU 433,6 million not paid.

⁽⁷⁾ Aid authorized under Article 95 of the ECSC Treaty.

⁽⁸⁾ Aid for energy measures.

(*) Average rate of exchange for the year in question.

(**) Accession 1 January 1986

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1853/93

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)

to the Commission

(15 July 1993)

(94/C 371/06)

Subject: Infringement of EC Regulations and Directives by Greece

In which areas has Greece infringed Community Regulations and Directives, and how are these infringements being dealt with?

Answer given by Mr Delors
on behalf of the Commission

(25 January 1994)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to refer to the tenth annual report on Commission monitoring of the application of Community law ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 233, 30. 8. 1993.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1870/93

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)

to the Commission

(15 July 1993)

(94/C 371/07)

Subject: Banned plant-protection products in circulation in Greece

Fifty-six hazardous plant-protection products listed by the United Nations as banned (or restricted) are in circulation in Greece. Six of those products belong to the so-called 'dirty dozen', others are considered to be especially toxic, some are possibly carcinogenic, others pollute ground water and some are generally harmful to the environment.

This was recently revealed by Mrs M. Mouratidou, a biologist, during a meeting organized jointly by the General Confederation of Greek Farmers' Associations and the Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives of Thessaloniki.

In view of the above, will the Commission take steps to ensure that these plant-protection products are taken out of circulation in Greece?

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

(6 May 1994)

Directive 79/117/EEC established a list of pesticide active substances the use of which all Member States had to ban or restrict on their territory.

The provisions of Directive 91/414/EEC of 15 July 1991 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market apply to active substances not banned or restricted by the above Directive. Directive 91/414/EEC lays down very strict requirements designed to guarantee that plant protection products placed on the market offer a very high level of protection to public health and the environment. However, these provisions will not apply fully in all Member States until the Council adopts the Commission proposal regarding the 'uniform principles'⁽¹⁾ and the active substances in question have been re-evaluated under the 10-year re-evaluation programme laid down in the Directive.

After that re-evaluation, Member States will have to review their authorizations for plant protection products containing such active substances and if necessary ban or restrict them if the re-evaluation indicates that they have unacceptable effects on public health or the environment. The initial list of 90 substances undergoing such a re-evaluation was adopted by the Commission in Regulation (EEC) No 3600/92, which also laid down all the provisions needed to ensure a re-evaluation of the effects of the substances on health and the environment on the basis of a completely up to date dossier.

As long as the Community re-evaluation of certain substances remains unfinalized in the re-evaluation programme Member States will have the power to decide whether to authorize them.

⁽¹⁾ COM(93) 117.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1899/93

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)

to the Commission

(15 July 1993)

(94/C 371/08)

Subject: Money given to the National Returnees Foundation to support the Pontic Greeks

The *Pondiki* newspaper of 6 May 1993 reports serious allegations, made by the Association of Pontic Greeks of the prefecture of Xanthi, that most of the money donated to the National Returnees Foundation by the EEC to support

Pontic Greeks returning to Greece from the former USSR had been squandered on sinecures for insiders. Is the Commission aware of these charges, and, if so, what details does it have?

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

(9 December 1993)

The Commission is not aware of any misappropriation of funds granted to the national Returnees Foundation by the EEC to support Pontic Greeks returning to Greece from the former USSR.

However, the Commission intends to investigate the allegations made by the newspaper *To Pondiki* and will take appropriate action if necessary.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1957/93

by Isidoro Sánchez García (ARE)

to the Commission

(19 July 1993)

(94/C 371/09)

Subject: Assessment of Community regional policy in the Canary Islands

What is the Commission's assessment of the implementation of Community regional policy in the Canary Islands (Spain) during the period 1989-1993?

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

(25 February 1994)

The measures adopted for implementing the regional policies in the Canary islands during the period 1989-1993 are being sent direct to the Honourable Member and to the Secretariat-General of the Parliament. The tables set out both the amounts involved and the contributions by the various administrative bodies.

By 31 December 1993 all the ERDF funds had been committed, although the degree of implementation is not the same in all cases. Thus:

- The projects for the reclamation of Playamard beach and the Binter project were completed on time, the Pasito Blanco-Arguineguin motorway was finished recently and the Las Palmas water treatment plant will be completed in the early part of this year. The marine park at Santa Cruz de Tenerife was started a year ago, but if

work continues at the present rate it should be finished on time. The Unelco project has been delayed by a series of environmental problems. The project for the improvement of the Las Canteras tourist area will be completed in the course of this year.

- For financial commitments relating to the operational programmes for la Gomera and the Canary Islands the Spanish Government has requested an extension until the end of 1994 because of fluctuations in the Spanish currency and delays in implementing the programmes.

All the operational programmes can reasonably be expected to use up the appropriations made available.

- Similarly, the Community initiatives should use up all their appropriations in the course of 1994, including the Regis initiative.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2089/93

by Ben Visser (PSE)
to the Commission
(23 July 1993)
(94/C 371/10)

Subject: German law on packaging

The German law on packaging has now been in force for 18 months and unfortunately is giving rise to a number of problems.

1. In answer to my earlier Written Question on this subject (No 2494/91⁽¹⁾), the Commission wrote: 'The Commission is examining the DSD system in the light of Articles 85 and 86 of the EEC Treaty.' What has been the outcome of this examination?
2. The law is still causing numerous problems for the Dutch companies that export to Germany. The situation concerning the use of synthetic material gives particular cause for confusion. The information from Germany is incomplete and the rules are constantly changing. Foreign companies feel they are at a disadvantage compared with German companies. What is the Commission's reaction to this?
3. A British note on this subject states that the law on packaging has a disruptive effect on the internal market because the cost price of waste in Germany has become artificially low; in fact the consumer pays for collecting,

sorting and re-cycling. This waste provides a cheap raw material for German industry, which consequently obtains an unfair advantage over foreign producers. What is the Commission's reaction?

4. As the supply of packaging waste in Germany is greater than demand, the surplus is exported to the Netherlands, Belgium and the UK as a secondary raw material. Taking the Netherlands as an example, the artificially low prices have a disruptive effect on the processing of Dutch packaging waste, which is closer to market norms. Does the Commission share this view and how can the problem be solved?

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 202, 10. 8. 1992, p. 19.

Answer given by Mr Vanni d'Archirafi
on behalf of the Commission

(6 May 1994)

The Commission's examination of the Duales System Deutschland under Articles 85 and 86 EC Treaty is still being carried out and no definitive position has yet been adopted.

In relation to the Commission's examination of the German legislation under Articles 30 to 36 EC Treaty, a large number of complaints have been received, as well as submissions made by several Member States as to the indirect effect which the implementation of the system is having on their own capacity to deal with the problem of effective waste disposal.

The Commission is concerned, as a result of the information provided, that the resultant build up of waste pursuant to the obligations imposed by the Decree and its implementation by the Duales System Deutschland in fact poses many problems for the environment. In this respect the environment is to be considered in its Community wide sense, rather than restricted to any one particular Member State. This investigation also has not yet been completed.

The Environment Councils of 28/29 June and 15 December 1993 held detailed discussions of the possibility of achieving a better control of the flow of packaging waste within the Community and the importance of reaching a Community wide solution was emphasised.

The Commission undertook to continue its efforts to obtain a reasonable solution at the Community level whilst also inviting the Member States which are most concerned by the current problem to engage in bilateral negotiations.

These investigations will also address the various effects of the price element in the sales of packaging waste.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2390/93**by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)****to the Commission***(1 September 1993)**(94/C 371/11)*

Subject: Statements by the President of the Commission on the failure of Cyprus's bid for EC membership and the recognition of northern and southern Cyprus

Statements made by Mr Jacques Delors, the President of the Commission, at the recent summit conference, concerning the failure of Cyprus's bid for EC membership and the recognition of northern and southern Cyprus, have raised a number of questions about the EC's position on this matter. It is emphasized that on the same day that Mr Delors made this statement, Mr Denktash called for northern Cyprus to become an independent State. This creates the impression that Mr Delors agrees with Mr Denktash and militates in favour of international recognition of a pseudo-state. Mr Delors's statements seem to support Turkey's obstructionist policies which seek to block a peaceful solution to the Cyprus problem at a time when Mr Denktash and the Turkish authorities are abandoning the UN negotiating process.

1. Can the Commission confirm the validity of the summit meeting resolutions recognizing the Turkish military occupation of a UN member country and does it recognize the Republic of Cyprus as an independent State?
2. Will the Community continue showing solidarity towards a Member State — Greece — or does it intend to make it a hostage to Turkish intransigence?
3. Was this provocative 'attack' unintended or deliberate? Was it the view of one person or of the Commission as a whole and what is the position of the Greek Commissioner?

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

(16 May 1994)

The Commission would inform the Honourable Member that Mr Delors made no statement on Cyprus's accession at the European Council in question.

The Commission's position was made quite clear during a working visit to Athens in preparation for the Greek Presidency. It expressed its support for the appointment of a Union observer to signal the Community's willingness to back peace efforts and the search for a balanced and lasting solution for Cyprus, as it considers that Cyprus is a part of a general process aimed at strengthening peace, mutual respect, recognition and cooperation in the region.

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its opinion on Cyprus's application for EC membership, an opinion which was widely approved by the Council (general affairs) on 4 October, in which the Community's support for the UN Secretary-General's efforts to reach a peaceful, balanced and lasting settlement to the Cyprus question is clearly stated. This is in keeping with the position constantly expressed by the Commission, namely that the status quo on the island is unacceptable.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2558/93**by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)****to the Commission***(1 September 1993)**(94/C 371/12)*

Subject: Vocational training of the local population in coastal areas

If the traditions of the fishing communities are to be preserved and protected, while tourism is developing, young people must be trained in new or traditional occupations. In view of this, will the Commission undertake to support the vocational training of young people among the local communities?

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

(9 December 1993)

Promoting the occupational integration of young people is one of the priority objectives of the Community's structural policy. The ESF allocates a large proportion of its finances to fund various guidance and training measures, recruitment aids and aid for setting up self-employed activities.

The tourism sector especially is already one of the priority targets for the Structural Funds, particularly in the less well-off regions of the Community. In these regions the ERDF usually supports investment in infrastructure and the ESF supports training for young people and adults specifically geared towards the development of tourism.

It goes without saying that the special development needs of the coastal and island regions of the Community will be taken into account when the new generation of CSFs is planned and programmed for the 1994-1999 period. In this connection the ESF measures to help young people will be defined and coordinated under the partnership arrangement, which involves close cooperation between the

Commission and all the relevant authorities at national, regional or local levels.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2599/93

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)
to the Commission
(1 September 1993)
(94/C 371/13)

Subject: Levels of radioactivity to which students at the Pallini Experimental School of Music (Attiki) are exposed

Every day students at the Pallini experimental School of Music (Attiki) are exposed to between two and three times the legally accepted radiation level as a result of the powerful electromagnetic fields created by the high tension wires owned by the Greek Public Power Corporation, which pass very close to the school and are increasing the incidence of leukaemia and cancer among the children. This information was given at a meeting of the Greek Technical Chamber held on 26 May 1993, by Mr Alexandros Dimitriadis, Professor and Electrological Research Scientist, who observed that the electromagnetic readings taken at the school oscillated between 3,5 and 5,2 milligauss. Can the Commission investigate this matter?

**Answer given by Mr Flynn
on behalf of the Commission**
(8 November 1993)

The Commission has no new information to add to its reply to Written Question No 3272/92 ⁽¹⁾ concerning exactly the same issue.

(1) OJ No C 145, 25. 5. 1993.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2700/93

by Ben Visser (PSE)
to the Commission
(8 September 1993)
(94/C 371/14)

Subject: Positive action for EC shipping

Over the last few years many people have come to the conclusion, in the discussion on setting up a Euros Community ship register, that Euros will be unable to prevent the erosion of the EC fleet if there is no accompanying package of positive measures. The Commission has promised to submit proposals. The

outflagging of EC vessels to non-Community registers continues apace and there is an even greater need for action.

1. There are rumours that in contacts with officials of the Member States the Community has encountered stiff opposition to proposals for positive action. Are these rumours true?
2. Is it true that the Community is considering not submitting proposals for a package of positive measures, or at least not doing so for the foreseeable future?
3. What prospect of success does the Commission feel the Euros register will have if there are no accompanying positive measures?

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2701/93

by Ben Visser (PSE)
to the Commission
(8 September 1993)
(94/C 371/15)

Subject: Euros register and nationality requirements for crews

In its deliberations on the proposals concerning the Euros register, the European Parliament opted for a compromise solution to the question of crew members' nationality: 100 % of officers and 50 % of other crew members should come from EC countries.

1. Is it true that the Commission and the Member States have failed to find a solution — for example, along the lines suggested by Parliament — to the question of nationality?
2. Is it also true that the Commission is considering presenting proposals whereby the requirements in respect of nationality are not uniform for all types of vessel?
3. When is the EC likely to produce new proposals on the nationality requirements in the Euros register?

**Joint answer to Written Questions
E-2700/93 and E-2701/93
given by Mr Matutes
on behalf of the Commission**
(26 April 1994)

It is true that the nationality requirements laid down in the Commission's proposal for the establishment of the Community ship-register Euros failed to receive sufficient support. Many Member States allow more flexibility on the employment of foreign seafarers than contained in the Commission proposal. This means that Parliament's amendment, to make the nationality requirement more severe, cannot come to fruition either.

On 20 January 1994, the Commission chaired a meeting of officials from the Member States in order to reactivate the debate on Euros. The Commission drew the inference that further discussion on Euros is worthwhile and is preparing to work on the further promotion of Euros. The Commission is aware that flagging out of Community vessels continues apace and there is, therefore, an urgent need for effective action.

The Commission is examining at present whether a formula can be found which will match both the objective of preservation of maritime know-how in the Community and a realistic chance of registration of vessels in Euros. Part of the solution might be a variation by type or size of the vessel. If such a formula can be found the Commission will continue to remould its proposal to such an extent that positive measures can be taken by Member States more easily.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2800/93

by Pierre Lataillade (RDE)

to the Commission

(4 October 1993)

(94/C 371/16)

Subject: Crisis in the paper market

Can the Commission state its position in the GATT negotiations as regards the wood trade and, especially, the paper sector? In particular, what is the situation regarding import quotas for newspaper and the possibility of extending public invitations to tender?

**Answer given by Sir Leon Brittan
on behalf of the Commission**

(7 February 1994)

The GATT Uruguay Round negotiations were concluded on 15 December 1993. With respect to customs tariffs, the concessions made at that date by all Contracting Parties are now bound and cannot be altered except for the better.

For the sake of a balanced overall outcome, last December the Community agreed to eliminate customs duties in the paper sector on a multilateral basis embracing all developed countries, provided this was done over 10 years instead of the five-year period traditionally applied under the GATT.

In the specific case of news-print, this of course means that after 10 years the zero-duty quota beyond which customs duties are charged will have lost all validity.

As regards the wood sector, the Community does not currently intend to change its offer to reduce tariffs made in Geneva in October 1993. The offer proposes a customs duty reduction of around 44 %. It should be noted that the tariff reduction on plywood over and above the zero-duty quota of 650 000 m³ will be more modest, from 10 % to 7 %.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2907/93

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)

to the Commission

(11 October 1993)

(94/C 371/17)

Subject: Repair of damage caused by forest fires in Greece

Considerable areas of forestry were recently destroyed by fires and adequate resources are now needed to fund projects to prevent soil erosion, provide protection against flooding, carry out re-forestation, etc. Will the Commission say what measures it envisages to help repair the damage caused by those fires?

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

(27 January 1994)

The aid requested by the Honourable Member could conceivably be covered by the regional development programmes, one of which, the national programme on agricultural structures, provides for ECU 23 million to repair damage to farm holdings as a result of natural disasters.

The 1993 operational programme for forestry in Greece, total investment in which amounts to ECU 31 million, provides in particular for afforestation measures, forest protection and technical assistance.

In any event, it is for the Greek authorities to review the priorities, if deemed appropriate, with a view to meeting the needs in question.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3042/93by **Laura González Álvarez (GUE)**

to the Commission

(29 October 1993)

(94/C 371/18)

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

(26 April 1994)

Subject: The rail accident in Vega de Anzo (Asturias)

On 3 August 1993, one of the worst rail accidents in Spanish history occurred in the Asturias region: 12 people were killed and several more wounded following a head-on collision between two trains, both belonging to the FEVE (Spanish Narrow-Gauge Railways) company, in the locality of Vega de Anzo. This company has been responsible over the last 10 years for accidents killing 16 people and wounding over 200 in head-on collisions; most of its track lacks the most basic facilities necessary for safety and accident prevention, such as central traffic control, manual blocks, train earthing and line electrification. In the context of the common transport policy, the Commission considers rail to be of major importance, as being a 'safe' form of transport. Council Regulation (EEC) No 1893/91 ⁽¹⁾ amending Regulation (EEC) No 1191/69 ⁽²⁾ on action by Member States concerning the obligations inherent in the concept of public service in transport by rail, road and inland waterway is intended to ensure that due account is taken of users' interests.

1. Does the Commission not consider that the most suitable means of protecting rail travellers' interests in the Community is to urge the Member States to adopt structural measures, where they are not already in place, so as to bring all rail networks in the Community up to the highest safety standards?
2. What action could the Commission take *vis-à-vis* the Spanish authorities to convince them of the need to correct the imbalances and inequalities existing in regional terms within the Spanish rail system?
3. To what extent could the proposed cohesion fund and EIB loans contribute to the investment in updated technology and safety systems required by the FEVE network?
4. Can the Commission request the Spanish authorities to supply all possible information concerning the structural factors which led to the accident on the FEVE line in Asturias on 3 August 1993?
5. Does the Commission not consider that the relevant Community legislation should include concrete provisions concerning the passenger safety aspects of rail transport?

The Commission shares the concern of the Honourable Member to ensure a high standard of safety in railway transport. However the general level of rail safety in the Community is higher than in other modes of transport, particularly road. As regards the Honourable Member's specific questions:

1. Safety in rail transport depends upon a range of factors including the quality of infrastructure. It is for the Member States to decide what priority they give to the various means available to improve safety. The Commission will endeavour to ensure that appropriate safety standards are applied to projects of Community interest. It might be noted that the European Investment Bank provided in 1990, 1991 and 1993 three loans totalling ECU 76,4 million, to Ferrocarriles de Via Estrecha (FEVE), for improving the safety, reliability and quality of service of the railway system along the Cantabrian Coast in the Basque Country. These funds are being used for the installation of modern automatic train control and signalling equipment and the automatization of level crossings. At present the Bank is appraising further railroad investment for which FEVE is seeking EIB financing. FEVE's network in Asturias is part of the scheme under review.
2. The Commission adopted on 29 March 1994 a network plan for conventional rail routes in the Community. This plan will serve as a basis for future Community financial aid to railway infrastructure. Due account has been taken of regional interests in the preparation of the network.
3. The cohesion fund and other Community financial instruments can contribute to the modernization and improvement of the Community rail system to the extent that the projects concerned meet the criteria established for the particular instrument.
4. The investigation of railway accidents is the responsibility of the authorities of the Member States and the Commission does not intend to intervene.
5. The question of establishing rules concerning safety has traditionally been a matter for the Member States and the railway companies themselves. As new railway companies are likely to be established in the Community to operate international services the Commission has

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 169, 29. 6. 1991, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ No L 156, 28. 6. 1969, p. 1.

forwarded to the Council a proposal for a Directive on the licensing of railway undertakings ⁽¹⁾ which takes account of the need to ensure high safety standards.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 24, 28. 1. 1994.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3121/93

by **Gerhard Schmid (PSE)**

to the Commission

(19 November 1993)

(94/C 371/19)

Subject: EC Regional Fund (ERDF)

What specific projects in Bavaria have received Community Regional Fund financing since 1990, and how much have they received?

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

(25 February 1994)

The commitments of the European Regional Development Fund for Bavaria since 1990 are as follows:

(million ecu)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	Total
Objective 5b areas	2,2	14,1	27,2	34,2	77,7
Community initiatives:					
— Interreg	—	2,7	6,8	4,3	13,8
— Leader ⁽¹⁾					5,2
Total					96,7

⁽¹⁾ Global grant.

As the Honourable Member will be aware, the choice of individual projects is made by the appropriate authorities of the Member State. The Honourable Member is therefore advised to address himself for more detailed information to the responsible Bavarian ministries.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3199/93

by **Víctor Arbeloa Muru (PSE)**

to the Commission

(23 November 1993)

(94/C 371/20)

Subject: Realities of Spanish farming

Is there not a danger that the new reformed CAP proposals may lead to irrigated land being set aside at a time when substantial investment is still taking place, which would thus be to no purpose?

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

(4 May 1994)

Irrigation is taken into account in Spain by establishing a basic 'regadío' area for maize and other crops for which higher yields are fixed than for cultivated land in 'secano' areas.

Furthermore, in December 1993 the Council introduced a greater degree of flexibility into the application of the reform of the arable crops sector when it adjusted the Regulation amending Regulation (EEC) No 1765/92 ⁽¹⁾, making it easier in particular for the producers whose holdings extend across both 'regadío' and 'secano' regions to set aside land in the 'secano' area corresponding to an application for compensation in the 'regadío' area.

The Commission believes that there is accordingly little or no risk of irrigated land being abandoned.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 181, 1. 7. 1992.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3337/93

by **Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)**

to the Commission

(24 November 1993)

(94/C 371/21)

Subject: Community aid to ACP countries

Community aid is granted to ACP countries following talks to determine appropriate measures and options for the

strategic development of these third countries. However, despite the fact that the Lomé Conventions recognize that the ACP countries are free to choose their strategic development, it appears that many of these countries do not honour their agreements, thus undermining the effectiveness of Community aid. In the light of this, will the Commission take steps in the immediate future to improve cooperation with the ACP countries?

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

(25 February 1994)

The consultation process to which the Honourable Member refers begins with the programming of Community aid with every single ACP country and the drawing-up of a national indicative programme. Programming is a vital stage in the cooperation process, at which the Community specifies, ACP State by ACP State, how much it is going to commit to each focal sector for aid during the lifetime of the financial protocol. For its part, the ACP country undertakes to take the economic, administrative or financial measures required in those sectors for Community aid to be fully effective.

In other words, the Commission, as part of this process, backs policy reforms in the sectors chosen.

The Commission has delayed the adoption of indicative programmes or postponed their implementation where ACP countries have failed to honour their commitments.

The Commission nevertheless believes, in the light of experience, that some programming procedures have brought a degree of inflexibility and thereby reduced the effectiveness of cooperation. A particular example of this is the system whereby the resources available are allocated from the very outset, which has not always been conducive to dialogue and has in some cases led to funds being frozen needlessly.

For this reason, the Commission, in its proposals to the Council concerning the renewal of the Lomé IV financial protocol, has proposed a rolling programming system and the granting of incentives as part of an on-going system to get the ACP countries to honour their commitments, fine-tune aid programmes during the lifetime of the protocol and make the management of the funds more flexible.

If applied, all these measures will significantly improve the Community's cooperation with every single ACP country.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3522/93

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)

to the Commission

(13 December 1993)

(94/C 371/22)

Subject: Establishment of prohibited zones for oil tankers

Environmental organizations are proposing the immediate introduction of zones which are prohibited to oil tankers in order to protect wetlands and habitats covered by the Ramsar Convention. Is the Commission sympathetic to such a proposal?

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

(27 April 1994)

At the request of the Council, by mid-July 1993 the Commission elaborated a list of common criteria for definition of marine and coastal environmentally sensitive areas (ESA) which might require measures of safeguard against the hazards of maritime transport. This list is being forwarded to Member States for the identification of ESA, to be reported to the Commission in accordance with Council Decision of 29 June 1993. Such ESA would include those foreseen by the Ramsar Convention.

The Commission should present the result of this Community-wide identification of ESA to the Council in the near future. Proposals for specific measures to be applied to these ESA may follow.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3554/93

by Des Geraghty (NI)

to the Commission

(13 December 1993)

(94/C 371/23)

Subject: Air France capital injection

When considering the Air France capital injection (1990) the Commission took into account in a positive way the fact that 'Air France's home base is well located, not suffering from infrastructure bottlenecks and therefore well prepared to benefit from future growth' (1). This *inter alia* led the Commission to conclude that the injection did not amount to state aid in the context of Articles 92 and 93 of the Treaty.

Does the Commission not consider it perverse, and contrary to the fundamental Community objective of economic and

social cohesion, to allow support, even partially on grounds of being centrally located in a wealthy area with a well-developed airport infrastructure, while disallowing support on a similar basis to Europe's most peripheral national airline, Aer Lingus?

(¹) SEC(92) 431.

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

(21 March 1994)

In examining whether a market economy investor would invest in a company, the Commission must evaluate the positive and negative economic factors which underpin such an investment decision.

With regard to the 1990 capital injection in Air France, the Commission examined whether the structure and volume of the company's debts would be such that a return to normal dividends and capital gains could be expected within a reasonable time. Based on the financial projections at that time, the Commission concluded that the anticipated overall return on investment demonstrated a favourable outlook for Air France in the future.

As part of its analysis, in this and other cases, the Commission has to consider the company's air traffic projections. Accordingly, an appraisal of the airline's location and the likelihood of infrastructure bottlenecks has also to be undertaken to ensure that such projections are realistic, and consistent with these other factors.

Turning to the case of Aer Lingus, it should be noted that, in contrast with the Air France case, the Commission considered the capital injections to represent aid. The Commission nevertheless found the aid to be compatible with the common market subject to fulfilment of various commitments given by the Irish Government. The Commission noted in its Decision that the restructuring of Aer Lingus will contribute to the development of air transport activity in a peripheral area of the Community.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3625/93

by Jean-Marie Alexandre (PSE)

to the Commission

(17 December 1993)

(94/C 371/24)

Subject: Unfair competition through the use of Community funds

The (Greek-owned) Titan group seems to be taking advantage of Community aid to relocate its (cement) production plant to sites in France and to build loading and storage facilities at the ports of Calais and Dunkirk.

Thanks to Community aid, its prices are apparently 20 % lower than those charged by French cement works.

If this should prove to be the case, cement works in the Pas-de-Calais will have to close down.

Following an inquiry, can the Commission confirm these practices and, if so, justify them?

If not, what steps will it take to prevent what is tantamount to unfair competition?

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

(22 April 1994)

No project of the type referred to in the question has been financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the Objective 2 programmes involving aid for Calais and Dunkirk or under the Renaval Programme (Dunkirk employment area).*

The Commission is not therefore in a position to answer the other questions put by the Honourable Member.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3686/93

by Alexandros Alavanos (GUE)

to the Commission

(3 January 1994)

(94/C 371/25)

Subject: Lack of reliable unemployment statistics in Greece

On 17 December 1992, in reply to a previous question of mine concerning unemployment (Written Question No 2825/92) (¹), the Commission replied that 'the number of persons registered at employment offices cannot be regarded as a representative unemployment indicator in the case of Greece'. One year later, Eurostat reports that there are no statistics available for unemployment in Greece for September 1992, August 1993 and September 1993.

In the light of the proposed white paper on employment up to the year 2000, how does the Commission intend to tackle the absence of unemployment statistics in Greece and what steps will it take to remedy this chronic lack of a reliable register of the unemployed in the country?

(¹) OJ No C 99, 7. 4. 1993, p. 23.

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

(11 April 1994)

The Commission obtains statistics on unemployment in Greece via the Community Labour Force survey which is conducted in every Member State in the Spring of every year. In order to get more frequent and up-to-date information, the Commission intends to propose to the Member States that the periodicity of this survey be stepped up from annual to quarterly.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3726/93

by Alex Smith (PSE)

to the Commission

(3 January 1994)

(94/C 371/26)

Subject: Tacis Programme

Further to its reply to Written Question No 2698/92 ⁽¹⁾, will the Commission

1. set out the details of the preliminary arrangements agreed to facilitate a solution to the problem posed by a lack of liability cover for companies from the European Communities working on safety upgrades for nuclear plants within the Russian federation of Ukraine, under the aegis of the Tacis Programme and
2. describe the procedure by which the consortia of agencies from different Member States have been chosen to establish target sectors for assistance under the Tacis Programme?

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 292, 28. 10. 1993, p. 13.

**Answer given by Sir Leon Brittan
on behalf of the Commission**

(23 March 1994)

1. The Commission early this year requested from both the Russian and the Ukrainian authorities an indemnity statement in order to protect the Communities and consultants working under the Tacis Programme from claims related to a nuclear accident.

The Russian Government has signed a limited nuclear indemnity statement which however does not provide for coverage if operating procedures are changed or equipment installed. It has pledged to sign a non-restrictive statement in the near future. On this basis, it has been possible to launch all Tacis nuclear safety assistance projects, as Tacis consultants agreed to begin work. The completion of the

projects is, however, dependant upon obtaining a full indemnity statement by the Russian Government. In this respect, the Commission's negotiations with the Russian authorities have not yet produced a tangible result. Negotiations will be continued.

As regards Ukraine, its Government has not provided any liability coverage for Tacis projects, despite continued Commission insistence. In this respect as well, discussions with the Ukrainian authorities will continue.

2. Target sectors for assistance under the Tacis Programme are established by the Commission in cooperation with beneficiaries as well as with experts nominated by the Member States.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3730/93

by Alex Smith (PSE)

to the Commission

(3 January 1994)

(94/C 371/27)

Subject: Volatile organic compound emissions

Further to the reply to Written Question No 615/93 ⁽¹⁾ by Mr Seligman on volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions, will the Commission report on any queries it has received arising from its proposals for a Directive on VOCs?

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 288, 25. 10. 1993, p. 20.

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

(17 March 1994)

The proposal for the so-called 'Stage I' Directive ⁽¹⁾ was submitted to the Council, the Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee on 30 July 1992 and since then all negotiations on the proposal have taken place within the framework of the procedures of these institutions.

The queries to which the Honourable Member refers were not addressed to the Commission but to members of the Parliament and E.S.C. and the Member State representatives in Council.

This was also the case with the query from the British Petrol Retailers Association to which the Commission referred in its reply to the written question from Mr Seligman.

This British business organization approached the authorities of the United Kingdom, who in turn asked the Commission to assist in clarifying the issue of costs of

implementation for smaller service stations. As a consequence an informal meeting was arranged between the Commission, the UK authorities and the business organization in Brussels in spring 1993.

The information given in the reply to the written question by Mr Seligman reflects the Commission's conclusions drawn from that meeting.

The Commission has not received further queries arising from its proposal outside the framework of the discussions in the Council, the Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee.

(¹) OJ No C 277, 3. 9. 1992.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3762/93

by Sir James Scott-Hopkins (PPE)

to the Commission

(12 January 1994)

(94/C 371/28)

Subject: Publicity for EC initiatives in the West Midlands

What is the Commission doing to increase awareness of new EC initiatives in the region of the UK known as the West Midlands?

What role does it envisage the new Committee of the Regions playing in this context?

Does it expect to establish a close working relationship with this committee and, if so, how does it intend to fulfil this aim?

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

(29 April 1994)

The Commission published a Green Paper on the future of Community initiatives in June 1993 which has been widely distributed, including to members of the monitoring committee for the Community Support Framework in the West Midlands. The Commission has now proposed draft guidelines for the new Community Initiatives and will take a final decision after it has received the views of the Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the Economic and Social Committee, and the Management Committee of Member States representatives.

The role of the Committee of the Regions is set out in the EC Treaty. It is up to the Committee to define its role precisely and to take its place among the Community institutions and bodies.

The Commission will establish close working relations with the Committee and has taken the necessary internal measures to ensure that relations with it are coordinated and its activities followed.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3782/93

by Alexandros Alavanos (GUE)

to the Commission

(12 January 1994)

(94/C 371/29)

Subject: Protection of an historic site in Aegina in the light of plans to build a cement works

The historic area of Palaia Hora close to the monastery of Saint Nectar on the isle of Aegina, in Greece, is an important religious site, with 365 Byzantine churches. It is here, just above the village of Kontos, that there are plans to begin exploiting a quarry and to build a cement works. Local authorities and local inhabitants are opposed to this project, fearing that the dust from cement, sand and other raw materials will have harmful consequences for public health, the surrounding forests, the beauty of the site itself and the prospects for the development of tourism on the island.

All the competent authorities on Aegina are calling for the protection and enhancement of the site, while the Greek Minister for Culture has launched a programme to restore the religious buildings and the diocese is asking for a special subsidy from the European Community. In the light of these considerations and bearing in mind the provisions of Annex II to Directive 85/337/EEC (¹) and the guidelines for Community cultural action (²), what steps will the Commission take to protect this historic site?

Have the Greek authorities requested financial aid for the protection and enhancement of the site? Has a regional planning or other study regarding Aegina been financed by the Community? What action will the Commission take in response to the violations of Directive 85/337/EEC represented on the one hand by the failure to assess the environmental impact of a quarry and cement works and, on the other, by the absence of public consultation?

(¹) OJ No L 175, 5. 7. 1985, p. 40.

(²) OJ No C 336, 19. 12. 1992, p. 1.

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

(6 May 1994)

It should be recalled that the Member States are fully sovereign as regards cultural policy, especially with respect

to their architectural heritage, and that in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity the Community confines itself to supporting and supplementing their actions.

Article 128 of the EC Treaty and the Conclusions of the Council meeting on 12 November 1992 on the guidelines for Community cultural action spell out the limits of such action.

In response to the first question, the Commission currently has no power, given the subsidiarity principle to intervene with the Greek authorities to secure the protection and enhancement of Aegina.

With respect to the second question, no request for financial support for the Aegina site has so far been submitted by the Greek authorities. The Commission would, however, point out that any such proposal under budget item B 3-2000 would have no prospect of success in view of the present budgetary constraints on cultural measures.

Lastly, the Commission is not aware of any application to the Structural Funds from the Greek authorities for financial assistance for protection of the site, nor have the Funds received any request for support for a regional planning or other study.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3819/93

by **Emmanouil Karellis (PSE)**

to the Commission

(17 January 1994)

(94/C 371/30)

Subject: Fisheries projects in the Greek IMP

Can the Commission inform Parliament of the fisheries projects implemented in Greece during the period 1990-1993 as covered by the estimates for the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes funded by the various funds (Fisheries, ERDF, ESF and the IMP Line)?

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

(4 May 1994)

Examples of the projects in the fisheries sector which the Commission has part-financed in Greece under the IMP are:

- the withdrawal of fishing vessels,
- shelters for fishing vessels and improvement of port facilities;

— aquaculture, research, training, development of lagoons.

In most cases these measures have had a positive impact on re-structuring of the sector.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3820/93

by **Alexandros Alavanos (GUE)**

to the Commission

(17 January 1994)

(94/C 371/31)

Subject: Pollution of Greece's waters from land-based sources

A recent report by the Greek Ministry of the Merchant Marine confirms, following tests in 2101 establishments, that pollution from the land-based sources remained acute during the period 1991/92 and was around the same level as in 1985. 29% of factories, 74% of sewage systems in coastal regions, 87% of abattoirs, 26% of oil-mills, 100% of fish-wharves and 66% of hospitals did not have the necessary authorization for the disposal of effluents as required by Council Decision 83/101/EEC ⁽¹⁾.

What action does the Commission intend to take to ensure that Greece complies with the above Decision? What was the total Community funding allocated to Greece up to 1992 for the treatment of effluents from the abovementioned activities? How does it view the fact that, despite Community funding for such projects, no substantial improvement was achieved between 1985 and 1992?

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 67, 12. 3. 1983, p. 1.

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

(22 April 1994)

The Commission would remind the Honourable Member that the Greek authorities are responsible for taking the measures required to comply with and implement the provisions of the various articles of the Protocol for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution from land-based sources.

Furthermore, Decision 83/101/EEC concerns the approval of the said protocol on behalf of the Community only.

The Community programme which has made the biggest contribution to tackling pollution of the marine environment from land-based sources is the Envireg initiative, which has enabled projects to be co-financed with a Community contribution of approximately ECU 53

million. The reason why the results are not yet clearly visible is that most of the installations are being completed now and will become operational during the course of 1994; moreover, pollution of the Mediterranean Sea is not only caused by Greek effluents, but also by effluents from other Mediterranean countries, very heavy maritime traffic and accidents at sea.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3822/93

by Des Geraghty (NI)
to the Commission
(17 January 1994)
(94/C 371/32)

Subject: Discrimination through job evaluation schemes

Does the Commission have any measures in mind to combat the tendency to devalue female-dominated jobs in job classification and evaluation schemes?

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3826/93

by Des Geraghty (NI)
to the Commission
(17 January 1994)
(94/C 371/33)

Subject: Action on equal pay

The results of a recent seminar on equal pay organized by the Commission show that the body of EC national legislation has had relatively little impact in breaking down the principal source of inequality between men and women on the labour market.

Does the Commission intend to adopt any new and additional measures to further the objective of employment quality for women and, if so, what are they?

**Joint answer to Written Questions
E-3822/93 and E-3826/93
given by Mr Flynn
on behalf of the Commission
(7 March 1994)**

The principle of equal pay for male and female workers is enshrined in Article 119 of the Treaty and is one of the founding principles of the Community. It was consolidated by Directive 75/117/EEC on equal pay, which introduced the concept of equal pay for work of equal value.

In its third action programme for equal opportunities for women and men (1991-1995)⁽¹⁾ the Commission undertook to 'adopt a Memorandum to define the scope and concept of equal pay for work of equal value and provide guidance on the criteria to be taken into account in job evaluation and job classification'. The Commission expects to adopt this memorandum shortly.

Among the points raised in its Green Paper on the future of Europe's social policy⁽²⁾ the Commission also mentioned the possibility of adopting a number of guidelines as the basis for a Community code of practice for the implementation of equal pay for work of equal value. The code would be geared mainly towards employers and workers and would be designed to increase awareness, provide them with training material and encourage them to tackle this complex subject as part of collective bargaining.

The deadline for reactions to the suggestions made in the Green Paper is 31 March 1994; the Commission will then decide on the line to take on the basis of the replies received.

⁽¹⁾ COM(90) 449 final.

⁽²⁾ COM(93) 351.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3911/93

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)
to the Commission
(24 January 1994)
(94/C 371/34)

Subject: Implementation of a common policy and measures to restrict traffic in city centres

Can the Commission state whether it can take steps (and, if so, which) to implement a common policy and measures to restrict traffic in European city centres, making it easier for pedestrians to get around in traffic-free areas while protecting the cultural heritage?

**Answer given by Mr Paleokrassas
on behalf of the Commission
(26 April 1994)**

Pursuant to the principle of subsidiarity, responsibility for urban traffic measures is a matter for the Member States authorities, primarily the local authorities.

However, among the main priorities of the Community's environment and transport policies is the encouragement of

environmentally friendly forms of transport and traffic management measures in order to improve the quality of the urban environment.

To this end the Commission is supporting the 'car free cities' initiative due to be launched in March of this year with a conference organized by the city of Amsterdam and the creation of a network of 'car-free' cities to promote the development of practical projects for sustainable urban mobility.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3920/93

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)
to the Commission
(24 January 1994)
(94/C 371/35)

Subject: Re-opening of mines at Mandoudi, Evvia

More than 15 large companies have closed down in Evvia in recent years, bringing the number of unemployed to 15 000. Factory shutdowns have produced a spectacular fall in the living standards of the local population and the closure of the mines at Skalistiris and Papastratis has created a population problem in north-central Evvia due to internal migration.

Can the Commission:

1. support measures to bring immediate relief to the unemployed and efforts to re-open the mines in north-central Evvia?
2. help set up a single magnesite mining operation and draw up a special development programme for Evvia?

**Answer given by Mr Millan
on behalf of the Commission**
(4 May 1994)

In the framework of the present operational programme for the region of central Greece (1989-1993), the European Social Fund is contributing to the financing of vocational training or aid to business start-ups to enable workers who have lost their jobs in the area of Mandoudi (Evvia) to retrain or become self-employed. The Commission is at present assessing the impact of these measures on employment.

In the framework of their regional development plan for 1994-1999, the Greek authorities are proposing further training and investment measures in the Mandoudi area. The Commission is prepared to consider, with the Greek

authorities, the possibility of Structural Fund part-financing for an integrated conversion measure for the area; in the Commission's view, this measure should concentrate on basing the economic development of the area essentially on activities other than those that have led to industrial decline.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3921/93

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)
to the Commission
(24 January 1994)
(94/C 371/36)

Subject: Restoration and development of the environment in the region of Mandoudi, Evvia

Organizations in Mandoudi, Evvia, have submitted a proposal to the Community through the LIFE Programme for the restoration, protection and development of the environment in the region. What is the Commission's reaction to this proposal?

**Answer given by Mr Paleokrassas
on behalf of the Commission**
(26 April 1994)

A total of 260 proposals were submitted by the Greek authorities for Community financing under the LIFE Programme in 1993.

The project to which the Honourable Member refers was of good quality. However, considering the availability of funds, only four projects, judged to be the best, were financed.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3961/93

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)
to the Commission
(24 January 1994)
(94/C 371/37)

Subject: Measures to prevent countries with little awareness of environmental issues from causing damage to agriculture

Will the Commission say what measures, if any, have been taken to prevent countries with little awareness of environmental issues and extremely low salary costs, and which profit from agricultural exports through the practice of dumping, from damaging agriculture in their own countries and in the European Union?

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

(6 May 1994)

The conclusion of the Uruguay Round means that support to and trade in agricultural products will become subject to strengthened and transparent international disciplines. These strengthened rules allow for the application of anti-dumping duties and countervailing charges in cases of dumping and similar practices. The rules also foresee the application of a special safeguard clause, in particular when import prices for certain products are very low. Furthermore, in the framework of the Uruguay Round it was agreed to draw up a work programme on trade and environment.

These new initiatives should allow progress in the direction desired by the Honourable Member.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3990/93

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)

to the Commission

(19 January 1994)

(94/C 371/38)

Subject: Quality of available arable land

In view of the warning issues by the UN's International Food and Agriculture Organization that the quality of 10 % of arable land world-wide will deteriorate over the next 20 years, unless suitable measures are taken, what additional specific proposals does the Commission intend to submit to promote environmentally friendly forms of agriculture?

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

(6 May 1994)

As a supporting measure to the CAP reform a Community aid scheme has already been introduced which encourages farmers to use agricultural practices compatible with the protection of the environment and maintenance of the countryside. The specific objectives of the scheme set down in Regulation (EEC) No 2078/92 are to promote:

- the use of farming practices which reduce the polluting effects of agriculture;
- the extensification of crop farming and sheep and cattle farming;

- ways of using agricultural land which are compatible with the protection and improvement of the environment, the countryside, the landscape and the soil, and the preservation of local breeds in danger of extinction;

- the upkeep of abandoned farmland and woodland where necessary for environmental reasons;

- the long-term set-aside of agricultural land for reasons connected with the environment, and

- education and training for farmers in types of farming compatible with the requirements of environmental protection and upkeep of the countryside.

The scheme is implemented by means of multi-annual zonal programmes drawn up by Member States, which cover a minimum period of five years.

In addition an afforestation aid has been introduced to provide an alternative use for agricultural land and encourage the development of forestry on holdings.

The Commission considers that the allocation of marginal land for non-agricultural purposes, the set-aside of land and the promotion of production methods which are less intensive will encourage the protection of the environment, the landscape and natural resources.

The Commission does not intend to take further measures in this context before the two abovementioned Regulations are fully implemented.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3991/93

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)

to the Commission

(19 January 1994)

(94/C 371/39)

Subject: Fur industry in Kastoria

The fur industry in Kastoria is facing a crisis and in desperation has called for the imposition of a ceiling on imports of similar products from third countries; this would solve its short-term problems and in the long term, lead to the re-structuring of the resources of the region and the rapid completion of infrastructure progress, thereby creating the conditions for a revival of the fur sector. What is the Commission's position on this matter, given that Greek fur traders have proposed an import levy of 30 % for goods worth up to ECU 10 million and, if possible, 300 % thereafter?

**Answer given by Sir Leon Brittan
on behalf of the Commission**
(4 May 1994)

Under Council Regulation (EC) No 518/94 ⁽¹⁾ on common rules for imports, surveillance and safeguard measures may be taken against imports from third countries, provided certain conditions are met.

First, consultations have to be held to determine if there is sufficient evidence to justify an investigation. No action may be taken before these consultations, which are held either at the request of a Member State or on the initiative of the Commission, within an advisory committee made up of representatives of each Member State with a representative of the Commission as chairman.

Second, the investigation carried out by the Commission must demonstrate that the product concerned is imported into the Community in such greatly increased quantities and/or ⁽²⁾ on such terms or conditions as to cause, or threaten to cause, serious injury to Community producers of like or directly competing products.

A prior investigation procedure is not mandatory where a critical situation, in which any delay would cause injury which it would be difficult to remedy, calls for immediate intervention.

If the Community has signed an international trade agreement with the exporting third country, consultations with that country might also be required before taking action.

If the conditions for applying surveillance or safeguard measures are met in only one region of the Community, the measures could exceptionally be applied only in the region concerned. Such regional measures must however be temporary and must disrupt the operation of the internal market as little as possible.

No Member State has yet requested consultations on the level or conditions of the imports of fur in Greece. The Commission has not received evidence on the terms and conditions of import of fur, on import trends, on the various aspects of the economic and commercial situation as regards the product in question, or on the alleged injury to the Community producers concerned.

Under these circumstances, there are no grounds for taking protective measures.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EC) No 519/94 applies to certain third countries (e.g., the former republics of the U.S.S.R. . . .).

⁽²⁾ The two conditions are cumulatively applied if the third country is member of the GATT.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4095/93

by Alex Smith (PSE)
to the Commission
(7 February 1994)
(94/C 371/40)

Subject: Safety of high-level nuclear waste storage tanks

What assessment has been conducted by the nuclear safety directorate or Euratom into the robustness of the safety of the high-level nuclear waste storage tanks at (a) Sellafield, (b) Dounreay, (c) Karlsruhe, (d) Mol and (e) The Hague reprocessing facilities, using the Commission computer programme Pi Cosyma.

**Answer given by Mr Paleokrassas
on behalf of the Commission**
(22 April 1994)

Pi Cosyma ⁽¹⁾ is designed for assessing in a probabilistic manner the potential effects of a given accidental release of radioactive materials to the atmosphere. It is not designed to evaluate the probability of such a release taking place and hence could not be used to assess the robustness of the tanks in question. Moreover, the Commission is not empowered to carry out any assessment of the latter type. Responsibility for any such evaluation lies with the Member State concerned.

⁽¹⁾ Cosyma (Code System from Maria) has been developed within the CEC Maria (Methods for Assessing the Radiological Impact of Accidents) Programme.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4104/93

by Gerardo Fernández-Albor (PPE)
to the Commission
(7 February 1994)
(94/C 371/41)

Subject: Grant of Community aid to the Spanish provinces of Zamora and Orense

Can the Commission say what aid the European Community has granted to the parts of the Spanish provinces of Orense and Zamora bordering Portugal under the relevant Community programme for developing Member States' border areas?

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

(6 May 1994)

The Interreg Programme for Spain/Portugal includes the following projects for the province of Orense:

— Improvement of road networks in ECU:

Bande-Hermille: 4 576 876
Hermille-Torno: 4 739 654
Ponte Barxas-Cortegada: 3 990 298
Alto Furriolo-Celanova: 1 419 607

The following projects are included for the province of Zamora:

— Improvement of road networks in ECU:

Ricobayo-Torregamones-Frotera Miranda: 2 618 502
Puebla Sanabria-Frontera (por Calabor): 3 080 232
Alcañices-Benavente: 1 752 000

— Water supply and treatment: 406 846

The abovementioned amounts correspond to the total cost of the projects. The ERDF contribution to each project is 70 %.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-7/94

by Sir Jack Stewart-Clark (PPE)

to the Commission

(8 February 1994)

(94/C 371/42)

Subject: The scope of the capital levy on milk producers in Scotland

Although the British Government has agreed with the reasoned opinion of the Commission that Article 5 of Regulation (EEC) No 1422/78 ⁽¹⁾ makes the collection of capital levies on dairy farmers by the Scottish Milk Marketing Board illegal for anything other than the simple buying and selling of milk, the Scottish Court of Session has ruled otherwise. What action does the Commission propose to take following the judgment?

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 171, 28. 6. 1978, p. 14.

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

(19 April 1994)

The Commission is aware of the ruling of the Scottish Court of Session which, in the absence of any appeal, must be accepted.

Whilst the ruling does not, of itself, remove the obligation on the United Kingdom to comply with the reasoned opinion issued on 18 June 1993, the Commission has formed the view that, in the light of the undertaking given by the United Kingdom to take the necessary action against the Milk Marketing Boards to ensure that no further capital contributions are raised, the infringement is effectively terminated. Accordingly the proceedings currently engaged against the United Kingdom under Article 169 EC Treaty, the purpose of which are to bring about conformity with Community law and not to compensate those adversely affected by infringements, are to be closed.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-15/94

by Annemarie Goedmakers (PSE)

to the Commission

(8 February 1994)

(94/C 371/43)

Subject: Structural Funds and stabilization of CO₂ emissions: joint funding by the EU of two Spanish power stations

1. Is it true that in 1991 the European Commission decided to grant aid to Spain through the ERDF for the construction of two oil-fired power stations?

2. Is it true that environmental impact assessments have to be carried out for such projects?

3. What alternatives to oil-fired power stations (e.g. wind or solar energy) were examined when the decision was taken?

4. On what factors was the decision to build oil-fired power stations based?

5. Does the Commission share the view that the construction of oil-fired power stations contributes to an increase in CO₂ emissions in the European Union?

6. In view of the natural and climatological conditions which prevail in the Canary Islands, to what extent is the construction of oil-fired power stations compatible with the Community's aim of reducing CO₂ emissions to their 1990 level by the year 2000?

7. Did the environmental impact assessment carried out take account of the Community's aim of stabilizing CO₂ emissions in the year 2000 at their 1990 level?

8. Is it true that the required environmental impact assessment procedure had not been completed when the decision to build the oil-fired power stations was taken?

WRITTEN QUESTION E-635/94

by Anita Pollack (PSE)

to the Commission

(17 March 1994)

(94/C 371/44)

Subject: Climate change and the Structural Funds

Does the Commission believe that its funding (ECU 40 million) to finance the construction of two oil-fired power stations in the Canary Islands is compatible with the EU's commitments under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, since it is estimated that these new power stations, if built, will pump an extra 2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year into the atmosphere? Was the environmental impact assessment procedure completed before these funds were released?

Joint answer to Written Questions

E-15/94 and E-635/94

given by Mr Millan

on behalf of the Commission

(4 May 1994)

The issues raised are currently the subject of proceedings brought by an environmental group before the Court of First Instance of the European Communities (Case T-585/93).

Under the circumstances the Commission would prefer not to comment for the moment. It will inform the Honourable Members of the Court's judgment should they so wish.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-40/94

by Mihail Papayannakis (GUE)

to the Commission

(9 February 1994)

(94/C 371/45)

Subject: Diversion of the Achelóos river

Will the Commission give full and precise details of the exact nature of the Achelóos river project and say what individual works have been financed or are in progress and what works are to be financed in future?

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

(5 May 1994)

Under the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes, the Community co-financed the construction of a dam and connected works at Messochora and preparatory works (access roads and water tunnels) for a dam at Sykia. Also co-financed were some on-site technical investigations (bore holes, experimental tunnelling) for the diversion tunnel.

No further works have been co-financed by the Community.

The Commission understands that the Greek authorities intend to pursue the Achelóos project and have included provision for this in their Regional Development Plan for the period 1994-1999.

For its part, apart from those components of the project mentioned above, the Commission has not yet taken any decision on funding this project.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-44/94

by Hiltrud Breyer (V)

to the Commission

(9 February 1994)

(94/C 371/46)

Subject: Anti-AIDS spermicides — EU Market

Experiments with anti-AIDS spermicides are being carried out on prostitutes in Kenya, Senegal and other Third World countries as part of a WHO Programme. The preparations given to the women, which cause ulcers and lead to higher rates of HIV-infection, contain the active substance Nonoxynol-9.

1. Is the substance also used in spermicidal contraceptives (creams, pessaries, etc.) available on the EC market?
2. Is the Commission aware of the use of spermicides causing similar health-related problems in the Community?

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

(5 April 1994)

1. The products referred to in the Written Question are not yet covered by Community legislation. Contraceptive products may fall under Directive 93/42/EEC ⁽¹⁾ relating to medical devices which comes into force on 1 January 1995.

Following information received from several Member States and manufacturers the substance non-oxynol-9 has been used for several years in particular as a spermicide in conjunction with various contraceptives or as gynaecological disinfecting solution. Relevant products are on sale on the European market.

2. The Commission has not received any indication from Member States which would confirm the effects alleged in the Written Question. A higher degree of risk of irritation, however, in the context of repetitive use under particular conditions as in the case of prostitution, cannot be excluded.

(¹) OJ No L 169, 12. 7. 1993.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-110/94

by Jean-Pierre Raffarin (PPE)

to the Commission

(17 February 1994)

(94/C 371/47)

Subject: Set-aside biofuel: Amendment B1-401

During its vote on the budget of the European Union for 1994 the European Parliament adopted, by a wide majority, an amendment by Mr Yves Galland (B1-401) on set-aside biofuel.

This amendment concerned the creation of a new line to encourage the production of non-food crops on land set-aside with a view to developing biofuels.

What action will the Commission take on Parliament's request?

Answer given by Mr Steichen
on behalf of the Commission

(20 April 1994)

Commission Regulation (EEC) No 334/93 (¹), lays down the detailed implementing rules for the use of land set aside for the provision of materials for the manufacture of products not primarily intended for human or animal consumption. This Regulation allows certain agricultural products, in particular oilseeds and cereals, to be grown on set aside land for manufacture into non-food products which include biofuels in particular.

As a consequence of the adoption of Council Regulation (EEC) No 231/94 (²), amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 1765/92 establishing a support system for producers of certain arable crops, which allows the growing of products on set aside land for non-food purposes without compensation, it is envisaged that sugarbeet will be eligible for the non-food set aside scheme under those conditions.

Clearly, the inclusion of sugarbeet in the scheme would result in an additional raw material which could be used for biofuels, given appropriate market conditions.

That Regulation also increased the aid granted to the farmer in respect of his obligation to set his land aside from ECU 45 to ECU 57 multiplied by the average cereals yield worked out in the regionalization plan.

(¹) OJ No L 38, 16. 2. 1993.

(²) OJ No L 30, 3. 2. 1994.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-144/94

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)

to the Commission

(17 February 1994)

(94/C 371/48)

Subject: Revitalizing the Podoniftis in Athens

The Municipality of Athens plans to transform the Podoniftis, a tributary of the River Kifissos, into an oasis of greenery and running water and in particular to revitalize it by creating an environmental education park featuring the natural elements of the Attica landscape. Would the Commission, if asked, help the Municipality of Athens to implement that ambitious project to revitalize the Podoniftis?

Answer given by Mr Millan
on behalf of the Commission

(19 April 1994)

The description of the project cited by the Honourable Member does not allow the Commission to determine whether it would involve eligible expenditure under the Structural Fund Regulations. However, should the Greek Authorities wish to propose such a project in the context of discussions on the 1994-1999 Community Support Framework, the Commission would examine the possibility of supporting it within the framework of the Regulations.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-147/94

by Tom Spencer (PPE)
to the Commission
(17 February 1994)
(94/C 371/49)

Subject: Thermie Programme

Through the Thermie Programme, the Commission has been sponsoring the validation of several promising technologies which will enhance energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption. Particularly in the case of electric power generation and distribution, these technologies would also assist the Community in reducing CO₂ emissions.

A significant barrier to introducing such technologies on a commercial scale is the higher level of initial investment required and the relatively long payback period, whereas in terms of CO₂ emissions, the benefits are immediate.

What steps does the Commission intend to take to reduce these barriers and to encourage the rapid dissemination of these proven technologies?

**Answer given by Mr Matutes
on behalf of the Commission**
(14 April 1994)

The Commission agrees that the Thermie Programme plays a vital role in the demonstration and dissemination of known, but often untested, technologies in the areas of energy production and energy consumption. These activities can have an immediate and significant impact in reducing CO₂ emissions. Many activities in the areas of both demonstration and dissemination could not take place without the support of Thermie because of the high initial costs and relatively long payback period.

The Commission therefore intends to continue to support demonstration activities as far as the Fourth Framework Programme RTD permits and to propose an additional instrument under Article 235 EC Treaty to ensure the continuation of those aspects of demonstration and dissemination which are not covered by the Fourth Framework Programme, in particular dissemination projects and dissemination of results of research and development funded by industry or Member States.

In order to overcome the financial barriers faced by energy saving technologies, the Commission will develop and

promote the use of new financial instruments such as Third Party Financing. This, in addition to other financial instruments (such as guarantee funds, venture capital, long term loans, interest rate subsidies) will facilitate the dissemination of new and proven technologies on the marketplace.

The Commission also proposes to boost dissemination of proven technologies by building up the current network of OPETs and Community Energy Centres throughout western and eastern Europe and by allocating a higher proportion of funding to dissemination projects.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-175/94

by José Apolinário (PSE)
to the Commission
(22 February 1994)
(94/C 371/50)

Subject: The Lisbon-Algarve motorway

The proposed Regional Development Plan for 1994-1999 submitted to the Commission by the Portuguese Government, does not include a motorway link between Grândola and the Algarve, despite Council Decision 93/629/EEC ⁽¹⁾ on the trans-European road network to the year 2002; (the Decision is admittedly merely a guideline, and subject to the financial resources at the disposal of the Member States and the Community).

With the negotiations on the new Community Support Framework for Portugal under way, should Community investment between 1994 and 1999 not be earmarked as of now for the scheduled implementation of the Council Decision referred to above?

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 305, 10. 12. 1993, p. 11.

**Answer given by Mr Millan
on behalf of the Commission**
(4 May 1994)

The Community Support Framework for Portugal for the period 1994-1999 includes the construction of the section of motorway between Lisbon and Grândola and the section of road (almost motorway standard) from Grândola to Algarve. These projects were included because of the current and foreseeable volumes of traffic along these routes.

The Community may therefore part-finance implementation of these two projects.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-184/94**by Francesco Guidolin (PPE)****to the Commission***(22 February 1994)**(94/C 371/51)**Subject: Med-Invest Programme*

What is the current state of implementation of the Med-Invest Programme and, in particular, what are the terms under which Community SMUs may take part in the programme?

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

(17 March 1994)

The Med-Invest Programme is currently in its pilot stage.

Section A operations are being implemented at a good pace. These operations involve the extension of instruments and programmes to Mediterranean non-member countries to promote business cooperation. In this way these countries have benefited, or will benefit in future, from instruments such as Europartenariat (France and the United Kingdom in 1993, Poland and Spain in 1994), Med Partenariat (Turkey in 1994, Israel and Morocco in 1995) and Med Enterprise (Tunisia, Italy and Spain in 1993 and Turkey in 1994). At the same time partners and training places are being sought so that the Mediterranean countries can take part in the transnational cooperation networks for businesses (BC-NET and BCC).

Under Section B pilot projects are implemented to find out what instruments would promote the setting-up and development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in the Mediterranean non-member countries, drawing on European experience. Three projects have already started up: (i) setting-up of an export management company in Morocco; (ii) a services centre, also in Morocco; (iii) a development agency in Turkey. Other projects of the same type, together with projects to set up specialized finance or business promotion companies in eligible countries, are on the drawing board and will start up in coming months.

The current pilot stage will last until the end of 1995.

Note that the Med-Invest Programme is aimed at creating an environment conducive to the development of SME and to increasing their competitiveness. It is not addressed to SME as such but business or professional associations, local and regional development agencies and institutions and any

other bodies with expertise in business information and cooperation and aid for economic development.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-226/94**by Anita Pollack (PSE)****to the Commission***(24 February 1994)**(94/C 371/52)**Subject: Holiday postcards*

Does the Commission have any information about the length of time it takes for postcards posted in each Member State to reach another?

Is it aware that it often takes three weeks for postcards from seaside resorts in Spain to reach people in the UK? Are there any plans to attempt to improve postal services between Member States?

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

(21 April 1994)

The Commission has been very active in the postal sector and the need to ensure a universal postal service at an affordable price with a high quality of service was a cornerstone of the proposals in the Green Paper ⁽¹⁾, the communication to the Council ⁽²⁾ which followed the period of consultation in the Green Paper and the Council resolution adopted on 7 February this year.

The outcome of these initiatives will be the setting and monitoring of standards of service between Member States, to be undertaken at Community level. The results of performance will be established using independent testing and they will be published.

The majority of postal administrations do not distinguish postcards from ordinary letter mail in their monitoring of quality of service. The last independently assessed measure of performance for cross-border Community mail (1991) was that on average, a letter took four days from time of posting to time of receipt and this varied from two days to over nine days. It should be remembered that many postcards are posted in holiday locations which are not adjacent to the principal dispatching centres for international mail and so some effect on quality of service is to be expected.

⁽¹⁾ COM(91) 476.

⁽²⁾ COM(93) 247.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-230/94

by Carlos Robles Piquer (PPE)

to the Commission

(24 February 1994)

(94/C 371/53)

Subject: The Leader Programme

I have just received — in December 1993 — a copy of the first issue of Leader magazine in Spanish, which is dated summer 1992. This is a large-size publication which I welcome and which I have read carefully despite the 'slight' delay in forwarding.

Having read it, I would like to ask the following questions:

1. Have other subsequent editions of Leader been published each quarter, as promised in the first issue?
2. If so, would the Commission be kind enough to forward them?
3. Apart from 'Alpujarra', which is mentioned on page 8 of the magazine, what are the other rural districts belonging to Leader out of the 213 members to which the publication refers?
4. Of the ECU 400 million allocated to the whole project, apparently for the years 1991-1993, what aid has been given to these districts?

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

(4 May 1994)

Leader publications, in particular the quarterly 'Leader Magazine', have been sent to the Honourable Member and to all those elected to the Parliament.

The documents were regularly sent to him at the Madrid address notified to us by Parliament.

Further to his request, the Commission has once again sent the missing copies to the Honourable Member, as well as the detailed documentation on the 217 Leader groups and their funding.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-235/94

by Enrique Sapena Granell (PSE)

and Pedro Bofill Abeilhe (PSE)

to the Commission

(24 February 1994)

(94/C 371/54)

Subject: Prestigious auditing firms and the real situation regarding companies' accounts

For more than a decade the prestige and influence of the six major multinational auditing companies, the 'big six', gave accounting and financial credibility to the companies which they inspected.

However, the recent revelation of very regrettable situations in the accounts of certain companies or consortia which were previously audited and approved by prestigious auditing firms calls into question the credibility of such firms as auditors.

Some recent cases, which were widely publicized in Europe, have cast doubt on the reliability of these very expensive and prestigious auditors. They include the cases of Ferruzzi in Italy, Metallgesellschaft in Germany, Banesto in Spain and Sasea in Switzerland.

What does the Commission think of these comments?

What obligations do auditing companies have to meet in Europe to guarantee their reliability?

What kind of responsibilities does Community legislation lay down in the event of doubtful auditing practices?

**Answer given by Vanni d'Archirafi
on behalf of the Commission**

(26 April 1994)

The statutory audit, which is required under Community law, has been imposed in the public interest. Those dealing with a company whose accounts have been audited must be able to rely on the financial information published by that company. For this reason the Eighth Council Directive 84/252/EC of 10 April 1984 on the approval of people responsible for carrying out the statutory audits of accounting documents⁽¹⁾ requires the auditors to be both qualified and independent.

The Commission is aware that a number of important financial failures have raised important issues about the responsibilities of the statutory auditor. For this reason, as has been announced in the strategic programme 'Making the

most of the internal market' ⁽²⁾, efforts will be made at the level of the Community to clarify the role, position and responsibility of the statutory auditor. This action should serve to re-inforce the reliability of published financial information.

It must however be pointed out that the primary responsibility for the financial information produced by an enterprise remains with its management. The statutory audit is no absolute guarantee against mis-management or fraud.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 126, 12. 5. 1984.

⁽²⁾ COM(93) 632.

obliged to distill in respect of the 1993/94 marketing year under a draft Regulation that was not adopted.

The Commission instead adopted a new Regulation, based on the provisional forecast supply balance, which allocates 18,2 million hectolitres among the Member States, of which Italy is obliged to distil 12 500 000 hectolitres, not 20 million.

The details were published in Regulation (EC) No 343/94 ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 44, 17. 2. 1994.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-254/94

by Giuseppe Mottola (PPE)
to the Commission
(24 February 1994)
(94/C 371/55)

Subject: Compulsory distillation of wine

It has been suggested that Italy will have to send more than 20 million hectolitres of wine, out of a total of 32 million hectolitres for the entire European Union, for compulsory distillation.

1. Does the Commission not consider that this is out of the question, given that the official forecasts from the Member States show an average fall in output of 10% and that the figure for Italy is around 15% for the 1992/93 marketing year?
2. Does the Commission not consider that this would cause such a sharp drop in the earnings of winegrowers that winegrowing would cease to be economic, particularly in those areas with the highest costs, where winegrowing plays a part in protecting the environment?
3. Does the Commission not also consider that there would be serious public unrest in the areas most affected by these measures, such as the regions of southern Italy, bearing in mind, as well, that dividing up the volume of national output to be sent for distillation among producers remains fraught with problems, not least because of the ridiculously low prices?

Answer given by Mr Steichen
on behalf of the Commission
(4 May 1994)

The Honourable Member is referring to figures relating to the considerable amount of wine Italy would have been

WRITTEN QUESTION E-263/94

by Wilhelm Piecyk (PSE)
to the Commission
(24 February 1994)
(94/C 371/56)

Subject: Water content of dairy products

It is suspected by a number of consumer associations that some dairy products contain above-average amounts of water and some farmers are said to have been convicted for adding water to milk in order to increase quantities.

1. Is the Commission aware of any such cases?
2. How many farmers have so far been convicted on account of practices of this kind?
3. What is the Commission doing to prevent this type of fraud?

Answer given by Mr Steichen
on behalf of the Commission
(6 May 1994)

The Commission has no information to confirm the facts reported by the Honourable Member.

As regards the production and marketing of milk and milk products, Council Directive 92/46/EEC ⁽¹⁾ prohibits milk dilution and makes specific provisions with a view to detecting this practice. It is the responsibility of the Member States to ensure that this rule is observed.

It should be emphasized, furthermore, that the price of milk paid to the producer is generally based on its fat and protein content, which substantially reduces any potential gain obtained by the addition of water. The gain is even less apparent if the consequences of such action on the implementation of the quantitative limits imposed by the milk quota rules are taken into account.

Lastly, it should be borne in mind in this context that, in the case of low-fat milk products in particular, the reduction in the fat content is frequently offset — perfectly legally — by an increase in the water content.

(¹) OJ No L 268, 14. 9. 1992.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-264/94

by Iñigo Méndez de Vigo (PPE)

to the Commission

(24 February 1994)

(94/C 371/57)

Subject: Extension of the period of validity of reference prices for tomatoes with effect from 1 January 1994

In December 1993 the Commission unanimously approved a proposal that the period of validity of reference prices for the common organization of the market in tomatoes be extended to include the months of January, February and March.

As this agreement is of capital importance for Spanish tomato producers and, more specifically, Canary Island tomato producers, has the Commission envisaged the possibility of applying the reference prices to exports of tomatoes from third countries with effect from 1 January 1994?

If not, what immediate effective steps does the Commission intend to take to prevent unauthorized exports from third countries and the subsequent irreparable harm this would cause to Community producers?

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

(4 May 1994)

In December 1993 the Community amended its offer in the GATT Uruguay Round. This amendment included among other amendments an extension of the application period of entry prices for tomatoes to include the months of January, February and March. This amendment only concerned the Community's offer in the GATT Uruguay Round, not the application period for reference prices in 1994.

From the start of 1994 the Commission has closely followed the levels of import of tomatoes and has been in close contact with the exporting countries with the aim of avoiding any substantial increase in Community imports.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-270/94

by Raymonde Dury (PSE)

to the Commission

(25 February 1994)

(94/C 371/58)

Subject: Agreement on the Uruguay Round (textiles and clothing)

European textile and clothing companies have been disappointed by the outcome of the Uruguay Round and fear negative repercussions in their industry. They consider that very little has been achieved in respect of fair trade, opening up third-country markets, social dumping, protecting intellectual property rights and cracking down on counterfeit goods.

What can the Commission do to allay these concerns in an industry subject to strong international competition?

**Answer given by Sir Leon Brittan
on behalf of the Commission**

(6 May 1994)

In the Commission's view the overall outcome of the Uruguay Round in the textile and clothing sector is balanced. The European Union has secured advantageous terms for the gradual integration of textile trade over a ten-year period into the more comprehensive GATT rules and disciplines. For the first time in multilateral negotiations the developing countries have accepted explicit obligations to open up their markets (by consolidating customs duties and abolishing non-tariff barriers) and protect intellectual property rights. At the same time the European Union has tightened up its anti-dumping and subsidy procedures, its anti-fraud measures in the textile sector (TAFI) and its export promotion programme (Exprom). It is also cracking down on fraud in counterfeit goods at external borders in the form of a Regulation to be shortly adopted.

The Commission has also tabled a proposal for a Regulation on the protection of designs and models at Community level and a proposal for a Directive harmonizing national legislation on designs and models to Parliament and the Council.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-271/94by **Birgit Cramon Daiber (V)** and **Virginio Bettini (V)**

to the Commission

(25 February 1994)

(94/C 371/59)

Subject: Valoren funding for the Aeolian Islands near Sicily

As part of the Valoren Programme the European Community has funded a pilot scheme, submitted by ENEL (Italian National Electricity Board), for a solar power plant in Ginostra on the island of Stromboli.

More than a year later, the plant has not been built and is therefore not in operation.

Will the Commission give the reasons for this delay, bearing in mind that the scheme has been funded by the Community without any guarantee that it will get off the ground?

Answer given by Mr Millan
on behalf of the Commission

(6 May 1994)

As provided for in point 7.4 of the Valoren Programme and in the relevant Commission Decision, the Commission has committed expenditure and paid appropriations under the programme on the basis of statements of expenditure certified correct by the national authorities.

It transpires from the information sent by the Italian authorities to the Commission on 26 April 1994 that no project on the island of Stromboli has been financed under the Valoren Programme.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-275/94by **Dieter Rogalla (PSE)**

to the Commission

(25 February 1994)

(94/C 371/60)

Subject: Genetic engineering

Can the Commission provide a general assessment of research and development work and successes in the field of genetic engineering in the Member States, perhaps broken down into main areas, and possibly indicate the direction in which developments should proceed if the EU wishes to remain in the vanguard in this respect in relation to the rest of the world?

If not, will it give Parliament a report on this in the near future?

Answer given by Mr Delors
on behalf of the Commission

(5 April 1994)

On a regular basis, the Commission obtains from the programme committee on biotechnology R&D, established by the Council Decision of 26 March 1992, detailed updates on the latest national developments in fields identified for their strategic importance. In a more global way the following table describes the Member States' public expenditures on biotechnological research — including biotechnological research *per se* and in the fields of agriculture, healthcare and the environment. These figures are collected from published data. However, they do not include expenses by regional authorities and, in any case, have to be considered as under-estimations. Further to this, the Commission has difficulty obtaining complete or consistent figures for R&D expenditure on biotechnology in the Community as Member States do not use the same definition of biotechnology which, among others, may result in statistics which cover different ranges of activities (1993 figures).

(in million ECU)

Belgium	10,0
Denmark	15,0
Germany	116,0
Greece	4,7
Spain	14,0
France	51,0
Ireland	10,0
Italy	85,0
The Netherlands	16,5
Portugal	8,5
United Kingdom	133,0
Total	463,4

In the White Paper on growth, competitiveness and employment ⁽¹⁾ the Commission observed that the potential of biotechnology to have a dramatic impact on competitiveness is greatest in certain sectors, namely chemicals, pharmaceuticals, process equipment and appliances, agriculture and agricultural processing. As noted in the White Paper, the Commission intends, together with the Member States, to counter unfavourable factors relating to R&D, to the legislative framework, and to public perception, in order to maintain the competitiveness of these sectors.

⁽¹⁾ COM(93) 700.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-279/94by **Wilfried Telkämper (V)**

to the Commission

(25 February 1994)

(94/C 371/61)

Subject: Compatibility of Germany's Rail Network Extension Law with the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive

On 15 November 1993 the Bundestag adopted the Federal Rail Network Extension Law. It was published on 24 November 1993 in the BGBl 1, pp. 1874—1876, and entered into force on the day after its publication.

Section 1(1) of the Law reads as follows:

'The needs laid down in the requirements plan shall be binding for the adoption of the plan pursuant to section 36 of the Federal Railways Law'.

Section 1(2) of the German Trunk Road Network Extension Law contains similar provisions. The Commission has on a number of occasions expressed its views on these (my question 1868/91 ⁽¹⁾ and question 2268/91 ⁽²⁾ by Breyer). The Commission also adopted a vigorous approach to this matter in sending the German Government a formal warning on 4 February 1992 (SG(92) D/1582, 90/4710).

In this connection, and with reference to a letter of 20 December 1993 from W. Mecklenburg to the Commission on the same subject:

1. Did Germany notify the Commission of the Rail Network Extension Law?
2. Despite the German Government's contestation of the claim, does the Commission still believe that section 1(2) of the Trunk Road Network Extension Law runs counter to the objectives of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive?
3. Does the Commission therefore believe that section 1(2) of the Rail Network Extension Law, which lays down that the need for long-distance rail links shall be determined Law, thus by-passing the approval procedure, runs counter to the objectives of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive?
4. Following the formal warning of 4 February 1992, has the Commission taken any further action vis-à-vis Germany with regard to the Trunk Road Network Extension Law (a letter of formal notice pursuant to Article 169 of the EEC Treaty) or does it intend to do so?

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 183, 20. 7. 1992, p. 6.

⁽²⁾ OJ No C 235, 14. 9. 1992, p. 4.

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

(5 May 1994)

No. According to Article 1(2) of Directive 85/337/EEC ⁽¹⁾, consent means 'the decision of the competent authority or authorities which entitles the developer to proceed with the project'. Germany maintains that the Trunk Road Network Extension Law relates only to the public utility of the projects listed. In the light of these clarifications, the Commission considers that the Law in question does not form part of the consent procedure. The law does not predetermine either the projects themselves or their routes. Consequently, an impact assessment did not necessarily have to precede its adoption.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 175, 5. 7. 1985.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-280/94by **Sir James Scott-Hopkins (PPE)**

to the Commission

(25 February 1994)

(94/C 371/62)

Subject: Cost of financing French farmers

What does the Commission estimate will be the additional cost to the EAGGF budget in (a) 1994, (b) 1995 and (c) 1996, of the decision taken at the Brussels Summit to pick up the bill for any losses in support which French farmers will sustain as a result of the agreement over agriculture in the GATT Uruguay Round? Does this decision have any place in the logic behind the reform of the CAP, or does it merely represent a shift in the resourcing of protection for a vocal lobby?

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

(4 May 1994)

The Commission takes the view that the agricultural aspects of the European Union offer to the GATT within the framework of the negotiations on the Uruguay Round will not involve any restraints on agricultural producers in the European Union beyond those agreed under the reform of the CAP. It follows that there will be no additional burden

on the budget of the EAGGF guarantee section for 1994, 1995 and 1996 arising from compensation for loss of income of producers in the European Union and in particular in France following the conclusion of the GATT agreement.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-335/94

by **Christine Crawley (PSE)**

to the Commission

(1 March 1994)

(94/C 371/63)

Subject: Horizon Poultry Farms Ltd

What comments would the Commission wish to make concerning the public outcry in the UK to the decision of the British Government to pay £ 250 000 of EAGGF funds to assist Horizon Poultry Farms Ltd. to build Europe's largest battery egg complex?

What reaction does the Commission make to growing demands for a phasing out of all battery cages in EC countries?

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

(4 March 1994)

In October 1993 the Commission approved an operational programme (OP) for EAGGF aid on the basis of a proposal submitted by the United Kingdom authorities. This OP included an investment from Horizon Poultry Farms related solely to the provision of buildings and plant for the packing, grading and distribution of shell eggs. No grant aid for battery hen production is involved. It is also understood that the packing plant will also receive production from free-range and barn-reared hens. Incidentally Community legislation forbids investment aids for egg production as such.

One can understand the concern felt by many people about battery egg production. The Commission is currently considering a report from the Scientific Veterinary Committee on the various alternative egg production systems, after which a decision will be taken on what further measures may be appropriate.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-381/94

by **Winifred Ewing (ARE)**

to the Commission

(1 March 1994)

(94/C 371/64)

Subject: Legal protection of biotechnological inventions

In the current review of the Directive on the Legal Protection of Biotechnological Inventions will the Commission ensure that any efforts to patent human genes are strenuously opposed for the following reasons:

- on ethical and moral grounds
- on pragmatic grounds, as the existence of human gene function patents would inhibit research and slow progress towards the development of effective, available and affordable therapies
- human genes, whether inside or outside the body, whether of known or unknown function, are naturally occurring entities and should not be patentable.

**Answer given by Mr Vanni d'Archirafi
on behalf of the Commission**

(6 April 1994)

The Commission would draw the Honourable Member's attention to the common position, adopted by the Council on 8 February 1994, regarding the proposal for a European Parliament and Council Directive on the legal protection of biotechnological inventions, in which questions relating to the patentability of genes of human origin are dealt with in detail. Article 2(3)(a) excludes from patentability the human body or parts of the human body per se, and the tenth and eleventh recitals specify the scope of that exclusion. The reasons put forward by the Honourable Member for opposing the patentability of human genes as parts of the human body per se have, therefore, been taken into account by the Council in its common position.

The Honourable Member may also wish to refer to the answer given by the Commission to Written Question No 4/92 by Mr Enrique Sapena Granell, which concerned the patenting of living matter produced by biotechnology and which also dealt with issues relating to the patentability of genes of human origin ⁽¹⁾. That answer is supported by the Council's common position.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 185, 7. 7. 1993.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-409/94by **Dimitrios Dessylas (CG)**

to the Commission

(2 March 1994)

(94/C 371/65)

Subject: Measures to support apiculture and honey producers

Apiculturalists are facing serious difficulties owing to:

- (a) the large quantities of cheap honey of dubious quality being imported from third countries,
- (b) the failure of the EC and governments of the Member States to take measures to support apiculture,
- (c) the damage to apiculture caused by the Varroa mite and
- (d) damage caused by herbicides and crop spraying, fires and drought.

Given the enormous contribution made by apiculture both in protecting the natural environment and in promoting the pollination and fertilization of plants and trees and the development of agricultural production in general, will the Commission say whether — and, if so, when — it intends to take the following measures:

1. protect European honey production by increasing the import levy and introducing a compulsory designation 'imported honey' and 'quality honey' to prevent adulteration;
2. granting pollination aid amounting to between 3 and ECU 5 per bee-hive with a special programme to protect the natural environment;
3. granting income support to offset loss of income for producers' and aid to combat the Varroa mite disease affecting;
4. dispose of unsold honey stocks by means of food aid to third countries;
5. fully integrate apiculture and honey in a common organization of the market (intervention prices, subsidies for processing, standardization, advertising, etc.)?

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

(6 May 1994)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the joint answer it gave to Questions Nos 3132/93 and 4038/93 ⁽¹⁾.

The Commission would also inform him that, at the request of the Council, it is preparing a discussion paper on the state

of European beekeeping which will also be sent to Parliament.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 367, 22. 12. 1994.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-451/94by **Concepció Ferrer (PPE)**

to the Commission

(7 March 1994)

(94/C 371/66)

Subject: A new Miriam initiative

Owing to a lack of cooperation between the Community institutions and the Member States, the Miriam initiative, which was designed to provide information and assistance for farmers through Green Euro Info Centres, was not put into practice.

Given the need to establish coherent, long-term information measures to enable small farmers in particular to acquire information on and take advantage of the various forms of Community assistance available to them, does the Commission plan to submit a new initiative to the Council?

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

(4 May 1994)

The Commission does not intend to resubmit the Miriam initiative to the Council.

Nevertheless, it will continue to promote several measures supplying information to farmers, using all the means at its disposal.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-457/94by **Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)**

to the Commission

(7 March 1994)

(94/C 371/67)

Subject: Discrimination against similar products which are legally produced and marketed under the same name

The Member States are still entitled to impose quality rules in respect of goods manufactured by producers established on their territory in order to promote their national production. However, these rules can result in

discrimination against similar products which are legally produced and marketed under the same name, particularly in another Member State, when consumers are provided with appropriate information. In view of the above, will the Commission say if a policy aimed at restricting the use of a produce name is incompatible with Article 30 of the EEC Treaty and the objectives of the Common Market and, in particular, the basic principle of the free movement of goods?

**Answer given by Mr Vanni d'Archirafi
on behalf of the Commission**

(3 May 1994)

Following rulings by the Court of Justice, Member States are, in the absence of harmonized Community rules, competent to determine the rules governing the marketing of their national products, and in particular product names. They must, however, allow into their territory foodstuffs legally produced and marketed in other Member States, subject to certain conditions.

Accordingly, the introduction and marketing of a product legally produced and marketed in another Member State may be prevented only where the measure:

- can be justified as being necessary to comply with objectives recognized by Article 36 of the EC Treaty or to meet an overriding concern (protection of public health, consumer protection, fair trading, environmental protection),
- is proportionate to the objective in mind, and
- hinders attainment of that objective least.

Subject to the foregoing, there are grounds for considering that restrictive measures, whether they relate to the composition, quality or name of products imported from another Member State, are, in principle, incompatible with Community law.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-478/94

by Glyn Ford (PSE)
to the Commission
(7 March 1994)
(94/C 371/68)

Subject: Voluntary sector funding of Structural Fund projects

Does the Commission not find it absurd that, in order to sponsor Structural Fund projects, monies raised by

voluntary organizations in the UK have to be deducted from local authority expenditure limits?

Is this not a clear breach of additionality rules?

Should the Commission not ask that the UK Government's Public Authority Support Certificate (PASC) be withdrawn for the voluntary sector?

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

(5 May 1994)

As a result of the February 1992 agreement between the Commission and the United Kingdom on the transparency and additionality of the European Regional Development Fund's grants, restrictions on the use of ERDF to co-finance voluntary sector projects were removed, and public expenditure cover is provided automatically for ERDF grants.

As far as the ESF is concerned, the Commission will raise the issue mentioned by the Honourable Member with the United Kingdom authorities.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-479/94

by Glyn Ford (PSE)
to the Commission
(7 March 1994)
(94/C 371/69)

Subject: Performance targets

In view of justifiable concerns in various Member States about how national governments deal with ESF and ERDF applications, is the Commission proposing to set performance targets for the handling of such applications and publishing the results?

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

(2 May 1994)

The Commission would remind the Honourable Member that the way in which national governments deal with ESF and ERDF applications is essentially a matter for them.

However requests to the Commission for payments by a Member State in respect of measures which have already been agreed are covered by the Structural Funds Regulations which provide in Article 21 of Regulation (EEC)

No 2082/83 ⁽¹⁾ that, as a general rule, payments will be made within two months of receipt of an acceptable application. They also provide that, as a general rule, payments should reach the final beneficiary within three months of the receipt of the funds by the Member State.

With respect to performance targets, the Regulations contain strengthened requirements with respect to evaluation and provide for an increased use of quantified indicators on the outcome expected from individual measures.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 193, 31. 7. 1993.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-488/94

by William Newton Dunn (PPE)

to the Commission

(14 March 1994)

(94/C 371/70)

Subject: Irish State-aids for mushroom growing

The Irish authorities provide tax advantages for mushroom exporters under the so-called Trading Houses Scheme. The Commission has asked the Irish Government to eliminate fresh mushroom exporters from the scheme by the end of the current fiscal year.

What reply has the Commission received from the Irish Government? If there has been no reply, what further action will the Commission take?

Answer given by Mr Steichen
on behalf of the Commission

(4 May 1994)

The Commission, as regards the application of the 10 % rate of corporation tax to mushroom growers, decided on 19 January 1994 to initiate the procedure under Article 93(2) EC Treaty ⁽¹⁾. The Irish authorities communicated recently their intention to abolish the above tax arrangement from the tax year 1994/95.

As regards the special trading houses scheme, which applies for companies which market abroad the products of small firms, the Commission in 1988 raised no objections to the inclusion of these houses in the 10 % rate of corporation tax scheme applicable to manufacturing industry.

The Commission has asked the Irish authorities for a report on the situation in regard to the application of the special trading houses scheme and in particular in regard to the continued eligibility of mushroom exporters for special

trading house status. As there is clearly a link between this latter point and the corporation tax issue on which the Article 93(2) EC Treaty procedure has been opened, it is likely that this matter will be resolved only after the corporation tax issue is finalized.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 94, 31. 3. 1994.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-561/94

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)

to the Commission

(15 March 1994)

(94/C 371/71)

Subject: Implementation of the technical obligations decided on by the Council of Fisheries Ministers on 28 October 1991

Will the Commission say whether fishing vessels in the Member States are respecting the technical obligations decided on by the Council of Fisheries Ministers on 28 October 1991?

Answer given by Mr Paleokrassas
on behalf of the Commission

(6 May 1994)

At the December 1991 Fisheries Council the Commission proposed a restriction of 2,5 kilometres on the length of drift-nets used by Community vessels, in line with United Nations resolutions. Parliament supported the Commission's proposal.

Following lengthy discussion the Council reached a compromise permitting a number of French vessels to continue to use drift-nets of up to 5 kilometres on certain terms until 31 December 1993.

Checks on observance of the restriction pose serious practical difficulties since these nets are mainly used in distant water fishing outside the Community's exclusive economic zone.

Member States have however on a number of occasions found vessels flying a Community flag fishing illegally with drifting gillnets longer than 2,5 kilometres. Appropriate action has been taken in response to these contraventions.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-634/94

by **Kenneth Collins (PSE)**
to the Commission
(17 March 1994)
(94/C 371/72)

Subject: Korea

Is the Commission satisfied that the Korean Government has taken the necessary steps to implement the recent EU/Korea agreement on spirit drinks?

Answer given by **Sir Leon Brittan**
on behalf of the Commission
(15 April 1994)

In line with its commitments under the June 1993 agreement between Korea and the Community on alcoholic beverages, the Korean Government reduced, as of January 1994, liquor tax on whisky and brandy. At the same time it increased liquor taxes on local brandy and whisky admixtures, thereby diminishing the tax differential between imported and local like products. The Korean National Assembly has, however, amended the Korean Government's proposals in one respect, and has postponed by one year, i.e. until January 1995, the introduction of an education tax on soju.

The Korean Government has given firm assurances to the Commission that the agreement between Korea and the Community on spirits will be fully implemented. The Commission will follow developments closely to ensure that Korea's undertakings are effectively carried out.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-671/94

by **Edward Kellett-Bowman (PPE)**
to the Commission
(21 March 1994)
(94/C 371/73)

Subject: EC abattoir Regulations in Spain

The Commission will be in no doubt as to the failure of the Spanish authorities to ensure that their abattoirs are up to EC standards before they are allowed to slaughter animals.

What action is the Commission taking in this regard?

Answer given by **Mr Steichen**
on behalf of the Commission
(4 May 1994)

The Commission regularly inspects a certain proportion of approved slaughterhouses in Spain. In the course of such inspections it has not noted any special problems and has not found that the situation gives rise to particular concern.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-694/94

by **Winifred Ewing (ARE)**
to the Commission
(21 March 1994)
(94/C 371/74)

Subject: Community initiatives — Regis

What criteria were used in determining the eligibility of regions for inclusion under Regis? Are there any plans to extend the scope to include the islands of Ireland and Scotland and what representations to that end have been made by

- (a) the UK Government,
- (b) the Irish Government and
- (c) local authorities?

Answer given by **Mr Millan**
on behalf of the Commission
(6 May 1994)

In the draft guidelines for Regis II (point 1), the eligible regions are identified as the most remote regions as they are defined in Declaration 26 attached to the Treaty on European Union.

The Commission has already stated, on page 12 of 'The Future of Community Initiatives under the Structural Funds' ⁽¹⁾, which is the document summarizing the results of the consultations on the Green Paper on Community initiatives, who was in favour of enlarging the geographical coverage of Regis (Ireland and the UK and about 10 local authorities in these Member States).

The Honourable Member will find more details in the above Commission document, which has already been sent to Parliament in connection with the discussion of the Community initiatives.

⁽¹⁾ COM(94) 46 final.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-710/94
by Jaak Vandemeulebroucke (ARE)
to the Commission
(25 February 1994)
(94/C 371/75)

Subject: Background to the Council Decision concerning the placing on the market and administration of BST

Via Rapid, I have learned of the report on the 1720th meeting of the Council of Ministers for Agriculture, which took place from 14 to 17 December 1993 (Doc. PRES/93/235). The Council unanimously took a decision of principle to extend the ban of the placing on the market and administration of BST to 31 December 1994. This decision of principle (Decision 93/718/EEC) ⁽¹⁾ was confirmed at a subsequent Council meeting on 22 December 1993. In the meantime the European Parliament, too, delivered its opinion on 17 December 1993.

The Council Decision amends the Commission draft (COM(93) 605 final ⁽²⁾) and also fails to take account of the EP's opinion. Both the Commission and the EP took the view that the ban on the placing on the market and administration of the hormone BST must apply for as long as the milk quota arrangements are in force, i.e. until at least the end of the century. The Council of Ministers has decided to apply the ban provisionally until the end of this year only. This is therefore a less strict measure.

Replying to a question in the Belgian Chamber of Representatives by Representatives Dejonckheere (Ecolo) and Caudron (Volksunie) on 16 February 1994, the Belgian Minister for Agriculture, Mr André Bourgeois, stated that the decision had been adopted unanimously and with the full consent of the Commission.

Will the Commission say:

1. why the draft Decision, which had been approved by the European Parliament, was amended to extend the ban on BST for only one year instead of until the end of the century?
2. whether the Decision actually was taken with the full consent of the Commission?

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 333, 31. 12. 1993, p. 72.

⁽²⁾ COM(93) 605. OJ No C 3, 5. 1. 1994, p. 7.

Answer given by Mr Steichen
on behalf of the Commission
(4 May 1994)

The Council's unanimous decision cited by the Honourable Member was taken in view of the urgency of the legal

situation and the need to provide sufficient time for the consequences of the proposal to be considered more carefully.

The Commission accepted this approach, it being understood that its original proposal rests on the table.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-719/94
by Glyn Ford (PSE)
to the Commission
(21 March 1994)
(94/C 371/76)

Subject: Irish mushroom industry

Is the Commission aware that the Irish Government has still not eliminated fresh mushrooms from the Trading Houses Scheme despite the Commission declaring it illegal?

Will the Commission ensure in future that when cash subvention is given the Market Development Scheme conditions are respected?

Answer given by Mr Steichen
on behalf of the Commission
(4 May 1994)

The Commission, as regards the application of the 10 % of corporation tax to mushroom growers, decided on 19 January 1994 to initiate the procedure under Article 93(2) EC Treaty ⁽¹⁾. The Irish authorities communicated recently their intention to abolish the tax arrangement from the tax year 1994/95.

As regards the special trading houses scheme, which applies to companies whose role is to market abroad the products of small firms, the Commission in 1988 raised no objections to the inclusion of these houses in the 10 % rate of corporation tax scheme applicable to manufacturing industry. The Commission has asked the Irish authorities for a report on the situation in regard to the application of the special trading houses scheme and in particular in regard to the continued eligibility of mushroom exporters for special trading house status.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 94, 31. 3. 1994.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-754/94by **Gérard Deprez (PPE)**

to the Commission

(22 March 1994)

(94/C 371/77)

Subject: ECOS Programme

The aim of the Ecos Programme is to strengthen the links between the Community's regional and local authorities, particularly those of towns and regions in the Community's less-favoured areas, and their counterparts in central and eastern Europe.

Can the Commission provide details of the projects which have so far taken place under this programme, including the partners involved, the total budget and the role of the ERDF?

In particular, how many interregional cooperation projects in the form of 'training of local elected representatives and officials' have been funded? Can these projects be regarded as fruitful in terms of exchanging experiences of local democracy?

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

(6 May 1994)

ECOS (The European Cities Cooperation System) is a programme of de-centralized inter-regional cooperation launched at the end of 1991 and is receiving financial support for a three-year period of approximately ECU 7,5 million from the European Regional Development Fund. ECOS supports cooperative links between cities in the Community and in central and eastern Europe. It is managed by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions and the City of Strasbourg.

By the end of 1993, ECOS had been able to agree 55 projects of the 121 submitted to it. Most of the projects have a training component and nine in particular have as a specific theme the training of locally elected officials.

The Commission also supports the Ouverture Programme which supports similar cooperation between regions in the Community and central and eastern Europe. The geographical coverage of both programmes was extended at the end of 1993 to bring in the CIS. A brochure with details about ECOS and Ouverture is being sent direct to the Honourable Member and to the Secretariat-General of the Parliament.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-764/94by **José Vázquez Fouz (PSE)**

to the Commission

(22 March 1994)

(94/C 371/78)

Subject: Fisheries Agreement with Namibia

For some time, Parliament has been calling for a Fisheries Agreement with Namibia, a matter of major importance for the Union's fisheries strategy and its international cooperation policy, and a significant means of mitigating the severe crisis affecting the Community's frozen fish sector.

None the less, the lack of news and of specific proposals is giving rise to — doubtless groundless — expectations and rumours of all kinds, which are encouraged by the lack of concrete results.

What is the current state of EU-Namibian negotiations on fisheries?

What are the real reasons that are preventing an agreement from being concluded? When does the Commission expect to conclude the agreement?

Which of the EP-approved criteria is the Commission applying in the negotiations?

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

(4 May 1994)

The Commission shares the Honourable Member's view concerning the potential importance to the Community freezer trawler fleet of the conclusion and implementation of a fisheries agreement with Namibia, but expects the forthcoming implementation of the agreement with Argentina to add a new dimension that could help resolve the crisis affecting this sector of the fleet.

The most recent contacts between the Community and the Namibian authorities suggest that a fisheries agreement with Namibia is likely to be concluded only if changes are made to the Council's negotiating guidelines. The Namibian authorities want the agreement to include the establishment of joint enterprises, which would also cover the processing of fishery products in Namibia. The Council is considering these changes at present.

In any event, it appears that the conclusion of a fisheries agreement with Namibia, offering Community vessels the firm prospect of operating in Namibian waters, cannot be

contemplated in the short term, given the state of stocks on the one hand and the capacity of the deep-sea fleet now in position on the other.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-843/94

by **Christian Rovsing (PPE)**

to the Commission

(30 March 1994)

(94/C 371/79)

Subject: Humanitarian aid in Georgia

Reports indicate that up to 400 Georgian soldiers lost one or both legs during the recent war in Abkhazia. What steps is the Commission taking to enable the rehabilitation of these men, as a component of humanitarian aid in the Tacis Programme?

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

(6 May 1994)

Although the Tacis Programme included a certain amount of humanitarian aid in 1993, the main humanitarian programme had always been administered by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and in 1994 this is the sole source of funding of such necessary actions.

ECHO has had a correspondent inside Georgia on a permanent basis for the last year and is therefore kept fully informed of developments and evolving needs in the country. When fighting broke out in Abkhazia in August, approval for extra medical supplies to the area was given within 24 hours.

In 1993 the Commission financed, through ECHO, different humanitarian actions — including food aid, medicines and medical assistance, hygiene and baby parcels and other relief items — for a total amount of ECU 11,77 million. Those operations were implemented by NGOs and international organizations such as MSF, Caritas, ICRC, Oxfam, Red Barnet, WFP, IFRC, UNHCR, ASB, Action Internationale Contre la Faim.

As to the particular problem of people who have lost limbs, the matter had already been brought up at a meeting called by ECHO to discuss the situation and needs of the South Caucasus region. The Commission can confirm that two of its partner organizations have already been approached with a view to treating those handicapped.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-847/94

by **Christine Crawley (PSE)**

to the Commission

(9 March 1994)

(94/C 371/80)

Subject: Improvements in dental health for ethnic minorities

What health education strategies are being conducted in Member States to improve the situation of dental health for ethnic minorities? As 1994 is WHO Year of Oral Health, are there any formal agencies of the Community working in this field?

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

(30 March 1994)

Dental health is one of the range of subjects covered by health education programmes in the majority of Member States. In the United Kingdom a National Health Service Ethnic Health Unit has recently been established which has supported the establishment of a unit of trans-cultural oral health at the University of Birmingham. In the Netherlands the Institute of preventive health care, Leiden, has undertaken work on this subject.

The Commission is not currently working in the specific field but is supporting concerted actions on efficiency in oral health care which are evaluating oral health systems in the Member States and involve 10 institutions in six Member States ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Health Services Research, Biomedical and Health Research Programme I (1990-1994).

WRITTEN QUESTION E-900/94

by **Jean-Pierre Raffin (V)**

to the Commission

(30 May 1994)

(94/C 371/81)

Subject: Community funding of Etablissements Phildar

Can the Commission state whether Phildar, as a result of recent re-structuring and in connection with the siting of its head office in Roubaix, has received Community aid for its initiatives on jobs and employee training?

If so, under what regime was such aid granted and what amount was paid?

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

(3 May 1994)

Following the reform of the Structural Funds in 1988, the Commission has no detailed information on individual projects or entities co-financed by the ESF.

Information on any aid which may have been granted to Phildar is the responsibility of the French authorities and more particularly of the Prefecture of Nord-Pas-de-Calais, especially the Direction Régionale du Travail et de l'Emploi and the Direction Régionale à la Formation Professionnelle.

However, the Commission has requested information from France and has obtained the following reply:

1. For many years before the reform of the Structural Funds, Phildar received aid which was co-financed by the ESF.
2. After 1989, Phildar received no ESF aid within the framework of the reform of the Structural Funds (Objective 2). Phildar is not one of the beneficiaries under the two sets of arrangements co-financed by the ESF to deal with restructuring operations: the FNE (Fonds National pour l'Emploi) and the EDF (Engagements de Développement de la Formation).

WRITTEN QUESTION E-913/94

by **Jürgen Brand (PPE)**

to the Commission

(12 April 1994)

(94/C 371/82)

Subject: Allocation of EC funds for cross-border cooperation

Can the Commission say, with reference to the period 1985-1993:

1. what appropriations for cross-border cooperation were allocated to Bavaria, and from which EC programmes?
2. what funds were earmarked for Euregios with Bavarian involvement?
3. whether the funds made available over this period were fully utilized?

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

(6 May 1994)

1. Under the Community initiative Interreg I, the Commission financed a programme for areas along the

borders between Bavaria and the Czech Republic, Austria and Switzerland respectively. This programme ran from 1991 to 1993 and granted ECU 15,4 million in aid, ECU 13,7 million from the ERDF (89,3%) and ECU 1,7 million from the EAGGF.

2. All of the Community contribution has been committed, and ECU 10,3 million (74,9%) has been paid.

3. The three Euregios in Bavaria to which the Honourable Member refers did not yet exist when the Interreg I Programme was drawn up. As such, they have not received Community assistance.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-919/94

by **Ernest Glinne (PSE)**

to the Commission

(12 April 1994)

(94/C 371/83)

Subject: Situation of Michalis Voulgarelis, a Greek conscientious objector

Group 65 of Belgian Amnesty International has informed me of its concern about the situation of Michalis Voulgarelis, a greek national.

Mr Voulgarelis, who is a conscientious objector and a Jehovah's Witness, refused to do national service. As a result he received a prison sentence in September 1992. Amnesty International regards him as a prisoner of conscience who has peacefully exercised his right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

What steps has the Commission taken to persuade the Greek Government to amend the Law which causes Greece to disregard the resolutions adopted by the European Parliament in October 1989?

WRITTEN QUESTION E-921/94

by **Ernest Glinne (PSE)**

to the Commission

(12 April 1994)

(94/C 371/84)

Subject: Situation of Greek conscientious objectors

In its first annual report on the human rights situation in the Community (March 1993), the European Parliament expressly condemned Greece because it treats conscientious objectors as criminals.

However, more than 380 conscientious objectors are still in prison in Greece because they refuse to do national service.

The majority have been sentenced to four years' forced labour under extremely harsh conditions: overcrowded and unsanitary cells, no health care whatsoever, etc. Once they have completed their heavy prison sentences, conscientious objectors are deprived of their political and civil rights for a period of ten years.

Greece is the only Member State not to recognize the right of conscientious objection to national service and not to have introduced a civilian alternative, in spite of resolutions to this end adopted by the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and Member States of the Community.

What steps has the Commission taken and what steps will it take to persuade Greece, the cradle of democracy, to respect the fundamental rights of its people?

**Joint answer to Written Questions
E-919/94 and E-921/94
given by Mr Delors
on behalf of the Commission
(3 May 1994)**

As the Commission has pointed out on past occasions, notably in January when Parliament was debating the report from Mr Bandres Molet and Mrs Binci, conscientious objection is a matter for Member States, where respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is extensively ensured by effective monitoring systems, both within countries, by internal appeal channels, and externally by mechanisms put in place under the European Convention on Human Rights, which all Member States have ratified. The common provisions of the Treaty on European Union, and Article F(2) in particular, re-state this very clearly.

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-1067/94
by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)
to the Commission
(30 March 1994)
(94/C 371/85)**

Subject: Protection and conservation of monuments forming part of the historical and cultural heritage of EU Member States

The current economic crisis has led some EU Member States to cut back their budgets for the protection and conservation of monuments forming part of their historical and cultural heritage. In view of this, can the Commission

propose that the national authorities of the Member States should retain a form of progressive funding in their national budgets or that the EU establish a minimum level of funding which the Member States should reserve in their budgets for the protection and conservation of the historical and cultural heritage?

**Answer given by Mr Pinheiro
on behalf of the Commission
(6 May 1994)**

The Commission fully appreciates the importance of protecting the European cultural heritage, and indeed this is explicitly referred to as a goal of Community action in Article 128 of the EC Treaty.

There is indeed a danger that the cultural heritage will suffer as a result of the current economic recession, which is causing certain Member States to cut expenditure on the conservation and restoration of their historic monuments.

However, the Commission has no power under Article 128 to make suggestions to the Member States as to how to manage their national budgets, nor can it impose a minimum level of funding to be reserved for the protection of the national heritage.

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-1121/94
by Christopher Jackson (PPE)
to the Commission
(18 March 1994)
(94/C 371/86)**

Subject: Aid for re-structuring the EU apple industry

Following on-going contact with Commission officials, the Secretary-General of COPA/Cogeca wrote to the Director-General of DG VI on 6 December 1993 outlining the most serious situation facing EU apple growers and requested a grubbing grant to correct the structural surplus. To date, two and a half months later, no reply has been received.

As the Commission is aware, the market for EU-produced apples is of the order of 7,5 million tonnes per annum, whereas production is now of the order of 8,5 to 11 million tonnes per annum. The apple industry throughout the EU is in a state of crisis and it is no longer a question of weak producers going under but also the strong, normally viable ones.

1. Without waiting for the completion of the review of Regulation (EEC) No 1035/72 and the general report on horticulture, will the Commission, in view of the current

crisis, agree as an interim measure to provide grants for grubbing up some 33 000 hectares (12%) of EU orchards within the next month, to remove 1 million tonnes of production and obviate the possibility of another disaster in the 1994/95 marketing year?

2. On completion of the review of Regulation (EEC) No 1035/72, will the Commission consider linking any further such grubbing grants to a reduction in expenditure on intervention, in part by reducing the co-efficient of varieties that remain in surplus?

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

(19 April 1994)

The Commission regrets that the grubbing up measure instituted for the 1989/90, 1990/91 and 1991/92 marketing years did not produce the results expected. Only 8 200 or 2,8 % of the 27 600 hectares of orchards grubbed up under this measure were situated outside the new German Länder. The overall trend has been in the opposite direction, with new apple orchards being planted over the last few years.

The Commission considers that, firstly, the increase in apple production in 1992/93 was determined by temporary, rather than structural factors and does not therefore justify launching a structural operation and, secondly, subsidized grubbing up should not become a habit for producers, who should primarily be seeking to adjust their range of varieties to demand trends.

The Commission does not, therefore, intend to propose a new grubbing up operation for the time being; this would in any case involve releasing budget funds, which cannot be considered in the present circumstances.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1130/94

by José Lafuente López (PPE)

to the Commission

(30 March 1994)

(94/C 371/87)

Subject: Aspects of the choice of the 'Kommander Amelia' as a fishery inspection vessel for the Community

After holding a public tender to hire of a fishery inspection vessel that would enable it to meet its monitoring commitments in international waters and, in particular, in waters governed by the NAFO agreement, the Commission, through DG XIV, having considered the applications in

detail, chose the 'Kommander Amelia' vessel, which, according to the experts, had the best capabilities.

However, an examination of the application chosen shows that this vessel is registered in the Isle of Man and that its crew is composed of Europeans and Filipinos.

Can the Commission clarify the last two aspects, which have implications for the 'Kommander Amelia', and give the reasons why, nonetheless, this vessel was chosen for the task in question?

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

(5 May 1994)

In response to the notice published ⁽¹⁾ there were eleven requests for additional information from firms or organizations in seven Member States. Twelve tenders involving thirteen vessels were received. The evaluation of the tenders was made on the basis of the price of the charter, the suitability of the vessel and the experience of the tenderer. Three of the tenders were considered worthy of further examination.

Having examined the suitability of the vessels, the charter prices quoted, the experience of the tenderers including the experience of the crews, the equipment offered, and the experience from previous years' charters, it was found that the British M/V 'Kommandor Amalie' owned by Hays Ships Ltd in Great Yarmouth, was the best choice for the task. This assessment was, together with all relevant documents including the original tenders and the opinion of the inspectors who surveyed the three vessels, forwarded to the Commission's Advisory Committee on Procurement and Contracts, which after having audited the material gave a favourable opinion on the contract to be concluded with Hays Ships Ltd.

The 'Kommandor Amalie' is registered in the Isle of Man Ships Register, which is the Second Register of the United Kingdom like the Canary Islands Register is the Second Register of Spain and the Danish International Ships Register is the Second Register of Denmark.

The 'Kommandor Amalie' is chartered by the Commission on a Baltimore 1939 Uniform Time Charter. A small number of the crew members are not citizens of the European Union. However, these crew members are on contract with Hays Ships Ltd.

All inspection missions carried out from the 'Kommandor Amalie' are undertaken by European Commission Fisheries Inspectors, and crew members are not associated in any way with these activities.

(1) OJ No C 257, 22. 9. 1993.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1288/94

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)
to the Commission
(13 April 1994)
(94/C 371/88)

Subject: The Rechar Programme and Greece

Can the Commission say what amount of resources was earmarked for the Rechar Programme in Greece and how much has so far actually been allocated to this programme?

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1296/94

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)
to the Commission
(13 April 1994)
(94/C 371/89)

Subject: The Renaval Programme and Greece

Can the Commission say what amount of resources was earmarked for the Renaval Programme in Greece and how much has actually been allocated to this programme?

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1297/94

by Sotiris Kostopoulos (PSE)
to the Commission
(13 April 1994)
(94/C 371/90)

Subject: The Regis Programme and Greece

Can the Commission say what amount of resources was earmarked for the Regis Programme in Greece and how much has actually been allocated to this programme?

Joint answer to Written Questions E-1288/94, E-1296/94
and E-1297/94
given by Mr Millan
on behalf of the Commission
(5 May 1994)

The Rechar, Renaval and Regis Programmes do not concern Greece.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1408/94

by Jean-Claude Pasty (RDE)
to the Commission
(29 March 1994)
(94/C 371/91)

Subject: The 'sugar' safeguard clause in the Community's offer to GATT

Is it true that the Commission has deleted from the annexes to the Community offer to GATT the notification of the triggering thresholds for the 'sugar' safeguard clause provided for in Article 5 of the draft Final Act of the Uruguay Round?

Did the Commission take this step on its own initiative or is it acting in accordance with its mandate from the Council, i.e. simply to check the offers from a technical point of view?

Is the Commission aware of the extremely harmful effects on the common organization of the market in sugar as a whole of doing away with the triggering thresholds for the safeguard clause, which sooner or later would lay the European Union open to the danger of arbitrary decisions by certain of the GATT panels?

Answer given by Mr Steichen
on behalf of the Commission
(2 May 1994)

When the Commission forwarded the European Communities final offer on agriculture to the GATT on 25 March 1994, it informed the GATT that the European Communities wished to recall their transmission of 14 December 1993 of a list showing the reference prices by tariff line as referred to in Article 5(1)(b) of the Agreement on Agriculture, and that this list was to be considered as an integral part of the European Communities schedule.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1473/94

by Sérgio Ribeiro (GUE)
to the Commission
(12 April 1994)
(94/C 371/92)

Subject: The economic crisis and its social consequences in the small town of Vieira de Leiria, Marinha Grande, Portugal

Just over a year ago I tabled a question on the economic and social situation in Marinha Grande, Portugal, caused by the crisis or signs of impending crisis in the industrial sectors in that area, especially the glass industry, but also in the sectors of moulds, plastics, steel and files, on which the livelihood of

the area depends. I asked the Commission to provide urgent financing for a detailed study of the situation and the adoption of preventive measures.

On 15 July 1993, Commissioner Millan, on behalf of the Commission, expressed willingness to provide such financing if the Portuguese authorities so requested.

In the meantime, workers and employers in the glass industry have managed to avoid or at least postpone the worst. However, the situation in the steel and files sector has deteriorated enormously. Following a mass lay-off financed by the ECSC in December 1991, which halved the number of workers, the steelworks, which may resume work if money is invested in it, has not produced anything for months. The management has disappeared and the firm was put in the hands of the receiver on 28 March. The file manufacturing industry is in greater difficulties now because the steelworks was its natural supplier, and one factory has already been closed down.

In a small town in the area, Vieira de Leiria, the social situation is critical and may become desperate, since the conditions for its economic viability are apparently disappearing.

Is the Commission still willing to consider the possibility of carrying out a study on the social and economic situation in Marinha Grande and have the Portuguese authorities taken any steps in this direction?

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

(3 May 1994)

The Commission is aware of the problems relating to the modernization and re-structuring of the Portuguese economy, in particular in the areas referred to by the Honourable Member.

For that reason it recently approved the new Community Support Framework for Portugal for the period 1994-1999. Several operational programmes which will be financed by the Community Structural Funds will make it possible to address problems such as those cited by the Honourable Member. For example, the 'industry' sub-programme (part of the programme for modernizing the economic fabric of Portugal) and the programme for the Central Region, to which ECU 1 661,2 million and 362 million of Community funds have been allocated respectively, can be used for operations in the Marinha Grande area. It is up to the national authorities to decide which operations, projects and, where appropriate, specific studies should be financed. Through its monitoring of the programmes the Commission will follow the development of the socio-economic situation in the sectors and regions concerned. It is also ready to examine any specific proposal that the Portuguese authorities may submit for a study of the kind referred to by the Honourable Member.