

Official Journal

of the European Communities

ISSN 0378-6986

C 21

Volume 41

22 January 1998

English edition

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Price: ECU 30

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I*(Information)***EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

WRITTEN QUESTIONS WITH ANSWER

(98/C 21/01)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3024/95**by Charlotte Cederschiöld (PPE) to the Council***(31 October 1995)**Subject:* Availability of draft conventions in all official languages

In pursuance of Article K.6 of the Treaty on European Union, the President of the Council forwarded four draft conventions by letter of 14 June 1995 to the chairman of Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs. The conventions concerned:

- A customs duty information system
- Europol
- A European information system
- Crossing of the European Union's external frontiers.

These drafts (the first two dated 26 July 1995) were available only in French. Despite repeated requests the Council has so far refused to forward other language versions.

Will the Council remedy this situation and forward the other two draft conventions to Parliament in all the official Union languages as soon as possible?

Answer*(6 August 1997)*

Under Article K.6, the Presidency and the Commission shall regularly inform the European Parliament of discussions in the areas covered by the Title VI of the Treaty on European Union.

In the case to which the Honourable Member refers, the Presidency had the documents forwarded in the language of the Presidency, as they were not available in time in all the languages. Those language versions which were not supplied at the time of the original communication were supplied subsequently, as soon as they became available.

Practical questions such as this particular situation, involving the transmission of documents in different languages, are usually resolved between the two Secretariats.

(98/C 21/02)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2219/96**by Roberta Angelilli (NI) to the Commission***(9 August 1996)*

Subject: ESF assistance for retraining and re-employment of workers

In a trade-union tract the workers of the ailing IRITECNA/FINTECNA-IRI Group, who have been drawing the short-time working allowance since October 1993, claim that the Union has allocated LIT 4 500 billion under the European Social Fund to enable them to retrain and find new employment.

1. Has the above contribution in fact been granted?
2. If so, it is possible to ascertain how it is being used, given that the employees of the firms concerned (many of whom will soon lose their unemployment benefit) are wondering what has happened to the money and fear that it will be administered under a bankruptcy arrangement, as has previously been the case when funding of this type has been provided?

**Supplementary answer
given by Mr Flynn on behalf of the Commission***(4 August 1997)*

Further to its answer of 1 October 1996 ⁽¹⁾, the Commission is now able to provide the following additional information.

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to her Written Question E-1408/97 ⁽²⁾.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 365, 4.12.1996.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 391, 23.12.1997, p. 82.

(98/C 21/03)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0613/97**by Joaquín Sisó Cruellas (PPE) to the Commission***(27 February 1997)*

Subject: Growth hormone used for salmon

The European Farmers' Coordination (CPE) has asked the Commission to prohibit the use of 'salmon somatotrophine', a genetically-engineered hormone which speeds up and boosts growth in salmon. The CPE claims that the industrialization of salmon farming has led to a considerable reduction in quality, resulted in a high concentration of production in Norway and also spread diseases related to industrial fish farming to the wild salmon population. It therefore criticizes the industrialization of fish farming in general.

In view of European consumers' scepticism about and lack of confidence in new biotechnology techniques as a result of the adverse effects of using the BST milk hormone, can the Commission state what position is being taken on the use of growth hormones in salmon farming?

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission*(14 April 1997)*

Somatosalin is a hormone intended solely to help young salmon adapt from fresh water to sea water.

At the request of the company holding the patent, an application to classify the substance was made under Council Regulation (EEC) No 2377/90 laying down a Community procedure for the establishment of maximum residue limits of veterinary medicinal products in foodstuffs of animal origin ⁽¹⁾. Following a scientific

evaluation of the dossier, the Committee for Veterinary Medicinal Products of the European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products recommended to the Commission that the product be classified in Annex II to the Regulation, containing substances for which no maximum residue limit needs to be set to protect consumers. Somatosalm breaks down very quickly and vanishes completely from the organism of the young fish. No traces remain when the adult fish is eaten.

Under the same procedure, however, the Commission asked the Committee for its opinion on whether somatosalm could be fraudulently used as a growth promoter. The scientific Committee stated clearly that, given the pharmacological properties of the hormone (no effect when administered orally) and the method of its administration (an individual injection required for each fish), fraudulent use of that type was impossible.

As somatosalm is a biotechnology product, authorization to place it on the market can only be granted through the procedures introduced by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2309/93 ⁽¹⁾ of 22 July 1993 laying down Community procedures for the authorization and supervision of medicinal products for human and veterinary use and establishing a European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products. To date, the Agency has received no application to place somatosalm on the Community market.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 224, 18.8.1990.

⁽²⁾ OJ 214, 24.8.1993

(98/C 21/04)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0624/97

by Ana Miranda de Lage (PSE) to the Council

(10 March 1997)

Subject: Reform of the UN

The United Nations General Assembly has repeatedly argued for the need to reform the UN to enable it to rise to the new challenges and realities following the end of the Cold War.

The Member States of the European Union, in particular those forming part of the Security Council, have always supported such a reform.

The replacement of the Secretary-General, in which one country was able to steer the process, provided clear evidence of the extraordinary influence of the USA in the running of the UN, to a large extent due to the inability and lack of will of the Member States of the Union to present a solid, united front.

Following his appointment, Mr Annan's first official visit was to the US. The settling of the debt was one of the items on the agenda. However, according to reports on the meetings held, the Ghanaian high official made certain promises to Congress regarding consultation on any future reforms.

In view of the above, the question arises as to what extent these promises are compatible with the competencies of the United Nations Security Council and, more especially, to what extent the submission of the new Secretary General to the US legislature in talks on the necessary reform of the UN and the clear exclusion from these talks, at least for the time being, of the EU Member States forming part of the UN Security Council is acceptable to those states?

Answer

(6 August 1997)

As the Honourable Member of the European Parliament correctly pointed out, the European Union has always supported the United Nations. The EU believes it necessary to strengthen the coordination between humanitarian activities and development programmes, as well as the mutually supportive relations between the two activities and conflict prevention and peace support endeavours.

In this spirit the European Union became, from the beginning of the present ongoing negotiations, a very active participant in the UN reform debate and submitted last year and this year two position papers, one on the financial reform of the UN and one on the UN reform in the economic and social areas. The purpose of the EU proposal for financial reform was to find a method which is objective and universally acceptable to all UN Member States, and would create a long term financial basis, based on fair rates of contribution to both regular and peace-keeping scales of assessment. The counterpart of this last proposal must therefore be the commitment of all Member States to acquit their arrears and pay their future contributions promptly and in full. In its second position paper the EU has given an outline of a reform in the economic and social areas that would provide a framework to respond to the new tasks and challenges awaiting the UN. The European Union considers that the reform of the United Nations is not about cost-cutting: it is about strengthening and revitalising the organisation.

(98/C 21/05)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0663/97

by Ben Fayot (PSE) to the Commission

(6 March 1997)

Subject: Flood protection measures on the Moselle and Sûre rivers

The commune of Oberbillig (Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany) intends to protect itself from flooding by the Moselle and Sûre rivers by building a wall on the German side.

As the two rivers form a natural frontier between Germany and Luxembourg, the communes on either side of the border should be encouraged to jointly plan and implement a cross-border project to prevent flooding.

Could the Commission not take the initiative, in connection with Interreg C on flood control in the Rhine- Meuse basin, to encourage and help the German and Luxembourgish communes involved to take practical action at local level to implement a truly European programme?

Answer given by Mrs Wulf-Mathies on behalf of the Commission

(17 April 1997)

The Commission received on 15 January 1997 a proposal for an Interreg II C joint operational programme on flood control in the Meuse Rhine basin. The draft programme was presented by the Netherlands authorities in cooperation with the Belgian, German, French and Luxembourg authorities. The total available budget from the structural funds is 135.28 MECU, of which 100 MECU for the Netherlands, 7.75 MECU for Belgium, 24.92 MECU for Germany and 2.61 MECU for France; there is no budget available for Luxembourg. The programme was sent to the Commission for a first consultation. It is therefore not yet possible to react to specific proposals such as the project in Oberbillig in Germany.

The Commission would propose, however, to give particular support, in the framework of the Interreg II C programme, to those projects which require a transnational approach and solution. It will therefore pay special attention to the extent to which transnational cooperation will be stimulated in the joint operational programme and will require that the transnational dimension be used as one of the main criteria for the selection of projects in the framework of the programme.

The Commission has already expressed a reservation as regards supporting infrastructure projects in the framework of the Interreg II C programme, taking into account the limited budget available for the different Member States.

(98/C 21/06)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0698/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B2-600 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/07)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0699/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B2-602 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/08)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0700/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B2-702 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/09)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0701/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B2-704 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/10)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0702/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-101 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/11)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0703/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-1000 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/12)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0704/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-1001 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/13)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0705/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-1006 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/14)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0706/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-1020 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/15)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0707/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-1021 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/16)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0708/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-2000 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/17)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0709/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-2001 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/18)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0710/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-2002 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/19)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0711/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-2010 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/20)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0712/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-2013 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/21)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0713/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-2014 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/22)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0714/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-300 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/23)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0715/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-301 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/24)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0716/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-302 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/25)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0717/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-306 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/26)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0718/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-4000 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/27)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0719/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-4004 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/28)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0720/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-4010 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/29)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0721/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-4012 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/30)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0722/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-4102 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/31)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0723/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-4103 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/32)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0724/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-4104 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/33)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0725/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-4110 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/34)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0726/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-4111 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/35)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0727/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-4300 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/36)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0728/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-4301 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/37)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0729/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-4302 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/38)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0730/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-4303 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/39)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0731/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-4310 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/40)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0732/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-4313 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/41)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0733/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B3-440 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/42)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0734/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B4-1000 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/43)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0735/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B4-1009 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/44)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0736/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B4-1030 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/45)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0737/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B4-1031 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/46)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0738/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B4-1040 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/47)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0739/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B4-1041 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/48)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0740/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B4-2000 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/49)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0741/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B4-2020 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/50)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0742/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B4-304 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/51)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0743/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B4-306 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/52)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0744/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B4-307 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/53)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0745/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B4-3200 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/54)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0746/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B4-3201 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/55)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0747/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B4-3209 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/56)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0748/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B4-3300 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/57)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0749/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B4-3400 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/58)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0750/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B5-100 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/59)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0751/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B5-102 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/60)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0752/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B5-105 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/61)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0753/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B5-300 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/62)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0754/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B5-3051 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/63)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0755/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B5-320 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/64)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0756/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B5-321 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/65)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0757/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B5-325 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/66)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0758/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B5-331 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/67)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0759/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B5-401 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/68)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0760/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B5-4020 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/69)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0761/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B5-4023 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/70)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0762/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B5-411 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/71)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0763/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B5-600 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/72)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0764/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B5-720 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/73)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0765/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B5-721 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/74)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0766/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B6-7122 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/75)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0767/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-210 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/76)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0768/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-3000 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/77)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0769/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-3001 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/78)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0770/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-3010 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/79)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0771/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-860 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/80)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0772/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-3011 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/81)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0773/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-302 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/82)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0774/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-4051 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/83)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0775/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-410 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/84)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0776/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-500 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/85)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0777/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-5020 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/86)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0778/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-5040 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/87)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0779/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-5046 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/88)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0780/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-5051 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/89)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0781/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-5080 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/90)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0782/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-5091 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/91)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0783/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-600 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/92)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0784/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-620 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/93)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0785/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-634 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/94)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0786/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-703 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/95)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0787/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-811 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/96)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0788/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-850 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/97)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0789/97
by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission
(10 March 1997)

Subject: Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-851 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

(98/C 21/98)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0790/97**by Jean-Yves Le Gallou (NI) to the Commission***(10 March 1997)**Subject:* Operating appropriations of the European Institutions

With regard to heading B7-852 would the Commission give figures for the total amount of appropriations allocated in 1996 to expenditure on:

- studies
- meetings of experts
- conferences and congresses
- information and publications.

Can the Commission also give figures for these four types of expenditure expressed as a proportion of the total appropriations allocated to the heading in question and state whether it considers this to be a reasonable proportion.

Joint answer

to Written Questions E-0698/97, E-0699/97, E-0700/97, E-0701/97, E-0702/97, E-0703/97, E-0704/97, E-0705/97, E-0706/97, E-0707/97, E-0708/97, E-0709/97, E-0710/97, E-0711/97, E-0712/97, E-0713/97, E-0714/97, E-0715/97, E-0716/97, E-0717/97, E-0718/97, E-0719/97, E-0720/97, E-0721/97, E-0722/97, E-0723/97, E-0724/97, E-0725/97, E-0726/97, E-0727/97, E-0728/97, E-0729/97, E-0730/97, E-0731/97, E-0732/97, E-0733/97, E-0734/97, E-0735/97, E-0736/97, E-0737/97, E-0738/97, E-0739/97, E-0740/97, E-0741/97, E-0742/97, E-0743/97, E-0744/97, E-0745/97, E-0746/97, E-0747/97, E-0748/97, E-0749/97, E-0750/97, E-0751/97, E-0752/97, E-0753/97, E-0754/97, E-0755/97, E-0756/97, E-0757/97, E-0758/97, E-0759/97, E-0760/97, E-0761/97, E-0762/97, E-0763/97, E-0764/97, E-0765/97, E-0766/97, E-0767/97, E-0768/97, E-0769/97, E-0770/97, E-0771/97, E-0772/97, E-0773/97, E-0774/97, E-0775/97, E-0776/97, E-0777/97, E-0778/97, E-0779/97, E-0780/97, E-0781/97, E-0782/97, E-0783/97, E-0784/97, E-0785/97, E-0786/97, E-0787/97, E-0788/97, E-0789/97 and E-0790/97 given by Mr Liikanen on behalf of the Commission

(5 May 1997)

The Commission is collecting the information it needs to answer the question. It will continue its findings as soon as possible.

(98/C 21/99)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0971/97**by Gianni Tamino (V) to the Commission***(13 March 1997)**Subject:* Distribution of a CD-Rom entitled 'Cepit' on EU funding for technological development and innovation

Daily newspapers in Italy have recently included advertisements for a CD-Rom entitled 'Cepit' containing information on how to obtain European funding for technological innovation. The advertisement includes the Union flag together with the words 'European Commission DG XIII — DG XVI, the logos of the ENEA (twice), the Ministry for Universities and Scientific Research, and the agency for the promotion of European research. The CD-Rom is produced and distributed by the Wonder Company srl of Trento and costs LIT 446 600 (approximately ECU 232). When asked, the Wonder Company said it had made available only one free copy of the CD-Rom to the Commission and one copy to the ENEA.

Is the Commission aware of this product?

Did it contribute to the product and, if so, how (documentation, funding, etc.)?

Does it not consider that advertising a commercial initiative of this kind with the EU flag in a more prominent position than the logo of the company producing the product may lead to unrealistic expectations?

For products of this kind, why could the Commission not make any involvement on its part conditional on the free distribution of a certain number of copies of the product to public institutions such as universities, Commission offices in different EU countries, etc.?

Answer given by Mrs Wulf-Mathies on behalf of the Commission

(26 May 1997)

The Commission has no knowledge of the CD-Rom and did not contribute to its production. It is collecting more details and will take any appropriate steps required.

(98/C 21/100)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1032/97

by Hiltrud Breyer (V) to the Commission

(19 March 1997)

Subject: Risk to the health of the public and employees as a result of underestimating neutron radiation during transport of highly radioactive waste

The biological radiation impact of dense ionising radiation, such as neutrons, is greater than the same physical dose of loose ionising radiation, such as gamma rays. In order to take account of this danger, a physical dose of neutrons is converted into an equivalent dose, by multiplying it by a quality factor Q. According to a scientific consensus which has prevailed for more than ten years, the quality factors for radiation protection do not reflect current scientific knowledge. As far back as 1990, the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) adopted enhanced factors (ICRP 60 1991). The recommended values depend, like the previous factors, on the energy of the neutrons.

1. What is the Commission's position vis-à-vis the guidelines laid down in ICRP 60 1991?
2. What conclusions has it drawn as regards radiation protection in the EU Member States?

Answer given by Mrs Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission

(12 May 1997)

As a result of increasing scientific knowledge on the biological effects of ionising radiation, the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) produced publication 60 in which it recommended certain changes to the concepts used in dosimetry and radiation protection. Pursuant to Article 31 of the Euratom Treaty, the Commission took the opportunity which this provided to revise the basic safety standards in radiation protection and drew up a draft directive after obtaining the opinion of the group of experts set up for this purpose.

As regards the assessment of neutron radiation, the Commission followed the ICRP's recommendations in its draft. The experts from the Member States and the institutions that were consulted accepted the new method of assessing neutron radiation. In addition, the opinion on the draft directive adopted by the Parliament at its plenary sitting on 20 April 1994 contained no request for an amendment in this regard ⁽¹⁾.

The Commission therefore thought it proper to incorporate in the draft directive the methods for assessing the biological effects of neutron radiation proposed in ICRP publication 60. The Council unanimously adopted Directive 96/26/Euratom on basic safety standards on 13 May 1996 ⁽²⁾ and the Member States are required to implement it by 13 May 2000.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 128, 9.5.1994.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 159, 29.6.1996.

(98/C 21/101)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1074/97**by Roberta Angelilli (NI) to the Commission***(21 March 1997)**Subject:* Use of structural funds by Italy

Italy has been conspicuous, even in recent years, by its low level of utilization of resources from the Structural Funds. As a result, it has often been suggested that the Commission could redirect certain unutilized funds intended for Italy to other countries that had shown a greater capacity to utilize them. Moreover, the lack of continuity between the previous planning period (1989-1993) and the current one (1994-1999) has created further problems and makes it difficult to provide a complete and up-to-date picture of the utilization of the Structural Funds in Italy.

Will the Commission provide as up-to-date an account as possible of the state of Italy's commitments and expenditure in relation to actions financed under Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5b as part of multi-regional and regional programmes?

Will the Commission provide separate answers for the two planning periods?

Will the Commission state whether funds allocated to Italy have in fact been redirected towards other EU Member States as a result of our country's failure to utilize them?

Lastly, can the Commission give its assessment of the reasons for the substantial delays in the utilization of the Structural Funds by Italy, comparing the Italian situation with that of the other Member States?

Answer given by Mrs Wulf-Mathies on behalf of the Commission*(10 June 1997)*

On the basis of the latest information received from the Italian authorities, which refers to the position on 31 December 1996, the situation regarding commitments and payments under structural fund programmes by implementing bodies in Italy is set out in the following table. The figures refer to commitments and payments as a percentage of the total cost of the approved programmes under each objective. The objective 2 programmes cover a three year period only (1994-1996). It should be noted that a limited number of programmes not yet approved by the Commission are not included in the figures, nor are Community initiative programmes.

No change has been made to overall Italian allocations for the period 1994-1999, which consequently remain available for commitment before the end of the period.

The agreement which the Commission concluded with the Italian authorities in 1995 on the improved management of structural fund programmes highlights the main causes of the delays, such as inadequate administrative structures, long and complicated procedures, ineffective use of technical assistance, and slow and complicated financial transfers. Similar problems exist in certain other Member States but not to the same extent and not in such combination. The Commission continues to monitor the situation in Italy closely and to review progress on the implementation of the reforms agreed with the Italian authorities in 1995.

Objective	1989-1993		1994-1999	
	Commitments	Payments	Commitments	Payment
1	99.2 %	80.1 %	40.7 %	17.0 %
2	⁽¹⁾ —	⁽¹⁾ 73.4 %	⁽²⁾ 87.9 %	⁽²⁾ 20.9 %
3	⁽³⁾	⁽³⁾	40.1 %	20.1 %
4	⁽³⁾	⁽³⁾	34.2 %	10.4 %
⁽⁴⁾ 5a	—	—	33.3 %	17.2 %
5b	91.1 %	⁽⁵⁾ 56.7 %	⁽⁵⁾ 31.1 %	⁽⁵⁾ 8.2 %

⁽¹⁾ Due to the absence in Italy of a centralized monitoring system for 1989-1993 objective 2 programmes the figure given is based on payment declarations to date to the Commission.

⁽²⁾ 1994-1996 period.

⁽³⁾ Data not available.

⁽⁴⁾ In the framework of the structural funds reform in 1993, all the financial instruments for fisheries were regrouped in a single 'Financial instrument for fisheries guidance' which contributes to achieving Objective 5a.

⁽⁵⁾ Data are provisional.

(98/C 21/102)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1178/97**by Gastone Parigi (NI) to the Commission***(3 April 1997)**Subject: Farm prices 1997/1998*

The Commission's proposals regarding intervention for the 1997/98 marketing year provide for a reduction of Lire 4000 billion, a large percentage of which (Lire 2700 billion) concerns arable land. The planned reductions are for cereals (– 7.3%), oilseeds (– 4.2%) and land for set-aside (– 27%).

The government's tax policies, price trends and their impact on production costs, and the 7% increase in the structural, social and regional funds – which in itself will take up the overall increase of 3% in agricultural spending – mean that the situation of Italian farmers will deteriorate sharply.

Since it was agreed that the reform of the CAP would take effect only after 1999, will the Commission maintain agricultural intervention at current levels for the 1997/98 marketing year?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission*(6 June 1997)*

On 5 March 1997 the Commission adopted a proposal on farm prices for the marketing year 1997/98 ⁽¹⁾, the general thrust of which is that there should be no innovation pending reform of several sectors of the CAP. The Member of the Commission with special responsibility for agriculture presented this proposal to a special meeting of Comagri in Strasbourg on 12 March.

In making this proposal, the Commission drew attention to the budgetary situation in 1998, and in particular to the fact that the aim of limiting the budget increase to 3% could be achieved only by maintaining agricultural expenditure at more or less its present level. To manage that, in view of the likely trend of expenditure in certain sectors such as beef and veal, the Commission recalled its proposal in the previous year, when it advocated a reduction in aid for arable crops as a solution to financing the crisis in the livestock sector ⁽²⁾.

This solution was not adopted by the Council, if only because Parliament had not given its opinion, but in its October 1996 conclusions the Council indicated that it would consider it when establishing the 1998 budget.

Knowledge of the 1998 budget currently available suggests that the status quo proposed for the farm prices for 1997/98 respects the budgetary equilibrium, assuming that the reduction in aid for arable crops is adopted. This proposal has accordingly been maintained.

⁽¹⁾ COM(97) 89.

⁽²⁾ COM(96) 422.

(98/C 21/103)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1182/97**by Gianni Tamino (V) to the Commission***(3 April 1997)**Subject: Importation of animals without health documents from Belgium into Sicily*

Since 4 March 1997, magistrates in Caltanissetta have been investigating a case of trade in dangerous substances and violation of health and hygiene rules in connection with the clandestine import of some 125 cattle and pigs from Belgium (from a shipment of 500 animals), without the necessary health documents. Twelve persons are involved in the investigation and twelve farms have been placed under restraint.

Is the Commission aware of this situation?

What steps will it take and what measures will it require states to adopt in order to comply with Community rules in this area and prevent any recurrence of such incidents?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission*(5 May 1997)*

The case raised by the Honourable Member falls under Articles 8 and 9 of Council Directive 90/425/EEC ⁽¹⁾ and also perhaps under Council Directive 89/608/EEC of 21 November 1989 on mutual assistance between the administrative authorities of the Member States and cooperation between the latter and the Commission to ensure the correct application of legislation on veterinary and zootechnical matters ⁽²⁾.

In accordance with Article 9 of Directive 90/425/EEC, the authorities of the Member State of destination (in this case Italy) are to contact the authorities of the Member State of despatch (in this case Belgium) immediately. The latter are to take all measures required and inform the authorities of the Member State of destination of the type of checks carried out, the decisions taken and their reasons for taking them. Where the authorities of the Member State of destination fear that the measures taken are not sufficient, they are to seek ways and means of remedying the situation in conjunction with the authorities of the Member State of despatch, if necessary by conducting an on-the-spot inspection. Where there are recurrences of such instances, the authorities of the Member State of destination are to notify the Commission and the authorities of the other Member States. It will then be for the Commission, on its own initiative or at the request of the Member State of destination, to take a number of measures as provided for in Article 9 of Directive 90/425/EEC (e.g. an inspection visit).

To date the Italian authorities have not referred the matter to the Commission. The latter will, if necessary and in due time, take the requisite measures pursuant to the abovementioned legislation.

⁽¹⁾ Council Directive 90/425/EEC of 26 June 1990 concerning veterinary and zootechnical checks applicable in intra-Community trade in certain live animals and products with a view to the completion of the internal market (OJ L 224, 18.8.1990), as last amended by Directive 92/118/EEC (OJ L 62, 15.3.1993).

⁽²⁾ OJ L 351, 2.12.1989.

(98/C 21/104)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1224/97**by Cristiana Muscardini (NI) to the Commission***(7 April 1997)*

Subject: The Cumulative Recovery System and the United States

The proposals regarding the introduction of the Cumulative Recovery System for the importation of husked rice into the Community seem to have originated in the Commission's concern to meet the demands of the United States.

Can the Commission say:

1. whether it agrees that this is so?
2. whether it does not consider that the demands made by the United States in fact mean that conditions are set on the Union's decisions, thereby seriously compromising the possibility of Community policy operating smoothly?
3. why it is not, on the other hand, showing any interest in ensuring full compliance with Article 39 of the Treaty?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission*(27 May 1997)*

Commission Regulation (EC) No 703/97 of 18 April 1997 introduces a cumulative recovery system for determining certain import duties on rice for a trial period from 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998 ⁽¹⁾.

The obligation to introduce such a system arises from the agreement concluded between the Community and the government of the United States in the form of an exchange of letters following the results of negotiations with certain third countries under Article XXIV.6 of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Indeed, the first paragraph of Annex II to Council Decision 95/591/CE of 22 December 1995 ⁽²⁾, which approves the above-mentioned agreement, stipulates that 'for the 1996/97 marketing year a cumulative recovery system for husked rice will be developed by the Commission in consultation with the United States Government and introduced on a trial basis'.

The Commission therefore adopted the Regulation in question to enable the Community to fulfil the obligations contracted under the above-mentioned international agreement.

The Commission wishes to reassure the Honourable Member that it never forgets, in the exercise of its activities, to uphold the Treaty.

(¹) OJ L 104, 22.4.1997.

(²) OJ L 334, 30.12.1995.

(98/C 21/105)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1235/97

by Laura González Álvarez (GUE/NGL) to the Commission

(7 April 1997)

Subject: Urban development in Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Spain

According to recent media reports in Andalusia, Spain, the Commission has published an opinion on the environmental viability of an urban development project (the Hohenlohe project) which may infringe Community environmental legislation.

What is the legal standing of the opinion and on what basis has it been drawn up?

Is the Hohenlohe project receiving Community finance via the structural funds? If not, might it be jeopardizing other measures which are being carried out with structural fund monies under the Doñana II operational programme?

Answer given by Mrs Wulf-Mathies on behalf of the Commission

(29 May 1997)

The Commission is not aware of the information published in Andalusia about its 'opinion' on an urban development project in Sanlúcar de Barrameda. In any case, it has not issued and is not required to issue an 'opinion' on the project.

The Commission has not financed the Hohenlohe project, which lies outside the area of the Doñana II programme and so has no impact on Community assistance which has already been approved.

(98/C 21/106)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1253/97

by Susan Waddington (PSE) to the Commission

(8 April 1997)

Subject: Recruitment of women by the institutions

Further to my Written Questions E-3444/96 (¹) and E-3171/95 (²), will the Commission give concrete examples (advertisements, internal training schemes etc.) of actions taken or planned to encourage the recruitment of women, particularly in view of the policy of main streaming equal opportunities into all Community policies?

(¹) OJ C 105, 3.4.1997, p. 74.

(²) OJ C 91, 27.3.1996, p. 39.

Answer given by Mr Liikanen on behalf of the Commission

(13 May 1997)

The staff regulations already stipulate in Article 27 that 'Officials shall be selected without reference to race, creed or sex'.

Recruitment to the Commission, as to the other institutions, is done by open competitions. When publishing these competitions in the Official journal potential candidates are at the very beginning of each notice of open competition faced with the equal opportunities approach: 'The Commission/Community institutions are equal opportunities employers and particularly welcome applications from women. They take great care to avoid any form of discrimination, both during the recruitment procedure and when making internal appointments.'

In addition to this notice there is an advertisement in the national press. In each announcement candidates will find the following paragraph: 'The Commission/the institutions of the European Union operate a policy of equal opportunities between women and men and take great care to avoid any form of discrimination on this basis of race, creed or disability.'

The press publicity, as well as the announcements of open competitions, respect a gender-neutral denomination of the profession throughout the text of each publication.

As far as training schemes are concerned, in the recently adopted third action programme on equal opportunities for women and men in the Commission ⁽¹⁾, provision is made for leadership training courses targeted at women eligible for management positions. A certain number of such seminars will already take place in 1997. Furthermore, awareness-raising seminars are also planned for a certain number of Commission services, thus emphasizing the need to increase the participation of women in all stages of policy-making.

The clearest example of concrete action taken by the Commission to increase the presence of women is the setting of ambitious annual targets both for the recruitment of women at the lower levels of the A category, and for the appointment of women to middle and senior management positions. The Honourable Member can have access to these data at her convenience.

The above measures are some of the ways of mainstreaming the gender dimension in the personnel policies. They have a positive impact on the recruitment of women in the Commission, as well as in their career development.

⁽¹⁾ SEC(97) 536.

(98/C 21/107)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1263/97

by Nikitas Kaklamanis (UPE) to the Commission

(11 April 1997)

Subject: Rules governing the import of used heavy vehicles to Greece

The adoption of onerous new provisions governing the sale of used heavy vehicles in Greece has caused great consternation among importers of used vehicles in that country. According to an article that appeared in the reputable periodical 'Trochoi kai TIR', the new rules governing the import and sale of heavy vehicles in Greece mean that whereas until 8 February 1997 the classification of these used vehicles in Greece depended on the fulfilment of a series of alternative conditions — for example, either the age of the vehicle (seven years from the date of construction), or possession of an exhaust certificate in accordance with the provisions of Directive 88/77 ⁽¹⁾ —, after 8 February 1997 a vehicle must meet both the above conditions.

These provisions constitute a barrier to the movement of goods in the European Union and the professional activity of importers.

In addition, the Greek authorities have recently reduced the seven- year period to six years from the date of first registration; vehicles that have already been legally imported and issued with classification certificates (and also used lorries and buses imported henceforth in accordance with the new conditions) must be classified within two years.

Given that the situation has become very difficult for dealers and other workers in this sector, would the Commission give its views on this subject and say to what extent the above rules are compatible with Community legislation and what measures it intends to take should this not be the case?

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 36, 9.2.1988, p. 33.

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission*(12 June 1997)*

The legislation alluded to by the Honourable Member (Article 2 of Law No 2465/1997 issued by the Greek Ministry of Transport and Communications — Greek Official Gazette No 28 of 26 February 1997, p. 415) would indeed seem to reinforce the restrictive nature of the earlier measures adopted by the Greek authorities limiting the sale of certain heavy vehicles previously registered in another Member State. The relevant earlier measures comprise, in particular, Article 1(5), (6) and (7) of Law No 2052/1992 (as amended), and Ministerial Decision No 12792/958.

The Commission has instituted infringement proceedings under Article 169 of the EC Treaty, since the legislation in question may constitute a measure having equivalent effect to quantitative restrictions and so be contrary to Articles 30 and 36 of the EC Treaty. The Greek authorities' response is currently being examined.

(98/C 21/108)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1279/97**by Ulla Sandbæk (I-EDN) to the Council***(10 April 1997)*

Subject: Implementing provisions and the intergovernmental conference

Is it possible that changes to the Treaty arising from the intergovernmental conference will affect the current formulation of implementing provisions governing restrictions on travel and residence within the Community for nationals of the Member States?

Would the existing directives on residence then be automatically repealed, or, if not, will the Court of Justice be able to make the provisions directly applicable and thus repeal the implementing directives?

Answer*(6 August 1997)*

The Council is not in a position to reply to the Honourable Member's question regarding the course taken by the Intergovernmental Conference, since it does not fall within the Council's competence.

(98/C 21/109)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1287/97**by Anne McIntosh (PPE) to the Commission***(11 April 1997)*

Subject: Developments since the Cork Declaration on Rural Development

With reference to the European Conference on Rural Development in November 1996, what progress has been made towards formulating a programme that places emphasis on sustainable rural development and meets the objectives as laid down at Cork?

It will be necessary to adjust the common agricultural policy (CAP) and the agricultural sector accordingly to implement this rural development programme. Will the Commission therefore confirm that the development programme will be introduced as part of its reform of the CAP, and that the principle of subsidiarity and the need to preserve and improve the quality of the rural environment will be observed?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission*(6 June 1997)*

As stated at the Cork conference, rural development policy must be integrated, sustainable, coherent and efficient. It must be simple and transparent and cater for the wide range of landscapes and activities in rural areas. Moreover, the Commission is convinced that rural development policy must help promote socio-economic cohesion within the Community and facilitate the necessary adjustments of the common agricultural policy (CAP) which will have implications on agricultural production at large.

It is a declared objective of the Commission to proceed with rural development policies in the context of a further reform of the CAP. As a general orientation, the Commission favours an approach which strengthens the coherence between rural development policies and market policies and which reinforces the role of agri-environmental policies.

Currently, the Commission is carrying out a thorough analysis of certain key market organisations, i.e. dairy, beef, cereals, oilseeds and protein crops, and of rural development. As a result of these analyses, the Commission will publish in due course a document which will give a factual background for proposals concerning a further reform of the CAP and rural development policies.

As an important document, the Commission adopted in November 1996 the first report on economic and social cohesion. This deals in particular with the effects of structural and sectorial policies — such as the CAP — on cohesion during 1989-1999. These questions were raised during the European forum on cohesion which was held at the end of April in Brussels.

In any case, the Commission will be presenting its guidelines and its first proposals — including financial perspectives — within the 'Santer package', following the conclusions of the Amsterdam European Council concerning the intergovernmental conference.

(98/C 21/110)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1298/97

by Bárbara Dührkop Dührkop (PSE) to the Commission

(11 April 1997)

Subject: Utilization of international fisheries agreements

What percentages of the quotas laid down in international fisheries agreements are actually caught by the Community fleet?

Answer given by Mrs Bonino on behalf of the Commission

(9 June 1997)

The fisheries agreements concluded on the basis of reciprocity give the Community fishing opportunities in the northern Atlantic (i.e. the exclusive economic zones of the Faroes, Iceland and Norway) and in the Baltic. These fishing opportunities are normally fully taken up by Community fishing vessels.

The annual catch tonnage (250 000 tonnes) permitted under the agreement with Argentina to vessels operating within joint enterprises and joint ventures has so far been fully utilized.

In the case of the agreements with Morocco and 14 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP States), there are no fixed catch quotas; fishing opportunities are expressed in gross registered tonnage (GRT) for trawlers and in numbers of vessels in the tuna fisheries. The catch tonnages, which depend on the extent to which these possibilities are taken up, are declared by Community shipowners directly to the authorities of the third countries, in accordance with the agreements. In the case of the tuna agreements, the Commission has figures for the tonnages caught each year by the Community fleet and would be able to send them to the Honourable Member. For the agreements concerned mainly with trawling, Member States have begun to send the Commission, under the 'control' regulation, overall data which require detailed examination.

(98/C 21/111)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1304/97

by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission

(11 April 1997)

Subject: Veterinary checks

The Commission has submitted a proposal for a Council Directive laying down the principles governing the organization of veterinary checks on products entering the Community from third countries, amending Directives 71/118/EEC, 72/462/EEC, 85/73/EEC, 91/67/EEC, 91/492/EEC, 91/493/EEC, 92/45/EEC and 92/118/EEC governing the organization of veterinary checks on products entering the Community from third countries (COM(96)170 final — 96/0109/0110 (CNS))⁽¹⁾, (CES 1395/96 — 96/0109/0110/CNS).

Following the repeal of Directive 90/675/EEC ⁽²⁾ it has become necessary to amend the text of the directive dealt with in the second Commission proposal, with a view to bringing it into line with the new directive proposed by the Council.

Would the Commission consolidate the existing legislation at the earliest opportunity, so as to make it clearer and more user-friendly?

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 245, 23.8.1996, p. 9.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 373, 31.12.1990, p. 1.

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission

(29 May 1997)

At present, the Commission has no plans to consolidate the Directives mentioned by the Honourable Member. On the other hand, a number of them (71/118/EEC, 91/492/EEC, 91/493/EEC, 92/45/EEC and 92/118/EEC) are included in a general exercise to group the so-called 'vertical' directives on food hygiene in order to simplify the legislation and achieve consistency. With regard to the financing of checks, on 26 June 1996 the Council adopted Directive 96/43/EC amending and consolidating Directive 85/73/EEC ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 162, 1.7.1996.

(98/C 21/112)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1305/97

by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission

(11 April 1997)

Subject: Veterinary checks

The Commission has submitted a proposal for a Council Directive laying down the principles governing the organization of veterinary checks on products entering the Community from third countries, amending Directives 71/118/EEC, 72/462/EEC, 85/73/EEC, 91/67/EEC, 91/492/EEC, 91/493/EEC, 92/45/EEC and 92/118/EEC governing the organization of veterinary checks on products entering the Community from third countries (COM(96)170 final – 96/0109/0110(CNS)) ⁽¹⁾, (CES 1395/96 – 96/0109/0110(CNS)).

So as to obviate the need to refer to the specific customs legislation, would the Commission amend the directive to clarify the powers of the customs authorities and the way in which responsibility is divided between the customs authorities and the veterinary authorities?

Does it feel that the directive should make cooperation between the two authorities compulsory and that it should give the competent customs authority, rather than the veterinary authority (as provided for in the proposal for a directive), exclusive responsibility for supervising free warehouses and customs warehouses?

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 245, 23.8.1996, p. 9.

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission

(2 June 1997)

The proposals for Council Directives laying down the principles governing the organization of veterinary checks on products entering the Community from third countries ⁽¹⁾ were examined in detail by Parliament (17-21 February 1997). In that context the Commission accepted a number of amendments to certain provisions adopted by Parliament, in particular to clarify the respective responsibilities of the veterinary and customs authorities.

On the particular question raised by the Honourable Member, the Commission has agreed that Article 12(1) of the proposal should provide for the customs authorities and the veterinary authorities responsible for the border inspection post to authorize admission into the free zone, the free warehouse or a customs warehouse. Nevertheless, Article 12(2) stipulates that zones and warehouses must be under the permanent supervision of an official veterinarian. This rule applies without prejudice to the obligations arising from customs regulations. This position is in accord with that expressed by Parliament.

⁽¹⁾ COM(96) 170 final.

(98/C 21/113)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1310/97**by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission***(11 April 1997)**Subject: Pathogens*

The Commission has submitted a proposal for a Council Directive amending Council Directive 92/118/EEC of 17 December 1992 laying down animal health and public health requirements governing trade in and imports into the Community of products not subject to the said requirements laid down in specific Community rules referred to in Annex A(I) to Directive 89/662/EEC and, as regards pathogens, to Directive 90/425/EEC (COM(96)393 final ⁽¹⁾ — 96/0197 CNS).

The proposal, which is intended to simplify the directive, should not cover unprocessed liquid manure from poultry. Given the substantial risk of transmission of diseases such as salmonella, avian influenza and Newcastle disease which such manure entails, the Commission is asked to retain the Community list.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 284, 27.9.1996, p. 18.

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission*(29 May 1997)*

On 24 July 1996 the Commission submitted to the Council a proposal for a Council Directive ⁽¹⁾ amending Directive 92/118/EEC ⁽²⁾ of 17 December 1992 laying down animal health and public health requirements governing trade in and imports into the Community of products not subject to the said requirements laid down in specific Community rules referred to in Annex A(I) to Directive 89/662/EEC and, as regards pathogens, to Directive 90/425/EEC 2.

The health requirements relating to trade in and imports of liquid manure are set out in Chapter 14 of Annex I to Directive 92/118/EEC. They were amended by Decision 96/103/EC ⁽³⁾ to take account of experience gained.

With regard to intra-Community trade in unprocessed liquid manure from poultry, health requirements are specified for Newcastle disease and avian influenza. The guarantees relating to Newcastle disease and avian influenza are laid down in Council Directives 92/40/EEC ⁽⁴⁾ and 92/66/EEC ⁽⁵⁾ introducing Community measures to combat avian influenza and Newcastle disease, respectively. Moreover, in the case of Newcastle disease, additional guarantees relating to region of destination are laid down regarding its status as 'not vaccinating against Newcastle disease'. The product must also be accompanied by a health certificate.

Directive 92/118/EEC provides for lists of third-country establishments to be drawn up for products covered by the Directive. It was decided in the light of the experience gained as regards the protection of public and animal health that such lists were not justified for certain products such as the skins of ungulates, bones and bone products not intended for animal or human consumption, beekeeping products, hunting trophies, liquid manure, wool, feathers and honey. Consequently, in the interests of simplification the Commission proposed to the Council to abolish the requirement to draw up such lists and instead to ensure that establishments are registered by the competent authority of the third country. The Commission proposal was adopted on 17 December 1996 as Council Directive 96/90/EC ⁽⁶⁾, after approval by Parliament on 25 October 1996 ⁽⁷⁾ within the framework of the consultation procedure.

⁽¹⁾ COM(96) 393 final.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 62, 15.3.1993.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 24, 31.1.1996.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 167, 22.2.1992.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 260, 5.9.1992.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ L 13, 16.1.1997.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ C 347, 18.11.1996.

(98/C 21/114)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1311/97**by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission***(11 April 1997)**Subject:* Identification of bovine animals and beef products

The Commission has submitted a proposal for a Council Regulation (EC) establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and a proposal for a Council Regulation (EC) regarding the labelling of beef and beef products (COM(96) 460 final – 96/0228/0229 CNS) ⁽¹⁾ (CES 1404/96 – 96/0228/0229 CNS).

The new system will include the labelling of beef and beef products. Although the labelling of such products will be optional, the information that each operator or organization decides to indicate on the label (region of birth, method of fattening, slaughter and feeding details, etc.) must first be approved by the competent national authorities.

Overall, the proposal for a regulation regarding the labelling of beef and beef products is satisfactory, given that it will provide many consumers with the information they require and therefore make a major contribution towards re-establishing confidence in European beef.

The Commission is asked to make indication of the origin of beef compulsory since this is only way of restoring consumer confidence in the long term.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 349, 20.11.1996, p. 14.

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission*(28 May 1997)*

According to Council Regulation (EC) No 820/97 establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products, which was adopted by the Council on 21 April 1997 ⁽¹⁾, a compulsory beef labelling system shall be introduced which shall be obligatory in all Member States from 1 January 2000, with the compulsory indications of the Member State or third country where the animal from which the beef is derived was born, the Member States or third countries where the animal was raised and the Member State or third country where the animal was slaughtered. However, this compulsory system shall not exclude the possibility for a Member State to apply the system merely on an optional basis to beef sold in that same Member State. A transitional voluntary labelling system shall be introduced until the end of 1999. In Member States where there is a sufficiently developed identification and registration system for bovine animals, a compulsory labelling system may be introduced before 1 January 2000, for beef from animals born, raised and slaughtered in their territory.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 117, 7.5.1997.

(98/C 21/115)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1313/97**by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission***(11 April 1997)**Subject:* New technologies and employment

Following the submission of 'The impact of the introduction of new technologies on employment' (CES 1403/96), it must be said that the ever-increasing impact of new technologies on growth and employment is likely to increase social exclusion and regional marginalization. This situation calls for the introduction of vigorous policies to provide support for less-qualified workers and young people looking for their first job, since these are the most economically vulnerable groups and those most prone to long-term unemployment. Combating marginalization is even more important in respect of those least-favoured regions in which the problems caused by geographical remoteness are aggravated by a lack of proper structures and infrastructure linked up by means of a network with the rest of the European Union, and by technological disparities which are far worse than any economic disparities. In line with the priorities laid down in respect of economic and social cohesion in the EU, responsibility for technological development must be taken at different levels: Community, national and regional.

The Commission is therefore asked to combine action under the Community's R&TD policy with Structural Fund operations as effectively as possible.

(98/C 21/116)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1314/97
by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission
(11 April 1997)

Subject: New technologies and employment

Having regard to 'The impact of the introduction of new technologies on employment' (CES 1403/96), the public sector's role must be reviewed and adjusted in response to the need to create the infrastructure required for the development and application of new technologies (particularly information and communication technologies) and to ensure that they rapidly spread throughout the production sector. Implementation of the trans-European networks programme is vital in order to provide properly-organized modern infrastructure at European level.

The Commission is asked to ensure that national and Community R&TD policies are based on instruments providing forecasts and information regarding technology and employment scenarios. Such scenarios would then be used by those involved in research to formulate their R&TD priorities on the basis of a 'bottom-up' approach and to organize integrated projects at European level.

Joint answer
to Written Questions E-1313/97 and E-1314/97
given by Mrs Cresson on behalf of the Commission

(17 June 1997)

The impact of technological progress, more particularly the development of information technology, on employment, is the subject of many concerns and is intensively studied at Community level. The overall conclusions of the work carried out on this issue are that the global effect of technological development on employment is a shift from less skilled and more repetitive jobs, to higher skilled and more creative ones.

It is also agreed that investment in research and technological development (RTD) has a positive impact on growth and competitiveness, which is a major factor of job creation, through the development of new products and the opening of new markets.

In order to benefit from these mechanisms, bearing in mind the concern to avoid social or regional marginalisation, the Community is making substantial efforts in the framework of social, regional, education and training and research policy, through a broad range of instruments and programmes, to stimulate both training and the mastering of new technologies, and the development of RTD activity.

The results of this action can already be observed. The gap between more advanced and less advanced Member States in terms of economic performance, as well as the even more important gap in terms of technological potential and activity, are progressively narrowing.

In order to strengthen the economic and social cohesion of the Community, and to maximise the impact of the actions undertaken, the Commission intends better to combine and fully exploit the possible synergies between RTD and regional policies, through a strengthening of the articulation between RTD programmes and structural funds.

Such a development is explicitly foreseen in the Commission proposal for the fifth framework programme (1998-2002). In a forthcoming communication on economic and social cohesion, research and competitiveness, the guidelines the Commission proposes to follow in this respect will be presented, as well as mechanisms it would be possible to use.

(98/C 21/117)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1318/97
by José Pomés Ruiz (PPE) to the Commission
(10 April 1997)

Subject: Eurostat and entry into the third phase of EMU

During the debate following his speech to the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Monetary Affairs on 27 November 1996, the Director-General of Eurostat was requested to ensure that Eurostat's periodical publications included a reference to the TEU convergence criteria and, with regard to the CIT, separated the

statistical weighted average from the simple arithmetical average of the three best-placed countries, should a significant divergence exist.

Although the Director-General agreed to this request, no reference at all is to be found after the line 'E15' in the first issue of the new harmonized CIP to what the subcommittee had requested and the Director-General had undertaken to provide.

Why has Eurostat not taken up the request made by the Subcommittee on Monetary Affairs on 27 November 1996?

Does Eurostat intend to rectify this and publish details of how the convergence criteria are being met for as long as it takes the countries to complete the third phase of EMU?

Does Eurostat intend, each time it publishes, to annex additional information as to the number of criteria met by each country?

Answer given by Mr de Silguy on behalf of the Commission

(12 June 1997)

Under the EC Treaty, the Commission has the responsibility to provide relevant statistics for the assessment of the convergence criteria. In the particular case of the inflation criterion, Eurostat has co-ordinated the setting up of the harmonised indices of consumer prices. These are available from January 1997 and allow an assessment of inflation in the Member States on a comparable basis, as required by the Treaty.

In the calculation of the inflation reference value, the Commission used the following operational definitions in its convergence report of 1996 ⁽¹⁾: 'a Member State's inflation is measured by the percentage change in the arithmetic average of twelve monthly [interim] indices [of consumer prices] relative to the arithmetic average of twelve monthly indices of the previous period'. The reference value has been 'calculated as the arithmetic [non weighted] average of the inflation rates of the three best performing Member States plus 1.5 percentage points'. In the next convergence report, in 1998, the interim indices will be replaced by the harmonised indices of consumer prices. It should be noted that, in its convergence report, the European monetary institute has followed the same operational definitions as the Commission.

The Commission's 1996 convergence report discussed the different issues relevant to these definitions and showed that alternative calculations resulted generally in very similar results. The Commission, in all official documents, has underlined that its assessment of the respecting of the convergence criteria will be conducted in due time, according to the letter and the spirit of the Treaty. This is why it is premature at this point to set in stone a definition of the inflation reference value.

Similarly, the Commission has repeatedly insisted that the EC Treaty stipulates (Article 109j) that other price indices should be taken into account in the assessment of the inflation convergence within the Community. This is why, in its convergence report of 1996, the Commission devoted an entire section to these other indices.

In view of the above considerations, the Commission considers it inappropriate to publish, on a regular basis, information on which Member States would meet the inflation convergence criterion.

Regarding the availability of information on the convergence criteria, a table headed Current performance of the Member States in relation to the convergence criteria is published monthly in the Economic data pocket book. This table includes figures calculated according to the operational definitions currently used by the Commission for the different convergence criteria, but provides, in the light of the above, no reference value.

⁽¹⁾ 'Report on convergence in the European Union in 1996' — COM(96) 560 final, published in European Economy, supplement A, No 1 — January 1997.

(98/C 21/118)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1319/97**by Gerhard Schmid (PSE) to the Commission***(11 April 1997)**Subject:* Retransmission of BSE from cattle to sheep

According to scientific findings to date, the threat of the BSE epidemic being retransmitted from cattle to sheep cannot be ruled out.

1. Is it true that a document by the EU Scientific Veterinary Committee has been available since 21 October 1996 recommending that at least material posing a risk such as brains, eyes and spinal cords from sheep, goats and cattle should be removed from the food chain in all countries in which there have been cases of BSE?
2. If so, why has the Commission not yet acted on this recommendation?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission*(2 June 1997)*

The scientific veterinary committee advised, in its opinion of 21 October 1996, that certain tissues of bovine, ovine and caprine origin should be removed from the human and animal food chains in countries or regions where there is a potential risk. The committee was unable to exclude the possibility of a risk in any Member State.

The Commission, on the basis of this advice, put forward a proposal for a decision on 11 December 1996 to ensure that these tissues were removed in the abattoir and destroyed, throughout the Community. This proposal failed to obtain a qualified majority in favour from the standing veterinary committee. Under the rules of procedure, it was sent to the Council, where it was rejected on 17 December 1996 by a simple majority.

The round of inspections in Member States, carried out in late 1996, has identified some deficiencies in the action taken against bovine spongiform encephalopathy. The Commission therefore is considering further action, including submission of a new proposal on similar lines to that made in December 1996.

(98/C 21/119)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1329/97**by Giacomo Santini (UPE) to the Commission***(10 April 1997)**Subject:* Directive 92/50/EEC on public service contracts

Since the entry into force of Directive 92/50/EEC ⁽¹⁾ and of Legislative Decree No 157 of 17 March 1995 giving effect to that Directive, almost all public service contracts have been awarded to the lowest tenderers.

This is leading to an imbalance in the market, as pirate companies are being awarded contracts at prices which bear no relation to the real costs which must be borne by a firm operating properly on the market.

Article 25 of Legislative Decree No 157 of 17 March 1995 stipulates that abnormally low tenders (i.e. those which are more than one fifth lower than the average of the tenders submitted and admitted) shall be verified by the contracting authority. This happens regularly but, given that no official assessment criteria have been laid down, the contracting authority is not in a position to determine whether a tender is abnormally low or not and so the contract is awarded even if the tender in question is 50% lower.

1. What steps does the Commission intend to take to ensure that such tenders are deemed abnormally low and accordingly rejected?
2. What steps does it intend to take to ensure that a firm can take part in tendering procedures on the basis of its technical and financial merits without being excluded by a contracting authority for which it has never previously provided services?

3. How does the Commission intend to guarantee equal conditions for firms taking part in tendering procedures?
4. What steps does it intend to take to check on the actual effects produced by the rules on exempting contributions from tax?

(¹) OJ L 209, 24.7.1992, p. 1.

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission

(4 June 1997)

Pursuant to Article 36 of Council Directive 92/50/EEC of 18 June 1992 relating to the coordination of procedures for the award of public service contracts, the contracting authority can award a contract not merely on the basis of the lowest price, but also on the basis of the economically most advantageous tender, whereby various aspects such as quality, technical merit, aesthetic and functional characteristics, technical assistance and the delivery date can be taken into account. This Article was transposed into national legislation by Article 23(1) and (2) of Legislative Decree No 157 of 17 March 1995.

1. Article 37 of the aforementioned Directive does not allow tenders deemed to be abnormally low to be excluded on the basis of an automatic (mathematical) criterion. Provision must be made for an adversarial procedure with a view to verifying the constituent elements of the tender before deciding to reject it, the aim being to avoid discrimination between companies. The contracting authority must therefore ensure that it has instruments enabling it correctly to assess the explanations provided by tenderers when verifying tenders which appear to be abnormally low.
2. Article 29 of Directive 92/50/EEC lists the cases where service providers may be excluded from participation in a contract, whereas Articles 31 and 32 specify the selection criteria applied on the basis of financial and economic standing and technical capabilities. Nowhere is it stated that a company can be excluded because it has never previously provided services to the contracting authority. An exclusion clause of that type would not merely be contrary to the aforementioned provisions, it would also fall foul of the general prohibition on discrimination on the grounds of nationality enshrined in Article 7 of the EC Treaty and freedom to provide services as provided for in Articles 59 et seq. of the Treaty.
3. The Commission takes the view that the current legislative framework is sufficient to guarantee equal conditions for companies taking part in public procurement procedures. Equal conditions are guaranteed by the Articles of the EC Treaty concerning free movement of goods and freedom to provide services and by the public procurement Directives, which clarify these Articles and guarantee, as the Court of Justice has often noted, the effectiveness of rights vested in individuals by the aforementioned provisions. Apart from the principle of equal treatment, the other principles laid down by the Court of Justice also apply, such as the principle of publication and transparency of procurement notices and all the conditions governing participation, the principle of recognition of applicants' qualifications and skills and the principle of proportionality. Some problems tend to concern transposal of Community rules into national legislation by the Member States and the practical implementation of these rules by the contracting authority.
4. The Commission would ask the Honourable Member to be more specific as regards the last question.

(98/C 21/120)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1332/97

by Gerhard Botz (PSE) to the Commission

(21 April 1997)

Subject: Town-twinning schemes

What is the total amount of funding from different EU programmes provided annually to promote social ties within the EU or with non-member countries (youth exchange schemes, town-twinning schemes, sporting and cultural activities, etc.)?

Can the Commission provide a detailed breakdown of the commitment and payment appropriations for such activities in the last three years?

What share of total spending in this area is taken by the Commission's administrative expenditure?

Answer given by Mr Santer on behalf of the Commission

(12 June 1997)

Town twinning

Since the Community town twinning programme was launched the following appropriations were allocated in the Community budget:

1990:	3	million ECU
1991:	3	million ECU
1992:	3.55	million ECU
1993:	3.18	million ECU
1994:	3.2	million ECU
1995:	3.5	million ECU
1996:	7.5	million ECU
1997:	7.5	million ECU

Each year the Commission reports to the budgetary authority on the management of the appropriations. The 1995 report was sent to Parliament on 24 July 1996. The 1996 report is in preparation and will be sent to Parliament as soon as it is finalized. The administrative costs associated with the programme are included in the Commission's administrative budget.

Cultural events

All the programmes and pilot projects developed by the Community in the context of its cultural action seek to promote cooperation and partnership within the Community and with non-Community countries. In the last three years the following amounts were allocated from the Community budget for these programmes and projects:

(million ECU)

	1995	1996	1997
Raphael (cultural heritage)	8.85	10	10.6
Kaleidoscope (promotion of creation)	7.25	7.5	8.55
Books and reading	1.35	2.5	2.78
Cooperation with non-member countries	1.95	6	6
TOTAL	19.40	26	27.93

Community expenditure is implemented in accordance with Parliament's comments and is subject to audit by the Court of Auditors. On 30 April each year, the Commission prepares the Revenue and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet for the previous financial year and presents it to Parliament at the beginning of May.

In addition, press releases listing the beneficiaries and amounts allocated to selected projects in the context of each programme or action are published each year. The following are the references:

— Cultural heritage

- 1995 IP/95/708, 7.7.1996
- 1996 Memo/96/99, 22.10.1996
- 1997 scheduled for October 1997

— Kaleidoscope (promotion of creation)

- 1995 IP/95/481, 15.5.1995; IP/95/764, 17.17.1995 (new Member States) (pilot project)
- 1996 IP/96/961, 28.10.1996 (Community programme)
- 1997 due out shortly

— Books and reading (Ariane)

- 1995 IP/95/980, 15.9.1995 (pilot project to assist translation of contemporary literary works)
- 1996 IP/96/1057, 21.11.1996 (including the pilot project to support projects to promote books and reading in Europe)

1997 scheduled for the end of September 1997 (action preparing for implementation of the support programme for books and reading, including through the Ariane translation).

The administrative costs are included in Volume IV of the above report in summary tables comparing expenditure and administrative costs. Volume II of the report sets out administrative costs in detail and by budget heading.

Exchanges of young people

Under the Youth for Europe programme, the Commission finances exchange projects and other activities by youth associations. Information collected from promoters of projects indicates that projects involving several organizations from twinned towns are relatively frequent. The Commission does not have precise data regarding the number of projects and amounts involved.

(98/C 21/121)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1338/97

by André Fourçans (PPE) to the Commission

(21 April 1997)

Subject: Non-discrimination rule

It has recently been reported in the press that the Commission intends to abolish the non-discrimination rule which currently applies to cash-card payment systems. The purpose of this rule is to prevent shopkeepers who accept payment by cash card from passing on the commission which they pay to their bank to their customers and thus to avoid discrimination between various means of payment. With respect to withdrawals from cash dispensers, its purpose is to prevent the bank supplying the cash from charging commission from card holders withdrawing cash from their dispensers.

Is taxation of payment by cash card, which the Commission intends to promote even though cash payment does not permit shopkeepers to make any charges, not likely to lead consumers to use cash instead of cash cards?

Does the abolition of the non-discrimination rule not therefore pose the risk of a decline in electronic means of payment?

Will the Commission take steps to ensure that the development of electronic means of payment is not hindered?

(98/C 21/122)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1339/97

by André Fourçans (PPE) to the Commission

(21 April 1997)

Subject: Non-discrimination rule

The Commission appears to take the view that the non-discrimination rule does not guarantee competition between the various means of payment.

Does the Commission have any data showing that such competition is not exercised sufficiently at present by the possibility for consumers to choose to obtain one means of payment rather than another from their bank depending on the services offered and their cost, and by the choice available to shopkeepers to join one payment system rather than another, depending on the advantages and cost of the various systems?

(98/C 21/123)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1340/97

by André Fourçans (PPE) to the Commission

(21 April 1997)

Subject: Non-discrimination rule

On what analysis does the Commission base its view that competition between various means of payment would be more intense if the non-discrimination rule was abolished?

(98/C 21/124)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1341/97
by André Fourçans (PPE) to the Commission
(21 April 1997)

Subject: Non-discrimination rule

The unpredictability of the amount of commission which shopkeepers might charge when payment is made by cash card will make it impossible for consumers to assess how much their card will cost when they obtain it, while the institution issuing the card will similarly be unable to provide card-holders with information on the cost of using such cards.

Does the Commission nevertheless consider that its plan is likely to make charges more transparent and improve competition among different means of payment?

(98/C 21/125)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1342/97
by André Fourçans (PPE) to the Commission
(21 April 1997)

Subject: Non-discrimination rule

Would abolition of the non-discrimination rule not result in consumers paying by card being required to bear the cost of banking services which benefit shopkeepers, particularly the guarantee of payment and more rapid receipt of payment offered by the electronic processing of cash-card operations?

(98/C 21/126)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1343/97
by André Fourçans (PPE) to the Commission
(21 April 1997)

Subject: Non-discrimination rule

Given that the use and stage reached in the development of the various means of payment vary considerably between the Member States, is the uniform abolition of the non-discrimination rule throughout the European Union justified?

Would it not be more appropriate to determine whether this rule is justified in view of the specific situation in each Member State, particularly the state of competition between the various means of payment and the degree of satisfaction among users?

(98/C 21/127)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1344/97
by André Fourçans (PPE) to the Commission
(21 April 1997)

Subject: Non-discrimination rule

Will the Commission take steps to ensure that consumers are protected against possible abuse, particularly in situations where they are most vulnerable?

In particular, will residents of one Member State travelling on business or as a tourist in another Member State and purchasing articles on the way not become the classic victims of abuse?

Joint answer
to Written Questions E-1338/97, E-1339/97, E-1340/97, E-1341/97, E-1342/97,
E-1343/97 and E-1344/97
given by Mr Van Miert on behalf of the Commission
(2 June 1997)

The Commission is unable at this juncture to reply in detail to the questions put by the Honourable Member. It is currently examining in the light of Community competition law a number of card payment systems notified under Article 4 of Council Regulation No 17 of 6 February 1962⁽¹⁾. They include, for example, national systems such as the 'CB' system in France as well as international systems such as those operated by Visa International and Europay International. Some of these systems have a so-called non-discrimination rule to which the Honourable Member refers.

The Commission is assessing the validity of that rule in the light of the Community rules on competition and has entered into discussions with the parties concerned.

(¹) OJ C 13, 21.2.1962.

(98/C 21/128)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1346/97

by Caroline Jackson (PPE) to the Commission

(21 April 1997)

Subject: Office for harmonization in the Internal Market

1. How many people, at what grade, are employed in the OHIM Alicante Office?
2. Who is the director of the office?
3. What is the purpose of the office, and to which directorate or Commissioner does it report in the Commission?
4. Are annual reports on the work of the office sent to the European Parliament, and to national parliaments?

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission

(2 June 1997)

1. On 25 April 1997, the Office for harmonization in the internal market (trade marks and designs) employed a total staff of 192 (including temporary agents). 67 are A grades, 45 are B grades, 77 are C grades, and 3 are D grades.
2. The president of the Office is Mr Jean-Claude Combaldieu, a former president of the French patent office (INPI). Mr Combaldieu was appointed as the first president of the Office following a decision of the Council in 1994.
3. The Office was established by Council Regulation (EC) No 40/94 of 20 December 1993 on the Community trade mark (¹). It is charged with the handling of applications for the registration of Community trade marks and any subsequent acts with regard to the maintenance or cancellation of registered Community trade marks.

The office is an independant Community agency. It is run by a board consisting of a representative of each Member State, and a representative of the Commission. The Commission representative is a deputy director general of DG XV (internal market and financial services).

4. Pursuant to Article 137 of Regulation No 40/94, accounts of the Office's total revenue and expenditure for the preceding financial year are sent to the Parliament, the Court of auditors and the Commission each year, not later than 31 March. According to the same provision, these accounts are also transmitted to the budget committee of the Office, which is composed of representatives of the Member States and the Commission.

(¹) OJ L 11, 14.1.1994.

(98/C 21/129)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1359/97

by Wolfgang Kreissl-Dörfler (V) to the Commission

(21 April 1997)

Subject: Full Cost Rate system ('kostendeckende Vergütung') for renewable energy

On 4 July 1996 the European Parliament called on the Commission to analyse experience with the Full Cost Rate system for renewable energy and to propose Member States' rules.

The Japanese Government is planning to instal 400 MW of photovoltaic energy capacity by 2000, rising to 4600 MW by 2010.

1. What findings has the Commission made about the Full Cost Rate system?
2. How does it evaluate those findings?
3. Will they be incorporated into the White Paper on renewable energy?
4. What strategy will the Commission adopt in reaction to the Japanese and industrial challenge, so as to maintain photovoltaic production in Europe?

Answer given by Mr Papoutsis on behalf of the Commission

(20 June 1997)

1. The Commission recently adopted a green paper entitled 'Energy for the future; renewable sources of energy, green paper for a Community strategy' ⁽¹⁾. The main objective of this paper is to provide a sound basis for a wide debate on the future role of renewable sources of energy in the Community. On the basis of the conclusions which can be drawn from the debate the Commission intends to present a white paper and an action plan later in 1997.

With the green paper the Commission provided an analysis of the various obstacles faced by renewable sources of energy in the Community, including the obstacles related to the cost of renewable sources of energy compared to conventional sources.

2. The Commission is aware that grid-connection of renewable sources of energy is a complex issue that needs careful consideration. The complexity, in particular, arises from the fact that the various renewable energy technologies are characterised by varying technological and competitive maturity as well as the fact that local conditions (geographical, climatic and economic) vary considerably throughout the various regions of the Community.

3. In the framework of the white paper and the action plan the Commission intends to present a comprehensive strategy for the promotion of renewable sources of energy addressing all major obstacles which need dismantling to promote a more wide-spread use of renewable sources of energy.

4. A recent study undertaken for the Commission in the framework of the Altener programme shows that there is scope for a considerable increase in installed photovoltaic (PV) capacity in Europe, although it would be difficult for Europe, even under very strict policy assumptions, to reach a target matching that set by the Japanese government.

The Commission accepts that there is a big challenge for European industry to maintain and if possible improve its position in the world PV market. In the Commission's view, this challenge can only be successfully taken up by creating a growing home market and by continuing and strengthening the efforts undertaken in the framework of both European and national research and technological development (RTD) programmes. This issue will be fully addressed in the forthcoming white paper and action plan.

⁽¹⁾ COM(96) 576 final.

(98/C 21/130)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1368/97

by Joaquín Sisó Cruellas (PPE) to the Commission

(21 April 1997)

Subject: The programme 'New sources of employment'

Out of more than 340 projects submitted for the European Union's 'New sources of employment' programme the European Commission's Directorate-General XVI — Regional Policy and Cohesion — has ratified a total of 42, ten of which are Spanish.

Can the Commission give details of these ten projects, summarizing their content and specifying the amount of Community participation in them?

Answer given by Mrs Wulf-Mathies on behalf of the Commission*(3 June 1997)*

Under the programme 'New sources of employment' pursuant to Article 10 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 4254/88 of 19 December 1988, laying down provisions for implementing Regulation (EEC) No 2052/88 as regards the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), as amended ⁽¹⁾, the Commission has selected 41 projects of which 10 were indeed presented by local authorities or bodies in Spain. The ERDF contribution to these 10 projects amounts to ECU 3 981 670. Basic information and a summary for each of these projects are directly accessible on the Internet site for innovative actions under Article 10 of the ERDF at the following address: <http://www.aeidl.be/art10/>.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 193, 31.7.1993.

(98/C 21/131)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1370/97**by Daniel Varela Suanzes-Carpegna (PPE) to the Commission***(21 April 1997)*

Subject: Community imports of semi-preserves of anchovies in brine or oil

Can the Community supply information on the volume of imports of the above products and their countries of origin?

Can the Commission guarantee that the products are imported in compliance with minimum standards as regards quality and salt and moisture content and that they are cleared through customs under the correct tariff headings?

Answer given by Mrs Bonino on behalf of the Commission*(3 June 1997)*

A table with information on imports of anchovies is being sent direct to the Honourable Member and to the Secretariat of Parliament.

There are no specific Community rules on semi-preserves of anchovies. These products are covered by the relevant health and hygiene rules and the provisions governing foodstuffs in general, such as, for example, additives or contact materials. Further quality standards can, if necessary, be imposed by national rules or manufacturing standards laid down by producers and recognized under approval systems. The national authorities are responsible for monitoring compliance with all applicable standards, both by Community production and by imports from non-member countries.

The Commission is not aware of any specific problems concerning semi-preserves of anchovies.

Finally, the goods introduced into the customs territory of the Community must be declared by the importer to the customs authorities of the Member State concerned, with all the information required to identify them. The customs authorities check that the correct tariff headings have been used and that they correspond to the goods declared and presented to the customs.

(98/C 21/132)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1373/97**by Daniel Varela Suanzes-Carpegna (PPE) to the Council***(18 April 1997)*

Subject: EU-Turkey cooperation agreement: tuna preserved in oil

European economic operators and, frequently, producers of tuna preserved in oil have been complaining about the marketing of such preserves on the Community market since, they claim, these products enjoy customs tariff exemptions different from those laid down for third countries.

Those concerned say that they benefit from these exemptions although they do not comply with legislation on the origin of the raw material — tuna — which is considered to be a preserve of Turkish origin.

What agreements are there between the EU and Turkey concerning the marketing of tuna preserved in oil?

Does the Council consider that the current methods of determining origin used by Turkey for the raw material used in this product are correct? If not, what can be done to improve them?

Answer

(6 August 1997)

Imports into the Community of canned tuna from Turkey are eligible for the preferential treatment granted to fishery products under Decision 1/80 by the EC-Turkey Association Council. However, such products are subject to the rules of origin for agricultural products, including fishery products, as laid down in Decisions 4/72 and 1/75 by the Association Council.

Following a number of complaints the Commission sent a mission to Turkey in June 1996. It reported that tuna from third countries was to be found in cans of tuna exported from Turkey. Customs duties on canned tuna from Turkey were therefore reintroduced.

Since then, the Joint Committee of the Customs Union has considered this matter on several occasions. At Turkey's request the Commission confirmed that Decisions 4/72 and 1/75 did authorize bilateral cumulation of origin between the Community and Turkey.

In response to concern within the Community, Turkey has recently adopted administrative measures aimed at guaranteeing the origin of canned tuna, but these have yet to be jointly examined by the Commission and the Turkish side. The Council will await the results of this examination before stating its position.

(98/C 21/133)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1377/97

by Bartho Pronk (PPE) to the Commission

(21 April 1997)

Subject: Surveillance of EU citizens in the Member States

EU citizens residing in another Member State are required to register in that state. Registration can be with the civil authorities or with the police.

1. What registration procedures are applied in the different Member States?
2. If the registration procedure is with a department of the police might not this entail discrimination by comparison with the state's own nationals if the latter register with a civil authority?
3. Will the Commission draw its own conclusions on the basis of its answers to questions (1) and (2) above?

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission

(16 June 1997)

One of the differences between a citizen of the Union who is a national of the Member State in which he/she resides and a citizen of the Union who is not a national of the Member State in which he/she resides is that the latter must be issued with a residence permit in accordance with secondary Community law. The practical procedures for the issue of such permits are determined by each Member State in accordance with its own administrative structure. It is not contrary to Community law for the authority which issues identity cards or passport to the Member State's own nationals to be different from that which issues residence permits to other citizens of the Union.

(98/C 21/134)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1379/97

by David Thomas (PSE) to the Commission

(22 April 1997)

Subject: Import levels of soft fruits from the CEECs

Can the Commission confirm the level of imports of soft fruits, and in particular blackcurrants from the CEECs over the last few years?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission*(29 May 1997)*

The Commission informs the Honourable Member that during the last six years, the total imports of fresh and frozen soft fruit originating in Central and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Czech Republic and Slovakia) evolved as follows (Community of 12 for 1992, 1993, 1994, Community of 15 for 1995, 1996 — the data for 1996 are not final):

1992:	192,729 tonnes
1993:	156,487 tonnes
1994:	115,117 tonnes
1995:	146,208 tonnes
1996:	160,063 tonnes

For blackcurrants the data are as follows:

	fresh blackcurrants	frozen blackcurrants
1992:	11,857 tonnes	24,138 tonnes
1993:	3,856 tonnes	17,317 tonnes
1994:	3,389 tonnes	17,727 tonnes
1995:	13,924 tonnes	15,918 tonnes
1996:	12,503 tonnes	15,785 tonnes

(98/C 21/135)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1391/97**by Nikitas Kaklamanis (UPE) to the Commission***(22 April 1997)*

Subject: Heavy vehicles with Community or other number plates

The Greek transport sector is protesting vociferously at the fact that heavy vehicles with Community or other number plates are undertaking haulage work at very low freight charges within Greece, without being subject to any audit controls by the Greek authorities, or any verification whether they have paid road charges or VAT.

This situation obviously creates unfair competition for Greek heavy vehicles.

Will the Commission say whether it is aware of this matter, whether it has been officially notified of this by the Greek authorities and what it intends to do to restore fair competition in the road haulage sector in Greece?

Answer given by Mr Kinnock on behalf of the Commission*(12 June 1997)*

Internal transport within Greece by non-Greek Community hauliers (cabotage) is subject to Council Regulation No 3118/93⁽¹⁾. For 1997, there are some 70 000 cabotage authorizations (each valid for 2 months) available to Community hauliers to carry out cabotage in any other Member State. From the most recent information available (1995), only 0.5% of all the cabotage performed in the 15 Member States, as measured in tonne-kilometres, was actually carried out in Greece. Further, in Greece, these cabotage movements accounted in 1995 for only 0,07% of national transport for hire or reward, measured in tonne-kilometres.

Following Article 6 (1) (a) and (e) of Council Regulation No 3118/93, non-Greek hauliers from other Member States carrying out cabotage in Greece should respect the rules for rates and conditions and VAT as laid down for Greek hauliers for national transport. It is up to the Greek authorities to monitor compliance with the Greek rules for rates and conditions. However, given the low penetration rates of cabotage in Greece, the Commission doubts whether the freight rates charged by non-Greek hauliers would have any appreciable influence on the freight rates obtained by Greek hauliers.

The Commission has not been informed of cabotage operations being carried out in Greece by hauliers from third countries. The Commission has not been officially notified by the Greek authorities concerning the matter raised by the Honourable Member.

(¹) OJ L 279, 12.11.1993.

(98/C 21/136)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1393/97

by Nikitas Kaklamanis (UPE) to the Commission

(22 April 1997)

Subject: Consumer taxes in the European Union

In the present EU there are clear differences between the consumer taxes in fifteen Member States of the European Union, despite the fact that the Single Market has been established for some years.

Certain EU Member States, which are already at a disadvantage owing to their remoteness from the principal markets of Central Europe and the higher transport costs this entails, also have to contend with higher taxation: both these factors increase prices.

Will the Commission say whether it intends to take immediate action — and if so how — to ensure the full harmonization of consumer taxes within the European Union in order to prevent some Member States suffering a competitive disadvantage compared with the rest, thereby avoiding distortions in intra-Community trade?

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission

(10 June 1997)

The Commission proposed harmonised rates of excise duty on mineral oils, alcohols and tobacco products in 1987. However, these proposals were not accepted by the Council, which ultimately adopted in 1992 a system based on minimum rates. Under this system, the Member States are free to set their rates of excise duty at any level, as long as it is not below the agreed minimum.

Those minimum rates fall to be reviewed every two years and, where appropriate, the Commission may make proposals to amend them. Factors relevant to the reviews include the proper functioning of the internal market, the real value of the duty rates and the wider objectives of the Treaty. Consequently, the concerns raised by the Honourable Member would fall to be considered in the course of the reviews.

(98/C 21/137)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1406/97

by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission

(22 April 1997)

Subject: Trade in embryos, gametes and genetic material

Cloning experiments as well as trade in embryos, gametes and genetic material are being conducted today in Europe, and throughout the world, totally unregulated.. This proves that we are now facing scientific boundaries that have certainly never been crossed before and that tackling and that resolving bioethical issues has become a matter of urgency.

Will the Commission establish a scientific committee to initiate the debate about cloning? And will it also present an urgent directive banning the trade in embryos — albeit with appropriate scientifically justified exceptions — as well as paid surrogate motherhood — restricting it solely to cases of proven, objective infertility, subject to the necessary guarantees that those concerned must provide.

Answer given by Mr Santer on behalf of the Commission*(30 June 1997)*

The Commission is paying close attention to the ethical implications of cloning. The Group of Advisers on the Ethical Implications of Biotechnology, set up by the Commission in 1991, delivered its opinion on the matter on 28 May 1997. The text is being sent directly to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's Secretariat.

The Commission is examining the recommendations in that opinion in order to identify the areas for which it would be responsible and in which Community action could be envisaged. In this context special attention is being given to the legal protection of biotechnological inventions (a draft directive on this matter is under discussion in Parliament) and to the proposal for a fifth framework programme on research and development.

(98/C 21/138)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1416/97**by Nikitas Kaklamanis (UPE) to the Commission***(23 April 1997)**Subject:* EU funding for the ECMI

In response to my question of 13 January 1997 to the Commission (E-0105/97) ⁽¹⁾ on the activities of the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI), Commissioner Wulf-Mathies stated on 17.3.1997 that the Commission 'is collecting the information it needs to answer the question'.

However, I have also received an information file from the head of the ECMI, Mr Stefan Troebst, answering the questions I had raised. This Centre has particularly 'distinguished itself' through its attempt to slander a Member State of the European Union, namely Greece, by making indulgent use of information of dubious authenticity to discover 'bogus' minorities in many countries and to raise questions which have the potential to trigger conflicts in many parts of Europe. This is an exceptionally serious matter, especially since the information file sent to me by Mr Troebst mentions that the ECMI has received funding of ECU 641 000 under the INTERREG II programme and that provision has been made for representatives of the EU, the Council of Europe and the OSCE to sit on its governing council.

Given that the curious activities of the ECMI can seriously tarnish the image of the European Union, will the Commission explain its official position regarding this centre, given that it appears to be financing it, and that two Member States of the European Union (Denmark and Germany) are also contributing ECU 575 000 per year to it, thus turning against their other EU partners?

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 186, 18.6.1997, p. 226.

Answer given by Mrs Wulf-Mathies on behalf of the Commission*(27 June 1997)*

The Commission has up to now not made a financial contribution to the European Centre for minority issues but it is examining the demands of the two Member States for Interreg II support for the project.

It is not for the Commission to comment on the statements attributed to the director of the centre.

(98/C 21/139)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1427/97**by Ernesto Caccavale (UPE) to the Commission***(23 April 1997)**Subject:* Capodichino Airport (Naples): Infringement of Community rules on the awarding of contracts.

Recent press reports have revealed that, under a private agreement with the Mayor of Naples and the President of the Province of Naples, the British Airports Authority is to be awarded a contract for the administration of the Naples Capodichino International Airport.

If this proves to be the case, the contract must be considered invalid since it infringes both Community rules on the awarding of public service contracts and international provisions, including GATT rules, which, in accordance with the basic principles of transparency laid down in the Treaties, require:

- compulsory issuing of international invitations to tender;
- publication thereof in the Official Journal of the European Communities ('S' series);
- strict rules governing any invitations to tender carried out by private agreement.

Will the Commission investigate the conduct of the Naples City and Provincial authorities so as to establish whether any unlawful action occurred?

Will the Commission lodge a complaint with GATT in this connection?

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission

(11 June 1997)

The Honourable Member does not specify whether the contract by which the operation of Capodichino airport was entrusted to British Airport Authority (BAA) takes the form of a services concession contract, i.e. a contract for which at least part of the remuneration to BAA consists of the right to exploit the airport at its own economic risk, for instance by operating shops or selling the right to do so, or of a 'normal' service contract, in which BAA is fully paid by the contracting authority for the services rendered.

There is, however, sufficient information to conclude that the absence of publication of a notice calling for competition in the supplement to the Official journal does not infringe the directives on public procurement.

In fact, if the contract in question takes the form of a service concession contract, then it does not fall within the scope of either Council Directive 92/50/EEC of 18 June 1992 relating to the coordination of procedures for the award of public service contracts ⁽¹⁾ or Council Directive 93/38/EEC of 14 June 1993 coordinating the procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and telecommunications sectors ⁽²⁾.

If, on the other hand, the contract takes the form of a 'normal' service contract, then it falls under category 20 ('Supporting and auxiliary transport services', specially CPC number 7461 'Airport operation services') in Annex I B of Directive 92/50/EEC or Annex XVI B of Directive 93/38/EEC. In both cases this entails that the award procedure is subject to two obligations only, namely the obligation to apply the provisions on technical specifications and to inform the Commission of the fact that a contract has been awarded, adding whether this notice on the award of the contract may or may not be published. There is, however, no obligation whatsoever to publish a tender notice or any other notice used as a means of calling for competition.

This issue is an internal Community matter which can be adequately dealt with under Community law. It is not therefore necessary, or indeed appropriate, to involve the World trade organisation.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 209, 24.7.1992.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 199, 9.8.1993.

(98/C 21/140)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1434/97

by Freddy Blak (PSE) to the Commission

(23 April 1997)

Subject: Misuse of trademark legislation in EU countries

Within the last three to four years, wily businessmen in the EU have begun to exploit the trademark legislation in EU countries in order to pressurize small firms into paying copyright royalties. What happens is that they acquire for a modest amount the right to use e.g., a specific name, expression or combination of words, signs or figures. They then claim copyright to the commercial use of such terms — which are often place names that are considered by most people to be common property — and levy royalties on small businessmen who have in good faith chosen to use these terms to market their business. Should these small firms refuse to pay, a law suit is simply taken out against them, resulting in additional costs in legal fees and hence an increased risk of bankruptcy.

A particularly serious example of this kind of misuse of the legal concept of a trademark is the 'Route 66' case in the Netherlands which is close to developing into a diplomatic crisis with the USA. The point at issue here is the use by a number of small companies of the name of a famous highway in the USA — Route 66 — as part of the designation of their products (restaurants, car repair centres, travel agencies, perfumes, etc.). Legal action brought by the Dutch owner of the copyright to the term 'Route 66', Mr Groeneveld, has in this case resulted in lengthy legal proceedings, contradictory court rulings, bankruptcies and company closures. Similar cases have since arisen in Denmark ('McDonalds versus McAllan' and the latest case concerning the purchase of the rights to Web domain names on the Internet), in the Netherlands (the copyright to the term 'EURO') and Germany (the purchase by a Hamburg firm of the right to use up to 90 well-known German names such as Goethe, Schiller, Wagner, etc.).

Is the Commission aware of this state of affairs and what is its position on the specific cases? In view of the distortion of the concept of trademark which these wily new 'middlemen' have chosen to exploit at the expense of small entrepreneurs in the EU, is it planning to make proposals for amending the EU legislation in this area that is so crucial for employment?

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission

(7 July 1997)

Trade marks constitute valuable assets for undertakings, since they serve to distinguish their goods and services from those of their competitors. Trade marks have developed into important bearers of goodwill for their proprietors, who usually invest significantly in the development and advertising of trade marks as well as in the quality and reputation of the goods and services concerned. For these reasons legal systems providing for the protection of trade marks have existed for at least a century. They are fully justified and not subject to fundamental disputes.

The laws of the Member States on trade marks have been harmonized on the basis of First Council Directive 89/104/EEC of 21 December 1988 to approximate the laws of the Member States relating to trade marks⁽¹⁾. This constitutes one of the most modern instruments of trade mark law and embodies principles which have since developed into model provisions for use at international level (such as in the Agreement on trade related aspects of intellectual property (TRIPS) concluded within the framework of the World Trade Organization).

According to these principles, any sign which is capable of distinguishing the goods or services of one undertaking from those of other undertakings and which is capable of being represented graphically is in principle capable of registration as a protected trade mark. Registration may, however, be refused on certain grounds, which are exhaustively listed in Articles 3 and 4 of the Directive. According to Article 4, holders of earlier rights may oppose the registration of new marks, whereas Article 3 contains certain general exceptions to the registrability of trade marks, which include the exclusion of signs which are descriptive, misleading or devoid of any distinctive character.

The cases cited by the Honourable Member are not the consequences of inadequate legislation in the field of trade marks, but may constitute examples of using trade marks for questionable purposes. A general principle, however, of trade mark law is that the person who has first filed a trade mark application acquires the exclusive right to use that mark after its registration. For this reason it is extremely important that users of trade marks, be they small, medium sized or large firms, protect their trade marks before others complicate business by abusive filings of these trade marks in their own name.

Depending on the specific circumstances of a case, the use of an exclusive right to a trade mark, as explained by the Honourable Member, may constitute a questionable use of a trade mark system. The Commission has no detailed information on the cases to which the Honourable Member refers, which makes it difficult to judge whether they constitute a misuse of Community trade mark legislation.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that under trade mark law, the appreciation of whether or not a sign is capable for trade mark protection, is in principle based upon objective criteria, such as those of distinctiveness and visibility. Thus, a judgment of whether a sign can benefit from trade mark protection cannot in principle be based upon subjective criteria such as whether or not the applicant for protection has a bona fide intention with regard to the use of the trade mark. However, Article 3(2)(d) of the Directive contains a provision which the Member States may incorporate in their national law (optional), according to which a trade mark may be refused registration or may be invalidated if the application for its registration was made in bad faith. The interpretation of the concept of bad faith is left to the Member States.

Whereas the concept of bad faith may play a role in the appreciation of the validity of a given trade mark, it is not an element which is included in the conditions for enforcing rights relating to a valid trade mark. Thus, according to trade mark standards, the possibility to enforce a right relating to a given trade mark is in principle not limited where such rights are enforced in bad faith.

The Commission recognizes that recently and increasingly, problems have arisen from the use of trade marks within the framework of the Internet. However, these cases concern a different problem, namely the abuse by third parties of existing and protected trade marks as domain names on the Internet. The Commission is currently examining the problem within the framework of the Community as well as at the international level.

(¹) OJ L 40, 11.2.1989.

(98/C 21/141)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1439/97

by Katerina Daskalaki (UPE) to the Commission

(23 April 1997)

Subject: Destruction of ancient Greek monuments in Youthrotos

Youthrotos, a unique archaeological site (situated outside Sarande) in Albania and was entered by Unesco in 1992 on the World Cultural Heritage List, is now unprotected and at the mercy of vandals.

Can the Commission launch or provide backing for a rescue mission to Albania in order to protect at least those remaining treasures which form part of Europe's cultural heritage?

Answer given by Mr Oreja on behalf of the Commission

(13 June 1997)

As the Honourable Member is aware, through its reply to the oral question H-350/97 by Mr Alavanos during question time at Parliament's May 1997 part-session (¹) the Commission has already expressed its concern and willingness to consider measures through the PHARE programme in favour of the protection of the archaeological site at Buthrotum. These measures, however, can not be considered and undertaken in the immediate future due to the conditions still prevailing in that part of the country. In its contacts with the new government of reconciliation, the Commission intends to raise this issue and the appropriate measures to be undertaken.

Furthermore, and once the conditions allow, the Commission could also consider support for a mission of experts for an evaluation of the situation as well as the implementation of emergency measures to protect this important archaeological site from further damage and deterioration. This mission and measures could be carried out in the framework of crossborder cooperation (Greece/Albania/Italy) in consultation and close cooperation with the Albanian authorities and under the auspices of an international organisation such as the International council of monuments and sites (ICOMOS).

(¹) Debates of the Parliament (May 1997).

(98/C 21/142)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1446/97

by Nikitas Kaklamanis (UPE) to the Commission

(28 April 1997)

Subject: Copyright in the EU

Many artists across Europe are calling for a uniform copyright law to enable the heirs of deceased artists to collect royalties in the EU on their works.

What is the Commission's position on this issue and does it believe that harmonization would benefit artists throughout the EU?

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission*(2 July 1997)*

The question by the Honourable Member refers to the problem of the transmission of property rights by authors and other rightholders to their heirs. These matters are, as a general rule, left to the Member States to deal with under their civil law.

However, the Commission would point out that the term of protection of copyright and certain related rights has already been harmonised at Community level by Council Directive 93/98/EEC of 29 October 1993 ⁽¹⁾. The Directive establishes a uniform term of protection at Community level for all works and other protected objects which is fixed at 70 years after the death of the author. The rights of performers expire 50 years after the date of the performance. However, the Directive does not harmonise any aspect of succession to rights, these continuing to be governed by national law.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 290, 24.11.1993.

(98/C 21/143)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1460/97**by James Moorhouse (PPE) to the Council***(5 May 1997)*

Subject: Detention of EU citizens in Saudi-Arabian prisons

How many EU citizens have been arrested and detained in Saudi Arabia in each of the years 1990 to 1996 inclusive, and in 1997 so far? In each year, how many of those persons have complained to their respective Ambassador in Saudi Arabia about ill treatment while they were in custody?

Answer*(6 August 1997)*

Figures about EU citizens prisoners in third countries are given by Member States on a voluntary basis and are therefore not complete. No historical record of these figures is kept.

At this moment the Council is aware of 12 EU citizens prisoners in Saudi Arabia. No complaints about prison conditions in Saudi Arabia have reached the Council.

(98/C 21/144)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1465/97**by Glyn Ford (PSE) to the Council***(30 April 1997)*

Subject: Ratification of 'third pillar' agreements

According to a report in 'The Guardian' of Monday, 24 March, p. 10, 'A joint EU customs/police surveillance operation in the Balkans to monitor drug-trafficking was 'agreed' at a meeting of EU Fisheries Ministers last December'.

Is the Council aware of this report? Is this report correct?

If this report is correct, does the Council really feel it appropriate that decisions which should be taken by Interior Ministry Council are taken in secret by Fisheries Ministers, who will not be aware of all the issues?

Answer*(6 August 1997)*

1. Although the Council meets in different formations, there is only one Council of the European Union. Under the Council's rules of procedure ⁽¹⁾ the agenda for a Council meeting is divided into Part A and Part B. Items for which approval of the Council is possible without discussion are included in Part A.
2. The Honourable Member refers to the joint action which the Council adopted, on the basis of Article K.3 of the Treaty on European Union, concerning the participation of the Member States of the European Union in the strategic operation planned by the Customs Cooperation Council (World Customs Organisation) to combat drug smuggling on the Balkan route. That joint action was included in Part A of the agenda for the Council meeting on 20 December 1996.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 304, 10.12.1993, p. 1, and L 31, 10.2.1995, p. 14.

(98/C 21/145)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1466/97**by Giovanni Burtone (PPE) to the Commission***(30 April 1997)*

Subject: Agreements with Mediterranean non-member countries

In March 1996 I called for the blocking of a trade agreement with Morocco, which would inevitably have led to a crisis in the agricultural sector and, in particular, in the Sicilian citrus fruit sector.

Member States are now going ahead with ratification of such agreements with Mediterranean non-member countries, giving rise to discontent among and opposition from farmers.

Has the Commission considered the impact and serious consequences of such agreements (especially with Morocco) on EU regions (in particular, Sicily), which have traditionally relied on such sectors of production and which are now faced with competition that is distorted by the lower labour costs in the Mediterranean non-member countries in question?

If the trade agreements with Mediterranean non-member countries are not suspended, does the Commission intend to introduce a policy of aid to producers who suffer as a result of unfair competition? If so, on the basis of what criteria?

Answer given by M. Fischler on behalf of the Commission*(9 June 1997)*

The Commission has held negotiations for new Euro-Mediterranean agreements with certain countries following the specific mandates adopted by the Council. The mandates include the guidelines for the negotiations on agricultural concessions. In the course of the negotiations, the historical trade flows and the situation of the internal market have been carefully examined by the Commission before proposing new concessions. It should be noted that the concessions on citrus fruits are granted within the limits of tariff quotas and that the preferential imports are subject to entry prices (entry prices have been reduced for Moroccan and Israeli oranges). The Commission believes that the concessions agreed so far with the Mediterranean countries (Morocco, Israel, Tunisia and the Palestinian authority) will permit the continuation of the historical trade flows but should not unduly affect Community imports of citrus fruits in general.

The market organisation for fruit and vegetables has been recently reformed. It foresees various means of support for Community fruit and vegetable farmers, mainly through the producers' organisations. This reform is being implemented at present. The Commission believes that such a regime will enhance competition in the fruit and vegetable sector and that this sector will also be capable of facing competition from imported products.

(98/C 21/146)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1485/97**by Mihail Papayannakis (GUE/NGL) to the Commission***(30 April 1997)**Subject:* Innovative pharmaceutical products

In reply to Question E-2093/95 ⁽¹⁾, Commissioner Bangemann stated that the committee set up under Directive 89/105/EEC ⁽²⁾ had instructed a working party to investigate the question of unusually high prices for innovative products and to clarify certain concepts such as 'innovative pharmaceutical products' and 'excessive prices'.

Has the working party given its opinion on the above matters? If so, what is the definition of 'innovative pharmaceutical products' and of 'excessive prices'?

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 311, 22.11.1995, p. 33.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 40, 11.2.1989, p. 8.

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission*(11 June 1997)*

The committee set up under Directive 89/105/EEC ⁽¹⁾ (the transparency committee) instructed a working party to examine the question of excessive prices of innovative medicines. That working party has met three times and has considered a paper produced by the Danish competition authorities about the pricing and reimbursement of a particular product within the Community. It has been possible to use data collected over a period of time to note the impact of different public health policies, and the effect of currency movements on the use of innovative medicines. During the working party discussions, it has been clear that the subject cannot easily be separated from the broader question of developing pricing and reimbursement strategies for all pharmaceutical products which reconcile objectives in health and industrial policy with progress towards a single European market in the pharmaceutical sector. It has also been clear that the definition of terms such as 'innovative' and 'excessive prices' is closely linked to approaches taken to these broader issues.

Accordingly discussion has been subsumed for the time being within the process launched at the round table in Frankfurt in December 1996. Informal working parties involving representatives of industry as well as the governments of Member States are studying possible solutions to the full range of issues, including the pricing of innovative products. The transparency committee is involved in taking forward the matter at all stages, and will decide on the future of the working party following the second round table, to be held in December 1997.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 40, 11.2.1989.

(98/C 21/147)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1489/97**by Salvador Garriga Polledo (PPE) to the Council***(30 April 1997)**Subject:* Structural funds

Is it possible under the Treaty on European Union that structural funds might be used to finance specific operations in non-Union countries?

If so, what restrictions apply to such financing?

Answer*(6 August 1997)*

As the Honourable Member will probably know, the Treaty establishing the European Community provides that the Structural Funds shall support the Community's action to strengthen its economic and social cohesion.

The tasks of the funds relating to the Community internally are specified in various Articles of the Treaty.

The Structural Funds do, however, participate in the financing of cross-border and inter-regional cooperation programmes with third countries in conjunction with other financial instruments such as PHARE, MEDA and TACIS.

(98/C 21/148)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1492/97

by Raimo Ilaskivi (PPE) to the Commission

(30 April 1997)

Subject: Dealing with changing economic circumstances under EMU

Against the current background of high unemployment in many countries, strict compliance with the convergence criteria for EMU can easily reduce virtually to zero the scope for national measures to boost the economy. The single currency will make exchange rate policies a thing of the past, interest rate policies will be laid down by the joint central bank: these, and many other things, will be facts of life once the third stage of EMU has come into force. The rules laying down the maximum percentages for the budget deficit and public debt and the fines which will be imposed should they be exceeded will make an active budget policy to deal with exceptional national circumstances or requirements impossible.

What measures do the Commission and, at the latter's suggestion, the Council intend to take to ensure that budget deficits and public debts are considered in the light of all the prevailing circumstances and not just on the basis of the situation at a given moment, since only in this way can the Member States be guaranteed at least some scope to deal with changing economic circumstances and, in particular, fight unemployment? Only budget policy measures will be possible.

Answer given by Mr de Silguy on behalf of the Commission

(12 June 1997)

The Commission is aware of the importance of taking into account all relevant information, including the phase of the business cycle, when assessing a Member State's budgetary performance. For this reason, the Treaty and the stability and growth pact allow a public deficit of 3% of gross domestic product or, in case of exceptional and temporary circumstances such as a severe recession, an even higher deficit. Provided that in normal circumstances a Member State aims at balanced public finances, this will provide an ample buffer for recession and allow for countercyclical budgetary policies. Hence, the Commission sees no conflict between active budgetary policies and the Treaty's requirement of sound public finances.

(98/C 21/149)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1495/97

by Antoine-François Bernardini (PSE) to the Commission

(30 April 1997)

Subject: Fares on the Thalys

A problem has arisen with regard to the Thalys rail service between Paris and Brussels.

Large families have not been able to obtain special reductions on Thalys since the service started on 2 June 1996. They are therefore forced to purchase tickets which offer far less flexibility and are more expensive. For instance, the 'mini' fare is available for only 80 seats for which tickets are put on sale 60 days in advance, and the 'loisir' fare represents a 36% increase in the fare for a family with three children.

Is it to be concluded that the EEIG responsible for operating the Thalys service is exempt from public service obligations?

Does the above situation not constitute blatant discrimination and a barrier to the free movement of persons?

Answer given by Mr Kinnoek on behalf of the Commission*(10 June 1997)*

The Commission has been informed that, on the Thalys service between Paris and Bruxelles, discounts for large families are not available now. It understands the difficulties that this may cause passengers but it has to recall that such discounts, and policy on fares in general, are not a matter of Community legal competence but the responsibility of the railways themselves and of the national authorities that supervise them.

As for public services, it is the responsibility of the Member State to decide on the nature and extent of public services, while respecting Community rules, particularly on compensation for public service obligations in transport. Finally, on the basis of the information available, the Commission does not consider this a case of discrimination or an obstacle to free circulation in violation of Community principles and rules.

(98/C 21/150)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1503/97**by Pervenche Berès (PSE) to the Commission***(30 April 1997)**Subject:* MED programmes

Many of the files which had been accepted in connection with the MED programmes are currently blocked as the second phase has not been finalized.

What steps does the Commission intend to take to remedy this situation, given that, in general, the projects concerned involve small-scale entities?

Answer given by Mr Marin on behalf of the Commission*(10 June 1997)*

The Commission is currently setting up a new system of management of the programmes of decentralised co-operation in the Mediterranean region. This follows a Court of auditors report and the support given by the ministers of foreign affairs at the Euro-Mediterranean conference in Barcelona, in November 1995, to decentralised co-operation, underlining the importance attached to this form of co-operation.

The Commission is aware of the difficulties the freeze creates for some participants in the programmes for decentralised co-operation in the Mediterranean. However, a temporary freeze of the programmes was necessary in order to ensure the transparency and efficiency of the management system.

The relaunching of the Med programmes will also depend on the results of the Parliament's committee of budgetary control debate on the Fabra Vallès report, which is due to be voted in the July plenary session.

(98/C 21/151)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1516/97**by Klaus Rehder (PSE) to the Commission***(5 May 1997)**Subject:* Export refunds on the transport of animals

1. What export refunds are currently paid for live and slaughtered cattle?
2. Under what conditions may deductions be made from these refunds, and what do they then amount to?
3. Is the export refund for slaughtered cattle calculated on the basis of weight before slaughter or weight after the removal of all offal?
4. There are various calculations of the killing-out percentage (54%, 58%, etc.). Which percentage does the Commission take?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission*(19 June 1997)*

1. Export refunds for beef and live animals are fixed at least every three months and published in the Official journal. Present amounts of the export refunds for beef were fixed in Commission Regulation (EC) No 685/97 of 17 April 1997 ⁽¹⁾.
2. In the beef sector, the Commission applies a differentiated refund system. The refund varies according to the destination and the product exported. The level of the refund corresponds to the amount needed to export to the world market. Adjustments are made on the basis of relevant parameters, such as fluctuations in world market prices and the US\$ rate. Another factor is the level of demand for export licences experienced at any given level of refunds. The Commission, while careful to ensure that exports can take place, must also ensure that the quantity and financial ceilings on such exports arising out of the World trade organisation agreement are fully respected.
3. The refund is fixed for beef either on a bone-in basis such as carcase, half carcase, and quarters, or on a boneless basis. The definition of the products eligible for export refunds is set out in the export refund legislation. All carcasses produced for commercial purposes within the Community must comply with the specification laid down in Council Directive 64/433/EEC of 26 June 1964 ⁽²⁾.
4. The Commission may fix different rates of export refund for live weight and slaughter weight at the same time. However, the ratio between live weight and slaughter weight rates of refund is not necessarily constant. It may change periodically, when one or both of the rates of refund are changed. Such changes reflect altered market conditions, the variety of products involved, the different destinations and the different refund rates between male and female animals.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 101, 18.4.1997.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 121, 29.7.1964.

(98/C 21/152)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1517/97**by Klaus Lukas (NI) to the Commission***(5 May 1997)*

Subject: EU buys unprotesting 'Euro' promoters

According to reports in the media, the EU is trying to make the introduction of the Euro palatable to the European people with a massive propaganda campaign. While I in no way question the need for comprehensive objective and transparent information on the introduction of the Euro, there must be doubts about the ability of muzzled academics to provide comprehensive and objective information. It is understood that these academics have had to sign a declaration committing themselves to speak on their own behalf, but not to express any views or positions that contradict the EU Commission's views.

1. How true are these reports in the media?
2. Why is the Commission attempting to give the people one-sided information on the Euro?
3. How many talks have meanwhile been given on the basis the declarations referred to above, and by which academics?
4. What financial resources have meanwhile been spent or pledged for EU information on the Euro on the basis of this declaration?
5. Does the Commission intend to amend the pertinent rules? If so, when? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr de Silguy on behalf of the Commission*(20 June 1997)*

The Commission decided in 1996 to set up Groupeuro, which is a group of external experts, acting on a voluntary basis, who are kept informed of developments in the field of economic and monetary union (EMU) and who are bound to the Commission by a very clear mandate to take part in forums in its place where no official representative is available. The main purpose of creating Groupeuro was to stimulate debate on EMU by presenting the Commission's position whenever it is sought.

In this context, it is reasonable that the members of Groupeuro should be bound to the Commission by a code of practice. They are of course free to accept it for as long as they like or reject it. This is the first purpose of the agreement, which also regulates the refund of expenses. Groupeuro members do not receive any specific remuneration. They merely receive payment of their travelling and accommodation expenses and a flat-rate amount to compensate for the disruption to their professional obligations caused by their involvement. The agreement explicitly requires them to refuse any payments offered by third parties.

When they do not speak in the context of the agreement, the Groupeuro members are completely released from their obligations. Moreover, signing the agreement is voluntary, and members may resign at any time. It has never been the Commission's intention to restrict freedom of expression.

In the light of experience during the initial period of operation, and in order to avoid any misunderstanding, it has been decided that the text of the code of practice should be amended to make it more transparent and to avoid any false interpretation in the future. The code of practice is forwarded to the Honourable Member and to the Secretariat general of the Parliament.

As for the Commission's policy of information on the euro in general, pluralism is ensured in at least two ways.

Many symposia and conferences have been organised and financed in the last 18 months as part of the Prince information campaign at which speakers with a reserved or indeed sceptical view of EMU took part. Secondly, members of Groupeuro have participated at many conferences alongside opponents of EMU.

The members of Groupeuro are asked by organisers to present the Commission's point of view in open and pluralist debates. After all, the position of the institution which serves as guardian of the treaties has as much right as any other to be brought to the public's attention. Consequently, when Groupeuro members speak in this capacity, it is up to them to provide their audience with all necessary information on the Commission's position. Other speakers may present different opinions.

In addition, the Commission always proposes to organisers that a member of the Parliament should take part in their event.

Between September 1996 and 12. May 1997 the total number of talks given by Groupeuro members was 165. The list is forwarded direct to the Honourable Member and to the Secretariat general of the Parliament. A provisional budget of ECU 400 000 for 1997 for Groupeuro speaking engagements in the 15 Member States is foreseen.

(98/C 21/153)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1519/97**by Mary Banotti (PPE) to the Commission***(5 May 1997)*

Subject: Driving licences and insurance for epileptic people

Can the Commission inform me of the regulations regarding the issuing of driving licences to people with epilepsy throughout the Community?

It is clear that different conditions apply, thus making it extremely difficult for free movement of people with epilepsy who, having been issued a driving licence in one jurisdiction, are refused it in another.

Can the Commission also comment on insurance conditions in this context?

Answer given by Mr Kinnoek on behalf of the Commission*(26 June 1997)*

Provisions regarding the issuing and renewal of driving licences to people with epilepsy are laid down in Annex III point 12 of Council Directive 91/439/EEC ⁽¹⁾ of 29 July 1991. However, point 5 of the annex provides that Member States may set stricter standards for the issuing and renewal of driving licences.

Article 1.2 of the Directive provides that driving licences issued by Member States shall be mutually recognised. This means that someone who holds a valid licence issued by a Member State may drive throughout the Community, including on the territory of a Member State applying stricter rules.

It is for the insurance company to decide the conditions upon which it provides cover, and at what premium, taking into account all relevant factors, one of which, obviously, could be a driver's history of epilepsy.

More specifically, regarding compulsory insurance cover under motor insurance policies, Article 3.1 of Directive 72/166/EEC ⁽²⁾, as amplified by Article 1 of Directive 84/5/EEC ⁽³⁾ and Article 1 of Directive 90/232/EEC ⁽⁴⁾, provides for the introduction of civil liability insurance against property damage and physical injury to passengers in respect of vehicles normally based in a Member State's territory. This is an obligatory cover throughout each Member State. Central to this objective is the need for all Member States to have a legal requirement for motor insurance.

Nevertheless, motor insurance directives do not harmonise the liabilities which are compulsorily insured neither do they abolish all differences between national requirements, except insofar as these impede the free movement of people and vehicles within the Community.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 237, 24.8.1991.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 103, 2.5.1972.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 8, 11.1.1984.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 129, 19.5.1990.

(98/C 21/154)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1527/97**by Hiltrud Breyer (V) to the Council***(5 May 1997)*

Subject: Safety guarantees for genetically modified products

As its reply to my Written Question No E-2835/96 ⁽¹⁾ was unsatisfactory, I call on the Council, with reference to Directive 90/220/EEC ⁽²⁾ and as the marketing of genetically modified products (e.g. soya, rapeseed and chicory) has been permitted subject to certain special conditions, to give specific answers to the following questions:

1. How can the Council guarantee that imported soya is not used for cultivation or breeding in the EU in contravention of the terms of the marketing authorization?
2. How are the other restrictions to be controlled and by whom?
3. If control is to be exercised by the Member States, how will it be carried out, and who will ensure compliance with the monitoring rules?
4. Will there be reports on compliance with the rules?
5. If so, will they be published?
6. If there is no national or European control system, for what measures has the Council provided?
7. Will the Council support a moratorium on the release of such products on to the market until adequate guarantees of compliance with the rules have been introduced?

8. How can the Council's position on permitting the import of genetically modified products without health checks or environmental impact assessment in the country of origin be reconciled with its negotiating position on the contents of the proposed protocol on biological safety?

(¹) OJ C 138, 5.5.1997, p. 14.

(²) OJ L 117, 8.5.1990, p. 15.

Answer

(6 August 1997)

In addition to the reply to Question No 2835/96, it should be pointed out that:

- as regards questions 1 to 6 and as the Honourable Member is aware, it is for the Commission to check that Community legislation is implemented;
- to date the Council has not received any proposal to introduce a moratorium on releasing genetically modified organisms (GMO) onto the market;
- as the Community is a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Council evidently supports Decision 11/5 of the Conference of the Parties whereby the negotiations with a view to a Protocol on biosafety were started and which stipulates that this Protocol, which focuses specifically on transboundary movements of GMOs resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on the preservation and use of biological diversity, must contribute towards ensuring an adequate level of protection in the field of biosafety. Directive 90/220 provides that Member States must take appropriate measures to avoid adverse effects on the environment or on human health which might result from releasing GMOs onto the market and is thus aimed at attaining the same objective as the Protocol.

(98/C 21/155)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1536/97

by Hiltrud Breyer (V) to the Commission

(5 May 1997)

Subject: Phosphate ester poisoning due to the use of Tiguvon (Fenthion) manufactured by Bayer Leverkusen

The flea-repellant Tiguvon (Fenthion) manufactured by Bayer Leverkusen can be administered in different forms. Tiguvon 10 is intended for cats over 2 kg in weight. The use of Tiguvon 20 is recommended for dogs weighing between 3 and 10 kg, while dogs with a body weight of more than 10 kg should be treated with Tiguvon 20 G. People who have repeatedly treated their pets with Tiguvon (Fenthion) have suffered serious phosphate ester poisoning. As it was unable to answer my Question E-1470/96 (¹) on the same subject, I would ask the Commission to answer the following questions as a matter of urgency:

Is the use of neurotoxins on animals or living organisms permissible? Is the Commission aware that repeated application may lead to organic lesions? Can the possibility of mental changes in animals due to chronic damage be ruled out?

(¹) OJ C 345, 15.11.1996, p. 76.

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission

(1 July 1997)

Veterinary medicinal products can be used on animals, if they are authorised according to Council Directive 81/851/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to veterinary medicinal products (¹) and Council Directive 81/852/EEC on the approximation of the laws of Member States relating to analytical,

pharmacotoxicological and clinical standards and protocols in respect of the testing of veterinary medicinal products ⁽¹⁾. A product used for ectoparasitic control may have potential neurotoxic properties at certain concentrations and elevated doses. Products which may exhibit neurotoxic effects may be authorised and such effects may lead to organic lesions with subsequent behavioural changes if the product is abused. The safety of the recommended dose is to be considered in the assessment of the safety file submitted to the competent authority to support the application for market authorisation ⁽²⁾.

If no such effects are seen at the recommended dose and if the product is used as indicated on the label there should be no cause of concern. The absence of reports on serious adverse reactions indicates that this is currently the case.

⁽¹⁾ OJ 317, 6.11.1981, as amended by Council Directives 90/676/EEC OJ 373, 31.12.1990, and 93/40/EEC OJ 214, 24.8.1993.

⁽²⁾ Provision concerned.

(98/C 21/156)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1538/97
by Hiltrud Breyer (V) to the Commission
(5 May 1997)

Subject: Phosphate ester poisoning due to the use of Tiguvon (Fenthion) manufactured by Bayer Leverkusen

The flea-repellant Tiguvon (Fenthion) manufactured by Bayer Leverkusen can be administered in different forms. Tiguvon 10 is intended for cats over 2 kg in weight. The use of Tiguvon 20 is recommended for dogs weighing between 3 and 10 kg, while dogs with a body weight of more than 10 kg should be treated with Tiguvon 20 G. People who have repeatedly treated their pets with Tiguvon (Fenthion) have suffered serious phosphate ester poisoning. As it was unable to answer my Question E-1470/96 ⁽¹⁾ on the same subject, I would ask the Commission to answer the following questions as a matter of urgency:

Is the Commission aware of any research findings that reveal the extent of the danger to pet-owners, especially children, whose health may be damaged even by small quantities of toxins and who, at their young age, cannot be assumed to act responsibly?

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 345, 15.11.1996, p. 76.

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission

(23 June 1997)

Following the Honourable Member's earlier written question E-1470/96 the Commission has asked the pharmacovigilance working party of the scientific committee for the evaluation of veterinary medicinal products to report on adverse effects of the product. No adverse effects have been reported since then.

(98/C 21/157)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1546/97
by Hiltrud Breyer (V) to the Commission
(5 May 1997)

Subject: Phosphate ester poisoning due to the use of Tiguvon (Fenthion) manufactured by Bayer Leverkusen

The flea-repellant Tiguvon (Fenthion) manufactured by Bayer Leverkusen can be administered in different forms. Tiguvon 10 is intended for cats over 2 kg in weight. The use of Tiguvon 20 is recommended for dogs weighing between 3 and 10 kg, while dogs with a body weight of more than 10 kg should be treated with Tiguvon 20 G. People who have repeatedly treated their pets with Tiguvon (Fenthion) have suffered serious phosphate ester poisoning. As it was unable to answer my Question E-1470/96 ⁽¹⁾ on the same subject, I would ask the Commission to answer the following questions as a matter of urgency:

What should be done if pet-owners suffer poisoning? Who takes responsibility for chronic damage to their health? What arrangements exist for the settlement of claims? What evidence needs to be produced?

(¹) OJ C 345, 15.11.1996, p. 76.

(98/C 21/158)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1548/97
by Hiltrud Breyer (V) to the Commission

(5 May 1997)

Subject: Phosphate ester poisoning due to the use of Tiguvon (Fenthion) manufactured by Bayer Leverkusen

The flea-repellant Tiguvon (Fenthion) manufactured by Bayer Leverkusen can be administered in different forms. Tiguvon 10 is intended for cats over 2 kg in weight. The use of Tiguvon 20 is recommended for dogs weighing between 3 and 10 kg, while dogs with a body weight of more than 10 kg should be treated with Tiguvon 20 G. People who have repeatedly treated their pets with Tiguvon (Fenthion) have suffered serious phosphate ester poisoning. As it was unable to answer my Question E-1470/96 (¹) on the same subject, I would ask the Commission to answer the following questions as a matter of urgency:

When will the burden of proof at last be reversed throughout Europe where injury is suffered as a result of the marketing of these and similarly dangerous products, the dubious benefit of which bears no relation to the risk they entail?

(¹) OJ C 345, 15.11.1996, p. 76.

Joint answer
to Written Questions E-1546/97 and E-1548/97
given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission

(11 July 1997)

Community legislation on manufacturers' liability for damage caused by defective products was first introduced in 1985 (¹) and has been incorporated into national law in all the Member States except France. The enacting measure in Germany is the Produkthaftungsgesetz (Product Liability Law) of 15 December 1989, published in Bundesgesetzblatt (Federal Law Gazette) 1989 I 2198 (²). In 1995 the Commission presented to Parliament and the Council its first report on the application of the Directive (³), stating that the Directive is generally perceived as an important piece of legislation which has helped to increase awareness of product safety and to ease the burden of proof on the injured party (who no longer has to prove that the producer was at fault).

The Directive has added a system of liability without fault to the Member States' existing systems of contractual and non-contractual liability. Under the new arrangements, liability for damage caused by a defective product rests with the producer and cannot be excluded or limited because the parties so wish.

Legal proceedings may be instituted by any injured person who is able to prove the damage, the defect and the causal relationship between the two. Once an injured person has furnished proof of each of these elements, the producer may refute liability only on the basis of one of the exemptions provided for in Article 7 of the Directive (e.g. the state of scientific and technical knowledge at the time when the product was put into circulation was not such as to enable the existence of the defect to be discovered: 'development risks' (⁴)).

It should be pointed out that, under the Directive, a product is deemed to be defective when it does not provide the safety which a person is entitled to expect, taking all circumstances into account, including: the presentation of the product; the use to which it could reasonably be expected that the product would be put; the time when the product was put into circulation. The Directive covers, among other things, damage caused by death or personal injuries occurring within ten years of the product in question being put into circulation.

Community legislation does not provide for the establishment of a system to cover the risks (either a 'pool' insurance scheme or a state-funded compensation scheme).

Since it is required to present a report to Parliament and the Council every five years, the Commission will continue to monitor the Directive's application and its effects on the operation of the internal market and on consumer protection. This monitoring work will include consultation of interested parties with a view to assessing the need for changes to the Directive (as regards, for example, development risks and the financial limit of full liability).

⁽¹⁾ Council Directive 85/374/EEC of 25 July 1985 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States concerning liability for defective products (OJ L 210, 7.8.1985, p.29).

⁽²⁾ Liability for death or personal injury resulting from a pharmaceutical product intended for human use is governed by the Arzneimittelgesetz (Medicinal Products Law) of 24.8.1976.

⁽³⁾ COM(95) 617 final.

⁽⁴⁾ European Court of Justice ruling of 29.5.1997 in Case C-300/95 Commission v United Kingdom (not yet published).

(98/C 21/159)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1550/97

by Dietrich Elchlepp (PSE) to the Commission

(6 May 1997)

Subject: Bureaucratic obstacles facing foreign students from other EU Member States

There has recently been an increasing number of serious complaints about unreasonable bureaucracy involved in applying to study in another EU Member State, and about dubious treatment of foreign students in the form of delays and refusals relating to the issue of residence permits for students from other EU Member States in some university locations within the EU, all of which runs diametrically counter to freedom of movement and the ban on discrimination within the EU, as well as to the meaning and purpose of the Erasmus programme. A glaring example of refusals and delays relating to residence permits recently emerged at the University of Amiens, where 30 students from other EU countries were refused residence permits for a considerable period, with serious social consequences, and where only foreign students have been required to make special payments in halls of residence. Such incidents make all statements about wanting to promote educational and vocational mobility as part of European policy implausible for both young people and their parents.

1. What evidence is there about difficulties with the issue of residence permits to students from other EU States, and in which Member States have difficulties repeatedly occurred?
2. What steps could be taken to reduce the sometimes intolerable bureaucratic obstacles — requirements to provide evidence of insurance cover and parental income, certified and translated birth certificates, and so on — to pursuing studies abroad?
3. What steps does the Commission intend to take to prevent future cases of blatant discrimination against foreign students by local authorities?

Answer given by Mrs Cresson on behalf of the Commission

(7 July 1997)

The difficulties referred to by the Honourable Member reflect the reasons for which the Commission produced its Green Paper on the obstacles to mobility in education, training and research. The Green Paper's in-depth analysis of these obstacles has been welcomed by Mrs Todini in her excellent report unanimously adopted by Parliament on 14 May 1997.

The Commission would like to reply to the specific questions raised by the Honourable Member as follows.

1. The Commission is not aware of Erasmus students encountering problems in the form of being refused a residence permit. However, the evidence does suggest that it often takes a very long time for a residence permit to be issued. This situation is not acceptable and must be rectified through better cooperation between the institutions, the establishments concerned and the national authorities.
2. The Commission's attention has already been drawn to the administrative formalities which have to be complied with by EU citizens studying in a Member State other than that of which they are a national and to certain difficulties associated with these formalities. However, the Commission is not aware of the specific case referred to by the Honourable Member.

Concerning students' resources, Article 1 of Directive 93/96 ⁽¹⁾ on the right of residence for students (which has been transposed by all Member States except Germany) requires Member States to recognise the right of residence for any student who, by means of a declaration or by such alternative means as the student may choose that is at least equivalent, assures the relevant national authority that he or she has sufficient resources to avoid becoming a burden on the social assistance system of the host Member State. It ensues from transposition of this provision into the national law of certain Member States that students are required to present formal evidence of resources (e.g. documents from a bank or a certificate that costs will be met by the student's parents or a third party). As the Commission feels that requiring such evidence is inconsistent with the above-mentioned Article 1, it has instituted infringement proceedings against those Member States. Reasoned opinions have been sent to Spain, France and Italy, whereas the proceedings initiated against Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands have been closed following the amending of their legislation. Regarding evidence of insurance cover, Article 1 of Directive 93/96 states that the right of residence is subject to sickness insurance cover in respect of all risks in the host Member State. This means that it is not contrary to Community law for the national authority responsible for issuing residence permits to require evidence of sickness insurance cover.

As for producing certified and translated birth certificates, the Commission feels that it ensues from the provisions of Community law on freedom of movement for persons that any requirement for such documents should be limited to cases where a family relationship must be proved (if, for example, the person with the right of residence is accompanied by children). The Commission has decided to send a reasoned opinion to France concerning the *préfectures'* practice of requiring birth certificates.

Finally, concerning the delays in issuing residence permits, the Commission is of the opinion that where the student has produced a declaration of resources, evidence of sickness insurance cover, and evidence of enrolment in a recognised establishment, there are no grounds for a delay in issuing a residence permit (unless reasons of public order necessitate specific checks).

All this shows that the Commission is using the powers conferred upon it as guardian of the Treaty to ensure full compliance with Community law, particularly Directive 93/96. It should be noted that the Commission is in the process of preparing a report on the application of this Directive, which will be sent to the Council and Parliament. Special attention will be devoted in the report to the formalities for the issue of residence permits.

3. The Commission is making use of all the available means in order to avoid discriminatory treatment, particularly in the context of its mobility programmes for persons in education or training.

In its Green Paper, the Commission announced its intention of following up the consultation exercise launched, with concrete initiatives within its field of competence. It is counting on the support of Parliament to ensure that rapid progress is made on these difficult matters.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 317, 18.12.1993.

(98/C 21/160)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1552/97

by Maren Günther (PPE) to the Commission

(6 May 1997)

Subject: Approval by ECHO, in December 1996, of ECU 1.5 million for Cambodia

On 23 December 1996 the Commission (ECHO) approved expenditure of ECU 1.5 million for mine clearance, health and rehabilitation in Cambodia. To which organizations and for which projects have these funds been disbursed?

Answer given by Ms Bonino on behalf of the Commission

(25 June 1997)

Partner organisation	Project description	Location	Amount (ECU)
Action Nord Sud	Breaking the isolation of a community of 25 000 to provide access to health services and humanitarian aid in particular	Battambang	320 000
Action contre la faim	Aid for running basic health centres in rural areas and district health centres, primary health care and mother-and-child protection programmes	Banteay Meanchey	220 000
Action contre la faim	Restoration to minimum working order of the Tbeng Meanchey Provincial Hospital operating theatre; restarting the work of district health centres; drinking water supplies for otherwise deprived health centres, schools and villages; minimum rehabilitation of basic infrastructure in the most isolated communities	Preah Vihear	400 000
Handicap international	Marking and mine-clearance operations, leadership, training and deployment of a mine-clearance unit	Kampong Thom	560 000

(98/C 21/161)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1557/97

by Alexandros Alavanos (GUE/NGL) to the Commission

(6 May 1997)

Subject: Funding of the register of olive cultivation in Greece

The register of olive cultivation is governed by Council Regulation (EEC) No 154/75 ⁽¹⁾ and Commission Regulation (EEC) No 2276/79 ⁽²⁾, and expenditure for the establishment and updating of the register is financed at a rate of 100% (under Council Regulation (EEC) No 2159/92) ⁽³⁾ by a 2.4% reduction in the amount of aid paid during the marketing years up to 1997/98. Even though the sum withheld so far in respect of Greece has now reached DRS 15 billion, no funding has yet been made available to establish a register of olive cultivation in Greece; on the other hand, olive registers in Italy, France and also in Spain — where the register is currently being developed — have already been funded at a rate of 100%.

Will the Commission say:

1. why the register of olive cultivation for Greece has not so far been established; and
2. what it intends to do to ensure that it is established under the same terms as applied to the other Member States in question (100% funding)?

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 19, 24.1.1975, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 262, 18.10.1979, p. 11.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 217, 31.7.1992, p. 8.

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission*(9 June 1997)*

1. The register of olive cultivation was not established in Greece by the statutory deadline because no proposal was received from the Greek administration. Accordingly, in April 1992 the Commission took the initiative of publishing a call for tenders to carry out, in cooperation with the national administration, a pilot study to evaluate the technical and financial constraints on establishing the register. The final results, available in April 1994, were sent to the national authorities.

Since then, the situation has improved. Following the results achieved in identifying agricultural areas for the Integrated System (arable land), the bilateral meetings held from February 1996 onwards have made it possible to reach the following position:

- a single identification system for agricultural land will be used in Greece for arable land, the olive-growing areas and those under vines. The approach adopted for the integrated system (a clustering method using black and white ortho-photos at a scale of 1/10 000) will be extended to the permanent crops;
- the identification of the olive-growing areas and of the surfaces under vines will be unified. For municipalities where work has already been completed on arable land, the permanent crop parcels will be updated. For the other municipalities, in March 1997 Greece submitted a work plan which is in the process of acceptance;
- in April 1997, the Ministry of Agriculture forwarded to the Commission a 1997-98 work programme relating to the cultivation declarations, to their computerization and to their control. This proposal is being considered.

2. If the work plan proposed by Greece is respected, establishment of the olive cultivation register will be completed in December 1998. Insofar as Regulation (EEC) No 2159/92 envisages withholding aid until the marketing year 1997/98 and where the part-financing rate is currently fixed at 100%, the Greek register of olive cultivation could therefore be financed in the same way as in the other Member States. If changes were made in Regulation (EEC) No 154/75, it would be up to the Council, acting on a proposal from the Commission, to give an opinion on the financing of the programmes already approved.

(98/C 21/162)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1561/97**by Ben Fayot (PSE) to the Commission***(6 May 1997)*

Subject: Safety of shipments of nuclear materials

Has the Commission's standing working party on the safety of shipments of radioactive materials already examined the incident on 4 February 1997 in which a train carrying nuclear waste from Lingen (D) to Sellafield (UK) via Apach (F) was derailed in Apach?

If so, what conclusions has the working party drawn from this incident?

In particular, does the Commission intend to harmonize information on the containers used for such shipments, so that the consequences of any future incident can be rapidly assessed?

Does the Commission not intend to call upon those responsible for such shipments, which constitute a serious risk for the inhabitants of the regions along the route they take, to select the most direct and/or least dangerous routes?

Finally, as the Commission is organizing a regular assessment of the safety of nuclear shipments, together with representatives of the industry and experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), can it say what conclusions it has drawn from this evaluation so far?

Answer given by Mr Papoutsis on behalf of the Commission*(30 June 1997)*

At the 26th meeting of the standing working group on safe transport of radioactive material on 27 May 1997 the Commission and the Member States were informed of the safety review following the derailment at Apach on 4 February 1997. The analysis was presented by the technical support organisation (IPSN) of the French ministry of transport. It confirms the information given by the Commission in reply to the questions P-527/97 by Mr Weber and P-528/97 by Mrs Breyer (1).

In the meantime expert appraisal has revealed that a pre-existing small defect in the rail with horizontal propagation over a length of approximately 450 mm caused the failure. Rails used at high velocity are inspected by ultrasonic techniques. Rails used in normal service at lower speed, such as at Apach, are controlled by visual inspections. The propagation of the defect horizontally by fatigue or brittle fracture provoked a break in the rail with the derailment of one wagon as consequence.

The radiation level of the packages was very low and remained unchanged during the incident (dose rate on gamma and neutron radiation of 2.5 microsievert per hour at one meter from the package surface) so there were no specific radiation protection problems for the intervention team. The transport continued at 18h00 on 5 February 1997. A speed limit of 80 kilometres an hour was imposed as supplementary precaution by the French authorities.

The standing working group is of the opinion that emergency response planning and preparedness for transport accidents should remain fully the responsibility of the Member States. The information on packages for the purpose of an emergency is available from the carrier and the Member States.

As already indicated in the Commission's previous reply the selection of the routing is mainly imposed by physical protection considerations which are within the exclusive competence of the Member States. However, there may be deviation from the shortest routing in order to ensure that all risks are systematically taken into account (radiological and non-radiological) including normal and accident conditions.

The safety of the transport is ultimately ensured by the performance of the package, even under severe accident conditions. At no time did the derailment at Apach threaten the safety of the population and the environment.

Having examined the whole issue, the Commission draws the conclusion that a permanent review of the rules and conditions for the transport of radioactive materials is justified, and that the standing working group on safe transport of radioactive material has proved to be useful. Although the third report of the group was only adopted and sent to Parliament in the second quarter of 1996, the Commission has invited the group to undertake immediately the drafting of the fourth report, taking into account recent developments and events in its field of competence.

(1) OJ C 319, 18.10.1997, p. 101.

(98/C 21/163)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1567/97

by Florus Wijsenbeek (ELDR) to the Commission

(6 May 1997)

Subject: French ban on driving at weekends

Is the Commission aware of the fact that many transport firms in various Member States are inconvenienced by the French government's ban on driving for a large part of the weekend and suffer unnecessary costs as a result. Since driving via Germany is no solution, because there is a ban on driving on Sundays in Germany, too, it is often necessary to make an additional night's stop. Because of the very low margins in the goods transport by road sector, many companies simply cannot afford the additional vehicles and staff required. This is particularly true of carriers of perishable goods and specialized transport, because of the additional storage facilities which are needed.

Is the Commission also aware of the fact that the safety arguments put forward by the French government with regard to driving at the weekend do not apply to Saturday evenings when there is very little traffic on the motorways?

Does the Commission feel, moreover, that it runs counter to its efforts to shift as much traffic as possible away from peak times if there is a threat to prevent freight transport on a major European North-South route on Saturday evenings?

In view of the foregoing, can the Commission give consideration to a proposal to encourage the French government to shift the ban on weekend driving to Sunday morning so that drivers have an opportunity of reaching their destination on Saturday evening, thereby not discriminating against road transport firms in various Member States compared with goods carried by different modes of transport?

If so, how does the Commission intend to induce the French government to do this?

If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Kinnoek on behalf of the Commission*(25 June 1997)*

The Commission is aware of the change in the conditions of movement for the carriage of goods on Sundays and public holidays in France.

Before this decision, the banning of lorries over 7.5 tonnes total weight on the roads in France from Saturday 10 p.m. to Sunday 10 p.m. and on public holidays was accompanied by certain general exemptions. These exemptions were granted for urgent economic activities (the carriage of perishable goods, live animals) which could not be delayed and to allow, in international traffic only, French or foreign vehicles to return to their residence, their home base or their country of registration. The French authorities withdrew this latter exemption, with effect from 24 March 1997.

France is neither the first nor the only Member State to prohibit the movement of lorries on Sundays and public holidays. The prohibition has been justified by the French authorities on the grounds of improving road safety and protecting local residents against excessive nuisance. It is not discriminatory since it applies to French lorries as much as it does to all others.

However, the Commission is aware of the negative implications of the current situation regarding bans on night and weekend driving for international road haulage in the Community. Therefore, it will discuss the general issue of driving bans with Member States and the industry in order to assess whether Community action in this field would be feasible and desirable.

(98/C 21/164)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1579/97**by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission***(6 May 1997)*

Subject: ADAPT: call for new proposals for 1997

The Community ADAPT initiative finances projects which help workers to adapt to changes in the labour market. It operates under the auspices of Objective 4 of the European Social Fund, which is aimed at improving the qualifications and employment prospects of citizens who already have jobs. It is possibly the only EU fund that is of particular importance to older workers.

ADAPT is being implemented in two stages: the first covers the period from 1995 to 1997 and the second covers the period from 1997 to 1999. The budget is ECU 1500 million for five years, including 162 million for a new priority project, ADAPT A.

There are five ADAPT projects focusing on older workers, in Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria (2) and Sweden. Another four projects, in Germany, France and the UK (2), aim to involve a significant proportion of older workers. However, these nine projects account for only a very small percentage of the 1400 programmes funded overall by ADAPT.

Can the Commission take care to ensure that the second round of funding applications results in a greater number of projects specifically targeted at older workers?

Answer given by Mr Flynn on behalf of the Commission*(9 June 1997)*

As stated by the Honourable Member, the purpose of the ADAPT initiative is to help workers adapt to industrial change and to improve the functioning of the labour market with a view to ensuring growth, employment and the competitiveness of Community businesses. The initiative covers the entire Community and has been allocated a total budget of ECU 1 582 million for the period 1995-1999 (including a reserve, at 1996 prices).

As regards the target group, ADAPT is aimed more particularly at workers affected by industrial change, regardless of their age. All projects financed under ADAPT include or may include older workers among their beneficiaries. In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the selection of projects is the responsibility of the national authorities. The Commission, through the monitoring committees, checks that the selections made are consistent with the principles and objectives of the initiative.

(98/C 21/165)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1584/97**by Armelle Guinebertière (UPE) to the Commission***(6 May 1997)*

Subject: Compulsory quarantine for pet animals entering the United Kingdom

Freedom of movement for goods and persons is now an officially established principle within the European Union.

The United Kingdom nevertheless still requires pet animals to spend a period in quarantine (6 months in the case of dogs) before they can freely enter the country. Although the official reason given for this requirement is the need to fight rabies, some claim that it is a form of economic protectionism.

Given that this is an infringement of the principles of free movement of goods and persons, free competition and animal rights, and that there are extremely effective rabies vaccines, we believe that the continued application of the quarantine rule is contrary to Community law.

Does the Commission intend to urge the British Government to remedy this situation and put an end to such practices?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission*(30 May 1997)*

The Commission is aware of the problem and has taken a number of initiatives in this field.

In recent years, an eradication programme financed by the Community has been implemented. This programme has had remarkable results and rabies will be hopefully be eradicated in the relatively near future, which will render the quarantine of pets in the United Kingdom unnecessary.

In addition, the Commission is currently re-examining the situation and will make suitable proposals shortly. The Scientific Veterinary Committee will submit a report on the matter.

(98/C 21/166)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1606/97**by Bárbara Dührkop Dührkop (PSE) to the Council***(12 May 1997)*

Subject: Increased funding for new fisheries agreements

The EU must find ways of compensating for the sacrifices which Community fleets have to make in order to adapt to the requirements of the Fourth Programme for Fisheries Guidance.

Did the Commission ask the Fisheries Council on 14 April to increase by ECU 30 million the budgetary funding available for negotiating new fisheries agreements with non-member countries?

What did the Council decide?

Answer*(6 August 1997)*

At its meeting on 14-15 April 1997, the Commission did not ask the Council to increase by 30 MECUs the budgetary funding for negotiating new fisheries agreements with third countries.

However, in the meantime, the Commission has made a proposal for a transfer of appropriations with a view to making available an additional amount of 52.6 MECUs in budget line B 78000 (International Fisheries Agreements). The Council will examine this proposal in accordance with established procedures.

(98/C 21/167)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1627/97**by Bárbara Dührkop Dührkop (PSE) to the Commission***(14 May 1997)**Subject:* URBAN Programme

10 January 1997 was the deadline for the submission of urban development projects under the 1997-1999 URBAN programme.

How many projects have been submitted by the Spanish authorities?

How many of those were originated by the Basque Country Autonomous Community? To which localities do they relate and what are their intended objectives?

Which projects has the Commission selected amongst all the ones submitted by the Spanish Government?

Answer given by Mrs Wulf-Mathies on behalf of the Commission*(27 June 1997)*

On 9 January 1997 the Spanish authorities submitted a programme under the Urban Community Initiative (1997-99) comprising 12 projects. Of these projects, none concerns municipalities located in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country.

The Commission is examining the application. However, the Spanish authorities are at present reformulating the text of the programme originally submitted. The Commission considers that a decision approving this programme is unlikely to be taken until the last quarter of this year.

(98/C 21/168)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1632/97**by Johanna Maij-Weggen (PPE) to the Commission***(14 May 1997)**Subject:* American ban on investing in Burma

Can the Commission confirm that the American President has signed a law banning American businesses from investing in Burma because of the adverse situation regarding democracy and human rights in that country?

How can the Commission prevent businesses in the US making their investments via European firms and European Member States?

Would it not be appropriate, in the wake of the Union's lifting of the preferential system for Burma, for the Commission to submit a proposal as soon as possible for an end to investments on the part of the Union so that, together with the US, maximum pressure can be put on Burma?

Answer given by Mr Marin on behalf of the Commission*(12 June 1997)*

On 22 April 1997, the United States (US) President announced his decision to impose a ban on new US investment in Burma, invoking the so-called Cohen-Feinstein amendment to the Appropriations Act for the fiscal year 1997.

The new sanctions prohibit US persons from new investment in Burma. The details, including the definition of US persons and new investment, have been specified in an executive order published on 20 May 1997. The Commission is at present examining in depth the executive order to further analyse the potential impact of this decision.

The withdrawal of privileges under the generalized scheme of privileges (GSP), on the other hand, is in no way linked to the sanctions imposed by the Community in its common position on Burma adopted on 28 October 1996 and prolonged for a second six-month period on 29 April 1997. The withdrawal of GSP privileges is exclusively based on the provisions of the Council Regulation (EC) No 3281/94 and 1256/96 ⁽¹⁾, Articles 9-12 and clearly not related to the common foreign and security policy (CFSP).

The Commission is participating actively in CFSP work. The Commission is, however, not in a position to anticipate future developments with regard to the possible imposition of further sanctions on Burma, in particular since Member States are engaged in a discussion on the usefulness of economic sanctions to achieve political objectives.

(¹) OJ L 348, 31.12.1994.
OJ L 160, 29.6.1996.

(98/C 21/169)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1635/97
by Doeke Eisma (ELDR) to the Commission

(14 May 1997)

Subject: The cormorant

Following remarks by Commissioner Bjerregaard about the cormorant, I should like to ask the following questions:

1. Is it true that the Commission is considering removing the cormorant from Annex I of the wild birds directive (79/409/EEC) (¹)?
2. When does the Commission intend to do this, and in what way will it inform Parliament?
3. What is the basis for the Commission's view that there is a need to remove the cormorant from Annex I of the wild birds directive?
4. Can the Commission indicate whether it also intends to add species to Annex I of the wild birds directive?

(¹) OJ L 103, 25.4.1979, p. 1.

Answer given by Mrs Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission

(25 June 1997)

There are three species and sub-species of cormorants listed in Annex I of Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds. These are the pygmy cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*), the Mediterranean sub-species of the shag (*P. aristoteles desmarestii*) and the continental sub-species of the great cormorant (*P. carbo sinensis*).

Given that the pygmy cormorant is globally threatened and that the Mediterranean sub-species of the shag is still very vulnerable, the Commission would not favour their removal from Annex I of the Directive.

As recognized in the resolution adopted by the Parliament in February 1996, the great cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) has significantly increased in numbers. On the basis of the scientific information available and after several consultations, the Commission considers that this species has reached a favourable conservation status at the European level. As such the conservation measures have worked. The Commission is consequently preparing a proposal for the removal of *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis* from Annex I of Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds.

The Parliament was already informed of this situation, and the Commission would therefore refer the Honourable Member to its previous answer to the written question No 3950/96 by Mr. T.P. Bebear (¹) and to the reply it gave to oral question H-124/97 by Mrs Schwaiger during question time at Parliament's March 1997 part-session (²).

Due to the urgency of the matter, the draft proposal was submitted for a vote during the meeting of the committee for the adaptation to technical and scientific progress of the birds Directive. This draft proposal was approved by the Committee and is forwarded to the Parliament for information. The Commission will take the necessary steps in order for the Commission to further consider this proposal for adoption. At this stage however, the Commission does not intend to propose in the short term an extension of the list of species covered by Annex I of the birds Directive.

(¹) OJ C 186, 18.6.1997.

(²) Debates of the Parliament (March 1997).

(98/C 21/170)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1646/97**by Ursula Stenzel (PPE) to the Commission***(14 May 1997)*

Subject: Implementation of a Media III programme

The various Listeners and Viewers representatives of the ORF, ARD, ZDF and SRG are jointly calling for an EU Media III programme aimed at encouraging production of their own children's programmes. That would make high-quality products for children's programmes or children's channels available to television organizations.

Is there any possibility of achieving and promoting this aspiration?

Answer given by Mr Oreja on behalf of the Commission*(30 June 1997)*

The priority aim of the Media II programme is to support independent audiovisual production. The Commission has consequently endeavoured to put in place grant mechanisms upstream and downstream of production, in the form of assistance for training, development and distribution.

In the case of assistance for television, special attention is paid to programmes for children and in particular animated programmes.

Grants are thus paid for dubbing or sub-titling programmes for television and for the production of works involving at least two broadcasters from more than one Member State. The stated aim of these measures (see 1.2.2 of the Annex to Decision 95/563/EC) ⁽¹⁾ is to improve the circulation of quality works in Europe and to offer broadcasters a range of programmes with a wide broadcasting potential. Thus broadcasters indirectly receive Community aid.

With regard to Media III, it is too soon to anticipate the half-term assessment of the Media II programme (planned for mid-1998) or the recommendations which could result therefrom and lead to possible readjustments in the future.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 321, 31. 12.1995.

(98/C 21/171)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1648/97**by Leoluca Orlando (V) to the Commission***(14 May 1997)*

Subject: Assumed conflict between Sicilian regional law 1/9/93 and Articles 92 and 93 of the Treaty of Rome

Regional law 1/9/93 of the Sicilian Regional Assembly amended the rules on incentives for charter and IT (inclusive tour) flights to Sicily already operating under regional law 12.4.1967, No 46. Those eligible for the financial aid thus provided by the regional administration are indiscriminately tour operators and travel agencies (Sicilian, Italian, European and non-European) that intend to arrange tourist travel to Sicily.

As the aid is granted not to the operators but to the consumers through the operators concerned and the rules apply absolutely indiscriminately between Sicilian and non-Sicilian tour operators and travel agencies who intend to make use of it, I do not consider there to be any distortion of competition within the meaning of Articles 92 and 93 of the Treaty of Rome. The aid in question does not constitute a reduction of costs for tour operators and travel agents but takes the form of price reductions for tour packages to Sicily for the exclusive benefit of tourists.

Why therefore has the Commission initiated infringement proceedings under Article 93 of the Treaty of Rome without taking account of the justification sent to Commission DG IV by the regional administration on 22 March (ref. No 2756) which had been agreed on by officials of DG IV (Director A. Peterson) and a delegation from the regional administration?

Answer given by Mr Van Miert on behalf of the Commission

(13 June 1997)

The Commission has found that grants amounting to 20% of the transport costs which are paid to tour operators and travel agents for the transport of tourists to Sicily have as their object and effect to increase the number of tourists staying there. This involves a deflection of flows of Community tourists to the region.

Although travel agents and tour operators are required to transfer those benefits to tourists, the grants confer advantages on those operators and on the Sicilian tourist industry in general since there is an increase in the numbers of tourists transported to and staying in Sicily.

Since the grants are not conditional on an investment, they constitute an operating aid. In view of its particularly adverse effects on competition, such aid can only be authorized as an exception, when it is for a limited time and degressive. Since the aid is not subject to those restrictions, the Commission considers it doubtful whether it is compatible with the common market and has therefore decided to initiate the adversary proceedings provided for in Article 93(2) of the EC Treaty. It has nevertheless given the Italian Government and other interested parties the opportunity to submit their observations.

Regarding the note justifying the aid sent by the regional authorities on 22 March 1997, which in any event arrived after the Commission's decision was adopted on 12 March, that note does not contain any information in addition to that contained in the observations already submitted by the authorities and taken into account by the Commission in reaching its decision.

(98/C 21/172)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1655/97

by Nikitas Kaklamanis (UPE) to the Commission

(14 May 1997)

Subject: Proposal within the framework of the MEDA programme for Turkey

A recent edition of the Official Journal of the European Communities (S 50) carried a call for the submission of proposals for the provision of technical assistance within the framework of the MEDA programme for Turkey.

This call concerns the offices of the Commission Representation in Ankara, and more particularly the recruitment of staff.

A total of fifteen experts are to be recruited in five areas of activity.

Will the Commission say how the recruitment and salaries of these officials will be funded?

Answer given by Mr Van den Broek on behalf of the Commission

(2 July 1997)

In 1996 the budgetary authority approved a special facility to help finance the Phare, Tacis and Meda programmes through recourse to external technical assistance aimed at assisting both the Commission and recipients in the implementation and follow-up of programmes and projects.

The Commission has decided to make technical assistance available to its delegations in the Mediterranean partner countries, consisting of highly-skilled experts, support and management personnel, the necessary support and reception infrastructure and personnel to maintain that infrastructure in the furtherance of cooperation between the Community and its Mediterranean partners within the framework of the Meda programme.

The Member States having delivered a favourable opinion, the Commission will commit the necessary appropriations from budget heading B7-410 in line with the remarks on this subject contained in the 1997 budget. Recruitment of technical assistance personnel will be by invitation to tender pursuant to Council Regulation 1488/96 (Meda) ⁽¹⁾ and in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Financial Regulation applicable to the General Budget of the European Communities.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 189, 30.7.1996.

(98/C 21/173)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1659/97

by Nikitas Kaklamanis (UPE) and Mihail Papayannakis (GUE/NGL) to the Commission

(14 May 1997)

Subject: The future of the Community Support Framework

Given that supplementary resources will very likely be required to complete many of the projects in the southern Member States financed by the Cohesion Fund and the Structural Funds, and in the light of reports from DG XVI that the Commissioner responsible intends to organize a conference to hear Member States' views on the volume of funding, will the Commission say whether it has analysed the long-term investments needed to complete the projects included in the Second Community Support Framework, and whether it already has some general notions about how to organize such funding?

Answer given by Mrs Wulf-Mathies on behalf of the Commission

(8 July 1997)

The Commission intends, shortly after completion of the intergovernmental conference, to table broad proposals for the future financing of the Community and for policy in the area of economic and social cohesion after 1999. It appears that the least prosperous regions of the Community should remain the main beneficiaries of structural assistance. Support for regions, including rural areas, experiencing structural adjustment difficulties in the more prosperous Member States and for the adaptation of human resources should also be continued.

Although it is difficult to give a detailed indication of the proposals the Commission will make, the system of structural and cohesion funds must, in any event, be directed towards more concentration, greater simplification and increased effectiveness.

(98/C 21/174)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1664/97

by David Bowe (PSE) to the Commission

(20 May 1997)

Subject: End of life vehicles

Why can the Commission not finalise its draft proposal for a Directive on end of life vehicles?

Answer given by Mrs Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission

(2 July 1997)

The Commission intends to adopt a proposal for a directive on end of life vehicles before the summer. The Commission is now finalising the text which includes a number of technical, economic and organisational issues requiring thorough consideration.

(98/C 21/175)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1666/97**by David Bowe (PSE) to the Commission***(20 May 1997)**Subject:* Control of volatile organic compounds

Is the Commission going to proceed with the drafting of a proposal for the control of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), resulting from refuelling operations at service stations (Stage II Directive)? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mrs Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission*(19 June 1997)*

From an environmental point of view, the volatile organic compounds (VOC) losses due to refuelling at filling stations are a small percentage, (2%), of the total man-made losses at European level.

Seven Member States (Denmark, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Austria and Sweden) have introduced domestic legislation on VOC control. France will use the framework legislation on air quality as a basis for introduction in specific locations (large cities, heavily polluted areas). It is understood that the United Kingdom (UK) will also introduce VOC stage II measures for a limited number of service stations.

In addition, other Member States are currently reviewing the results of pilot projects (Greece, Finland) or have recently entered into discussions with their national petroleum federation (Belgium).

In these circumstances it would appear that the additional environmental benefits in terms of reduced emissions which would result from a Commission initiative on stage II are marginal. A legislative proposal on VOC stage II does not therefore rank among the current priorities.

However, the current work on the ozone strategy expected to be adopted by the Commission in spring 1998, will take account of the emissions from this sector. On the basis of the conclusions of the strategy to combat tropospheric ozone the Commission will review the need for and nature of any future Community initiatives on refuelling losses.

(98/C 21/176)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1677/97**by Roberta Angelilli (NI) to the Commission***(7 May 1997)**Subject:* EIB funding and the Jubilee in Rome

In reply to Written Question E-0178/97 ⁽¹⁾, which I tabled on 3 February 1997, the Commission stated that the EIB had awarded a loan of Lire 1.4 billion to the Commune of Rome and the Region of Lazio for a programme of works in connection with the Jubilee in the year 2000 ('Roma 2000'). Recently, however, the head of the Mayor of Rome's office acknowledged that there was a considerable risk that many of the planned works would not be completed: despite the fact that the year 2000 is less than one thousand days away, there has been practically no progress on the projects in question, while the Deputy Mayor with responsibility for transport in the Commune of Rome continues to announce possible drastic changes to the plan which are delaying its implementation.

1. What is the Commission's opinion on the feasibility of completing the five hundred or so works included in the Jubilee plan which the EIB is helping to finance?
2. Would the Commission clarify, if possible, the arrangements for the provision of funds, i.e. whether the EIB contribution will be paid in a single tranche on the basis of the plan as a whole or whether the works will be scrutinized individually and the respective funds paid in successive instalments?
3. Are the continual delays in the completion of the works in question — for which the communal authorities in Rome are responsible — jeopardizing the Commune of Rome's prospects of actually benefiting from EIB funding for the Jubilee?

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 319, 18.10.1997, p. 33.

Answer given by Mr de Silguy on behalf of the Commission*(27 June 1997)*

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has no reason to date to doubt the ability of the promoters to carry out the activities linked to the Rome 2000 project.

According to the EIB, the promoters will receive the payments linked to the investments financed by the Bank once the progress of work has been verified. The Rome 2000 loan will be paid in successive tranches and not in a single instalment, as is the EIB's usual practice with projects of the size and importance of the Rome 2000 project.

The 500 or so works to be financed will be examined individually on the basis of their economic interest, their usefulness and the benefits they will bring to the various sectors in the city of Rome and the region of Lazio, well beyond the actual lead time of the projects.

(98/C 21/177)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1687/97**by Wolfgang Kreissl-Dörfler (V) to the Commission***(20 May 1997)*

Subject: Implementation of Agenda 21 (aid programmes)

Five years ago, in 1992, the international community meeting at the UNCED Conference in Rio agreed on the objectives of Agenda 21. The conference stressed that a global action plan for women was the prerequisite for achieving sustainable and just development. It also assigned to NGOs and local authorities a major role in the agenda process.

Can the Commission indicate to what extent it supports these objectives and what financial support, and through what programmes, it makes available to women and local authorities to achieve the objectives of Agenda 21?

Answer given by Mrs Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission*(7 July 1997)*

The Community funds many programmes which help women, non governmental organizations (NGOs) and local authorities in achieving the objectives of Agenda 21, both within the Community and in the wider world. While there are no centrally kept figures on overall financial support, nevertheless it is possible to give examples of such assistance.

The Community is a signatory to the Beijing platform for action which represents a global action plan for women. In accordance with the policy set out in the Beijing platform for action, the Community uses the dual strategy of positive actions for women and the mainstreaming of gender in all programmes and projects. In 1996, the Commission produced a communication on 'Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities' ⁽¹⁾ as part of the Community's overall follow up to the Beijing conference.

Between 1994 and 1999, 785 MECU will be committed from the structural funds on specific measures in favour of women in the context of the campaign against long-term unemployment and the integration of young people into working life which are part of the social element of sustainable development.

With regard to the role of women in development, and in line with the dual strategy mentioned above, most activities in favour of women are financed under the main budget lines for development cooperation, in the form of integrated projects addressing both women and men, but with specific attention to the needs of women. In addition, a number of large-scale positive action programmes specifically for women are funded on these mainstream budget lines. Furthermore, the Commission makes use of the small but important budget line concerning women's role in development (amount in 1997: 5 MECU) to finance actions such as studies, training, sensitisation and strategic planning in order to promote the mainstreaming of gender issues into Community development cooperation.

The Commission committed 175 MECU in co-financing NGO development projects in third countries in 1996. In the same year the Commission awarded 1.6 MECU in core funding to 18 environmental NGOs working in Europe.

The structural funds contribute large sums to helping local authorities achieve sustainable development. In addition, the Commission supports a number of specific initiatives such as sustainable cities campaign, which help local authorities implement particular elements in Agenda 21. Local authorities in developing countries have also received support. For example more than 44 MECU over four years is being provided to innovate cooperation between cities in Europe and in Asia, Latin America and the Mediterranean regions. A little under 1 MECU has been allocated to helping six urban and six rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa to prepare their own local environment action plans.

(¹) COM (96) 67.

(98/C 21/178)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1696/97

by Roberta Angelilli (NI) to the Commission

(20 May 1997)

Subject: Plan to build a five-storey car-park on a site of archaeological importance in Rome

The City of Rome intends to build a large five-storey car-park and shopping centre complex in the vicinity of Piazzale della Radio, a densely populated area in the fifteenth district of the city. Many local residents' committees have called for an immediate halt to the work, one of the reasons being that the Archaeology Department of the Ministry for Cultural Assets has discovered Roman graves, possible evidence of an underground necropolis, the conservation of which would undoubtedly be jeopardized by the work. Notwithstanding Annex II to Directive 85/337/EEC (¹), point 10(b) of which provides that Member States should lay down appropriate criteria for defining the urban development projects that should be subject to environmental impact assessment within the meaning of Articles 5 to 10 of the Directive, and even though the scale of the project implies that it would be advisable to carry out such an assessment in accordance with the procedures laid down, the authorities have not consulted the residents about the construction project. Moreover, despite Directive 97/11/EC (²), which provides that environmental impact assessment of this category of project should take due account of historic, cultural, and archaeological factors, no importance has been attached to the archaeological finds on the site.

Does the Commission not think that the attitude of the City of Rome is in flagrant violation of the European legislation on environmental impact assessment?

Will the Commission make representations to the City of Rome to ensure that Community law continues to be observed?

(¹) OJ L 175, 5.7.1985, p. 40.

(²) OJ L 73, 14.3.1997, p. 5.

Answer given by Mrs Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission

(25 June 1997)

The Commission would first point out that the reference to Directive 97/11/EC is inappropriate insofar as the Directive has not yet been applied.

Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (¹) lays down compulsory impact assessment for projects listed in Annex I to the Directive, while for projects listed in Annex II (including the project under consideration here) it is left to Member States to determine in the light of a project's characteristics, namely its nature, size, etc., whether it must be subject to the environmental impact assessment procedure.

On the basis of the information in its possession, the Commission will approach the Italian authorities for additional information.

(¹) OJ L 175, 27.6.1985.

(98/C 21/179)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1698/97
by Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE) to the Commission
(20 May 1997)

Subject: Noise and exhaust gas emission requirements for boat's engines

In mid-October 1996 there were discussions with Sweden, other interested Member States and the industry concerning requirements for noise and exhaust gas emissions for boat's engines.

The Commission was supposed to have adopted a position following these discussions, but nothing has so far been published.

1. What is the Commission's position on this issue?
2. Does the Commission think that European rules for noise and exhaust gas emission requirements for boat's engines are justified?
3. If so, what does the Commission intend doing?

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission

(11 July 1997)

1. In the Commission's previous answer to the Honourable Member's written question No 2100/96 (¹), last year, it was indicated that a meeting with Sweden, other interested Member States and industry had been organised to discuss the question of recreational craft emissions.
2. It is now possible to confirm that Commission is presently taking the steps necessary for the preparation of Europe-wide legislation in this field.
3. To this end, the Commission initially envisages a meeting with Member State and industry experts in July 1997. It is intended that, during this meeting, a possible modification to Directive 94/25/EC relating to recreational craft (²) will be examined.

(¹) OJ C 83, 14.3.1997.

(²) OJ L 164, 30.6.1994.

(98/C 21/180)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1699/97
by Ulf Holm (V) to the Commission
(20 May 1997)

Subject: The agri-environmental scheme

Further to its answer to written question E-0549/97 (¹), will the Commission now provide answers to the following questions concerning the regulation on agri-environmental measures?

1. Will it provide a list of the countries in which the 117 approved programmes are located?
2. How much financial assistance are the 117 programmes receiving from the Community?
3. What is the total amount that has been earmarked for this scheme by the Community?
4. What requirements must farmers satisfy in order to be able to participate in the agri-environmental scheme?

(¹) OJ C 319, 18.10.1997, p. 110.

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission

(26 June 1997)

Agri-environment programmes have been approved in all Member States and by the end of the 1996 budget year implementation had begun in all Member States with the exception of Luxembourg.

The Commission is forwarding direct to the Honourable Member and to the Secretariat general of the Parliament a full list of the approved programmes at 31 December 1996. Finance is provided from the Community budget (European agriculture guidance and guarantee fund guarantee section) at the rate of 75% in Objective 1 regions and 50% in all other regions. Full data concerning the budget of each programme up to 1997 are being forwarded separately to the Honourable Member and to the Secretariat general of the Parliament.

The funding allocation (Community contribution only) for the first five years of implementation is given below:

	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1997</i>
EU12 budget	130	322			
EU15 budget			990	1342	1193
EU12 out-turn	123	224			
EU15 out-turn			485	1391	

MECU

Programmes are developed and implemented by the Member States or regions, subject to approval by the Commission, and thus the specific conditions vary greatly between programmes. Programmes may comprise detailed obligations relating to the environmental management of land, beneficial farm practices, and the organization of training courses in environmental techniques. Farmers who choose to join programmes are bound to observe the undertakings set out in the relevant programme for the period specified which is at least five years for the land management measures.

(98/C 21/181)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1700/97

by Ulf Holm (V) to the Commission

(20 May 1997)

Subject: Commission delegations

For several years, the Commission has had a number of offices (delegations) around the world.

1. Can it supply a list of all current EU delegations?
2. How many delegations there were altogether in 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1995 respectively?
3. How many people does each of them now employ?
4. What does each of them cost to run?
5. What did the delegations cost to run, overall, in 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1995 respectively?

Answer given by Mr Van den Broek on behalf of the Commission

(24 June 1997)

For points 1 and 3, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the answer already given to written question 1107/97 (1).

Point 2: there were 64 delegations and offices in 1980, 82 in 1985, 94 in 1990 and 122 in 1995.

It is impossible to give the cost of each individual delegation since the relevant appropriations are entered in chapter A6 of the Commission's budget, where spending is broken down by item.

Pre-1988, cost breakdowns were spread over the whole budget and cannot therefore now be isolated. Since 1990, the costs have been entered under chapter A6; they totalled ECU 112 million in 1990 and ECU 191 million in 1995. The increase was due largely to the opening of new Commission delegations in eastern Europe.

(¹) OJ C 319, 18.10.1997, p. 230.

(98/C 21/182)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1706/97
by Hiltrud Breyer (V) to the Commission
(23 May 1997)

Subject: Nuclear waste transport accident in Apach, Lorraine

At around 6.30 a.m. on Monday, 4 February 1997, a train carrying nuclear waste from North Germany was derailed between Perl (D) and Apach (F) in France, near the Luxembourg border. As the Commission has not answered most of the questions in my Question P-0528/97 (¹), I find myself compelled to repeat them:

1. What emergency plans had been drawn up? What measures do these prescribe in the event of an emergency? What evacuation plans exist for emergencies of this kind?
2. At the time of the accident the train was travelling at 28 kph; up to what speed would the safety of the Excellox 6 containers have been assured?
3. As there would have been a catastrophe if the train had collided with a passenger train, why was the train's route not closed to passenger trains?
4. What were the reasons for the train's circuitous route via this region where three countries meet? Why was the most direct route — via Belgium and the Netherlands — not selected?
5. Was the load-bearing capacity of the line checked and the maximum speed prescribed?
6. What were the levels of neutron irradiation and radiation exposure received by the rescue teams?

(¹) OJ C 319, 18.10.1997, p. 101.

Answer given by Mr Papoutsis on behalf of the Commission

(14 July 1997)

1. The emergency plans fall within the powers of the national authorities. In this instance the necessary action was taken under the authority of the prefect.
2. The engineering performance criteria to be met by the containers have been set out by the International Atomic Energy Agency in the regulation on the carriage of radioactive materials, 1985 version, as amended in 1990 (safety collection No 6). The Excellox 6 containers must meet those criteria.
3. At the time of the accident the train was not travelling on a major line but was in an area set aside for shunting.
4. Matters concerning physical protection prompt the Member States, who alone are competent in this area, to lay down the route to be followed by trains.
5. and 6. The Commission would invite the Honourable Member to refer to the answer given to written question E-1561/97 (¹) by Mr Ben Fayot.

(¹) See page 71.

(98/C 21/183)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1716/97**by Hiltrud Breyer (V) to the Commission***(23 May 1997)**Subject:* Electricity Grid Feed Act

The letter of 26 October 1996 from Commissioner Van Miert to Germany's Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Rexrodt, states that, in the field of wind power production, the Commission was assuming that 'in 1990 there had been a capacity of 20 MW and that the additional cost to all electricity supply companies in Germany had been between DM 500 000 and 1 million per annum'. If one accepts these figures, the additional costs arising from wind power are, at most, DM 0.0125-0.025/kWh. This calculation accords with German case law dealing with cartels and information provided by renewable energy associations. At the same time, however, this figure completely contradicts the alleged additional costs of up to DM 900 million in 2005 which have been asserted by the German energy industry and accepted by the Commission without verification (with an estimated installed wind power capacity of 4000 MW). If one carries out the calculation in the same way as the Commission, the additional costs in 2005 could not exceed DM 100-200 million for all German energy suppliers.

1. The studies of trends in the costs of wind power published in Germany in early 1997 show that the Electricity Grid Feed Act clearly does not result in excessive subsidies being paid. These studies demonstrate that only at the most favourable coastal sites do the rates of subsidy currently granted permit the facilities to operate economically. This calculation does not even take account of the impact of possible future damage to facilities and repair work. Is Directorate-General IV aware of these studies, and will it qualify its statements of October 1996 in the light of this new information?

2. Is the Competition Commissioner aware that his German Director-General, Alexander Schaub, is a member of the same party as Minister for Economic Affairs Rexrodt, to whom the letter of 26 October 1996 was addressed? Is there not a serious conflict of interest in this case, particularly in view of the fact that Mr Schaub drafted an internal note from Directorate-General IV on the Electricity Grid Feed Act, quite blatantly accepting without verification the position of PreussenElektra, which had complained, and not even mentioning the material submitted by the renewable energy associations?

Answer given by Mr Van Miert on behalf of the Commission*(9 July 1997)*

1. Several studies on the development of costs for production of wind energy in Germany have been submitted to the Commission in 1997 and are being examined. As far as their results may influence the evaluation of the 'Stromeinspeisungsgesetz' under state aid law, the Commission will take them into account in its decision how to proceed in this matter.

2. The Commission is obliged to examine complaints from enterprises and individuals about the infringement of competition rules of the Community. In complying with this obligation, the Commission regularly asks the government of the Member State concerned to comment the facts underlying the complaint. This was the purpose of the letter sent by the Commission to the minister of Economics.

(98/C 21/184)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1726/97**by Richard Corbett (PSE) to the Commission***(23 May 1997)**Subject:* Southport sea wall

1. Can the Commission confirm that it verified that the UK complied with the provisions of Directive 92/43 ⁽¹⁾ (Habitats Directive) and Directive 85/337 ⁽²⁾ (Environmental Impact Assessment) in authorizing this project?

2. In doing so, was it satisfied that the alternative of 'natural sea defences' (i.e. allowing embryonic sand dunes to develop) was given sufficient consideration?

3. When the Commission carried out an on-site inspection, why did it not involve those persons and organizations that had originally submitted the complaint to it concerning the conformity of the project with European legislation, as it has done on many previous site inspections (e.g. on the Bootle docks coal dust problem within the same local authority), even if this is not a legal requirement?
4. When it authorized the project, why did the Commission not have the courtesy to inform the original complainants immediately?

(¹) OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7.

(²) OJ L 175, 5.7.1985, p. 40.

Answer given by Mrs Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission

(15 July 1997)

The Commission can confirm that before approving the funding of part of the Southport sea wall scheme, it did ascertain that the project would not infringe the two directives mentioned in the question. Since no significant effects were established, the question as to alternative solutions under Article 6 of the habitats Directive did not arise. Those who had complained to the Commission on the sea wall project were informed later of the Commission's approval of funding. The Commission is aware that a delay of three and a half months to inform the association is too long. As such, concrete steps have been taken to improve the administrative procedure so as to ensure timely distribution of relevant information.

Concerning the visit to the site by representatives of the Commission, the Honourable Member should note that this was an informal visit undertaken at the request of the local council. The Commission's interest in undertaking such a visit was only to establish visually, at first hand, the area of coast and precise location of the proposed project. No people or organisations associated with the complaint were met during the visit because the Commission was already in receipt of substantial correspondence and material relating to the potential environmental impact from the complainants and understood fully their concerns in regard to the proposed development.

(98/C 21/185)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1731/97

by Esko Seppänen (GUE/NGL) to the Commission

(23 May 1997)

Subject: Raising of the retirement age for women, and compensation therefor

The Finnish Government is drafting a law based on the EU Court of Justice's 'Barber' decision which will raise the retirement age for women to the same age as applies to men without giving the women affected by this any compensation.

Will the Commission ensure that Member States respect the principle that nobody's entitlements may be reduced in connection with the said decision?

Answer given by Mr Flynn on behalf of the Commission

(2 July 1997)

The Commission would inform the Honourable Member that, with regard to equality between men and women in the matter of retirement age, the essential factor from the point of view of Community law (Article 119 of the EC Treaty, and Directives 86/378/EEC (¹) and 96/97/EC (²)) is that men and women should be treated equally in occupational social security schemes (³). This equal treatment may result either in the fixing of an identical retirement age for both sexes or in the introduction of a flexible retirement scheme comprising the same conditions for both sexes. The choice of the identical age is a matter for the occupational scheme in question to decide, in accordance with the rules and arrangements applicable in the Member State concerned.

Council Directive 96/97/EC of 20 December 1996, amending Directive 86/378/EEC so as to bring it into conformity with Article 119 of the EC Treaty, as interpreted by the Court of Justice in its 'Barber' judgment and related subsequent judgments, stipulates that Member States shall take the measures necessary to comply with the said Directive by 1 July 1997. The Commission intends writing to all Member States in the very near future to ask them to supply details of the measures taken to implement the Directive.

(¹) OJ L 225, 12.8.1986.

(²) OJ L 46, 17.2.1997.

(³) Equality of treatment between men and women as regards retirement age in statutory schemes has not yet been introduced. Pursuant to Article 7(1)(a) of Directive 79/7/EEC (OJ L 6, 10.1.1979), Member States may continue to apply different retirement ages for men and women.

(98/C 21/186)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1736/97
by Dominique Baudis (PPE) to the Commission
(23 May 1997)

Subject: Joint European aircraft certification authority

What steps have been taken in response to the European Parliament's request concerning a proposal to establish a European joint aviation authority for worldwide harmonization and implementation of aviation regulations, aircraft safety standards and certification (Doc A3-0426/92) (¹)?

(¹) OJ C 72, 15.3.1993, p. 173.

Answer given by Mr Kinnock on behalf of the Commission
(3 July 1997)

The Commission has, on several occasions, stressed the need for a European aviation safety authority, to establish common high safety requirements and to ensure their effective and uniform application throughout Europe, as well as their promotion world-wide.

On 10 December 1996, the Commission adopted a recommendation for a Council decision to authorise the Commission pursuant to negotiating directives to negotiate, on behalf of the Community, with European third countries, the international convention which it considers necessary to create such an authority.

Discussions on this basis continue in the Council and the Commission is hopeful that it will soon obtain the authorisation which would allow it to proceed.

The Commission intention has been discussed in Parliament's committee on transport and tourism during its debates on the Commission's communication 'A Community aviation safety improvement strategy' (¹).

(¹) SEC(96) 1083 final.

(98/C 21/187)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1737/97
by Bernard Stasi (PPE) to the Commission
(23 May 1997)

Subject: Management by the Community of natural resources in southern Africa

At its meeting of 17-20 March 1997 in Brussels, the ACP-EU Joint Assembly unanimously adopted two resolutions concerning southern Africa, acknowledging the success of Community programmes for the management of natural resources, for example the 'Campfire' programme in Zimbabwe, and endorsing the strategies selected by the countries of southern Africa to develop their rural economies and protect resources in terms of biodiversity by making rural communities more aware of their responsibilities in this respect and ensuring sustainable use of natural resources.

What steps will the Commission make — for example in the course of international fora such as the tenth CITES Conference to be held next June in Zimbabwe — to support efforts by southern African countries in this area, in accordance with the principles set out in the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21?

Answer given by Mr Pinheiro on behalf of the Commission

(9 July 1997)

The Commission welcomes the acknowledged success of the programmes for the conservation and management of natural resources in Southern Africa.

The Commission intends to pursue its current policy of support for the strategies adopted by the countries of Southern Africa, notably Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe, to ensure the effective conservation and utilisation of their natural resources. It has accordingly provided financing for a training programme, launched under the aegis of the Southern Africa Development Community, concerning the management of fauna in the region.

In addition, within the framework of the programming of the Lomé IV Second Financial Protocol, the Commission, in accord with each of the countries concerned, has agreed to step up its support for rural development policies which lay particular stress on the conservation and efficient utilisation of natural resources.

The Commission considers that the results of the tenth Conference of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, held in Harare represent a compromise which recognises and supports the efforts made by the Southern African countries and which, whilst responding to their requests for sustainable exploitation of their natural resources and fauna, nevertheless ensures that these will be safeguarded in line with the principles of the Rio Declaration.

(98/C 21/188)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1738/97

by Gisèle Moreau (GUE/NGL) to the Commission

(23 May 1997)

Subject: Economic and social implications of the ban on the use of asbestos

The European Community has introduced a policy of end-use control applicable to the marketing of products containing asbestos. Certain Member States — including France since 1 January 1997 — have decided to impose a total ban on the production, import and marketing of products containing asbestos. While this decision is justified in terms of safety and health at work and public health, it is being used as a pretext by companies such as Eternit to lay off workers and close down plant. In many cases the same companies had previously refused to carry out reconversions, disputing the risks associated with asbestos. What measures will the Commission take with a view to:

- achieving a total ban on the production, import and marketing of products containing asbestos,
- promoting research and production of alternative products which are totally risk-free in terms of safety and health at work and public health in general,
- encouraging the reconversion of industrial plant towards asbestos-free products in order to avoid loss of jobs?

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission

(10 July 1997)

The Commission recalls that the Community has operated a policy of controlled use on the marketing of asbestos-containing products since the mid-1980's. Accordingly, all but one of the asbestos fibres are totally banned and fourteen categories of products containing the last remaining fibre, known as chrysotile, are also banned. Other product categories containing chrysotile fall outside the scope of Community harmonisation and should be allowed to circulate freely provided they are properly labelled and subject to Articles 30 and 36 of the EC Treaty.

The Commission relaunched discussions on the asbestos question with Member State experts in 1996. Meetings were held on 26 July 1996 and 7 November 1996. A further meeting is planned during July 1997 to consider the first results of an independent study on asbestos and substitute fibres. The Commission intends to examine, as quickly as possible, all the most recent scientific, technical and economical analyses in order to review policy with regard to asbestos.

With regard to possible substitution products, the Commission is expected to adopt danger classifications in the framework of Directive 67/548/EEC on the classification packaging and labelling of dangerous substances ⁽¹⁾ in the near future for certain man-made mineral fibres. In addition, these and other fibres, notably cellulose, polyvinyl alcohol and aramid, are being examined in terms of their potential to substitute asbestos as part of the above-mentioned study.

⁽¹⁾ OJ 196, 16.8.1967.

(98/C 21/189)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1745/97

by José Apolinário (PSE) to the Commission

(23 May 1997)

Subject: Collecting and recycling batteries

With regard to the action programme to combat pollution from cadmium, on the basis of the Council's resolution of 25 January 1988, can the Commission tell me:

1. How it evaluates the application of Directives 91/157/EEC ⁽¹⁾ and 93/86/EEC ⁽²⁾ by Member State? Have all Member States transposed the directives into national law?
2. The percentage of batteries recycled, by Member State?
3. What new measures it intends to introduce?

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 78, 26.3.1991, p. 38.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 264, 23.10.1993, p. 51.

Answer given by Mrs Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission

(4 July 1997)

Community Directive 91/157/EEC on batteries and accumulators limits the presence of mercury in batteries. It also contains a number of provisions for certain types of batteries, namely those containing a certain level of mercury, cadmium and lead. Member States are required to establish systems with a view to their separate collection. Furthermore, Directive 93/86/EEC establishes the detailed arrangements for the marking system envisaged by the first Directive.

1. Practically all Member States have adopted implementing measures concerning both Directives. However, measures concerning collection, marking and economic instruments are particularly divergent among Member States. Currently some twenty infringement cases have been opened against Member States for failure to implement or incorrect implementation of both Directives. In practice the fragmented implementation of both Directives by Member States has given rise to a number of obstacles and barriers to trade resulting in distortions of the internal market rules.
2. The Commission does not have the necessary data in order to answer fully the Honourable Member. However, on the basis of the available information, it may be said that in general, large and automotive batteries are to a large extent collected and recycled — up to 90% in some Member States. As far as consumer batteries are concerned, the collection and recycling rates are much lower. Although some Member States have achieved collection rates of around 50% for this category of batteries — Netherlands, Austria, Germany — most Member States appear to be far from that figure. The situation seems to be particularly disappointing for portable nickel cadmium (NiCd) batteries the collection rates of which vary in Member States between 10% and 35%.

3. The Commission is looking into the need for a general review of Directive 91/157/EEC, which may result in a proposal to the Parliament and the Council during this year. During the review, the Commission will look into the need to extend the scope of the Directive, further to restrict the marketing of environmentally hazardous batteries as well as to improve the collection, recycling and marking requirements.

(98/C 21/190)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1750/97

by Nikitas Kaklamanis (UPE) to the Commission

(27 May 1997)

Subject: Initiative to save Ayia Sofia in Istanbul

The church of Ayia Sofia is one of the most important monuments in the world. However, it is beset by severe problems and is even in danger of collapsing. All the restoration work carried out since the 6th century has deformed and weighed down the delicate original shell of the church with unnecessary heavy masonry and it is commonly remarked that every bus that passes Ayia Sofia brings it one step nearer collapse.

Its main columns are leaning, which is even visible to the naked eye, and its generally destabilized state is apparent from the fact that the small pillars do not stand perpendicular. There are cracks everywhere and the marble columns have already been reinforced to withstand the pressure but, unfortunately, the situation is made worse because the area is prone to earthquakes.

What is the possibility of taking an initiative to save this monument, in collaboration with the Greek and Turkish Governments and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, to prevent this unique monument from collapsing and to build bridges for communication, understanding and dialogue between the Greek and Turkish nations, which would obviously be helpful, particularly at the present time?

Answer given by Mr Van den Broek on behalf of the Commission

(3 July 1997)

The Honourable Member should refer to the answer given by the Commission to Question E-3520/96 by Mr Kellett-Bowman ⁽¹⁾.

In view of its particular importance, Ayia Sofia is continuously monitored by a scientific committee set up in 1992 comprising architects and specialists in seismic engineering.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 138, 5.5.1997.

(98/C 21/191)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1759/97

by Claude Desama (PSE) to the Commission

(27 May 1997)

Subject: Communal tax on dish aerials for the reception of TV programmes transmitted by satellite

Several large Belgian communes have just conferred on themselves the right to impose an annual charge on the use of dish aerials for the reception of radio and television programme programmes transmitted by satellites with Europe-wide coverage.

Could the Commission ascertain whether this provision infringes the 'television without frontiers' directive and whether it constitutes discrimination by the Belgian communal authorities, or indeed an obstacle to the free flow of information, since it seeks to deter access to satellite signals by means of receiving equipment?

Answer given by Mr Oreja on behalf of the Commission*(7 July 1997)*

The Commission is now looking into the matter raised by the Honorable Member. A tax on dish aerials could be illegal if it was found to contravene Article 59 of the EC Treaty by restricting the freedom to provide services, or Article 2 of Directive 89/552/EEC ⁽¹⁾, the 'Television without frontiers' Directive, which establishes the principle of freedom of reception and retransmission of television broadcasts from other Member States.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 298, 17.10.1989.

(98/C 21/192)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1762/97**by Jan Mulder (ELDR) to the Commission***(27 May 1997)*

Subject: Imports of flowers from Latin American countries

On 29 April I received the Commission's answer to my question E-0901/97 ⁽¹⁾ of 24 April 1997. The Commission states that it does not yet have the results of a large-scale survey of the functioning of the SGP scheme with the countries of the Andean Pact, the Central American Common Market and Panama. The special arrangements with Colombia have been in force since 13 November 1990.

My supplementary questions are as follows:

1. Why is it that in late April 1997 the Commission had still not evaluated the scheme involving Colombia which has been in force since 13 November 1990, particularly as the United States appear to have the requisite information to enable them to evaluate the arrangements and to draw far-reaching conclusions?
2. When does the Commission think it will be able to evaluate these arrangements, and in particular inform Parliament of whether the trading concessions satisfy the original objectives?

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 373, 9.12.1997.

Answer given by Mr Marín on behalf of the Commission*(20 June 1997)*

1. The Commission keeps a close watch on trends in exports to the Community from the Andean and Central American countries accorded special arrangements under the scheme of generalised tariff preferences. Studies of the impact of those arrangements on Andean trade were carried out prior to the scheme's extension to include Venezuela from 1 January 1995. Via monitoring arrangements set up jointly with the countries concerned, the Commission also keeps abreast of their efforts to combat drug trafficking and progress made in terms of improved legislation, reductions in the area cultivated to produce drugs, and law enforcement.

On the basis of the data available to it, the Commission judged the impact of the special arrangements to be satisfactory, and said so in its report to the Generalised Preferences Committee in December 1995, pursuant to Article 18 of Council Regulation (EC) No 3281/94 of 19 December 1994 ⁽¹⁾. Nonetheless, the Commission felt that a more detailed examination of the impact of the special arrangements, including their long-term socio-economic effects, was needed. It was to that comprehensive, up-to-date study that the Commission referred in its answer to the Honourable Member's written question E-0901/97. It is not aware that the US has the information needed to evaluate the effects of the special arrangements granted by the Community.

2. The Commission expects to receive the preliminary conclusions of the study in question in July and to present its final report to the Generalised Preferences Committee when it reconvenes in October.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 348, 31.12.1994.

(98/C 21/193)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1766/97**by Nikitas Kaklamanis (UPE) to the Commission***(27 May 1997)*

Subject: Fitting of gas 'traps' to HGV exhausts and Community funding

According to a report in the Greek newspaper *Athinaiki*, the Commission's LIFE programme encourages the fitting of 'traps' to HGV exhaust-pipes, which greatly reduces pollutant emissions. The report also states that the Commission pays 50% of the cost involved, the other 50% being covered by the Member State.

Will the Commission state the terms on which hauliers may apply to have a 'trap' fitted to their vehicles' exhaust? How many applications have been received from Greece and what is the total amount given to that country?

Answer given by Mrs Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission*(4 July 1997)*

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that it is unaware of the information set out in the Greek '*Athinaiki*' newspaper on the subject referred to. Moreover, although a draft proposal concerning 'traps for particulates emitted by diesel engines' was indeed put forward in the LIFE programme in 1996 and 1997 no such proposal has so far been adopted for co-financing.

The LIFE programme could possibly finance a project proposal on the subject in question provided that it meets the criteria laid down by Council LIFE (EC) Regulation No 1404/96 of 15 July 1996 ⁽¹⁾ amending Council Regulation 1973/92 on the creation of a financial instrument for the environment, and more particularly, that of being demonstrative and innovative in nature and of being selected for co-financing on completion of the Commission's selection procedure.

The LIFE financial support is 30% of the spending that is eligible for projects generating revenue, and 50% of the spending for other activities.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 181, 20.7.1996.

(98/C 21/194)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1767/97**by Nikitas Kaklamanis (UPE) to the Commission***(27 May 1997)*

Subject: Selection of staff for the European Environment Agency (EEA)

The European Environment Agency is funded from the EU budget. The Agency has a shortage of Greek staff, whose presence is confined to the vice-chairmanship of the EEA's Scientific Committee and ex officio placements of Greek civil servants.

A new process of selecting staff ('temporary agents') at grades A7, A6 and A5 is already under way. Will the Commission, therefore, say whether the selection process will endeavour to observe the required balance of nationalities among the EEA's staff so that Greek nationals are adequately represented at this very important European Agency?

Answer given by Mrs Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission*(1 July 1997)*

The European environment agency is an independent body with legal personality even though it is funded almost entirely by a subsidy from the Community budget. Article 9 of Regulation (EEC) No 1210/90 on the establishment of the European environment agency and the European environment information and observation

network ⁽¹⁾ gives responsibility to the executive director of the Agency for all staff matters and the executive director, in turn, is accountable to the management board of the Agency for his activities. This means that the Commission is not responsible for the Agency's recruitment procedures and is not able to comment on the details of the selection process, including the competition for the recruitment of three 'A' grade staff and two 'B' grade staff which was published in the Official journal on 11th April 1997.

The question has been passed onto the executive director for a detailed response on behalf of the Agency.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 120, 11.5.1990.

(98/C 21/195)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1774/97

by Alexandros Alavanos (GUE/NGL) to the Commission

(27 May 1997)

Subject: Producers ineligible for compensation

The Greek Ministries of Agriculture and Finance have decided to interpret EU Regulation 2328/91 ⁽¹⁾ as excluding from the programme for compensation for damage caused by heavy rain and floods between September and December 1996 'any person, and members of their family, who have been convicted or are awaiting prosecution for offences under public criminal law, before their release or before final judgment is passed.'

As the compensation is awarded following the Commission's approval and given that such a decision excludes certain producers and is also problematic in procedural terms, will the Commission say whether it has approved the particular interpretative text excluding producers from the compensation programme? Does it consider the above text to be a valid interpretation of EU Regulation 2328/91?

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 218, 6.8.1991, p. 1.

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission

(1 July 1997)

The Commission has begun to examine the national aid scheme notified by Greece for repairing the damage caused by heavy rain and floods between September and December 1996 to ensure that it is compatible with Articles 92 to 94 of the EC Treaty governing aids granted by the Member States.

However, since the national decision defining the recipients of this aid referred to by the Honourable Member was not notified to the Commission, it is requesting further information from the Greek authorities.

(98/C 21/196)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1779/97

by Karl von Wogau (PPE) to the Commission

(27 May 1997)

Subject: Obstacle to free movement of services

The Mannheim Convention of 17 October 1868 declares the Rhine to be an 'international waterway' and vessels using it must therefore fly the flag of one of the bordering States. This provision also applies to the owners of pleasure craft.

Owners of pleasure craft who register their vessels in Strasbourg are required to pay a tax to obtain a French nationality certificate in order to be able to fly the French flag and sail on the Rhine. This tax is intended for navigation on the high seas and in international waters and amounts to FF 10 000 annually. Pleasure craft owners registering their vessels in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands or Switzerland do not pay a special tax in order to use the Rhine.

1. Is this Mannheim Convention dating from 1868 compatible with the Treaties of Rome and is not the Rhine an internal waterway of the EU?
2. Should not this tax to obtain a French nationality certificate when registering a vessel in Strasbourg be considered as an obstacle to the free movement of services to the extent that owners of pleasure craft will not register in Strasbourg and will as a result be prevented from providing services?
3. Would it be possible to sail under the European flag when the EU acquires legal personality?

Answer given by Mr Kinnock on behalf of the Commission

(11 July 1997)

In accordance with Article 234 of the EC Treaty, the Mannheim Convention of 1868 is an example of an agreement which has not so far been affected by the provisions of the Treaty.

The information provided by the Honourable Member does not allow the Commission to conclude that the conditions governing registration of pleasure boats in Strasbourg constitute an obstacle to the freedom to provide services. The existence of restrictions upon the principle of the freedom to provide services pre-supposes obstacles which hinder the exercise of a cross-border economic activity, which is not the case here given the category of boat concerned.

The Commission has no plans to establish a European flag for vessels, irrespective of whether the Union obtains legal personality or not.

(98/C 21/197)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1786/97

by Christine Oddy (PSE) to the Commission

(27 May 1997)

Subject: Recognition of a European qualification in psychotherapy

Is the Commission aware that the UK Council for Psychotherapy and psychotherapy organizations in other Member States would like recognition for a European Certificate in Psychotherapy so that qualified psychotherapists are recognized and can practise throughout the EU?

This qualification should be open to health practitioners such as doctors and nursing staff and social workers as well as those qualified in psychology or psychiatry.

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission

(1 July 1997)

The Commission is aware of the European Association of Psychotherapy (EAP)'s initiative to introduce a European Certificate of Psychotherapy (ECP). According to the information available to the Commission, the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy is a member of the EAP, which brings together a large number of national associations representing the profession.

The Commission considers — as it has stated on several occasions, including in its answers to written questions Nos E-3429/93 by Mr Rovsing ⁽¹⁾ and E-4094/93 by Mr Chiabrando and Mr Pisoni ⁽²⁾ — that initiatives taken by European professional associations such as the EAP can play an important role in Member States' implementation of the 'general system' Directives 89/48/EEC ⁽³⁾ and 92/51/EEC ⁽⁴⁾. In particular, the establishment of joint training standards — more commonly known as joint platforms — such as the ECP can facilitate freedom of establishment by reducing or completely removing any substantial differences between training (differences which would otherwise entail the migrant having to complete an adaptation period or take an aptitude test as provided for by the Directives referred to above).

However, in line with the approach followed by the 'general system' Directives, matters relating to the regulation of professions (requirements governing training and professional practice, competent authorities) fall under the Member States' jurisdiction. Consequently, it is not for the Commission to accept or reject joint platforms established by European professional associations. In other words, the Commission does not formally recognize such joint platforms — even though it is aware of their benefit in promoting free movement of professionals within the single market.

Joint platforms remain private initiatives, and thus cannot replace national regulation. Nevertheless, a certificate such as the ECP submitted by a migrant would provide the host Member State's authorities with certain guarantees as regards the training undergone. Thus the success of initiatives such as that taken by the EAP largely depends on the national authorities' acceptance of each joint platform as a yardstick. The fact that training leading to the award of the ECP is also open to members of other professions is an additional advantage in this regard.

(¹) OJ C 268, 26.9.1994.

(²) OJ C 332, 28.11.1994.

(³) OJ L 19, 24.1.1989.

(⁴) OJ L 209, 24.7.1992.

(98/C 21/198)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1787/97

by Richard Howitt (PSE) to the Commission

(27 May 1997)

Subject: Television licences

Can the Commission comment on the current UK practice of charging people for the use of the same television at two separate addresses twice? This practice would seem to penalize those who need to use their television in two places and cannot be a fair practice.

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission

(11 July 1997)

The Commission cannot comment on the practice described by the Honourable Member. In general, licence fees fall within the competence of the Member States. For example, recital No 13 of directive 89/552/EEC on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the pursuit of television broadcasting activities (¹) stipulates that the Directive does not affect the responsibility of Member States with regard to the organisation and financing of programmes. However, measures taken by Member States in this regard must be compatible with Community law. The facts given in the question are not sufficient to indicate in themselves that there is any infringement of Community law.

(¹) OJ L 298, 17.10.1989.

(98/C 21/199)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1791/97

by Anne Poisson (UPE) to the Commission

(27 May 1997)

Subject: Production of European Union official documents in braille

The European Union, the European Parliament and other agencies and institutions produce and distribute a number of official documents providing information.

Unfortunately they are not accessible to everyone, especially the blind.

At present there are 7.4 million blind and partially sighted people in Europe, which amounts to 2% of the population.

In the interests of better public access to information, can the Commission say when and to what extent official documents will be available in braille?

Answer given by Mr Oreja on behalf of the Commission

(4 July 1997)

The Commission is very sensitive to the difficulties which partially sighted European citizens can experience in gaining access to official documents.

The spread of standards such as the standard generalised mark-up language (SGML) for structured information retrieval enables technical solutions to be devised for making certain documents available in Braille.

Taking account of the demands already made on the Commission's resources, it is at present unlikely that all official documents will be made available in Braille in 11 languages.

Nevertheless, for some time all official documents relating to the integration of disabled persons (programmes, reports, resolutions, European guides) as well as the Helioscope and Helios Flash publications have also been accessible to the blind and partially sighted on diskette in all possible languages. Anyone interested may obtain from the Commission a diskette version of the document required in order to easily transform it into Braille or print adapted for the partially sighted.

The Commission will raise the question of extending this approach to other documents with the Management Committee of the Publications Office in order to decide on a common approach for the European institutions.

(98/C 21/200)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1805/97

by Robert Evans (PSE) to the Commission

(28 May 1997)

Subject: EU levy on Cassava products

Would the Commission explain the somewhat high levy that is placed upon the cassava products listed below.

- Cassava dough 1901909999 / additional code 7010
- Cassava flour 1901909975 / additional code 7015?

Companies operating in my constituency are confused as to why the rate should be so high for these products.

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission

(4 July 1997)

Processed agricultural products not covered by Annex II to the EC Treaty are subject to a trade regime established by Council Regulation (EC) No 3448/93 ⁽¹⁾ laying down the trade arrangements applicable to certain goods resulting from the processing of agricultural products. The regime aims to safeguard the commercial and agricultural policies of the Community.

At import and like numerous other processed agricultural products subject to the regime, food preparations containing cassava falling under code 1901 90 99 of the combined nomenclature are subject to a duty comprising two parts — an ad valorem rate corresponding to industrial protection and a specific amount corresponding to the protection necessary for agricultural reasons.

In accordance with the objectives of the common agricultural policy the specific amount takes account of the quantities of agricultural raw materials used in manufacture. It is based upon the duties applied to imports of the relevant raw materials in the natural state. The raw material import duties for cassava flour, cassava starch, potato starch and maize starch are identical.

All the specific amounts which form part of the duty applied to processed agricultural products including food preparations containing cassava falling under code 1901 90 99 of the combined nomenclature were bound in the General agreement on tariffs and trade Uruguay Round settlement. These bindings were based upon the average of the levies applied over the period 1986 to 1988.

(¹) OJ L 318, 20.12.1993.

(98/C 21/201)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1806/97
by Robert Evans (PSE) to the Commission
(28 May 1997)

Subject: EU quotas on electrical goods

Would the Commission give a detailed outlay of any restrictions on the import of electrical wiring accessories (plugs, switches, sockets), into the European Union?

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission

(18 July 1997)

Electrical wiring accessories, like switches, plugs and sockets, are not subject to Community quotas on imports. Some restrictions are applied to such products imported from Iraq or Libya (¹).

No particular restriction based on technical rules and standards exists for imported electrical equipment subject to Community harmonisation.

In fact, as far as conditions applicable to placing on the Community market are concerned, electrical equipment, including wiring accessories, is subject to Directive 73/23/EEC, as modified by Directive 93/68/EEC, on the harmonisation of the laws of the Member States relating to electrical equipment designed for use within certain voltage limits (the low voltage Directive) (²).

Products imported from third countries into the Community must comply with exactly the same Community rules which apply to domestically produced electrical equipment. The low voltage Directive sets the essential safety requirements applicable. A declaration of conformity by the manufacturer or his authorised representative is required and must be kept at the disposal of market surveillance authorities. No third party certification is required.

For plugs and sockets for domestic use excluded from the scope of that Directive, national provisions and standards are in force.

(¹) The electrical apparatus for switching or protecting electrical circuits or for making connections to or in electrical circuits (switches, fuses lightning arresters, voltage limiters, surge suppressors, plugs, junction boxes and the like), for a voltage exceeding 1,000 volts, of CN heading 8535 and the same types of apparatus, for a voltage not exceeding 1,000 volts, of heading 8536 intended strictly for essential civilian needs or for medical purposes are excluded from the ban applying to products originating in Iraq, but require a preliminary import authorisation, pursuant to paragraph 23 of United Nations Security Council Resolution 687/1991, to be delivered by the committee established under Security Council Resolution 661/1990, before their import into the Community can be approved. Import into the Community of all components for use in certain types of aircraft within the two mentioned headings originating in Libya is banned, pursuant to Council Regulation (EEC) 3274/93 – OJ L 295, 30.11.1993.

(²) OJ L 220, 30.8.1997.

(98/C 21/202)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1807/97
by Robert Evans (PSE) to the Commission
(28 May 1997)

Subject: EU safety regulations and the disabled

Is the Commission aware of the problems of access for the disabled sometimes created by buildings conforming to fire and other safety regulations (heavy doors and so on)?

Is the Commission looking into ways around these problems of access when those with disabilities already face so many barriers in accessing buildings and utilizing public transport?

Answer given by M. Flynn behalf of the Commission

(16 July 1997)

The Commission is aware of the problems which disabled people can experience in access to buildings. In its communication of 30 July 1996 on equality of opportunity for people with disabilities ⁽¹⁾, the Commission noted the fact that many public buildings continue to be inaccessible or accessible only with difficulty and further noted the benefits that 'designed for all' and universal access can bring for many groups, including people with disabilities.

Council Directive 89/654/EEC concerning the minimum safety and health requirements for the workplace ⁽²⁾ specifies that 'workplaces must be organised to take account of handicapped workers, if necessary. This provision applies in particular to the doors, passageways, staircases, showers, washbasins, lavatories and work stations used or occupied directly by handicapped persons'.

⁽¹⁾ COM(96) 406 final.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 393, 30.12.1989.

(98/C 21/203)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1810/97

by Ernesto Caccavale (UPE) to the Commission

(28 May 1997)

Subject: AIDS controversy

Many questions have been raised about AIDS by a scientific controversy involving more than 700 specialists from 23 countries including the greatest living retrovirologist, Peter Duesberg.

Extensive documentation has recently been published in Italy by the well-known sexologist Luigi De Marchi and the specialist in infectious diseases Fabio Franchi ('AIDS — La grande truffa' (the big fraud), SEAM, Rome, 1997). The publications highlight unjustified alarmism and numerous conflicting opinions of most Italian and international health authorities on the subject of AIDS.

The controversy questions the validity of major crucial aspects of the presentation and treatment of AIDS from discovery of the virus to definition of the illness, epidemiological prognoses, the uselessness of tests, the harmfulness of treatments and the search for an 'impossible' vaccine.

1. Is the Commission aware of these publications and the theories they expound?
2. If so, will it inform the European Parliament and other bodies of the importance of the documentation and the claims?
3. Does it not consider it advisable to appoint a multidisciplinary committee of inquiry (not confined to virologists and infectious disease specialists) to shed light on the numerous inconsistencies concerning this plague of the second millennium?

Answer given by Mr Flynn on behalf of the Commission

(16 July 1997)

The Commission has no knowledge of the publication mentioned and is collecting the information necessary to answer the questions put by the Honourable Member. It will let him know the results of its inquiries as soon as possible.

(98/C 21/204)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1817/97**by Jesús Cabezón Alonso (PSE) to the Commission***(28 May 1997)**Subject:* Milk quotas

Can the Commission confirm that, having analysed the milk market in the European Union, it will propose to the Council that the production quota system in this sector be maintained until the year 2005?

Will this mean that there will be no changes to the milk quotas allocated to each of the countries of the European Union?

(98/C 21/205)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1818/97**by Jesús Cabezón Alonso (PSE) to the Commission***(28 May 1997)**Subject:* Milk market in the European Union

What basic principles will the Commission include in its document analysing the situation of the milk market in the European Union?

What time-scale does the Commission envisage for revising the COM for milk products?

**Joint answer
to Written Questions E-1817/97 and E-1818/97
given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission**

(27 June 1997)

In December 1992 the system of dairy quotas was extended until 31 March 2000. Discussions should now begin on the arrangements to be applied at a later date.

With this in mind, the Commission began by drawing up two working papers 'CAP 2000 long-term forecasts' and 'Situation and prospects in the dairy sector' which have recently been published and sent to Parliament. The Honourable Member is referred to them.

At this stage, it is therefore premature to give an opinion on any renewal of the system and its application.

(98/C 21/206)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1819/97**by Jesús Cabezón Alonso (PSE) to the Commission***(28 May 1997)**Subject:* BSE and possible sanctions against officials

Bearing in mind the research and conclusions of the special parliamentary committee which studied the origins and development of bovine spongiform encephalopathy and the possible failures to comply with Community legislation, will the Commission instigate and, where appropriate, decide on administrative penalties against Commission officials?

Answer given by Mr Santer on behalf of the Commission

(30 June 1997)

The Commission will act, conforming to the statute, in taking the appropriate measures, both at the level of the organisation of its services, and at the level of the individual measures, that it judges to be necessary.

(98/C 21/207)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1827/97**by Alfonso Novo Belenguer (ARE) to the Commission***(28 May 1997)**Subject:* EU potato imports

Potato-growing is a firmly established activity in the autonomous community of Valencia. Thousands of families depend on the smooth operation of the European market. Nevertheless, this sector is being seriously damaged by massive potato imports from third countries, mainly Egypt, contrary to the principle of Community preference, and this is causing a steady fall in potato prices, which have slumped to 20 pesetas. Such prices do not allow Valencian farmers even to cover the costs involved in potato-growing.

Bearing in mind that, in spite of the crisis in the sector which has now lasted for two consecutive marketing years, the EU has offered Egypt customs-free entry of 220 000 tonnes of potatoes, what measures will the Commission adopt to offset the damage to the potato sector as a result of the preferential agreement with Egypt?

When will these measures come into effect?

Will the Commission guarantee minimum income levels for farmers?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission*(27 June 1997)*

Negotiations with Egypt started in 1995 and are in progress. One of the unresolved elements of the negotiations is the arrangement on agricultural reciprocal concessions, where the positions of both parties remain apart. The Community position is based on the negotiation directives adopted by the Council in 1995.

Under the 1977 agreement which is operational at present, 109 000 tonnes of Egyptian early potatoes can be imported duty free between 1 January and 31 March each year. The average Egyptian exports in the period 1994/1996 were 204 000 tonnes, with a maximum of 271 000 tonnes in 1995. Actual exports depend strongly on the market situation of the Community so that the record export figure of 1995 coincides with a period of short internal supply. Egyptian exports within the preferential period account for 140 000 tonnes (average figure) while 64 000 tonnes are exported from 1 April to 15 May (paying full duties).

In the absence of a common market organization for potatoes, the Commission has no competence to regulate the potato market in Europe. The Commission is fully aware of the problems caused by the absence of a market organization for potatoes and proposed in 1992 to set up such a system⁽¹⁾. The Commission remains convinced that the existing proposal represents the best compromise taking into account the different points of view expressed by the Member States.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 333, 17.12.1992.

(98/C 21/208)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1836/97**by Fernand Herman (PPE) to the Commission***(27 May 1997)**Subject:* Interpretation of Directive 90/388/EEC on competition in the markets for telecommunications services

In the context of the liberalization of the market for telecommunications services, the Commission has defined the term 'closed user groups' as follows:

'those entities, not necessarily bound by economic links, but which can be identified as being part of a group on the basis of a lasting professional relationship among themselves, or with another entity of the group, and whose internal communications needs result from the common interest underlying this relationship. In general, the link between the members of the group is a common business activity' ⁽¹⁾.

Will the Commission confirm that a closed user group can be composed not only of persons with relations which pre-date the offer of communications services, but also of persons whose relations which were established subsequently?

Will the Commission also confirm that no 'voice telephony' service, within the meaning of Directive 90/388/EEC⁽¹⁾, is provided when the service user can enter into communication only with persons whose telephone numbers are selected by a computer program on the basis of the frequency with which the user has dialled those numbers? The call frequency would prove the existence of a lasting business relationship between the service user and the persons whose numbers are dialled regularly.

⁽¹⁾ Communication by the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the status and implementation of Directive 90/388/EEC on competition in the markets for telecommunications services (OJ C 275, 20.10.1995, p. 2).

⁽²⁾ OJ L 192, 24.7.1990, p. 10.

Answer given by Mr Van Miert on behalf of the Commission

(19 June 1997)

Commission Directive 90/388/EEC defines voice telephony as a commercial service provided 'for the public'. The provision of telephone communications linking closed user groups is one instance among others of a service which is not run for the public and which does not, therefore, constitute voice telephony within the meaning of the Directive. To determine whether telephone services constitute voice telephony, the relevant criterion is not whether they are supplied to closed user groups, but whether they are operated for the benefit of the general public.

The idea of closed user groups is based on the existence of lasting professional links between individuals or companies. Such links may be readily identifiable, as with the examples quoted in the Commission communication of 20 October 1995. In other cases, demonstrating the existence of such connections may be a matter of fact, as in the case of the links between a company and its usual suppliers or main clients. The technique referred to by the Honourable Member — the identification of the members of a closed user group on the basis of the frequency of calls during a given reference period — may be used for this purpose.

Such an approach must not, of course, be used to the exclusion of other possible, less intrusive ways of demonstrating the existence of links between the members of a closed user group.

(98/C 21/209)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1837/97

by Winfried Menrad (PPE) to the Commission

(28 May 1997)

Subject: Special social security schemes in the public service

In connection with the right of free movement, an extension of the provisions for coordination under Regulation 1408/71⁽¹⁾ on compulsorily insured employed and self-employed persons to other groups and social security systems is imminent. One question now being discussed is how the special public-service schemes are to be included in the Regulation (see, for instance, the proceedings before the European Court of Justice).

Can the Commission indicate:

1. Which EU Member States have special social-security schemes for public-service employees (officials' pensions)?
2. Which of those states seek to protect the special schemes for officials or other pensioners by means of 'pension reserves'?
3. When it expects the pensions of persons in public service to be included in the coordination system under Regulation 1408/71?

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 149, 5.7.1971, p. 2.

Answer given by Mr Flynn on behalf of the Commission*(8 July 1997)*

1. The social security systems of the Member States are coordinated by Council Regulations (EEC) No 1408/71 and No 574/72 ⁽¹⁾. It must be noted, however, that the regulations aim only to coordinate and not to harmonize the national social security schemes. Member States are free to decide how to organize and how to finance their different social security systems.

2. A study recently carried out by the European institute of public administration ⁽²⁾ shows that most Member States pay civil servants' pensions from their own state budget. In the Netherlands the special scheme is financed through a special pension fund and in some Member States pensions are paid partly from the dedicated part of the state budget and partly with money taken from a special pension fund (Portugal and Sweden).

3. The Commission submitted a proposal in 1992 to extend the material scope of Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 to the special schemes for civil servants ⁽³⁾. It has not yet achieved the unanimity required within the Council.

On 22 November 1995 the Court of Justice ruled that the existing lack of coordination of special schemes was an obstacle to free movement which should be overcome by a Council decision. In this, the Council is free to depart in some respect from the mechanisms currently provided by Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 in order to take into account the specifics of the special schemes for civil servants ⁽⁴⁾. The Council is still discussing the possible solutions.

⁽¹⁾ Amended and updated by Regulation No 118/97 (OJ L 28, 30.1.1997).

⁽²⁾ Civil Service in the Europe of the Fifteen, Maastricht 1996.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 46, 20.2.1992.

⁽⁴⁾ Case C-443/93, VOUGIOUKAS, ECJ law report 1995, I-4033.

(98/C 21/210)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1847/97**by Daniela Raschhofer (NI) to the Commission***(30 May 1997)*

Subject: Adjustments in the clearance of accounts

In 1992 the clearance of accounts showed ECU 900 million as financial adjustments which could not be recovered until 1996 with the adoption of the clearance of accounts for 1992. As a result the EU suffered a loss of interest and financial damage amounting to some ECU 200 million. What action will the Commission take to prevent such irregularities in the future? How much funding is needed for such measures?

Answer given by Mr Liikanen on behalf of the Commission*(11 July 1997)*

The question presumably refers to the clearance of accounts for 1992 for the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF), Guarantee Section, which is the only budget heading that is subject to such a procedure.

The clearance of EAGGF Guarantee Section accounts for 1992 has been the subject of two clear Decisions. The first of these (Commission Decision No 96/311/EC of 10 April 1996 ⁽¹⁾) involved an amount of ECU 753 million that had been reimbursed to the Commission by the Member States in 1996. The second (Commission Decision No 96/701/EC of 20 November 1996 ⁽²⁾) involved an amount of ECU 70 million that was reimbursed to the Commission in November 1996 and subsequently posted to the 1997 budget. The total amount of adjustments levied on Member States for the 1992 budget was thus ECU 823 million. There can therefore be no question of a loss; on the contrary, this figure represents the recovery of a considerable amount of wrongfully paid appropriations.

The clearance of accounts procedure is governed by Article 102 of the Financial Regulation and Article 5 of Regulation (EEC) No 729/70 of 21 April 1970 ⁽³⁾. According to these provisions, the accounts for years prior to 1996 must be cleared before the end of the year following the year for which annual statements of expenditure

are submitted. If errors of any kind or deficiencies in financial control are ascertained during this period, the Member States are requested to provide an explanation. If no explanation is forthcoming or if a Member State is found to have exercised inadequate financial control, the amounts are disallowed. The Member State then remains liable for these amounts and they are recovered by the Community budget.

The financial adjustment, that is to say the amount that is still payable by the Member State, can range from rejection of an individual application to rejection of a more substantial amount, and may even amount to the total payments made for the offending operation. The forthcoming enlargement of the Community and the increasingly numerous and complex controls on bookkeeping and audits that this will entail have caused considerable delays.

A decision was taken in 1995 to reform the system, with the aim of improving the clearance of accounts procedure. The objective is to make the procedure more preventive than punitive, to improve dialogue between Member States by means of an arbitration procedure to take place before an arbitration body, and to reduce financial insecurity by cutting the time taken to reach the clearance decision. Starting with the 1996 clearance exercise, the procedure has been split into two parts: a clearance of accounts, to be carried out no later than 30 April of the following budget year, and subsequent operations audits not linked to a particular budget year and aiming to ensure that operations do not breach Community rules and regulations.

(¹) OJ L 117, 14.5.1996.

(²) OJ L 323, 13.12.1996.

(³) OJ L 94, 28.4.1970.

(98/C 21/211)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1857/97

by Marjo Matikainen-Kallström (PPE) to the Commission

(30 May 1997)

Subject: Mobility of the young

The European Union's Socrates education programme and its Erasmus subprogramme have been among the EU's most successful programmes. The number of applications for places under them is constantly growing. However, even now the number of applications is so large that the grants students receive are too small to cover their costs.

What will the Commission do to increase the funding of the Socrates programme and ensure that the relative share of funding allocated to Erasmus within Socrates is not reduced?

Answer given by Mrs Cresson on behalf of the Commission

(16 July 1997)

The Commission shares the view expressed by the Honourable Member, that Socrates and its Chapter 1 (Erasmus) are among the most successful Community programmes. The number of students for whom mobility grants are requested under Erasmus, has risen consistently ever since the adoption of the first Erasmus programme in 1987. In the academic year 1997/8, the Commission has received such requests for around 180 000 students. The budget available for the programme has not kept pace with this rising demand. It should be recalled that the Commission had originally proposed a financial framework of 1,005 MECU (Community of 12) for the programme for the period 1995/6. The amount eventually adopted, 850 MECU, had to cover the Community of 15 as well as additional activities introduced during the negotiations.

In accordance with the joint statement issued by the Parliament, the Council and the Commission on 14 March 1995 upon conclusion of the conciliation procedure, the Commission adopted, on 14 March 1997, a report on the first two years of the programme's implementation (¹), together with a proposal to increase the financial framework for 1995/9 by 50 MECU to a total of 900 MECU. This proposal is currently before the Parliament and the Council. On 12 June 1997, the Parliament voted at first reading an amendment raising the additional amount to 100 MECU. The Commission, for reasons of budgetary rigour, has not taken account of this amendment in its modified proposal, adopted on 25 June 1997. On 26 June 1997, the Council reached unanimous agreement on an increase of 25 MECU but did not formally adopt its Common Position.

The Decision establishing the programme stipulates that a minimum of 55% shall be spent on Chapter 1 of the programme. During the first two years, the proportion was 56.9%. It should be noted that higher education institutions are also eligible under other parts of the programme, such as those for the promotion of language-learning (Lingua) and of open and distance learning. In the event of an additional amount being allocated to Socrates on the basis of the Commission's above-mentioned proposal, at least 55% of this additional sum would be spent on Erasmus. It should, however, be noted that the Socrates programme also contains innovative measures addressing other sectors of the educational community, notably the school sector and adult education. Adequate financial provision must therefore also be ensured for these, in order to maintain the overall balance envisaged by the legislator.

(¹) COM(97) 99 final.

(98/C 21/212)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1862/97

by Carlos Pimenta (PPE) to the Commission

(30 May 1997)

Subject: Entrance to medical specializations in the European Union

What administrative formalities are required for a graduate in medicine to embark on a medical specialization (e.g. in surgery) in each of the EU Member States, with particular regard to the entrance examinations and the existence or otherwise of a requirement to take a test in the language of the Member State concerned?

Answer given by Mrs Cresson on behalf of the Commission

(15 July 1997)

The administrative formalities which are required for a graduate in medicine to embark on a medical specialisation differ from one Member State to another, since they relate to the organisation of systems of study and therefore fall exclusively within domestic jurisdiction.

The Honourable Member may, if he wishes, contact the national academic recognition information centres in the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area comprising the NARIC network, for which a list of contact points is being sent direct to the Honourable Member and to the Secretariat of the Parliament.

(98/C 21/213)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1863/97

by Francesco Baldarelli (PSE) to the Council

(27 May 1997)

Subject: Plan for Italian fishermen to diversify out of certain fishing activities

On 29 April 1997, the Council of the Union adopted, on the basis of the Commission proposal (COM(96) 682) (¹) and having regard to the opinion delivered by the European Parliament on 24 April 1997, a specific measure to encourage Italian fishermen to diversify out of certain fishing activities known as spadare (drift-net fishing). In approving the proposal with the amendments adopted, Parliament asked to be reconsulted if the Council made substantial changes to the Commission proposal. The text which was adopted and published in the interinstitutional edition No 96/0308 (CNS) of 28 February 1997 departs significantly and substantially from that proposed by the Commission on which Parliament delivered its opinion: it adds a tenth recital and a second part to Article 5, banning the accumulation and granting of aids deemed unjustified.

Does the Council not consider that these additions:

- are a flagrant breach of Article 43 of the Treaty since they ignore the authority of the Commission and Parliament?
- Undermine the legitimacy of Parliament which delivered its own opinion on a proposal substantially different from that adopted by the Council?

- Clearly conflict with the multi-fund management of Community resources since they deny the legitimate use of the funds intended in particular for Objective 1 regions?
- Call into question the entire diversification measure since they concern the economic part of the plan and actually hinder diversification into other fishing activities which can be financed from Community funds?

Does the Council not also consider that it should reconsult Parliament on the additions or, if necessary, agree to apply the conciliation procedure?

(¹) OJ C 59, 26.2.1997, p. 21.

Answer

(6 August 1997)

On the basis of a proposal from the Commission, and having received and studied the Opinion delivered by the European Parliament, on 29 April 1997 the Council effectively adopted a specific measure to encourage Italian fishermen to diversify out of certain fishing activities.

The Council considers that the changes made, further to its proceedings, to the text of the Commission proposal do not depart significantly and substantially from that proposal.

The Council therefore considered that reconsultation of Parliament was not necessary. Furthermore, the Commission did not go along with the amendments suggested by Parliament.

(98/C 21/214)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1867/97

by Carlos Robles Piquer (PPE) to the Commission

(30 May 1997)

Subject: Vested interests in cocoa campaign

The Kangaroo Group Newsletter published in Brussels (March 1997 ed., No 12, pp. 18 and 19) contains an article signed by Jürgen Boltz, of European Public Policy Advisers, London, on the single market in chocolate products.

Mr Boltz argues that this market should be standardized and endorses the Commission's proposal for a directive, which he claims is accepted by European chocolate manufacturers who are members of CAOBISCO on the ground that it represents clear progress towards improving the single market in this product.

Mr Boltz also claims that the proposal does not enjoy the support it needs among consumer organizations and politicians because of a campaign conducted against it 'which is largely financed by powerful cocoa interests'.

Given the importance of this matter for many ACP countries, can the Commission say whether this grave accusation is true or whether what is occurring is simply a legitimate conflict of interests and opinions?

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission

(11 July 1997)

The Commission would prefer not to comment on the statements made in the article referred to by the Honourable Member.

It would stress that the proposal for a directive on cocoa products and chocolate (¹) currently being examined by the Council and Parliament was subjected to a long process of consultation of the circles concerned during its preparation.

It feels that its proposal is based on an equitable balance of those interests.

(¹) OJ C 231, 9.8.1996.

(98/C 21/215)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1871/97**by Gerardo Fernández-Albor (PPE) to the Commission***(30 May 1997)**Subject:* Safety in children's play areas

Children's play areas in Spain are not as safe as they should be, according to the Spanish Ombudsman, who has just produced a study showing that the child mortality rate in Spain as a result of accidents at home and during leisure activities is 9.4 per thousand among the under-fourteens. This is the highest rate in the European Union.

The study recommends that the games and safety environment in play areas be standardized. It says that if the efforts of the European committee to achieve standardization do not bear fruit, Spain should adopt mandatory standards to ensure the safety and hygiene of its play areas.

What is the current position regarding the proceedings of the EU committee in question and what initiatives could the Commission put forward on this matter, so as to prevent, or at least reduce, the grave shortcomings identified by the Spanish Ombudsman in this area?

Answer given by Mrs Bonino on behalf of the Commission*(10 July 1997)*

An extensive working programme for standardisation of playground equipment has been carried out by the European committee for standardisation (CEN) one of the three recognized European standardisation organizations, for a number of years. The work is now almost finalized. The general standard for safety requirements and test methods (prEN 1176-1) will most likely be finalized after a meeting in June 1997 and the standards for additional requirements and test methods for certain specific types of equipment (carousels, swings, rocking equipment, slides and runways) are to be finalized within a few months thereafter. Voting will take place during the autumn of this year.

The work has been carried out with consumer-representation coordinated through the European association for the co-ordination of consumer representation in standardisation (ANEC). According to ANEC's assessment the standards will provide for a satisfactory level of safety.

Moreover on 14th May 1997, the Commission adopted a communication ⁽¹⁾ and a proposal for a Parliament and Council decision adopting a programme of Community action on injury prevention in the context of the framework for action in the field of public health. This programme will be aimed at reducing the number of injuries in key areas, including home and leisure accidents involving children, young adults and elderly people.

⁽¹⁾ COM(97) 178 final.

(98/C 21/216)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1878/97**by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission***(2 June 1997)**Subject:* Actions to support run-down urban areas

In the European Regions' bulletin of 18 October 1996 ('Information Note: The Union', p. 359) actions in support of run-down urban areas are announced. These actions, which are approved by the European Commission and cover a series of measures to run for five years, in accordance with the rules on state aid, are intended to promote job creation in the poorest neighbourhoods of the EU's towns and cities. This should enable the governments of the Member States to provide financial support in the run-down areas to maintain or set up firms which have a purely local vocation. The measures are directed mainly at unemployed young people, young people without vocational qualifications and women and will cost a maximum of ECU 10 000 for each job created.

Will the Commission:

1. provide further information on the programme under which these measures are planned?
2. State whether the municipalities of Milan and Turin have applied for this financial assistance for their run-down areas?

Answer given by Mr Van Miert on behalf of the Commission

(10 July 1997)

The Honourable Member refers to an 'Information Note' which, he states, appeared in the 'European Regions' bulletin of 18 October 1996'. Having made enquiries, the Commission cannot give an exact reply to this question; it has no such note in its possession, and the Honourable Member's secretariat was unable to forward the note when requested to do so.

It would seem, however, that the Honourable Member is confusing the Community programme URBAN, which provides for a number of Community aid measures, and the guidelines on state aid for undertakings in deprived urban areas, adopted by the Commission on 2 October 1996 ⁽¹⁾.

The purpose of these guidelines is to set out appropriate rules for determining which urban districts may be regarded as deprived urban areas and thus qualify for aid from the Member State concerned — not from the Community — provided that certain conditions and financial ceilings are observed, notably a limit of ECU 10 000 per job created, as mentioned by the Honourable Member.

It is thus the Member States' responsibility to identify the urban districts eligible for aid as deprived urban areas and to determine the aid to be granted to them. Such projects must be notified to the Commission for approval, in accordance with Article 93(3) of the EC Treaty. The Commission has received no notifications so far and is not aware of any project of the nature described in either Milan or Turin.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 146, 14.5.1997.

(98/C 21/217)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1881/97

by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission

(2 June 1997)

Subject: Development of the social dialogue

The Commission has issued a 'Communication concerning the Development of the Social Dialogue at Community Level' (COM(96) 0448 final).

As regards the sectoral social dialogue, various aspects must be taken into consideration for the social dialogue to be developed further at sectoral level. Effectiveness is an important factor but consideration must also be given to the contribution which can be made to improving labour relations in Europe. The efficient management of costs must also be considered although this cannot be the sole criterion.

Will the Commission therefore allocate sufficient funds, for which there is currently no provision, to the sectoral social dialogue?

Answer given by Mr Flynn on behalf of the Commission

(15 July 1997)

The Commission recognises the importance of the sectoral dimension of the social dialogue, which makes it possible to take the specific features of each economic activity into account, and of its contribution to the improvement of industrial relations in Europe.

In his closing address at the conference on the future of the social dialogue held on 28-29 April 1997, the Member of the Commission responsible for social affairs reiterated the importance of the sectoral social dialogue and confirmed the Commission's desire to support it.

Some 20 sectors have developed Community-level dialogue, through joint committees or informal working parties. They receive substantial financial and logistical support from the Commission, which organises around 150 sectoral social dialogue meetings each year. Furthermore, budget heading B3-4000 includes an amount of ECU 5 million for 1997 for funding measures to promote the development of the social dialogue at both sectoral and cross-industrial level.

In its Communication concerning the development of the social dialogue at Community level, the Commission refers to the need to seek ways of improving the operation and results of the sectoral social dialogue whilst promoting the more efficient use of resources.

Consequently, the Commission suggests that the sectoral social dialogue should focus on strategic sectors and issues, with the strengthening of cooperation and coordination within the Commission in respect of consultation procedures. These various aspects will be the subject of the second Communication on the development of the social dialogue at Community level.

(98/C 21/218)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1884/97

by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission

(2 June 1997)

Subject: Waste management

With reference to the Commission's 'Communication on the review of the Community Strategy for Waste Management' and the 'draft Council Resolution on waste policy' (COM(96) 0399 final),

will the Commission make a greater commitment to developing more incisive and effective measures for monitoring and verifying the Member States' progress in implementing Community legislation by launching specific programmes for investigations and studies where necessary?

Answer given by Mrs Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission

(4 July 1997)

The Commission shares the Honourable Member's view on the importance of monitoring and verifying the Member States' progress in implementing Community waste legislation.

On 22 October 1996 the Commission adopted a communication on implementing Community environmental law ⁽¹⁾, the aim of which was to reinforce the obligations which different actors in the regulatory chain (the Commission, Member States, regional and local authorities, industry, citizens and non-governmental organisations) bear in the 'shared responsibility' for the application of Community environmental law, in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of environmental policy and law and improve the quality of the environment in Europe.

Proper application of Community waste legislation depends largely on the national, regional and local authorities taking a range of measures to deal with the many applications for authorisation, to grant authorisation in accordance with statutory conditions, to encourage economic operators to comply with the conditions of authorisation and to adopt the necessary corrections or penalties.

Most problems in the waste sector relate to Member States' failure to apply measures. Accordingly, the Commission has instituted, or is about to institute, many infringement proceedings to ensure the legislation is complied with.

⁽¹⁾ COM (96) 500.

(98/C 21/219)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1885/97**by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission***(2 June 1997)**Subject:* Waste management

With reference to the Commission's 'Communication on the review of the Community Strategy for Waste Management' and the 'draft Council Resolution on waste policy' (COM(96) 0399 final), will the Commission promote studies and research, with a specific role for the EEA (European Environment Agency), to explain the crucial aspects of the problem and highlight particular situations while waiting for the complex system for providing statistics at European level to begin producing reliable data?

Answer given by Mrs Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission*(25 June 1997)*

In the communication from the Commission on the review of the Community strategy for waste management ⁽¹⁾ the importance of the availability of reliable and comparable data on waste generation and waste management was outlined. The Commission expressed the need to examine the appropriate instruments to improve data collection because the current situation regarding waste statistics is not satisfactory. These activities have to be undertaken in close co-operation with Eurostat, the European environmental agency and Member States.

In reply to the question of the Honourable Member three important initiatives to improve the situation regarding waste statistics should be mentioned:

- in October 1996 the Commission started a study that aims to collect data on waste generation and waste management in the Member States and develop a methodology for the gathering and use of these data. The final report of this study is expected in October 1997;
- the Commission is preparing a Council regulation on waste management statistics. This will establish the legal basis for a system of Community waste statistics that will provide harmonised data on waste generation and waste management. The results of the study mentioned above will be used to define the degree of detail for requirements regarding methodology and the need for guidance documents;
- the Agency is preparing the establishment of a European topic centre on waste. The decision to establish this topic centre was taken in December 1996. In March 1997 a specification describing the tasks of the centre was sent to the nominated candidates. The European topic centre will be designated by the Agency's management board in June 1997. The European topic centre will play an important role in providing information for the preparation of waste management policy, on the basis of the statistics provided by Eurostat such as detailed surveys for specific sectors, trend analysis etc. The results of the above mentioned study will give valuable input in the starting period of the centre.

With these provisions it should be possible to improve considerably the situation regarding waste statistics and information on waste during the years to come.

⁽¹⁾ COM(96) 399 final.

(98/C 21/220)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1886/97**by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission***(2 June 1997)**Subject:* Monitoring CO₂ emissions

In the 'Proposal for a Council Decision amending Decision 93/389/EEC for a monitoring mechanism of Community CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions' (COM(96) 0369 final — 96/0192 SYN) ⁽¹⁾,

various references are made to the ozone precursors which are harmful to health.

Will the Commission specify that the reference is to tropospheric ozone so that the public can distinguish it from stratospheric ozone, which we are seeking to protect?

(¹) OJ C 314, 24.10.1996, p. 11.

Answer given by Mrs Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission

(22 July 1997)

Ozone is a molecule made up of three oxygen atoms. It is found both in the troposphere (the layer of the atmosphere we live in) and in the stratosphere (10-50 km above the planet's surface).

While it is true that tropospheric ozone has unwelcome effects, particularly on human health, and that stratospheric ozone protects against ultra-violet rays, they are the same substance. Tropospheric ozone is also a powerful greenhouse gas. In the interests of better public understanding, however, the Commission will consider inserting the adjective 'tropospheric' into the draft Council Decision amending Decision 93/389/EEC for a monitoring mechanism of Community CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions (¹).

It would be inserted only where strictly necessary and without affecting the scientific content.

(¹) OJ C 314, 24.10.1996, p. 11.

(98/C 21/221)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1887/97

by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission

(2 June 1997)

Subject: Promotion of combined transport

With reference to the Commission's 'Communication concerning an action programme to promote the combined transport of goods' and the 'Proposal for a Council Regulation (EC) concerning the granting of Community financial assistance for actions to promote combined goods transport' (COM(96) 0335 final — 96/0207 SYN) (¹),

the Union must establish and guarantee an efficient goods transport system which meets users' mobility requirements. Combined transport is a key element in such a system as it enables transport resources to be used more efficiently.

In its resolution of 30 October 1990 on the creation of a European combined transport network, the Council emphasized the need for the best possible management of Community resources in the transport sector as well as the need to protect the environment. One of the means for achieving this goal was to be the increased use of combined transport.

Will the Commission continue to pursue and encourage the radical reform of the organization and structure of the Community's railways which was launched with Council Directive 91/440 (EEC) (²) of 29 July 1991 and the two implementing directives 95/18/EC (³) and 95/19/EC (⁴) and will it, in particular, grant private operators access to Europe's rail networks?

Will it also listen to the users of transport services, as well as operators and other firms offering services, with a view to removing the legal and economic barriers impeding the further development of combined transport?

(¹) OJ C 343, 15.11.1996, p. 4.

(²) OJ L 237, 24.8.1991, p. 25.

(³) OJ L 143, 27.6.1995, p. 70.

(⁴) OJ L 143, 27.6.1995, p. 70.

Answer given by Mr Kinnock on behalf of the Commission

(11 July 1997)

The Honourable Member can be assured that the Commission will do its utmost to continue its policy to improve the performance of the railways, which will also benefit the performance of combined transport.

The Commission is also engaging in dialogue with providers and users of transport in order to develop practical solutions to the problems facing combined transport. One recent example of this approach is the Commission communication on the trans-European Rail Freight Freeways⁽¹⁾, which suggests, on the basis of wide consultation, ways of enhancing the attractiveness of Rail Freight by opening access to rail infrastructure to all licenced train operators and by making the use of rail infrastructure less burdensome.

The Pilot Actions for Combined Transport (PACT) programme is an excellent instrument to shape policy in direct response to market requirements. It is the market which comes with ideas and propositions and, through the pilot actions, the Commission is gaining valuable insight into the real problems in the market place. In this way it can develop policies in close co-operation with market participants which can contribute to the further development of combined transport.

⁽¹⁾ COM(97) 242.

(98/C 21/222)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1889/97

by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission

(2 June 1997)

Subject: Food additives other than colours and sweeteners

With reference to the 'Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Directive amending European Parliament and Council Directive 95/2/EC on food additives other than colours and sweeteners' (COM(96) 0303 final — 96/0166 COD)⁽¹⁾,

the framework Directive 89/107/EEC⁽²⁾ harmonizes the use of additives at Community level in order to permit the free movement of foodstuffs and at the same time guarantee effective consumer protection and a wide choice;

the specific Directive 95/2/EC⁽³⁾ on food additives other than colours and sweeteners is based on the principle of a positive list, i.e. a list of additives which are permitted and of foodstuffs in which such additives may be used;

will modifications relating to new additives be adopted under a procedure involving the Council and Parliament?

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 76, 11.3.1997, p. 34.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 40, 11.2.1989, p. 27.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 61, 18.3.1995, p. 1.

(98/C 21/223)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1890/97

by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission

(2 June 1997)

Subject: Food additives other than colours and sweeteners

The 'Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Directive amending European Parliament and Council Directive 95/2/EC on food additives other than colours and sweeteners' (COM(96) 0303 final — 96/0166 COD)⁽¹⁾ is intended to introduce certain new categories of foodstuffs in which additives that are already permitted may be used. In fact, by the time the deadlines set for transposing the directive have expired these categories, though already on the market, could have been banned, while the Member States would have lost the opportunity of altering the lists or the rules on the use of additives on their own initiative.

The proposal also takes account of the recent evaluations of the Scientific Committee for Food, which supported the use of certain new additives.

Will the Commission ensure that amendments which only involve alterations at the level of implementation are adopted by means of a committee procedure, with the participation of the Scientific Committee for Food, after prior consultations with the different socio-economic groups represented on the Scientific Committee for Food?

(¹) OJ C 76, 11.3.1997, p. 34.

**Joint answer
to Written Questions E-1889/97 and E-1890/97
given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission**

(26 June 1997)

In accordance with Directive 89/107/EEC, the framework directive on food additives, the list of additives the use of which is authorized to the exclusion of all others and the list of foodstuffs to which these additives may be added, the conditions under which they may be added and where appropriate, a limit on the technological purpose of their use must be adopted by the Parliament and the Council in accordance with the co-decision procedure laid down by Article 189b of the EC Treaty.

In its recent green paper on the general principles of food law in the European Union (¹), the Commission has explicitly drawn attention to the difficulties in updating the rules on additives to take account of technical and scientific progress, and has invited comments from all interested parties on this question. These comments will be considered in the light of the institutional and intergovernmental discussions in progress and may lead the Commission to bring forward proposals to simplify the relevant procedures.

(¹) COM(97) 176.

(98/C 21/224)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-1894/97
by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission**

(4 June 1997)

Subject: Integrated groundwater protection and management

The Commission 'Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision on an action programme for integrated groundwater protection and management' (COM(96) 0315 final — 96/0181 COD) (¹)

sets out an action programme comprising four main lines of action: planning and management of groundwater protection, creating a regulatory framework for fresh water abstraction, development of instruments for control of groundwater pollution from diffuse sources and development of instruments for control of point source emissions and discharges.

Where groundwater pollution from diffuse sources is concerned, will the Commission pay particular attention to cleaning up soil contaminated by long-standing or accidental pollution, bearing in mind that a Community frame of reference is needed concerning responsibilities and the financing of the measures?

Will the Commission turn its attention to the fact that many Member States have failed to announce measures to transpose Directive 91/676/EEC (²) on nitrates? Will it also impose official controls on the substances contained in recycled sewage sludge and consider the advisability of imposing more stringent limit values on atmospheric emissions of substances which contribute to acidification?

(¹) OJ C 355, 25.11.1996, p. 1.

(²) OJ L 375, 31.12.1991, p. 1.

Answer given by Mrs Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission*(8 July 1997)*

The objective of the proposal for a Parliament and Council decision on an action programme for integrated groundwater protection and management is to ensure that protection and use of groundwater takes place as part of an integrated management of fresh water resources and that groundwaters on a long term basis will be managed with surface waters within a river basin management approach.

In February 1997 the Commission adopted a proposal for a Council directive establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy ⁽¹⁾ which lays down the basic principles for integrated protection and use of groundwaters and surface waters within such a river basin management approach. Whilst part of the actions presented in the proposed groundwater action programme may be pursued through a variety of instruments, some may be strengthened through appropriate legal provisions. The proposed water framework directive is intended as a framework within which inter alia the protection and sustainable use of groundwater may be ensured through such legal provisions.

Civil liability for damage caused to soil and groundwater by pollution is not addressed in the proposed groundwater action programme. Appropriate Community action on this particular question is considered in a white paper being prepared by the Commission for presentation by early 1998. However, the proposed groundwater action programme requests Member States to take appropriate action towards contaminated groundwaters to ensure containment of such contaminated groundwaters in order to prevent further contamination, and where appropriate to restore such groundwaters.

Contamination of groundwaters may arise from a variety of point and diffuse sources. The proposed groundwater action programme requests the identification of such potential sources. Control of point source pollution has improved considerably through the adoption of Community environment legislation, while diffuse source pollution still calls for better control. The Honourable Member identifies the diffuse sources of nitrates from agricultural use, dangerous substances contained in recycled sewage sludge and acid precipitation. Nitrates pollution from agriculture is regulated through Council Directive 91/676/EEC of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources ⁽²⁾. Unfortunately, not all Member States have implemented this Directive fully and the Commission is pursuing this lack of implementation through appropriate action including action under Article 169 of the EC Treaty. Control of dangerous substances in sewage sludge is regulated through Council Directive 86/278/EEC of 12 June 1986 on the protection of the environment, and in particular of the soil, when sewage sludge is used in agriculture ⁽³⁾. Acidification due to atmospheric deposition is addressed through a number of Council directives primarily addressing sources of air pollution, inter alia nitrogen oxides and sulphur oxides emitted from combustion plants, car emissions and incineration of hazardous waste. The basic principles of a common strategy towards air pollution are defined in Council Directive 96/62/EC of 27 September 1996 on ambient air quality assessment and management ⁽⁴⁾. As a follow up to this, the Commission adopted a communication to the Council and the Parliament in March 1997 presenting a strategy towards acidification ⁽⁵⁾.

⁽¹⁾ COM(97) 49 final.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 375, 31.12.1991.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 181, 4.7.1986.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 296, 21.11.1996.

⁽⁵⁾ COM(97) 88 final.

(98/C 21/225)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1896/97**by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission***(4 June 1997)*

Subject: Inventing Tomorrow — Europe's research at the service of its people

With reference to the Commission communication 'Inventing Tomorrow — Europe's research at the service of its people' (COM(96) 0332 final + final 2 (French version only)),

will the Commission promote the thorough reorganization of European research in the areas of defining strategic scenarios, identifying priorities, new architecture, greater flexibility, wider accessibility, clearer allotment of responsibilities and the evaluation of results, with improved administration and management, simpler procedures and more efficient accompanying structures?

Answer given by Mrs Cresson on behalf of the Commission

(7 July 1997)

The formal proposal concerning the Fifth Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities ⁽¹⁾, adopted by the Commission on 30 April 1997, was the outcome of a year of preparatory work. At every stage of this period there was a highly constructive dialogue with the political bodies in the Council and in Parliament, with scientific and industrial partners and also with users directly concerned by the potential consequences of the planned research effort.

The assessment report compiled by a group of independent experts chaired by Mr Davignon notes that the research and technological development framework programmes have become a reference instrument making it possible to support high-quality research and establish numerous expert networks throughout the Community. The report puts forward recommendations to maintain this quality requirement, take better account of the social and economic objectives and provide an indispensable European added value.

In line with this strategy, the Fifth Framework Programme is innovative in its guidelines and organisation. The major objectives and priority areas have been identified on the basis of a set of criteria in which scientific performance is not the sole driving force, even though scientific and technical excellence remain a basic principle.

The organisation of the Framework Programme has been simplified. The number of programmes has been substantially reduced compared with the previous one. Community research activities are concentrated in three thematic programmes and three horizontal programmes. This organisation reflects the desire to concentrate and better coordinate efforts. Within the thematic programmes, a limited number of key activities concerning themes connected with priority social and economic needs has been identified. These activities will make it possible to mobilise various forms of expertise and bring together basic research, technological development and the users of research results in integrated projects.

The desire to make the execution of the programmes more flexible and to improve coordination is reflected in a more collegial management, making it possible to respond more swiftly to unexpected and urgent requirements.

In deciding which should be the priority areas for research, choices have to be made. These will henceforth be based on a close scrutiny of the needs of society, industrial realities and future prospects. By adapting to the new economic and social environment, the Fifth Framework Programme pursues the dual target of giving a new impetus to growth and job creation and creating a genuine European area for science and technology.

⁽¹⁾ Doc. COM(97) 142.

(98/C 21/226)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1897/97

by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission

(4 June 1997)

Subject: Residues of veterinary medicinal products in foodstuffs

In the 'Proposal for a Council Regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 2377/90 laying down a Community procedure for the establishment of maximum residue limits of veterinary medicinal products in foodstuffs of animal origin' (COM(96) 0584 final – 90/0279 CNS) ⁽¹⁾,

the deadline for reviewing substances already in use needs to be altered.

Given the rate at which substances already in use are being examined and the fact that there are still over 200 substances to be examined, the Committee can only approve the extension provided for in Article 14 (1) and (2).

Given the length of time needed for detailed examinations, which are vital for consumer protection and animal health, and in order ensure that the practice of extending deadlines is not continued indefinitely, does the Commission not consider two years to be sufficient, on the basis of the information gathered by the European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products, and will it set 1 January 2000 as the final deadline?

(¹) OJ C 381, 17.12.1996, p. 9.

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission

(11 July 1997)

The Commission's proposal for a Council regulation amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 2377/90 laying down a Community procedure for the establishment of maximum residue limits of veterinary medicinal products in foodstuffs of animal origin (¹) has been split into two parts: the extension of the deadline mentioned in Article 14 (1,2) and the rest of the proposal.

Through Council Regulation (EC) No 34/97 of 3 March 1997 amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 2377/90 laying down a Community procedure for the establishment of maximum residue limits of veterinary medicinal products in foodstuffs of animal origin (²) the deadline has been extended for pyrasolidon, nitroimidazoles, arsenic acid and phenylbutazone to 1 January 1998 and to 1 January 2000 for all other substances which were on the market before 1 January 1992 in one or more Member States and for which a dossier has been submitted to the Commission or the European agency for the evaluation of medicinal products (EMEA) before 1 January 1996. These substances have been listed in the communication of the EMEA for the evaluation of medicines according to Article 1 of Council Regulation (EC) No 434/97 of 3 March 1997 (³). The Commission's proposal had foreseen an extension of the deadline until 1999. However it was modified by Council to the above mentioned dates.

(¹) OJ C 381, 17.12.1996.

(²) OJ L 67, 7.3.1997.

(³) OJ C 165, 31.5.1997.

(98/C 21/227)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1898/97

by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission

(4 June 1997)

Subject: Residues of veterinary medicinal products in foodstuffs

With reference to the 'Proposal for a Council Regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 2377/90 laying down a Community procedure for the establishment of maximum residue limits of veterinary medicinal products in foodstuffs of animal origin' (COM(96) 0584 final — 96/0279 CNS) (¹)

and in connection with the setting of maximum limits on the live experiment phase,

given that consumer protection is already guaranteed at national level by the standards laid down in Directive 93/40/EEC (²) and by the clinical requirements defined in Directive 92/18/EEC (³), does the Commission not consider that the definition of a provisional maximum residue limit could give consumers an additional guarantee?

Will it avoid inserting a new article 4(a) and a third paragraph in Article 14 and will it draw up a new proposal on the subject, taking into account the advice of the Committee for Veterinary Medicinal Products, in order to reconcile consumer safety with the need to avoid as far as possible the destruction of animals used in experiments?

(¹) OJ C 381, 17.12.1996, p. 9.

(²) OJ L 214, 24.8.1993, p. 31.

(³) OJ L 97, 10.4.1992, p. 1.

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission*(14 July 1997)*

The Commission's proposal for a Council regulation amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 2377/90 laying down a Community procedure for the establishment of maximum residue limits of veterinary medicinal products in foodstuffs of animal origin has been split into two parts. The first part has been adopted by the Council on 3 March 1997 as Council Regulation (EC) No 434/97 ⁽¹⁾.

Work is continuing in the Council on the remaining part of the Commission's proposal which is left unchanged and contains Article 4a and the third paragraph of Article 14. At this time the opinion of the Parliament is the essential requirement to continue the legislative procedure. The Commission will not draw up a new proposal at this stage of the procedure, but wait for the outcome of the discussions in Council and Parliament.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 67, 7.3.1997.

(98/C 21/228)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1906/97**by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission***(4 June 1997)*

Subject: Dangerous goods — vessels

With reference to the 'Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 93/75/EEC concerning minimum requirements for vessels bound for or leaving Community ports and carrying dangerous or polluting goods' (COM(96) 0455 final — 96/0231 SYN) ⁽¹⁾,

will the Commission ensure that Directive 93/75/EEC ⁽²⁾, as amended by the proposal for a directive in question, is applied not only to vessels bound for or leaving Community ports and anchored in the territorial waters of an EU Member State, but also to all vessels in transit in those territorial waters?

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 334, 8.11.1996, p. 11.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 247, 5.10.1993, p. 19.

Answer given by Mr Kinnoek on behalf of the Commission*(9 July 1997)*

The Commission agrees that the existing notification requirements applicable to ships bound for or leaving Community ports under Directive 93/75/EEC should be extended to cover ships in transit off the coasts of Member States.

However, the Commission believes that this extension should not be introduced through modification of the existing Directive 93/75/EEC, since notification by ships in transit is already the main objective of the proposal for a Council directive concerning the setting-up of a European ship reporting system (Eurorep), adopted by the Commission on 17th December 1993 ⁽¹⁾. This proposal is still on the table of the Council.

⁽¹⁾ COM(93) 647 modified by COM(94) 220 final — OJ C 193, 16.7.1994.

(98/C 21/229)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1907/97**by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission***(4 June 1997)*

Subject: Dangerous goods — vessels

With reference to the 'Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 93/75/EEC concerning minimum requirements for vessels bound for or leaving Community ports and carrying dangerous or polluting goods' (COM(96) 0455 final — 96/0231 SYN) ⁽¹⁾,

Directive 93/75/EEC ⁽²⁾ is intended to improve the prevention of and intervention in circumstances which may cause accidents at sea in which vessels transporting dangerous or polluting goods are involved.

This directive has been the subject of an initial amendment, under Commission Directive 96/39/EC ⁽³⁾ concerning the application, in accordance with Article 11, of subsequent amendments to the international Convention, Codes and Resolution referred to in Article 2(e), (f), (g) and (h). The amendment was made in accordance with the opinion of the committee referred to in Article 12 of Directive 93/75/EEC.

In view of the increase in the transport of radioactive materials by sea and the importance of the position of the Member States on the matter, will the Commission insert a reference to the INF list in Article 2 of Directive 93/75/EEC?

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 334, 8.11.1996, p. 11.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 247, 5.10.1993, p. 19.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 196, 7.8.1996, p. 7.

Answer given by Mr Kinnock on behalf of the Commission

(9 July 1997)

The Commission welcomes the Honourable Member's suggestion to update Community legislation in view of the increase in transport by sea of nuclear materials. The proposed directive of the Commission amending Council Directive 93/75/EEC which concerns minimum requirements for vessels bound for or leaving Community ports and carrying dangerous or polluting goods ⁽¹⁾ already responds to this suggestion. It does so by making an explicit reference, in the list of codes and conventions applicable for the purposes of the Directive, to the INF code of the International maritime organization concerning the safe carriage of irradiated nuclear fuel (INF), plutonium and high-level radioactive wastes on board ships.

⁽¹⁾ COM(96) 455.

(98/C 21/230)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1910/97

by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission

(4 June 1997)

Subject: XXVth report on competition policy

With reference to the 'XXVth report on competition policy (1995)' (COM(96) 0126 final) and the 'draft Commission notice on cooperation between national competition authorities and the Commission in handling cases falling within the scope of Articles 85 or 86 of the EC Treaty' ⁽¹⁾,

will the Commission make significant improvements with regard to procedural law, the right of defence, access to documents and the length of proceedings (even if progress has been made on this last point)?

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 262, 10.9.1996, p. 5.

Answer given by Mr Van Miert on behalf of the Commission

(18 June 1997)

The Commission is well aware of the need, particularly in view of the limited administrative resources available, for it to constantly review ways of improving its procedures for dealing with issues relating to competition, as referred to in Articles 85 and 86 of the EC Treaty.

This review has resulted in a number of steps and planned measures in the areas mentioned by the Honourable Member. As regards respect for the right of defence, for instance, having considerably extended the remit of the Hearing Officer ⁽¹⁾, the Commission has shown its concern for transparency in relations with undertakings by clarifying and regularizing its practices as regards access to the file under consideration, in the light of recent case-law handed down by the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance. This it has done by first defining non-communicable documents, all other documents in the file being accessible to the parties concerned ⁽²⁾. Moreover, the Commission is currently conducting a full review of Commission Regulation No 99/63/EEC ⁽³⁾ of 25 July 1963 on hearings, which could result in the revision of the said Regulation.

The Commission has also introduced a number of measures designed to expedite the handling of such matters and to concentrate its resources on the most important cases. These include 'structural' cooperative joint ventures, to which the Commission decided in 1992 (XXIInd Report on Competition Policy, paragraphs 123-124) to apply a rapid procedure like that applied to concentrative joint ventures. This year, it has also adopted internal management measures allowing cases which are not of great significance as regards competition policy to be dealt with rapidly. Moreover, as the preliminary draft notice quoted by the Honourable Member shows, it is the Commission's policy to call on national authorities to deal with complaints which are not of sufficient importance at Community level, in the light of the case-law handed down by the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance.

Furthermore, in the preliminary draft notice on the decentralized application of Articles 85 and 86 referred to above, the Commission expresses its hope that differences in the procedural rules in force in the various Member States will not result in solutions of differing effectiveness in response to similar cases, which would prove detrimental to legal certainty for economic operators.

⁽¹⁾ Decision of 12 December 1994 (OJ L 330, 21.12.1994).

⁽²⁾ Notice of 20 January 1997 (OJ C 23, 23.1.1997).

⁽³⁾ OJ 127, 20.8.1963.

(98/C 21/231)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1912/97
by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission
(4 June 1997)

Subject: XXVth report on competition policy

With reference to the 'XXVth report on competition policy (1995)' (COM(96) 0126 final) and the 'draft Commission notice on cooperation between national competition authorities and the Commission in handling cases falling within the scope of Articles 85 or 86 of the EC Treaty' ⁽¹⁾,

and with regard to state aid, will the Commission step up its efforts to achieve ever greater transparency and protection of the rights of third parties and will it note the importance today of the close link between competition policy and cohesion policy and give it particular consideration in its forthcoming report on state aid?

The goal must be to reduce aid, revise the rules and introduce greater clarity. Will the Commission also adopt a regulation formally establishing the rights of third parties?

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 262, 10.9.1996, p. 5.

Answer given by Mr Van Miert on behalf of the Commission
(27 June 1997)

As the Commission has stressed on a number of occasions, improving transparency is one of its chief objectives in the field of state aid. One way of meeting this objective is to publish guidelines and notices indicating the criteria it uses to assess the compatibility of aid. The Commission aims to step up its efforts in this field and to draw up two proposals for regulations on the basis of Article 94 of the EC Treaty.

The first proposal for a regulation is designed to enable the Commission to exempt, by means of regulations, certain categories of aid from the obligation to notify. The planned regulation will help to simplify procedures and to free some of the resources available, which could be concentrated on examining the most important aid cases and those which cause most distortion of competition. In this way, the regulation could also help to reduce the overall volume of aid.

A second proposal for a regulation dealing with procedural issues relating to aid is currently being drawn up. This regulation will, of course, play a major role in enhancing transparency. It will also contain provisions relating to the rights of third parties.

As to the relationship between competition policy and cohesion policy, the Commission has always sought to take account as far as possible of the objective of cohesion when defining aid policy. Furthermore, it is currently drafting a new set of guidelines on regional aid.

(98/C 21/232)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1916/97
by David Hallam (PSE) to the Commission
(27 May 1997)

Subject: Discrimination against persons on the grounds of height

Does the Commission have any plans or proposed measures to deal with discrimination against tall people in the provision of goods and services?

Does the Commission consider that tall persons should be able to pre-book airline seats with legroom commensurate with their needs, subject to provision of evidence of their height to the airline?

Would the Commission agree that the policy of many airlines, to advise tall people that they should fly Business or First Class, amounts to a financial penalty for being tall and that consideration should be given by both the EU, the airlines and tall and short persons NGOs as to how to mitigate the financial penalties imposed on people because of their height?

In setting its standards, does the Commission agree that the European Union should reconsider endorsement of the CEN's use of historical anthropometric data, where it may not take account of current or future needs?

As the populations of Europe vary significantly in average height, does the Commission not agree that the EU should seek to enforce ranges of appropriate standards, rather than single unsatisfactory ones?

Would the Commission consider that the CEN should be advised to seek the cooperation of groups representing tall and short people when setting standards?

Answer given by Mr Kinnoek on behalf of the Commission

(24 June 1997)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-1118/97 by Mr Ilaskivi ⁽¹⁾.

The Commission has no plans to propose special measures in relation to tall people in the provision of goods and services, just as it has no plans for measures relating to small or to overweight people.

The Commission recognises that tall people may choose to ensure adequate space by flying in business or first class, but does not consider this any more a financial penalty than a tall person deciding to buy a large car rather than a small one. The Commission considers this matter is best left to airlines to meet demands of the market place as they see fit.

The Commission does not see the relevance of reference to the European committee for standardisation (CEN) in the context of this question.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 367, 4.12.1997.

(98/C 21/233)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1920/97
by Mark Watts (PSE) to the Commission
(4 June 1997)

Subject: Superannuation pensions

I have been given to understand that Community law allows superannuation pensions to be regarded as deferred pay and that there should, therefore, be no abatement of earnings in the case of persons drawing a superannuation pension. Would the Commission please confirm that such is the case.

If so, is the Commission aware that the National Health Service is not applying that law and is indeed taking an abatement of earnings from employees who have been re-employed?

Can the Commission indicate whether the NHS rules are unlawful under Community law? If so, what action will it take to remedy the situation?

Answer given by Mr Flynn on behalf of the Commission

(11 July 1997)

In accordance with the established case law of the Court of Justice ⁽¹⁾, superannuation schemes as found in the United Kingdom are included under the scope of Article 119 of the EC Treaty on equal pay for male and female workers. However, Community intervention is limited to matters concerning equal treatment for men and women (Article 119 and Directives 86/378/EEC ⁽²⁾ and 96/97/EC ⁽³⁾) and, in part, the protection of employees' pension rights in the event of transfers of undertakings (Directive 77/187/EEC ⁽⁴⁾) and the insolvency of the employer (Directive 80/987/EEC) ⁽⁵⁾. The latter two Directives apply only to the private sector.

The organisation, functioning and calculation of the various benefits under these schemes are matters for the national authorities, provided that the above-mentioned Community rules are complied with. For this reason the Commission cannot intervene in the case described by the Honourable Member, on the grounds that it would not appear to be governed by current Community law.

⁽¹⁾ Cf. Barber judgment of 17 May 1990 (C-262/88), ECR 1990 I-1889, Beunc judgment of 28 March 1994 (C-7/93), ECR 1994 I-4471, and DEI judgment of 17 April 1997 (C-147/95), not yet published.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 225, 12.8.1986.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 46, 17.2.1997.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 61, 5.3.1977.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 283, 20.10.1980.

(98/C 21/234)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1926/97
by Anita Pollack (PSE) to the Commission
(4 June 1997)

Subject: Abolition of duty-free sales in 1999

Has the Commission undertaken any research into the social and economic consequences of the planned abolition of duty-free sales?

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission

(11 July 1997)

The Commission would remind the Honourable Member that the Council decided to abolish duty-free sales in intra-Community trade in 1991, when the directives abolishing tax-related border controls were adopted as part of the moves to establish the single market.

However, the Council decided to allow intra-Community duty-free sales to continue until 30 June 1999, so that the necessary measures could be taken during the seven-year transition period to mitigate the social impact in the sectors concerned and the associated regional problems. This temporary exemption, a one-off measure in support of a specific activity, represents an exception to the principles underlying the single market.

The Commission regrets that the sectors concerned have not so far made use of the grace period allowed by the Council to develop a strategy which would enable them to adjust to the abolition of the tax concession associated with duty-free sales, although it is now five years since the decision was taken. Instead, the duty-free sales sector boosted its turnover by about 50% between 1991 and 1995, thus exerting pressure by unacceptable means. This increase in turnover also reflects the scale of the tax concession enjoyed by the sector, which represents, on average, 35% of turnover.

Furthermore, the Commission notes that the arguments being advanced today are exactly the same as those put forward in 1991. Accordingly, it has no plans to conduct a study of the social and economic repercussions in the sector concerned. In this regard it endorses the approach advocated by the Ecofin Council on 11 November 1996.

(98/C 21/235)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1936/97

by Christof Tannert (PSE) to the Commission

(4 June 1997)

Subject: Community-wide recognition of teacher training in Berlin

Because of budget cuts, Berlin's Department for Schools, Youth and Sport has decided to reduce from two years to one year the length of courses at teacher-training colleges. The Land Education Authority sent a letter to Berlin's training centres stating that vocational-school students who had proceeded beyond the eleventh class (formerly '10 + 2': ten years' general education plus two years in vocational school) may now apply for admission to the training school.

Can the Commission indicate whether, despite the reduction to one year at vocational school ('10 + 1'), teacher training obtained in Berlin is still recognized throughout the European Union?

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission

(11 July 1997)

The recognition of diplomas qualifying the holder to practise the occupation of childcare worker is covered by the Community directives establishing the general system of recognition of diplomas. Depending on the level of the qualifications concerned, one of the following two directives applies: Directive 89/48/EEC on a general system for the recognition of higher-education diplomas awarded on completion of professional education and training of at least three years' duration ⁽¹⁾, or Directive 92/51/EEC on a second general system for the recognition of professional education and training to supplement Directive 89/48/EEC ⁽²⁾.

Each Member State remains free to determine the level of qualifications required to practise as a childcare worker on its territory. The above directives have not, in fact, harmonised training courses; rather, they have established a system whereby a diploma required for a particular profession or occupation in a Member State must be recognised so that the holder can practise the same activity in another Member State, despite the differences between education systems. Thus, Germany is perfectly entitled to decide the level of qualifications required to practise as a childcare worker. The qualification in question is covered by the recognition mechanisms established by Directive 92/51/EEC, which states that, in the event of substantial differences in length and content between the migrant worker's training and that required by the host Member State, the latter's authorities can require a compensatory measure to be taken (an adaptation period or an aptitude test). Given the length of the period of training leading to the new German qualification of childcare worker (Erzieher) and that of the courses leading to the corresponding qualification in the host Member State, the imposition of such a compensatory measure may be justified in some cases.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 19, 24.1.1989.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 209, 24.7.1992.

(98/C 21/236)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1939/97**by Kirsten Jensen (PSE) and John Iversen (PSE) to the Commission***(4 June 1997)**Subject:* Swine fever

On Monday, 12 May 1997, Dutch newspapers carried reports on the deplorable conditions in which pigs suffering from swine fever are kept. Pigs had fallen through a hatchway in their sty into their own excrement, in which they drowned. A photographer had his camera taken off him by the police.

Does the Commission believe that sick animals should be treated decently?

Will it take the initiative and submit a Green Paper on animal welfare in the EU?

Does it intend to investigate why the public is not allowed to find out about such conditions and why the Dutch photographer was not allowed to publish his pictures?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission*(26 June 1997)*

The only Community legislation currently in force concerning the welfare of pigs on farms is provided by Council Directive 91/630/EEC, of 19 November 1991 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs ⁽¹⁾. The Annex to the Directive (Chapter I, point 6) requires that all pigs reared in groups or in stalls must be inspected by the owner or the person responsible for the animals at least once a day. Any pig which appears to be ill or injured must be treated appropriately without delay. It should be possible, wherever necessary, to isolate sick or injured pigs in adequate accommodation with dry, comfortable bedding. Veterinary advice must be obtained as soon as possible for pigs which are not responding to the stock-keeper's care.

In relation to future developments with regard to the welfare of pigs, the Commission would draw attention to Article 6 of Directive 91/630/EEC which requires the Commission to submit a report to the Council drawn up on the basis of an opinion from the scientific veterinary committee on the welfare aspects of intensive pig rearing systems. It is anticipated that the scientific veterinary committee will complete its report by the end of July this year.

The question of access by press photographers to private premises is governed by the law of the Member State concerned.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 340, 11.12.1991.

(98/C 21/237)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1946/97**by Sebastiano Musumeci (NI) to the Commission***(4 June 1997)**Subject:* Cuts in EU funds for tourism in Italy

At a recent high-level meeting held at the Sicily Region headquarters the representatives of the EU Directorate-General for Regional Policy apparently threatened to reduce the budget for Sicilian tourism, established under the 94-99 MGP, and to redirect Community aid to other uses.

The feared cuts would deprive the island of some Lit 90 bn, thereby undermining the efforts of many hotel groups which have for some time been making the necessary arrangements to benefit from EU support for upgrading facilities and complying with safety standards.

The drastic cuts which have been announced are apparently in response to cases of alleged mismanagement by the Sicily Regional Council and are therefore a disproportionate reaction, given the harm they would cause.

Will the Commission confirm the statements made in Palermo by Community officials? If so, does it not consider that alternative solutions should be adopted that do not further penalize an 'Objective 1' region which is fighting for its own socio-economic recovery, focusing primarily on the tourist sector?

Answer given by Mrs Wulf-Mathies on behalf of the Commission*(30 June 1997)*

The operational programme for Sicily is suffering from serious delays in implementation with a gap of around 10% (latest figures) between projected and incurred expenditure for measures part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, and when the Monitoring Committee for the Community Support Framework met in Rome on 22 May 1997 it was held to be among the programmes at risk. In particular the tourism investment measures to which the Honourable Member refers (2.1 Aid for tourism and 2.3 Rural tourism) have so far shown no expenditure and the national authorities do not expect the first payments before the end of 1998 or beginning of 1999.

To avoid the risk of losing resources the Commission is in process of assessing with the national authorities, as part of a wider reprogramming of assistance affected by implementation problems, the possibilities of adjusting the programme in line with the state of and outlook for realisation of its various measures. Adjustment would not at this stage involve any reduction in total Community aid to Sicily and the resources would be retained in the same field of action (Subprogramme 2 Tourism and cultural assets).

(98/C 21/238)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1947/97**by Cristiana Muscardini (NI) to the Commission***(4 June 1997)*

Subject: Torture inflicted on mares to produce the Premarin drug

The 'Impronte' review, which is printed and distributed by the LAV (Italian Anti-Vivisection League) has for some time denounced the fact that 75 000 mares are tortured in the United States and Canada to enable the American Wieth-ayerst laboratories to prepare substances used to produce the Premarin drug.

The torture inflicted on the mares consists in depriving them of adequate water supplies (i.e. giving them only 22 litres of water a day instead of the 50 they need), so as to obtain a much more concentrated urine. The method used to collect their urine also causes them pain and severe injuries.

Will the Commission therefore ensure that imports of this drug are banned in Europe so as to discourage such cruel practices?

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission*(8 July 1997)*

Will the Honourable Member please refer to the answer given by the Commission to written questions E-1784/96 and 1785/96 from Mrs Van Dijk ⁽¹⁾.

Generally speaking the international trade rules do not allow the Community to ban the import of products from non-member countries on the grounds that those products are obtained in those countries under conditions which would be considered unacceptable within the Community, especially since those products do not constitute any hazards to the lives and health of persons and animals within the Community.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 11, 13.1.1997.

(98/C 21/239)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1949/97**by Sebastiano Musumeci (NI) to the Commission***(4 June 1997)*

Subject: Ban on Sicily Region's aid to tourist operators

The Commission has prohibited the Sicily Regional Council from subsidizing tourist transport to the island by charter, rail, boat and coach operators because it considers that the measures in question constitute a form of aid

to companies since their effect is to reduce the costs of a select group of operators, thereby discriminating against their competitors. It therefore claims that such measures distort competition between companies and may be prejudicial to trade between Member states.

This financial support should in fact be seen as a form of intervention — for the sole benefit of tourists — to offset Sicily's geographical remoteness, which has a severe impact on normal transport costs and causes tourists to opt for cheaper resorts.

Recently, at a hearing, the Commission assured Nino Strano, Regional Alderman responsible for tourism, and Mario Bevacqua, Fiafet vice-chairman, that their position was acceptable and that there was no danger of such subsidies from the Sicily Region being prohibited.

Does the Commission not consider that alternative solutions should be adopted that do not further penalize an 'Objective 1' region which is fighting for its own socio-economic recovery, focusing primarily on the tourist sector?

Answer given by Mr Van Miert on behalf of the Commission

(10 July 1997)

The Commission would inform the Honourable Member that it has not yet taken a final position on the question of aid to promote tourist transport to Sicily. However, as it has doubts about the compatibility of the scheme with the common market, it has initiated the Article 93(2) procedure.

It noted in particular that the subsidies, which amount to 20% of transport costs and are paid to tour operators and travel agencies in respect of the transport of tourists to Sicily, have the object and effect of increasing the number of tourists staying on the island. As a result, they divert Community tourists towards that region.

Even if the travel agencies and tour operators have to transfer the aid in question to tourists, the aid benefits not only the latter but also Sicilian tourism in general, owing to the larger number of tourists transported and staying on the island.

As the subsidies are not linked to investments, they constitute operating aid, which, given its particularly distorting effect, is authorized only in exceptional cases, when it is granted for a limited duration and on a declining scale. As the aid in question does not present these characteristics, the Commission doubts that it is compatible and considered it advisable to initiate the procedure provided for in Article 93(2) of the EC Treaty. As part of the procedure, it has invited the Italian Government and other interested parties to present their observations.

(98/C 21/240)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1951/97

by Susan Waddington (PSE) to the Commission

(4 June 1997)

Subject: Recommendation on homeworking

Given the Commission's renewed commitment to bring forward a Recommendation on Homeworking in early 1997 ⁽¹⁾ that would encourage Member States to implement the recently agreed ILO Convention on Homeworking and give protection to thousands of homeworkers across the EU, how far has the Commission succeeded in developing such a proposal, do barriers exist within the Commission to such a proposal and when is the Commission likely to adopt such a proposal given that it is now the second quarter of 1997?

⁽¹⁾ Social Europe — progress report on the implementation of the medium-term social action programme, supplement 4/96, p. 42.

Answer given by Mr Flynn on behalf of the Commission

(11 July 1997)

As pointed out by the Honourable Member, the Commission has committed itself, in its progress report on the implementation of the medium-term social action programme (1995-97) ⁽¹⁾, to presenting a recommendation on homeworking.

The Commission is currently considering the most appropriate initiative in the light of International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No 177 and the accompanying Recommendation.

(¹) Social Europe 4/96, p. 42.

(98/C 21/241)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1957/97
by Peter Skinner (PSE) to the Commission
(28 May 1997)

Subject: Availability of right-hand drive vehicles

Given that open market conditions should prevail in the EU with regard to competition amongst car manufacturing companies, and that this competition should lead to greater availability and fewer restrictions on the purchaser, will the Commission comment on the unnecessary restrictions imposed on people who wish to directly purchase right-hand drive vehicles on the continent?

What action is the Commission taking to ensure that right-hand drive vehicles are as readily available for car manufacturers on the continent as are left-hand drive vehicles, without the restriction of dealership purchase only?

Answer given by Mr Van Miert on behalf of the Commission
(17 June 1997)

The Commission fully agrees with the Honourable Member that open market conditions should lead to more competition and, in fact, make it easier for consumers to buy their right-hand-drive (RHD) vehicles wherever they find it most advantageous in the Community.

Indeed, the Commission in its Regulation (¹) for motor vehicle distribution reinforces this freedom. A dealer within the single market may not reject a consumer's offer to buy, or ask for a higher price simply because the consumer is a resident of another Member State. However, since it is normally in a dealer's interest to maximise sales, the consumer's right is not accompanied by an obligation imposed on dealers to sell. The Regulation establishes the following rights for a consumer resident in one Member State who wants to buy a motor vehicle, including RHD cars, in another Member State:

- the consumer can be requested to complete only the same documentation, and in the usual manner, as is normally and lawfully required of a consumer resident in the Member State where the vehicle is bought. Usually such documentation relates to the name and address of the consumer;
- the producer and all dealers should honour the guarantee and provide free servicing, vehicle recall work, and repair and maintenance services necessary for the safe and reliable functioning of the vehicle, irrespective of where and from whom in the single market the vehicle was purchased;
- the manufacturer, the supplier or another undertaking within the network which directly or indirectly restricts the freedom of final consumers, authorized intermediaries or authorized dealers to obtain a new motor vehicle from whichever authorized dealer they choose within the single market automatically loses the benefit of the exemption and as a consequence this manufacturer's whole distribution network is automatically void pursuant to Article 85(2) of the EC Treaty.

Apart from this general approach aiming at opening the car sales markets e.g. for customers who want to buy a RHD car outside their place of residence, the Commission has adopted two decisions condemning obstacles to the purchase of new RHD cars (²) outside the United Kingdom. In addition, the Honourable Member is invited to refer to the Commission's earlier answers to written questions on this subject (³).

(¹) Commission Regulation (EC) No 1475/95, OJ L 145 of 28.6.1995, p. 25 on the application of Article 85(3) of the Treaty to certain categories of motor vehicle distribution and servicing agreements which replaced the former Commission Regulation (EEC) for this area No 123/85 of 12.12.1984, OJ L 15 of 18.1.1985, p. 16.

(²) Commission decision of 25.9.1986, OJ L 295 of 18.10.1986, p. 19; Commission decision of 2.7.1984, OJ L 207 of 2.8.1987, p. 11.

(³) Written Question No 2874/91 by Mr Thomas Megahy, OJ C 162 of 29.6.1992, p. 33; Written Question No 1829/82 by Sir James Scott-Hopkins, OJ C 111 of 25.4.1983, p. 11, with further reference to previous answers of the Commission.

(98/C 21/242)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1961/97**by Karin Riis-Jørgensen (ELDR) to the Commission***(29 May 1997)*

Subject: Commission's approaches to Polish Government to abolish pro-environmental measure

I will hereby draw your attention to the Polish national regulations to ban the import of cars not having catalytic converters and to ban the import in general of cars older than ten years. Their aim is to reduce the extra pollution caused by the substantial emergence of second-hand cars coming from West European countries.

What approaches have the Commission made in this case? Is it true that the Commission has been putting pressure on the Polish Government to abolish these regulations? Is my impression right that the Commission in this case is only interested in forcing the Polish market to be open for western products, irrelevant of the quality? Is it not necessary to support the Polish Government instead, for the sake of health and the environment?

Answer given by Mr Van den Broek on behalf of the Commission*(3 July 1997)*

The Commission is aware that the importation of old technology second-hand cars into Poland could have an adverse environmental impact. However, the Polish legislation in question differentiated between the environmental standards applied to the treatment of second-hand vehicles from Poland and from the Community thus permitting Polish vehicles of low environmental standards to continue in circulation whilst vehicles from the Community with similar or higher levels of environmental standards were excluded from import. The Commission requested that Poland approximate its legislation in this area in accordance with the requirements of the Europe Agreement. In line with these provisions and with the pre-accession requirement to improve the level of environmental protection in Poland, it is expected that Poland's decision to approximate its legislation in this regard by 1999 will lead to higher standards of environmental protection in this sector.

(98/C 21/243)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1966/97**by Richard Howitt (PSE) to the Commission***(9 June 1997)*

Subject: Prescribing Cascade Directive for veterinary medicines

Does the Commission agree that the Prescribing Cascade Directive unfairly allows veterinary practices to charge higher prices for their medicines due to the monopoly they have over the supply of animal medication? Why can a prescription not be issued to be used at an animal pharmacy, thus saving the customer money and inconvenience?

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission*(9 July 1997)*

Article 4 of Council Directive 81/851/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to veterinary medicinal products ⁽¹⁾ provides that where no authorised product for a condition exists the Member States may exceptionally, in particular to avoid causing unacceptable suffering to the animal concerned, permit the administration of another product by a veterinarian. The medicinal product has to be administered under his direct personal responsibility to one animal or to a small number of animals or a particular holding. The product used has to be either authorised in the Member State for another species or another condition, or, if the first two possibilities do not apply, for use in human beings. If there is no authorised product available, a veterinary medicinal product may be prepared extemporaneously by a person authorised to do so under national legislation in accordance with the terms of a veterinary prescription. For food-producing animals an extended withdrawal time has to be observed to ensure that food obtained from treated animals does not contain residues harmful to the consumer.

These provisions have been established to place the animals under the direct control and responsibility of a veterinarian, when they are treated with a veterinary medicinal product not authorised for the particular circumstances in order to protect the animal and the consumer. The purpose of this provision, therefore is not to grant a particular profession a monopoly, but to protect public and animal health. There is no evidence that veterinarians actually abuse their position by systematically prescribing more expensive products.

(¹) OJ L 317, 6.11.1981, as amended by Council Directives 90/676/EEC OJ 373, 31.12.1990, and 93/40/EEC OJ 214, 24.8.1993.

(98/C 21/244)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1979/97

by Bryan Cassidy (PPE) to the Commission

(9 June 1997)

Subject: Stagiaires

Can the Commission give me the breakdown list of the stagiaire applications by Member State for 1996 and 1997?

Can the Commission, as well, provide the list by Member State of those successful in 1996 and 1997?

Answer given by Mr Santer on behalf of the Commission

(30 June 1997)

The figures relating to stagiaire applications received by the Commission for 1996 and 1997 are included in the table below. The figures relating to successful candidates for 1996 and the first half of 1997 are also included. The Commission is in the process of recruiting stagiaires for the October 1997 training period.

Country	Applications 1996	Stagiaires 1996	Applications March 1997	Stagiaires March 1997	Applications October 1997
Belgium	485	68	196	21	292
Denmark	74	45	36	18	74
Germany	966	103	435	63	483
Greece	360	65	184	37	211
Spain	1476	136	512	60	1044
France	1042	108	437	58	735
Ireland	205	57	57	40	156
Italy	3449	170	1658	66	1742
Luxembourg	12	4	5	1	13
Netherlands	235	49	66	25	117
Austria	265	49	184	33	220
Portugal	353	48	103	22	164
Finland	224	33	87	26	111
Sweden	323	51	146	28	237
United Kingdom	440	128	161	51	335
EUR 15	9909	1114	4267	549	5934
Third countries	760	91	360	49	506
TOTAL	10669	1205	4627	598	6440

(98/C 21/245)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1981/97**by Antoni Gutiérrez Díaz (GUE/NGL) to the Commission***(9 June 1997)**Subject:* Nazi propaganda

The 'Europa' bookshop in Barcelona has been temporarily closed on the grounds that it is a centre for disseminating Nazi propaganda and racist leaflets. The closure has led to a 'Committee for freedom of expression' being set up in support of the owner; it has published a manifesto questioning the fundamental principles which underpin democratic states founded on the rule of law, attacking, for example, laws on the crime of genocide and questioning their constitutionality. The committee in question is collecting funds to support its aims.

Given that the Commission is the guardian of the Treaties, and has a duty to ensure that the basic principles of democracy are respected, especially in this European Year Against Racism and Xenophobia, what steps does the Commission intend to take in situations like this, where citizens' committees, possibly with the backing of extreme right wing organizations, are set up in the name of freedom of expression to defend the dissemination of Nazi or racist ideas which call into question our democratic criminal legislation? How does the Commission intend to prevent and curb initiatives of this kind?

Answer given by Mr Flynn on behalf of the Commission*(4 July 1997)*

The combating of racist manifestations in Member States is essentially a matter for the national, regional and local authorities of the Member States, in the light of their laws, regulations and constitutional provisions.

On 15 July 1996, on the basis of Article 193 of the Treaty on European Union, the Council adopted a Joint Action concerning action to combat racism and xenophobia ⁽¹⁾. In order to facilitate international judicial cooperation to combat racism and xenophobia this Joint Action contains provisions which seek to ensure that certain types of racist and xenophobic behaviour are punishable as criminal offences or, failing that, and pending the adoption of any necessary provisions, to derogate from the principle of double criminality for such behaviour.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 185, 24.7.1996.

(98/C 21/246)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1986/97**by Gianni Tamino (V) to the Commission***(9 June 1997)**Subject:* Clash between Italian and Community legislation on waste — failure to carry out an environmental impact assessment for a waste incinerator at Scarlino (Grosseto, Italy)

By Decree No 879737 of 12 April 1996 the Italian Ministry for Industry, Commerce and Craft Trades authorized Ambiente Spa, a company which has taken over Società Nuova Solmine Spa, to build a 65 MWt electricity power plant in the commune of Scarlino (Grosseto). The plant is to be powered by a 16.8 MWe turbogenerator using process wastes as fuel, as provided for by Annex 1 of the Interministerial Decree of 16 January 1995 (published in Official Gazette No 24 of 30 January 1995), on the basis of Decree Law No 113 of 8 March 1996. This decree law is contrary to Directive 91/156/EEC ⁽¹⁾ of 18 March 1991, in that it does not consider process wastes used as 'alternative fuel' to be 'waste', and has not been turned into an actual law. The plant in question is currently at an experimental stage.

Does the Commission not consider that it should urge the Italian authorities to take action to ensure that a waste incineration plant, such as the one planned for Scarlino, complies with Directive 91/156/EEC and hence with Directive 85/337/EEC ⁽²⁾ on the environmental impact assessment, given that the plant is considered to be an electricity power station of less than 300 MW rather than a waste incinerator?

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 78, 26.3.1991, p. 32.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 175, 5.7.1985, p. 40.

Answer given by Mrs Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission*(22 July 1997)*

To be able to approach the Italian authorities the Commission believes it needs further information regarding the nature of the industrial waste used as fuel, and would therefore ask the Honourable Member whether he is in a position to forward such information. If the materials in question are classed as 'waste', Directive 91/156/EEC amending Directive 75/442/EEC on waste will apply. The Directive applies also to operations to recover waste used as a fuel or other means to generate energy, in accordance with Annex II(B), as amended by the Commission Decision of 24 May 1996. Should the waste fall within the category of 'hazardous waste', the provisions of Directive 91/689/EEC on hazardous waste ⁽¹⁾ would also be applicable. These Directives were transposed into Italian law by Decree No 22 of 5 February 1997.

Regarding the application of Directive 85/337/EEC on environmental impact assessment, Annex I stipulates that thermal power stations and other combustion installations with a heat output of 300 megawatts or more must undergo environmental impact assessment; installations with a heat output of less than 300 megawatts come under Annex II to the Directive. With a heat capacity of 65 megawatts, the installation in question therefore comes under Annex II, unless it proves to be an installation for the disposal of hazardous waste, in which case it comes under Annex I.

However, these provisions apply to works which are still at the planning stage, before development consent has been granted. According to the information supplied by the Honourable Member, the installation, currently at an experimental stage, has already been built, which means these Directives can no longer be applied.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 377, 31.12.1991.

(98/C 21/247)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1989/97**by John Iversen (PSE) to the Commission***(30 May 1997)*

Subject: New EU safety requirements for lifts: problems for wheelchair users

What is the Commission's reaction to the new EU requirements concerning increased safety in passenger lifts which considerably restrict the use of lifts by wheelchair users?

Under the new EU safety requirements for lifts, doors have to be fitted to the lift cage, thereby isolating users from the lift shaft. The new requirements adversely affect access by the disabled to many buildings. It is very difficult to fit doors to existing lift cages without reducing the space available. The lift cage could then become so small that:

- wheelchairs cannot get into it
- wheelchairs cannot turn round to allow users to reach the buttons
- wheelchair users cannot be accompanied.

Is there not another way of increasing safety in lifts? Could a safety device, such as a blocking mechanism between the cage and the shaft or a very sensitive stopping mechanism, be developed to provide the required degree of safety?

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission*(30 June 1997)*

The Commission would remind the Honourable Member that there are two parts to the Community safety requirements for lifts.

Firstly, European Parliament and Council Directive 95/16/EC of 29 June 1995 ⁽¹⁾ applies only to new lifts placed on the market after 1 July 1999, with a transitional period from 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1999. The Directive does not contain any provision which might prevent disabled persons, and particularly wheelchair users, from using lifts. On the contrary, it sets out specific points for access to the lift cage by disabled persons (see essential requirements, point 1.2). Furthermore, at the express request of Parliament, the Directive was accompanied by a declaration published in the same Official Journal which recommended that at least one lift in all new buildings be accessible to disabled persons, and particularly to wheelchair users.

Secondly, the Commission recommendation of 8 June 1995 ⁽²⁾ applies to safety improvements for existing lifts. The recommendation is addressed to the Member States and invites them to take the necessary measures within their territories. It sets out different measures for improving safety, notably the installation of lift cage doors which could, in the case of small lift cages, impede access by wheelchair users. In this case it is open to Member States to take other measures such as those proposed, viz. a blocking mechanism or a sensitive stopping mechanism.

In the mandate given to the European standardisation bodies (European Committee for Standardisation (CEN), European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation (Cenelec), European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI)) for the application of directive 95/16/EC, the preparation of a harmonised standard for lifts carrying disabled persons, and particularly wheelchair users, is specifically addressed. To apply the above-mentioned recommendation, the Commission is planning to supplement the mandate to include the establishment of a standard for existing lifts, which would cover lift cage doors and other devices providing an equivalent level of safety.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 213 of 7.9.1995.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 134 of 20.6.1995.

(98/C 21/248)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1993/97

by Olivier Dupuis (ARE) to the Commission

(30 May 1997)

Subject: Turkey

With a view to the opening of negotiations for the accession of Central and Eastern European and Baltic countries to the European Union, the Commission has drawn up a list of eligible countries. Although Turkey has been linked to the Community by an association agreement since 1963 and a customs agreement since last year and has officially submitted its request for EU membership, it has not been included in this list.

Has the Commission considered the implications of not being included in the list, which in any case does not guarantee automatic accession?

Does the Commission not consider that this exclusion may justifiably lead Turkish citizens and their authorities to conclude that eligibility for EU membership is determined on the basis of criteria other than respect for democracy and the free market?

Is the Commission aware that this exclusion may contribute — or is already contributing — to the emergence of an Algerian-type scenario or similar situations dominated by violence and intolerance?

Has the Commission seriously considered the possibility of relations with Turkey being based on a series of political, institutional and economic reforms to be introduced gradually, following which Turkey could become a full member of the European Union? If so, why has this option been ruled out?

Answer given by Mr Van den Broek on behalf of the Commission

(23 June 1997)

The EC-Turkey Association Council has recently reiterated Turkey's eligibility for membership of the Union, confirming that its application would be examined in the light of the same objective criteria as any other country's.

At the Council's request, the Commission is currently preparing a discussion paper on the strengthening of relations with Turkey. The paper will include proposals to that effect and should go to the Council in a matter of weeks.

(98/C 21/249)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1999/97

by Nikitas Kaklamanis (UPE) to the Commission

(9 June 1997)

Subject: Imports of poor-quality steel products from third countries

The European steel industry is facing serious problems arising from imports of steel products from third countries whose specifications are not comparable to the EU's, while the accompanying 'quality certificates' are very often not genuine. These products have been imported into the EU for many years and the fact that their prices are low is putting further pressure on the already beleaguered European steel industry, particularly in the smaller Member States of the Union.

How will the Commission respond to the allegations that 'quality certificates' are falsified or issued with completely inaccurate information and what measures will it take to verify effectively such certificates which often accompany the poor-quality, cheap steel products which are taking over from their EU counterparts which are manufactured to higher specifications?

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission

(10 July 1997)

In the case of steel product imports, it is essential to distinguish between customs treatment of the goods and judgment of the condition of the goods.

As far as customs treatment is concerned, the quality of the goods will play a role only if it has to be incorporated into the definition of the combined customs nomenclature, which corresponds to the international harmonized tariff system, i.e. stainless steel, high-grade steel. The use of false data in order to obtain advantages in the application of custom duties can be pursued on the basis of customs regulations. The responsibility for these controls lies with the national customs authorities.

As far as the question of the quality and the fitness for use of import material is concerned, it is up to buyers and sellers to include appropriate provisions in their contracts. Falsifications of quality certificates fall accordingly into the civil law area. Community-wide controls in this area cannot fall under sovereign jurisdiction. Nonetheless, a number of technical supervision and examination systems exist for steel products within the Community, which exclude the use of sub-standard material in sensitive areas (e.g. with reinforced steel).

Finally, the Commission is of the opinion that, on the basis of the data in the import documents, imports of downgraded material do not currently exceed the proportion found on the Community market.

(98/C 21/250)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2006/97

by Johanna Maij-Weggen (PPE) to the Commission

(11 June 1997)

Subject: Free movement of goods from the Netherlands to Italy

A Dutch citizen who has moved home to Italy where he is now resident has told me that re-registering a Dutch car in Italy requires not only a lot of bureaucracy but also the payment of some FL 800.

What exactly are the procedures for re-registering a Dutch car in Italy and is the sum of FL 800 correct?

If so, does the Commission feel this is correct implementation by the Italian authorities of the principle of the free movement of goods in the Community?

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission

(23 July 1997)

The Commission explained the principles applicable to the registration of vehicles previously registered in another Member State in its interpretative communication of 15 May 1996 ⁽¹⁾. In that communication it indicates, in the light of the case law of the Court of Justice, what Member States must do in order to help simplify controls in intra-Community trade and sets out the rights which private individuals derive from the EC Treaty in this area.

In its communication the Commission does not lay down any scale of charges such as might make it possible to assess the compatibility with Community law of the sums to be paid by a person seeking to register a vehicle to the authorities of the Member State of destination of that vehicle. It merely points out that the documents which the manufacturer or his representative need — where their intervention is called for — in order to check the vehicle's technical characteristics must be issued at reasonable cost and within a reasonable period of time. In the Commission's view, a period of not more than three weeks and a cost of around ECU 100 may be deemed to meet this condition.

These criteria are, however, intended only as a guide. A number of factors may affect the vehicle being registered, depending on whether it is a model with EC approval or one with national approval. In the latter case it must be checked whether the vehicle was type-approved or individually approved. The range of checks to be carried out by the Member State of destination may vary in each of these sets of circumstances.

This being so, the Commission is unable to comment on the compatibility or otherwise of the case mentioned by the Honourable Member on the basis solely of the data contained in the question. It therefore calls upon the Honourable Member to provide further details so that it might, if appropriate, take the matter up with the Italian authorities. The person concerned may also complain to the Commission direct if he feels his rights under the Treaty have been infringed by those authorities.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 143, 15.5.1996.

(98/C 21/251)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2008/97

by Jonas Sjöstedt (GUE/NGL) to the Commission

(11 June 1997)

Subject: EU and Poland's environment legislation

According to the Polish environmental movement, the Commission is demanding that the country lower its standards on certain important aspects of its environment legislation. The Commission is reportedly demanding changes to the Polish rules on car imports. At present, Poland requires all imported cars to be fitted with catalytic converters and also bans imports of cars more than 10 years old. The Commission wants Poland to reconsider these rules.

It is often stressed in debating future eastwards enlargement of the EU that membership would have a positive impact on the environment in the new Member States. The credibility of such an argument is seriously undermined when the EU is demanding that the present environment laws should be relaxed.

The Commission's demands are unacceptable for several reasons. Poland is not a member of the Union. On what legal basis is the EU demanding that the country amend its laws? What specific measures and means of exerting pressure has the Commission used against Poland in these particular cases?

Answer given by Mr Van den Broek on behalf of the Commission*(18 July 1997)*

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question P-1961/97 by Mrs Riis-Jørgensen ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ See page 127.

(98/C 21/252)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2016/97**by Konstadinos Klironomos (PSE) to the Commission***(11 June 1997)*

Subject: Greek ferries between Greece and Italy

On 24 February 1997, the Commission sent a critical report to a number of Greek shipping companies following an investigation into Greek ferry services between Greece and Turkey..

In its report, the Commission refers to a number of facts and concludes that the companies involved had been acting in collaboration over a long period of time to fix their rates on the international sector of the ferry market between Greece and Italy, in breach of Article 85 of the Treaty.

On 17 March 1995, the Greek Government sent a letter to the Commission pointing out that, because Greece does not have common borders with the other EU Member States, the continuous and unhampered operation of ferry services between Greece and Italy was regarded as a service in the public interest. Moreover, the Ministry for Merchant Shipping had urged the companies involved to avoid engaging in unfair competition in ferry services between Greece and Italy.

If the companies involved were to be fined for a serious breach of Article 85 of the Treaty, the viability of the Greek-Italy service would be severely undermined, which would have a very serious negative impact on the future of Greek national policy in regard to that particular route.

In view of the above, will the Commission say whether it has duly taken account of the content of the Greek Government's letter of 17 March 1995 and what measures it will take to avert the possibly disastrous consequences of drawing the mistaken conclusion that the companies involved were knowingly in breach of Article 85 of the Treaty over a number of years?

Answer given by Mr Van Miert on behalf of the Commission*(7 July 1997)*

The Commission has noted carefully the contents of the letter of 17 March 1995 to which the Honourable Member refers, and also the arguments made by the parties during the hearing which was held on 13-14 May 1997, and in their written replies to the Commission's statement of objections of 24 February 1997.

Note has also been taken of the public service obligations for which the ministry of Merchant Marine is responsible, although it is also clear to the Commission that the ministry does not interfere in the price setting mechanism on international routes. The Commission is, of course, fully aware of the importance of international maritime transport for the Greek economy.

Should the Commission decide to proceed towards a negative decision in this case, it will take all of the relevant factors into consideration, particularly when it comes to assessing the gravity of the infringement. Any such decision will not be taken prior to the consultation of the advisory committee on restrictive practices and dominant positions in maritime transport where the competition and transport experts of the Member States will be asked for their opinion on the case.

(98/C 21/253)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2018/97**by Iñigo Méndez de Vigo (PPE) to the Commission***(11 June 1997)**Subject:* Aid for the shipping sector

The Commission has adopted new guidelines authorizing state aids in the shipping sector.

Does the Commission intend to grant aid from European funds to counteract the decline in the European fleet?

Answer given by Mr Kinnock on behalf of the Commission*(11 July 1997)*

On 6 May 1997, the Commission adopted revised guidelines for state aid in the maritime transport sector. The revised guidelines were envisaged in the Commission communication 'Towards a new maritime strategy' ⁽¹⁾ which recommended such a review in order to help maintain and develop the Community's shipping sector.

The guidelines seek to regulate the manner in which aid is granted by the Member States. However, apart from a number of initiatives in the area of training (e.g. Leonardo) it is not foreseen that Community funding will be used to aid the maritime transport sector.

⁽¹⁾ COM(96) 81 final.

(98/C 21/254)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2026/97**by Alexandros Alavanos (GUE/NGL) to the Commission***(5 June 1997)**Subject:* Psychiatric care in Greece

Further to the Commission's answer to my Written Question P-1038/97 ⁽¹⁾:

1. The effect of suspending funding for the social exclusion programmes for people with mental health problems until the study for the completion of the psychiatric care reform is approved is that various centres are being dismantled, staff are unsettled and specialists are leaving. What measures will the Commission take to ensure that funding continues in this interim phase until the programmes covered by the new study are finalized and approved?
2. The measures implemented under Regulation 815/84 ⁽²⁾ fell within the terms of reference of the Ministry of Health, whereas the measures relating to the social exclusion of people with mental health problems are now a matter for the Ministry of Labour, the adverse consequences of which are well-known. What steps will the Commission take to ensure that the measures which are a continuation of Regulation 815/84 are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health?
3. Apart from ministry officials, do those taking part in the study of the psychiatric reforms include the people who are directly responsible for and familiar with the situation of psychiatric hospitals and, in particular, the biggest of these, the Attica Psychiatric Hospital?
4. Has provision been made for staff of the Attica Psychiatric Hospital to form part of the committee managing the programmes to combat the social exclusion of people with mental health problems?
5. What stage has been reached in the Greek study of the reform of psychiatric care? When is it expected to be approved and implemented?

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 319, 18.10.1997, p. 219.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 88, 31.3.1984, p. 1.

Answer given by Mr Flynn on behalf of the Commission*(8 July 1997)*

The Commission would inform the Honourable Member that there has been no disruption of payments for actions concerning people with mental health problems under the operational programme 'Combating exclusion from the labour market'.

The Greek ministry for health and welfare remains the responsible authority for action related to the socio-economic exclusion of mentally ill people. As mentioned in the Commission's reply to the Honourable Member's question P-1038/97, the Greek authorities, at the Commission's request, submitted an action plan comprising the action required to continue and consolidate psychiatric reform. There has been an initial Commission reaction to this plan which will be revised further by the Greek authorities during the next few months. In the context of this plan, some actions were identified for implementation during 1997.

The Commission is not in a position to reply to the Honourable Member as to whether representatives from psychiatric hospitals participated in the drafting of the plan of action in question. This matter falls within the competence of the Greek authorities.

The ministerial decisions adopted in July 1996 on the accreditation of implementing agencies and the management of actions under the specific operational programme, do not provide for a management committee for social exclusion programmes concerning people with mental health problems such as that cited by the Honourable Member.

(98/C 21/255)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2047/97**by Roberta Angelilli (NI) to the Commission***(13 June 1997)*

Subject: CERA annual report on 'Extremism in Europe'

The annual report of the European Centre for Research and Action on Racism and Anti-Semitism (CERA), entitled 'Extremism in Europe', was presented to the press at the EP Press Centre in Strasbourg on 14 May 1997.

Astonishment and indignation are the only possible reactions to the section of the report devoted to the Italian political party, Alleanza Nazionale, which is branded by the CERA, with no real supporting evidence, as an organization with an ideology characterized by immobilism, many of whose activities reflect a tradition of xenophobia, and which has a tendency towards anti-democratic and extremist behaviour. As is illustrated by the data set out in the CERA report itself, Alleanza Nazionale is a party which, in addition to being well represented in the European Parliament, gained 15.7% of the overall vote in the recent elections in Italy, and in some constituencies, over 30%. This attempt to present Alleanza Nazionale to world public opinion as just another right-wing extremist group is therefore totally unacceptable, as well as being totally unfounded. The CERA report would appear to reflect a basic prejudice against the right wing and, despite the fact that it should be based on hard facts alone, it contains unacceptable elements of political bias.

Given the above, would the Commission state whether:

1. the CERA report was commissioned or supported in any way (including financially) by one of the Community institutions?
2. if it was, it is to be considered an official document of the Community institutions?
3. there are any rules preventing the Community institutions from providing support of any kind for politically-biased initiatives?
4. it intends to give its views on the matter?

Answer given by Mr Flynn on behalf of the Commission*(16 July 1997)*

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the answer given to written question P-1940/97 from Mr Fernando Moriz ⁽¹⁾.

The report mentioned can in no way be considered an official document of the Commission.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 373, 9.12.1997.

(98/C 21/256)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2056/97**by Frode Kristoffersen (PPE) to the Commission***(16 June 1997)*

Subject: Ethnic minorities

Since, when new Member States are accepted into the EU, the quality of the rules they have adopted to benefit ethnic minorities are to be given proper consideration, will both the representatives of the ethnic minorities in person and non-governmental organizations such as the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) also be actively involved in the assessment process?

Answer given by Mr Van den Broek on behalf of the Commission*(8 July 1997)*

In order to assess — in keeping with the political criteria laid down by the 1993 Copenhagen European Council — the situation of minorities and the protection granted to them by countries which have applied to accede to the EU, the Commission has read reports from several non-governmental organisations which will be of great use to it in preparing the opinions which it has to deliver pursuant to Article O of the Treaty on European Union on the applications for membership from the countries in question.

The Commission has not been acquainted, however, with the position of the federation referred to by the Honourable Member.

(98/C 21/257)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2058/97**by Nikitas Kaklamanis (UPE) to the Commission***(16 June 1997)*

Subject: Demographic composition of present-day Turkey

The prestigious German University of Tübingen has published a report stating that Anatolia is populated by over a hundred indigenous peoples, and that citizens of Turkish extraction very likely constitute only a marginal minority. It is also generally recognised that there are innumerable 'crypto-Christians' on Turkish territory, who are reluctant openly to declare their ethnic origin and faith for fear of the treatment they may receive at the hands of the Turkish authorities. Moreover, information about the precise number of Kurds living in Turkey is confused, with estimates varying between eight and twenty million.

Will the Commission say whether it has raised — or intends to raise in future — with the Turkish authorities the question of establishing a precise and objective register of the demographic composition of present-day Turkey, given the intention of both sides (the EU and Turkey) to incorporate this country in the European project, an objective that can be attained only if the cultural identity of all ethnic groups living in this country is fully and devoutly respected?

Answer given by Mr Van den Broek on behalf of the Commission*(11 July 1997)*

The last census in Turkey was held in 1990. A date has yet to be fixed for the next one.

The Turkish authorities consider that ethnic origin must not be among the questions asked in a census.

(98/C 21/258)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2067/97**by Markus Ferber (PPE) to the Commission***(16 June 1997)*

Subject: Right of establishment and freedom of profession in Greece for architects who are citizens of other EU Member States

Directive 85/384/EEC ⁽¹⁾ of 10 June 1985 covers the mutual recognition of certificates concerning architecture and other measures to facilitate the effective exercise of the right of establishment and freedom to provide services in the EU Member States.

I understand that this Directive was transposed in Greek law by Presidential Decree No 107 (Greek Official Gazette of 7 April 1993, No 49, p. 483 ff.). Although the Decree recognizes, under certain conditions, the right of establishment and the right to exercise the profession of architect of citizens of other EU Member States, at the same time it makes permission to do so dependent on prior authorization by the Technical Chamber of Greece (TCG).

According to information from German citizens, the TCG refuses permission, without any explanation of the reasons, for foreign applicants who have all the requisite qualifications. Consequently, even though it has been transposed formally in Greek law, the EU directive is of no practical significance.

What action will the Commission take to ensure that the provisions of the EU Directive are transposed in Greece?

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 223, 21.8.1985, p. 15.

Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission*(23 July 1997)*

The Commission is aware of the problem raised by the Honourable Member. It has already officially drawn the attention of the Greek authorities to the problem and the need to resolve it as soon as possible. If the Greek authorities do not take the requisite steps forthwith, the Commission will, where necessary, be certain to investigate the matter by instituting proceedings under Article 169 of the EC Treaty.

(98/C 21/259)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2068/97**by Cristiana Muscardini (NI) to the Commission***(16 June 1997)*

Subject: Coordination of biomedical research

In its reply to question E-0535/97 ⁽¹⁾ of 11 April 1997 the Commission states that the Community has 'been able to achieve a high degree of coordination' in the spheres of biomedical and health research.

Can the Commission say how high a degree of coordination it has achieved between the 700 research networks to which it refers?

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 319, 18.10.1997, p. 103.

Answer given by Mrs Cresson on behalf of the Commission*(15 July 1997)*

The setting-up of more than 700 biomedical research networks has enabled cooperation among research workers to be initiated or boosted, the available resources to be pooled, duplication of effort and research to be avoided and critical mass to be achieved in the data needed for the epidemiological studies, more particularly as regards rare diseases or pathologies linked with hazards at work.

By way of an example: a project funded by the Community and coordinated by a British laboratory has enabled the existence of a new variant of Creutzfeld-Jakob disease to be established via the exchange of information among various European centres. This result is essential in understanding the inter-species transmission of prion-initiated neurodegenerative diseases and in drawing up a strategy for bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

(98/C 21/260)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2076/97**by Claudio Azzolini (UPE) to the Commission***(11 June 1997)*

Subject: Implementation of the Cites Convention

The 'super-fines' provided for in Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 ⁽¹⁾, which seeks to harmonize implementation in the 15 Member States of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (Cites), come into force on 1 June 1997.

As far as coral is concerned, various distinctions must be made with a view to avoiding unlikely, but nevertheless possible, problems.

The species to be protected, which appear in the aforementioned Cites list, belong to the class Anthozoa, with particular regard to the Tubiporidae (organpipe corals), Antipatharia (black corals) and Madreporaria groups. Given that all the types of coral to be protected are of madreporarian structure, they cannot be made into necklaces or other types of manufactured goods and are therefore completely different from the *Corallium rubrum* which is to be found in many parts of the Union.

The false information on the subject which has appeared in the weekly and daily press represents a serious threat to direct and indirect jobs in the coral-working sector in areas such as Torre del Greco (Italy), where 6 000 people are employed. Would the Commission not agree that, with a view to protecting both the large number of people employed in this sector and, above all, individual members of the public who might be unjustly punished, it should take steps to ensure that comprehensive supporting evidence is put forward with the utmost urgency, so as to enable the serious and damaging misunderstanding caused by the above press reports to be cleared up?

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 61, 3.3.1997, p. 1.

Answer given by Mme Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission*(27 June 1997)*

The false information in the press on the subject of species of coral not covered by Regulation (EC) No 338/97 does not originate either from the Commission or from the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) press campaign currently co-financed by the Commission.

In order to avoid any damage to the interests of Member States, the Commission has asked the WWF to co-ordinate the content of all communications released during the information campaign on the new Council Regulation with the authorities of the signatory countries to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). During the committee meetings, the national authorities were officially informed by the Commission on several occasions of the progress of the campaign and of the necessity of co-operating with the WWF.

WWF Italy has duly collaborated with the Italian authorities in regulating communications released during the information campaign. The communication released cannot give rise to confusion since it indicates that not all types of coral are covered by the Regulation. It specifies that 'certain types of coral should not be gathered as souvenirs'.

(98/C 21/261)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2077/97**by Riccardo Garosci (UPE) to the Commission***(11 June 1997)**Subject:* Labelling of packaged foodstuffs

Given that, according to the findings of scientific studies available from Commission DG XII, over one million Italian consumers suffer from disorders caused by allergies to various types of food, while in the European Union as a whole there are estimated to be more than seven million such sufferers (2% of the population), a new Regulation on the labelling of packaged foodstuffs should be introduced with a view to protecting the health of European consumers.

Under the current EU Regulation ingredients comprising less than 25% of a given product are not subject to labelling requirements.

Can the Commission amend the EU Regulation on the labelling of both products packaged within the EU and foodstuffs imported from third countries, so as to enable allergy sufferers to determine the exact proportions of all the ingredients present in packaged foodstuffs?

The Commission should note that, according to reliable scientific evidence, even very small quantities (less than 1%) are sufficient to produce a serious reaction in anyone allergic to a given foodstuff.

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission*(2 July 1997)*

The Commission is currently studying the need to amend Directive 79/112/EEC on the labelling of foodstuffs ⁽¹⁾ so as to provide better information for persons suffering from a food allergy or intolerance.

Eighteen months ago, at the Commission's request, the Scientific Committee for Food finalised a report on scientific knowledge in this area. As the Honourable Member points out, a more general study in this field — 'Study of nutritional factors in food allergies and food intolerances' ⁽²⁾ — was published at the beginning of this year at the Commission's initiative. This work is to be supplemented, within the framework of scientific cooperation between the Member States and the Commission, by a review of available epidemiological data (effect, intake, geographical variations, frequency and degree of hypersensitivity). This is a necessary step in defining the criteria for drawing up a list of ingredients recognised to be a source of allergy or intolerance and which, when used in a foodstuff, should have to appear in the list of ingredients indicated on the label.

On the basis of the results of this epidemiological survey, due at the end of this year, the Commission might be in a position to adopt a proposal to amend Directive 79/112/EEC.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 33, 8.2.1979, as last amended by Directive 97/4/EC — OJ L 43, 14.2.1997.

⁽²⁾ EUR/16893 (AIR1 — 93 — 8012-IT).

(98/C 21/262)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2084/97**by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission***(19 June 1997)**Subject:* JRC in Ispra

The Staff Regulations applicable to EU officials expressly forbid officials to engage in outside employment, even if it is linked to the duties carried out for the institution for which they work.

It would appear that a senior official at the JRC in Ispra is also managing director or chairman of various companies located in northern Italy.

Does the Commission consider this situation to be in line with the provisions of the Staff Regulations?

Can it state whether contractors are paid on time?

Can it state whether the findings of research undertaken on contract by the JRC are treated with the required degree of confidentiality and are not divulged to third parties?

Answer given by Mrs Cresson on behalf of the Commission

(29 July 1997)

The Commission is conducting a detailed investigation of the problem raised by the Honourable Member and will inform him of the outcome as soon as possible.

(98/C 21/263)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2086/97
by Hiltrud Breyer (V) to the Commission

(19 June 1997)

Subject: EU research funding for cloning experiments

Mrs Cresson answered Written Question E-1021/97 ⁽¹⁾ on 22 May 1997. Unfortunately she omitted to answer the second part of question 2(b).

How much EU money was indirectly utilized (for cloning experiments with sheep cells)?

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 373, 9.12.1997.

Answer given by Mrs Cresson on behalf of the Commission

(22 July 1997)

Referring to the Commission's reply to the Honourable Member's Written Question E-1021/97, the project under point 2a, which aimed to gain understanding of cell totipotency, has received a Community contribution of 1.3 MECU for 3 years (ECU 351 000 to the Roslin institute).

(98/C 21/264)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2206/97
by Undine-Uta Bloch von Blottnitz (V) to the Commission

(13 June 1997)

Subject: EU resources for the Rovno and Khmelnitzky nuclear power stations in Ukraine

An EBRD study has revealed that the completion of the Rovno 4 and Khmelnitzky 2 nuclear power stations in Ukraine is not the least-cost option for supplying Ukraine with electricity. The EBRD's statutes do not therefore permit it to participate financially. The EU has already contributed ECU 30 million to these nuclear projects.

1. Are any efforts being made to have further EU resources provided for the completion of the two Ukrainian reactors? If so, what resources, on what scale and over what period?
2. Are Euratom loans to be granted for the completion of the reactors? If so, on what scale and over what period?
3. Are resources from the EU's PHARE/TACIS programme to be provided for the completion of the reactors? If so, on what scale and over what period?

4. Does the EBRD's decision not to provide resources for the completion of the reactors because it does not satisfy the least-cost criterion have any implications for the allocation of EU resources under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)? If so, what are they? If not, why not?
5. Given the dangerous state of the sarcophagus over the damaged Chernobyl reactor, does the Commission not believe that a greater financial effort should at last be made to reduce the risk of the structure collapsing?

Answer given by Mr Van den Broek on behalf of the Commission

(8 July 1997)

It should be noted that the European bank for reconstruction and development (EBRD) has not yet decided on its participation in the financing of the Rovno 4 and Khmelnitzky 2 nuclear reactors. This decision will take account of all relevant aspects.

1. and 3. There are no plans at this stage to provide additional Community resources for the completion of the two reactors beyond those already envisaged.
2. The Community has envisaged at the Corfou European Council in 1994 to contribute with Euratom loans to the financing of this project. The Commission is at present in the process of preparing this loan decision and no details are yet decided.
4. The EBRD has not yet decided on the loan application.
5. The Commission is concerned with the risks associated with the present sarcophagus and has undertaken serious efforts, since 1994, to evaluate possible realistic solutions. As a result of these efforts an agreement has been reached with Ukraine, in the context of the G-7, on a 'shelter implementation plan'. The financing is a matter still under discussion within the G-7.

(98/C 21/265)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2215/97

by Helena Torres Marques (PSE) to the Commission

(19 June 1997)

Subject: Creation of enterprises by women

In view of the growing presence of women in the world of work, can the Commission supply up-to-the-minute figures on the number of enterprises created over the last few years by women, for the Union as a whole and for each Member State?

Answer given by Mr Papoutsis on behalf of the Commission

(15 July 1997)

Available statistics on the number of enterprises created by women in the Community as a whole and in each Member State are provided by the annual report of the European observatory for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and Eurostat, through its publication 'Enterprises in Europe'. The statistics provided on women entrepreneurs indicate that out of the 17 million enterprises in the Community, 20-30% are run by women, of all the new enterprises created 25-35% are created by women, assisting spouses in SMEs have a participation rate of 60-80% and the survival rate of businesses run by women — after a 5 year period — is about 52%.

It is very important to note that women entrepreneurs and assisting spouses are most common in smaller enterprises. The sectors of business activity women entrepreneurs most frequently choose are the retail and service sectors whereas men prefer manufacturing. The relatively low rate of survival (52%) is reflected in the choice of sector (services) and the lack of start-up assistance offered to small businesses and more particularly women entrepreneurs.

Another point worth mentioning, due to its significance to society, is that women entrepreneurs tend to exhibit more socially oriented goals. As for the available statistics on women entrepreneurs in each Member State, statistics gathered reflect the available statistics on national level.

Due to the fact that more quantitative and up to date statistics are required (the available statistics date back to 1994-1995) in order better to identify the sector, the third multiannual programme for SMEs (1997-2000) (Council Decision 97/15/EC ⁽¹⁾) stresses the importance of statistical data so as to identify the number of enterprises, their size, structure and demography. Specific credits are intended to be foreseen for the elaboration of statistics in the proposed budget of 1998 on budget line B5-3201.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 6, 10.1.1997.

(98/C 21/266)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2216/97

by Robin Teverson (ELDR)

to the Commission (30 June 1997)

Subject: Satellite technology

The use of satellite technology is of great assistance to those remote rural regions whose economies are often dependent on SME's. It is therefore important for them to follow this technology's development in order to benefit from it.

However, there have been claims that price agreements are common practice among satellite space segment sellers which have kept prices high and uniform.

Is the Commission aware of such a practice and if so, has this been taken into account in the preparation of the new action plan for satellite technology?

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission

(30 July 1997)

The Commission Communication entitled 'European Union Action Plan: Satellite Communications in the Information Society' ⁽¹⁾ is a response to the urgent need for political action to create the conditions necessary for the rapid development of a competitive market in European satellite communications.

The Action Plan, in keeping with the principle of subsidiarity, concentrates on completing the Community's internal market, strengthening the European position at an international level and increasing support for the European research and development sector.

Actions A1 and A6 refer, among other things, to provisions on competition law, in particular to provisions on pricing agreements (Article 85 of the EC Treaty):

- A1 'The Commission will step up efforts to achieve full implementation of all EU legislation relevant for satellite communications [...]',
- A6 '[...] The Commission will continue to review developments concerning the International Satellite Organisations and [to] take the appropriate steps with a view to ensuring that these developments contribute to the achievement of a fully competitive satellite communications marketplace'.

The Commission is indeed seeking to increase the level of competition amongst satellite operators and the satellite service providers. One way in which it is doing this is to support the restructuring of the intergovernmental satellite organisations (Intelsat, Eutelsat and Inmarsat) on a more commercial basis in the light of the entry of new satellite operators into their markets. In addition, the Commission will investigate fully any complaint about practices which appear to infringe the Community's competition rules.

⁽¹⁾ Doc. COM(97) 91.

(98/C 21/267)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2226/97**by Frode Kristoffersen (PPE) to the Commission***(30 June 1997)**Subject:* Sexual harassment in the workplace

Does the Commission consider its plans to implement EU rules on the degree and scale of sexual harassment in the workplace in individual Member States to be in keeping with the principle of subsidiarity, and has it occurred to it that the outlook (including legal usage) is largely conditioned by national attitudes to ethics and education, which must be taken to mean that a set of EU rules on the subject would be impossible to enforce?

Answer given by Mr Flynn on behalf of the Commission*(4 August 1997)*

The Commission is currently consulting the social partners on the objectives and the content of a Community initiative on sexual harassment. The Community institutions have repeatedly emphasised the importance of dealing effectively with this issue of equal opportunities and health and safety for all employees throughout the Community. Research has shown that sexual harassment is a problem in the workplace, and furthermore that very few Member States have a sufficient system of prevention to deal with it.

The current Community definition of behaviour constituting sexual harassment in the 1990 Council Resolution ⁽¹⁾ on the protection of the dignity of women and men at work, includes an element of the recipient's subjective understanding of the situation, and thus takes into account possible cultural differences. The Commission acts in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity in formulating all its proposals.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 157, 27.6.1990.

(98/C 21/268)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2235/97**by Patricia McKenna (V) to the Commission***(2 July 1997)**Subject:* US military aid to Congo (formerly Zaïre)

A report in The International Herald Tribune (9 June 1997) refers to a suggestion by the US representative to the United Nations that the Clinton administration is willing to give military aid to the new Government of Congo 'as an incentive to maintain human rights standards'.

Many would view this as a worrying development, given that arms sales have already exacerbated tensions in the Great Lakes Region. Western-supplied arms are believed to have played an important role in the genocide witnessed in Rwanda, for example.

Has the US Government given any details to the Commission or other EU institutions about the nature of its planned military cooperation with Congo? What action does the Commission propose to take?

Answer given by Mr Pinheiro on behalf of the Commission*(22 July 1997)*

The Commission wishes to bring to the attention of the Honourable Member the conclusions of the Council (General Affairs) on 2 June 1997 on the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa, in which the Member States, 'recognising that the availability of arms in quantities exceeding needs for self-defence may be

a factor contributing to situations of instability, reaffirm their commitment to exercise the utmost restraint with regard to arms exports.' On the subject of United States military aid, information supplied by the US authorities is to the effect that their country is prepared to help the Democratic Republic of the Congo to reform its armed forces in order to turn them into a multi-ethnic professional army tasked with the defence of the national territory. Military aid would take the form of institutional support i.e. the provision of experts.

In agreement with the Member States the Commission's policy is aimed at full cooperation by the new authorities with the humanitarian aid agencies in searching for and repatriating refugees and displaced persons. Furthermore, it has called on the Congolese authorities to allow the United Nations fact-finding mission complete freedom to enquire into accusations of violent extortion and of massacres of Rwandan refugees in the Congo. Rehabilitation programmes and full cooperation can resume as soon as there is practical confirmation of the new authorities' willingness to respect human rights, restart the democratisation process and establish a State in which the rule of law prevails.

The United States was informed in the course of the regular dialogue with that country of the fact that this policy, referred to in the conclusions of the Amsterdam European Council, had been adopted.

(98/C 21/269)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2236/97

by Patricia McKenna (V) to the Commission

(2 July 1997)

Subject: Ireland's failure to ratify CITES

Ireland is the only EU country which has not yet ratified the UN Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

Has the Commission sought any explanation from the Irish authorities about this matter? What responses have been given by the Irish authorities?

Is the Commission monitoring how the EU states which have ratified the convention are enforcing its provisions? Is it satisfied with the enforcement of its provisions by Member States? Has it published any reports about such monitoring?

Answer given by Mrs Bjerregaard on behalf of the Commission

(16 July 1997)

The Commission has indeed insisted on the accession by Ireland to the convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora (CITES) since the entry into force of Council Regulation (EEC) No 3626/82 ⁽¹⁾ on the implementation of CITES.

In December 1996, the minister for arts, culture and the Gaeltacht confirmed Ireland's commitment to its accession to the convention and its intention to do so this year following enactment of a bill to amend the Wildlife Act 1976.

The Commission monitors the implementation and enforcement by Member States of the 1982 Regulation mentioned above and its successor, Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 ⁽²⁾, which entered into force on 1 June 1997. The Commission has been generally satisfied with Member States' performance under the 1982 Regulation, but expects the 1997 Regulation to bring important improvement in both implementation and enforcement.

The old Regulation did not contain a provision for reports on implementation, unlike the new one. The latter provides, in its Article 15.4(c) and (d), for biennial reports on implementation and enforcement. The first of these reports has to be drawn up before 31 October 1999.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 384, 31.12.1982.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 61, 3.3.1997.

(98/C 21/270)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2237/97
by Patricia McKenna (V) to the Commission
(2 July 1997)

Subject: Food aid for North Korea

On 23 May 1997 the Commission announced a ECU 46.3 million food aid package for North Korea.

The head of the Commission's delegation in Korea was quoted in a report by Yonhap, the South Korean news agency, as saying that many problems had been encountered in the distribution of a previous consignment of EU aid there earlier this year.

Can the Commission give details of the problems encountered? Are there any reports of any aid being siphoned off by the North Korean military? Has the Commission published and/or will it publish a report about those problems?

What measures will it be taking to ensure that its latest aid package will be properly distributed?

How many EU officials will be involved in monitoring the distribution of the aid?

Answer given by Sir Leon Brittan on behalf of the Commission

(24 July 1997)

The Commission clearly indicated at a press conference in Seoul on 24 May 1997 that there was no evidence of past Community food aid to North Korea being improperly used. The report cited by the Honourable Member, issued by Yonhap news agency on 24 May 1997, quotes the Commission as reporting that 'seeds of grain provided early this year had been distributed properly'.

The Commission has received no reports indicating that Community food aid has been diverted to groups other than the civilian population for which it was intended. This view is shared by the United Nation's world food programme (WFP) which has a presence in North Korea checking distribution of its food aid.

The package announced on 23 May 1997 consists of approximately 155 000 tonnes of food aid products, with a value of around 46.3 MECU. It also includes a team of independent experts who will work closely with WFP in North Korea to ensure that the significant quantities of Community food aid are properly distributed.

(98/C 21/271)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2267/97
by Amedeo Amadeo (NI) to the Commission
(2 July 1997)

Subject: Information on funds used to develop the north-west region of Italy in 1995-1996

What funds were allocated by the European Union in 1995 and 1996 to the north-west region of Italy (Lombardy, Piedmont, Liguria and Valle d'Aosta) and for what purposes, with particular reference to:

1. European Regional Development Fund;
2. European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) – Guidance Section;
3. European Social Fund;
4. European Union research programmes;
5. European Union energy programmes;
6. European Union environment programmes;
7. Other European Union programmes?

Answer given by Mr Santer on behalf of the Commission*(7 August 1997)*

The Commission is collecting the information it needs to answer the question. It will communicate its findings as soon as possible.

(98/C 21/272)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2275/97**by Cristiana Muscardini (NI) to the Commission***(2 July 1997)*

Subject: Reduction of payment deadlines for SMU

It is well known that one of the main difficulties faced by SMU as regards their expansion, and often their survival, is caused by the excessive delays in the payment of invoices. With a view to improving the functioning of the internal market, does the Commission feel it would be useful to draw up a directive requiring large firms and multinational companies in particular to settle invoices within a period of 30 to 45 days, after which interest calculated on the basis of the bank rate would have to be paid?

Answer given by Mr Papoutsis on behalf of the Commission*(23 July 1997)*

The action plan for the single market⁽¹⁾ and the Commission's report on late payments in commercial transactions⁽²⁾ indicated that further action is needed to tackle the problem of late payment in Europe. The lack of action in most Member States on this issue and the latest statistics on late payments in Europe have led the Commission to conclude that it is now necessary to make proposals for minimum requirements to combat late payments which should be incorporated into national legislation. The Commission intends to make a proposal for a directive on late payments before the end of the year, based on the package of measures set out in the Commission's Recommendation of 12 May 1995 (No 198/97/EC) on payment periods in commercial transactions⁽³⁾, including the statutory right of creditors to interest on late payment.

⁽¹⁾ CSE(97) 1 final.

⁽²⁾ C(97) 2121, 9.7.1997

⁽³⁾ OJ L 127, 10.6.1995.

(98/C 21/273)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2284/97**by José Pomés Ruiz (PPE) to the Commission***(19 June 1997)*

Subject: Freedom of movement for road haulage every day of the week

Article 36 of the Treaty of Rome allows prohibitions and restrictions on goods in transit provided they do not constitute a means of arbitrary discrimination or a disguised restriction on trade between Member States. However, France and Germany do not allow lorry traffic on non-working days. The rest of the Member States, on the other hand, prefer heavy traffic to be spread over the seven days of the week, so as not to cause week day congestion for the sake of week-end traffic. Specific restrictions for road safety reasons are acceptable, but not general bans.

Furthermore, along the frontiers of these countries, great queues of lorries build up, to the direct detriment of the frontier regions of neighbouring countries.

Does the Commission possess any means of preventing these distortions of the free movement of traffic by liberalizing the transport of goods so as to avoid these additional costs to the transit of goods within the Union? If not, is it prepared to make a proposal to this effect?

Answer given by Mr Kinnoek on behalf of the Commission*(11 July 1997)*

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Questions E-41/97 and E-1567/97 by Mr Cornelissen ⁽¹⁾ and Mr Wijisenbeek ⁽²⁾.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 186, 18.6.1997.

⁽²⁾ See page 72.

(98/C 21/274)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2368/97**by Ulf Holm (V) to the Commission***(1 July 1997)*

Subject: Generalized system of preferences

The European Union has had generalized trade preferences since 1971 for finished and semi-finished industrial products from the developing countries.

Has there been a request with respect to Pakistan for the removal of GSP? If so, what was the Commission's reaction? Could the Commission please make its decision public?

Why did the Commission establish a procedure for the withdrawal of preferences?

What results does the Commission expect from the removal of such preferences?

Answer given by Mr Marín on behalf of the Commission*(18 July 1997)*

The Honourable Member is referring to a complaint under Article 9 of Regulation (EC) No 3281/94 applying a four-year scheme of generalized tariff preferences (1995 to 1998) in respect of certain industrial products originating in developing countries ⁽¹⁾. This complaint seeking the withdrawal of generalised tariff preferences has been the subject of consultations within the Committee for the Management of Generalized Preferences under Article 10 of the Regulation. Consultations are the first — confidential — stage of the procedure laid down in the Regulation; they are followed by an investigation and, if called for, a decision withdrawing preferences.

In view of the steps taken in the right direction, and in particular the stepping-up of efforts by the government of the country concerned to abolish the practices that gave rise to the complaint (forced child labour), the Commission feels it is enough at the moment to follow developments closely, without moving on to the second stage of the procedure.

The decision to withdraw generalised tariff preferences is taken by the Council, not the Commission, under a rigorous procedure aimed at ensuring that complaints are handled with all due legal guarantees of equity and impartiality.

The overriding objective of the procedure, during which contacts are established with the authorities of the countries concerned, is to bring about progress on the ground by encouraging the countries concerned to pursue a qualitative social development, a process the Community backs up with complementary schemes. Preferences are withdrawn as a last resort, if the first two stages have come to nothing.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 348, 31.12.1994.

(98/C 21/275)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2427/97
by Mark Watts (PSE) to the Commission
(7 July 1997)

Subject: Channel tunnel security

Is the Commission aware of the incident on 11 June 1997 when four Moldovan stowaways were discovered in a storage compartment on a Eurostar train at Ashford International station in my constituency?

Does the Commission share my extreme concern at this lapse of security, which proves yet again that security is lax on the French side?

Will the Commission now demand an immediate review of all aspects of Channel tunnel security, with the aim of preventing a disaster before one takes place?

Answer given by Mrs Gradin on behalf of the Commission

(28 July 1997)

The Commission is as concerned as the Honourable Member over the security issues, and over the trafficking in human beings that is ongoing in Europe. It has serious consequences for the people involved, and all forces should be joined in combating this smuggling of human beings.

It is an important part of European co-operation to counteract smuggling in human beings. In this respect the Commission would like to underline the importance of the joint action adopted by the Council in February this year. This action commits the Member States to classify trafficking in human being as a criminal offence.

(98/C 21/276)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2496/97
by Alan Gillis (PPE) to the Commission
(11 July 1997)

Subject: Sects

Given the frightening increase in the activities of various cults and sects in our society and the mind control they impose on their members would the Commission consider launching an investigation into such organizations — their practices, recruitment methods and treatment of their members — and where necessary take steps to ban such organizations from operating in the EU

Answer given by Mrs Gradin on behalf of the Commission

(1 August 1997)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to Written Question E-3443/96 by Mr Ferber ⁽¹⁾ and to Oral Question H-524/97 by Mr J. Fitzsimons ⁽²⁾.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 186, 18.6.1997.

⁽²⁾ Debates of the Parliament (July 1997).