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European Parliament

WRITTEN QUESTIONS WITH ANSWER

2014/C 41 E/01 Written questions by Members of the European Parliament and their answers given by a European Union institution 1

(See notice to reader)

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Notice to reader

This publication contains written questions by Members of the European Parliament and their answers given by a European Union institution.

For each question and answer, the original language version is presented before a possible translation.

In some cases, it is possible that the answer is given in a language other than the question. This depends on the working language of the committee requested to provide the answer.

These questions and answers are published in accordance with Rules 117 and 118 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament.

All questions and answers can be accessed via the website of the European Parliament (Europarl) under the heading 'Parliamentary questions':

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

ABBREVIATIONS USED FOR POLITICAL GROUPS

PPE	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
S&D	Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament
ALDE	Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
Verts/ALE	Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists Group
GUE/NGL	Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left
EFD	Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group
NI	Non-attached Members

EN

IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

WRITTEN QUESTIONS WITH ANSWER

Written questions by Members of the European Parliament and their answers given by a European Union institution

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(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005527/13
a la Comisión
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Teleasistencia sanitaria

El envejecimiento de nuestra sociedad nos requiere un mayor esfuerzo económico en la protección social y el derecho de acceso a la salud de nuestros mayores. De acuerdo con el artículo 35 de la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales, cada persona tiene derecho a un elevado nivel de protección de la salud.

A nivel europeo se espera que para el año 2015 la población mayor de 60 años aumente en 2 millones. Actualmente un 17,7 % de la población cántabra tiene más de 65 años, un porcentaje que irá en aumento y que se encuentra en situación crítica con el desmantelamiento de los centros de salud y servicios de atención sanitaria en zonas rurales.

Durante el 2012, Año Europeo del Envejecimiento Activo, numerosas iniciativas fueron puestas sobre la mesa para aliviar el problema del envejecimiento y el acceso a la salud a través de la innovación. El mismo año en el que el Gobierno de España eliminaba de los Presupuestos Generales del Estado el programa de teleasistencia sanitaria. Nuestra población sigue envejeciendo y esta es una situación a la que tenemos que dar prioridad más allá del 2012.

¿Nos puede informar la Comisión del estado de aplicación del plan estratégico para atajar los problemas económicos y sociales que acarrean el envejecimiento de la población europea y cómo los recortes presupuestarios afectan a dicho plan?

¿Tiene la Comisión una propuesta que aporte soluciones innovadoras para la sanidad en áreas rurales, medidas destinadas a fomentar un diagnóstico precoz, la incorporación de innovaciones tecnológicas en el diagnóstico y tratamiento, así como para mejorar el acceso a la salud de zonas remotas o modelos de atención integrada para pacientes de edad avanzada que sufren enfermedades crónicas?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(1 de julio de 2013)

En el contexto del envejecimiento de la población y la presión económica que pesa sobre los presupuestos, proporcionar asistencia accesible y de alta calidad a las personas mayores es un gran reto social. Los sistemas sanitario y de asistencia deben transformarse para responder a las necesidades de los mayores, a fin de que puedan seguir recibiendo la asistencia y la protección a las que tienen derecho. La Comisión apoya estos esfuerzos a través de una serie de iniciativas.

La Asociación Europea para la Innovación en el Ámbito del Envejecimiento Activo y Saludable permite la colaboración entre las partes interesadas para impulsar enfoques innovadores a fin de mejorar la calidad de vida de las personas mayores, la sostenibilidad de los sistemas sanitarios y la competitividad europea. En ella participan más de 3 000 los socios (300 organizaciones que forman coaliciones, de todos los Estados miembros, que representan a 1 000 regiones y municipios). Un ámbito es la reproducción, el acompañamiento y el paso a una mayor escala de modelos de asistencia integrada que se ocupen de las enfermedades crónicas a través de la supervisión a distancia. El Plan de acción sobre la salud electrónica [COM(2012) 736 final] aborda las oportunidades de la telemedicina para mejorar la accesibilidad de los servicios sanitarios en las zonas rurales de una manera rentable.

En la actualidad varios los instrumentos de financiación se ocupan del envejecimiento activo y saludable como, por ejemplo, el Programa de Acción Comunitaria en el Ámbito de la Salud, el Séptimo Programa Marco en relación con el reto social de una sociedad que envejece, o el Programa Marco para la Innovación y la Competitividad. El Programa Conjunto «Vida Cotidiana Asistida por el Entorno» también respalda y financia la investigación aplicada destinada a mejorar las condiciones del envejecimiento. Las propuestas de la Comisión para el próximo programa marco plurianual, que incluye la propuesta de Horizonte 2020 y los Fondos Estructurales, señalan como prioridades el envejecimiento y el aumento de la calidad y la equidad de los sistemas sanitarios a través de soluciones de salud electrónica.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005527/13
to the Commission
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: eHealth services

Our ageing society requires us to make a greater financial commitment to social protection and the right of access to healthcare for the elderly. According to Article 35 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, everyone has the right to a high level of health protection.

In the EU, the number of people over 60 years-old is expected to increase by 2 million by 2015. At present, 17.7% of the population in Cantabria is over 65, a figure that is set to rise, and facing a critical situation as a result of the dismantling of health centres and health services in rural areas.

In 2012, the European Year for Active Ageing, several innovative initiatives were tabled to alleviate the problem of ageing and access to healthcare. In the same year, the Spanish Government removed the eHealth services programme from the general state budget. Our population is growing increasingly older and this is a situation which must be addressed as a priority beyond 2012.

Can the Commission say what stage has been reached in the implementation of the strategic plan to address the economic and social problems caused by an ageing European population and how budget cuts affect this plan?

Does the Commission have a proposal to bring innovative health solutions to rural areas, measures to promote early diagnosis, incorporation of innovative technologies in diagnosis and treatment, as well as to improve access to healthcare in remote areas or integrated care models for elderly patients with chronic illnesses?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(1 July 2013)

In the face of demographic ageing and the economic pressure on budgets, providing accessible, high quality care to older people is a major societal challenge. Health and care systems need to be transformed to respond to the needs of older citizens so they can keep receiving the care and the health protection that they are entitled to. The Commission supports these efforts through a number of initiatives.

The European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing enables collaboration between stakeholders to mobilise innovative approaches to improve the quality of life of older people, the sustainability of health systems and European competitiveness. Over 3000 partners are involved (300 organisations forming coalitions, from all Member States, representing 1000 regions and municipalities). One area is the replication, tutoring and scaling up of integrated care models addressing chronic conditions through remote monitoring. The eHealth Action Plan (COM 2012 736 final) addresses the opportunities of telemedicine to improve the accessibility of health services in rural areas in a cost-efficient manner.

Currently several funding instruments cover the topic of active and healthy ageing, e.g. the Health Programme, the FP7 related to the societal challenge of an ageing society, or the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework. The Ambient Assisted Living Joint Programme further supports and funds applied research for ageing well. The Commission proposals for the next multiannual framework programme including the proposed Horizon 2020 and the Structural Funds, foresee ageing and increasing the quality and equity of health systems through eHealth solutions as priorities.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005528/13
a la Comisión
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Tejido asociativo en Cantabria

La actual crisis económica que afecta a Europa está perjudicando en gran medida a las ayudas y a la financiación dirigida a organismos no gubernamentales y a las organizaciones de la sociedad civil.

El desmantelamiento del tejido asociativo participativo en España, principalmente en Cantabria, a través de recortes en subvenciones y apoyos a sus actividades, ha llevado a la desaparición de organismos claves como el Consejo Económico Social, que aglutina a los agentes sociales y representantes del mundo profesional y universitario. El Consejo de la Mujer o el de la Juventud (al que pertenecían directamente más de 12 500 jóvenes) también han sido paralizados por los recortes del Gobierno regional en 2012. En enero de 2013, la Casa de la Solidaridad de Santander cerró sus puertas, ya que el Gobierno cántabro no incluyó en los presupuestos generales el convenio de colaboración con la Coordinadora Cántabra de ONG para el Desarrollo.

¿Podría indicar la Comisión qué medidas concretas piensa adoptar y qué recomendaciones puede dar a España para que se siga apoyando a las organizaciones de la sociedad civil española?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de agosto de 2013)

No forma parte de las prerrogativas de la Comisión dar recomendaciones a los Estados miembros sobre la cuantía de la ayuda financiera que conceden a las organizaciones de la sociedad civil.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005528/13
to the Commission
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: NGOs and civil-society organisations in Cantabria

The economic crisis currently affecting Europe is significantly reducing the support and funding channelled into non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil-society organisations.

The dismantling of Spain's NGOs and civil-society organisations through cuts in subsidies and support for their activities has led, especially in Cantabria, to the disappearance of key organisations, such as the Spanish Economic and Social Council, which brings together social stakeholders and representatives from the professional and academic worlds. The Women's Council of Cantabria and the Youth Council of Cantabria — of which over 12 500 young people were members — have also been penalised by the Cantabrian Regional Government's cuts in 2012. In January 2013, the Santander House of Solidarity closed its doors, since the Cantabrian Regional Government's general budget did not cover the cooperation agreement with the Cantabrian Council for the Coordination of NGOs for Development.

Could the Commission state what concrete measures it intends to take and what recommendations it can give Spain so that Spanish civil-society organisations continue to receive support?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(12 August 2013)

Giving recommendations to Member States on the amount of financial support they give to civil-society organisations is not part of the prerogatives of the Commission.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005529/13
a la Comisión
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Dependencia y austeridad

El Parlamento Europeo ha subrayado en varias ocasiones la necesidad de promover medidas a nivel comunitario para dar respuesta al desafío social y sanitario que representa el envejecimiento progresivo de la población europea, un sector de población que en estos momentos supera los 85 millones de personas.

La Unión debe empezar a actuar con contundencia apoyando al sector sociosanitario. El anterior Gobierno en España puso en marcha la denominada Ley de Dependencia, la cual está siendo desmantelada por el actual Gobierno con la excusa de que la factura que genera es ingente y de que el Estado no puede cubrirla. En Cantabria, la atención a la dependencia se ha recortado 7 822 343,4 euros

Sin embargo hay estudios que confirman que este sector no sólo contribuye a la mejora de la salud, sino que también impulsa el empleo y con ello la situación económica del país. Se calcula que por cada millón de euros invertidos en dependencia se generan más de treinta empleos, estables y no deslocalizables.

Las políticas de austeridad en el sector sociosanitario lo único que producirán es un aumento del número de personas en dependencia de la atención sanitaria y social prestada por las instituciones estatales o regionales de los Estados miembros.

¿Qué pasos pretende dar la Comisión para invertir esta tendencia?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(5 de julio de 2013)

La prestación de cuidados de larga duración es responsabilidad de los Estados miembros. Sin embargo, estos han establecido en el Comité de Protección Social unos objetivos comunes en materia de accesibilidad, calidad y sostenibilidad financiera de los cuidados de larga duración. La Comisión apoya a los Estados miembros en sus esfuerzos y, por ejemplo, ha cofinanciado recientemente dos proyectos con la OCDE centrados en la financiación y en la calidad de los cuidados de larga duración, así como en la situación de los cuidadores.

El Paquete sobre Inversión Social adoptado en febrero de 2013 incluye un documento de trabajo de la Comisión sobre los cuidados de larga duración ([1]). La Comisión apoya al Comité de Protección Social en la elaboración de un informe sobre los cuidados de larga duración que será adoptado a principios de 2014. En dicho informe se estudiará cómo evitar la pérdida de autonomía y cómo mantener o recuperar la capacidad de las personas mayores para llevar una vida independiente.

El 29 de mayo la Comisión presentó sus propuestas de recomendaciones específicas para cada país en el contexto de la Estrategia Europa 2020 ([2]). En este contexto, la Comisión recomienda que España tome medidas durante el período 2013-2014 «para aumentar la rentabilidad del sector sanitario al tiempo que vela por la accesibilidad de los grupos vulnerables».

La Comisión es consciente de que España ha llevado a cabo una serie de reformas que garantizarán la sostenibilidad del sistema nacional de salud y mejorarán la calidad y la seguridad de los servicios que presta. Durante la primavera de 2014 presentará la Comisión su evaluación de la aplicación de las citadas recomendaciones específicas de cada país.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52013SC0041:EN:NOT
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_es.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005529/13
to the Commission
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Dependency and austerity

Parliament has stressed on numerous occasions the need to promote EU-level measures to respond to the social and health challenge posed by the gradual ageing of the European population; this sector of the population now exceeds 85 million people.

The EU should start taking decisive steps to support the health- and social-care sector. The previous Spanish Government implemented the so-called Dependency Law, which the current government is dismantling on the pretext that it is hugely expensive and that the State cannot afford it. In Cantabria, EUR 7 822 343.40 has been cut from dependent care.

However, studies show that this sector not only contributes to health improvements, but also boosts employment and with it the country's economy. It is estimated that for every EUR 1 million invested in dependency, more than 30 stable jobs that cannot be offshored are created.

All that austerity policies in the health- and social-care sector will produce is increased numbers of people dependent on the health and social care provided by central- or regional-government institutions in the Member States.

What steps does the Commission intend to take to reverse this trend?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(5 July 2013)

Long-term care provision is a responsibility of Member States. They have, however, agreed common objectives on the accessibility, quality and financial sustainability of long-term care in the context of their cooperation in the Social Protection Committee. The Commission supports Member States in their efforts and has, for instance, recently co-financed two projects with OECD which looked into the financing and quality of long-term care as well as into the situation of carers.

The Social Investment Package adopted in February 2013 includes a Commission Staff Working Document on long-term care ([1]). The Commission supports the Social Protection Committee in preparing a report on long-term care to be adopted at the beginning of 2014. It will explore how the loss of autonomy can be prevented and how the capacity of older people to live independently can be preserved or restored.

On 29 May the Commission presented its proposals for country specific recommendations in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy ([2]). In this context, the Commission recommends that Spain should take action within the period of 2013-2014 'to increase the cost-effectiveness of the healthcare sector, while maintaining accessibility for vulnerable groups'.

The Commission is aware that Spain has passed various regulations oriented to settle up reforms to ensure sustainability of the National Health System and to improve the quality and safety of their services. The Commission will present its assessment of the implementation of the abovementioned country specific recommendation in spring 2014.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52013SC0041:EN:NOT
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005530/13
a la Comisión
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Participación en el régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión

La Directiva 2003/87/CE pone en marcha el comercio de emisiones para reducirlas en un 20 % para el año 2020. A partir de este año, las empresas deben adquirir el número de licencias suficiente para cubrir todas las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero que liberan para evitar ser multadas, de modo que, si es eficiente y le sobran, puede venderlas en el mercado a otras empresas más contaminantes. Los empresarios y sindicatos de la región española de Cantabria denuncian que acogerse a este régimen les obliga a llevar a cabo expedientes reguladores de empleo, ceses de actividad e incluso posibles cierres, ya que incide en su producción y competitividad.

Así queda ratificado por un comunicado de la compañía turca ETI Soda, que anunció el pasado 11 de enero que incrementará su capacidad de producción en un 50 % gracias a que las empresas competidoras europeas recortarán la suya debido a la puesta en macha del comercio de emisiones.

En sus propuestas de derechos de emisión desde el 2003, ¿ha tenido la Comisión en cuenta la variedad de métodos de producción empleados por las empresas europeas y las consecuencias sociales y económicas que soportarán?

¿Ha estimado la Comisión los daños en la competencia que la aplicación de este régimen supone para las empresas europeas, en comparación a empresas de países vecinos?

¿Ha previsto la Comisión encargar un estudio sobre los riesgos reales y las consecuencias de la desindustralización y deslocalización por participar en el régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión?

¿Qué soluciones podría facilitar la Comisión o puede recomendar al Gobierno español para atajar la situación de las empresas cántabras, como Solvay, que se encuentran en una situación difícil como consecuencia de su participación en el régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión?

Ante la situación de las empresas cántabras, ¿qué mecanismos sugiere la Comisión para asegurar que la energía sea un factor positivo para la competitividad y no todo lo contrario?

Respuesta de la Sra. Hedegaard en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de julio de 2013)

La UE ha optado por recurrir a la asignación gratuita de derechos de emisión, al acceso a créditos internacionales y a las ayudas estatales nacionales como medidas para reducir el riesgo de fuga de carbono en sectores que consumen mucha energía. Se considera que la producción de carbonato sódico está expuesta a un riesgo significativo de fuga de carbono y, por tanto, los operadores se benefician de una asignación gratuita de hasta el 100 % respecto al parámetro de referencia pertinente. En el momento de establecer el régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión, la Comisión analizó con detenimiento las repercusiones y llegó a la conclusión de que dichas medidas eran adecuadas para proteger a las industrias europeas que consumen mucha energía. Los precios bajos del carbono en la actualidad siguen mejorando los eventuales impactos.

La Comisión lleva a cabo periódicamente revisiones y estudios para controlar los riesgos de fuga de carbono. Las evaluaciones de impacto realizadas en el ámbito de las políticas de cambio climático examinan sistemáticamente esos riesgos.

Además, en las Directrices sobre ayudas estatales relacionadas con el régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión ([1]), la Comisión consideró el sector de los productos químicos inorgánicos subvencionable con ayudas estatales para compensar parcialmente el incremento de los costes de la electricidad que repercuten en las instalaciones de esos sectores. Los Estados miembros pueden decidir libremente si conceden o no ayudas estatales a las empresas de los sectores subvencionables para compensar esos costes.

No parece que exista ninguna relación entre el régimen de comercio de derechos de emisión de la UE y la inversión en el aumento de la capacidad de producción en Turquía, que se beneficia de unas condiciones de acceso favorables al carbonato sódico natural.

([1]) DO C 158 de 5.6.2012, p. 4.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005530/13
to the Commission
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Participation in the emissions trading scheme

Directive 2003/87/EC sets out an emissions trading scheme, with a view to a 20% reduction by 2020. Starting this year, if companies are to avoid fines, they must acquire enough licences to cover all their greenhouse gas emissions and, if the scheme works and they have too many, they can sell them on the market to other more polluting companies. Employers and trade unions in Spain's Cantabria region report that compliance with this scheme is impacting their productivity and competitiveness, obliging them to make staff redundant or stop production, and even forcing some out of business.

This is confirmed by a press release from the Turkish company ETI Soda, which announced on 11 January that it would increase its production capacity by 50% because its European competitors had cut theirs, due to the implementation of emissions trading.

In its emissions trading proposals since 2003, has the Commission taken into account the variety of production methods employed by European companies, and the social and economic consequences that these companies will bear?

Has the Commission taken into account the damage that implementing this scheme will inflict on European companies' competitiveness in comparison with companies from neighbouring countries?

Does the Commission intend to carry out a study on the real risks and consequences of deindustrialisation and offshoring due to participation in the emissions trading scheme?

What solutions can the Commission provide for or recommend to the Spanish Government to counter the situation of Cantabrian companies, such as Solvay, which find themselves in difficulties because of their participation in the emissions trading scheme?

In view of the situation of Cantabrian companies, what mechanisms does the Commission suggest to ensure that energy plays a positive role in competitiveness rather than hindering it?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(4 July 2013)

The EU has opted for the use of free allowances, access to international credits and national state aid as measures to reduce the risk of carbon leakage for its energy intensive industry. Soda ash production is deemed to be exposed to a significant risk of carbon leakage and the operators therefore benefit from free allocation at up to 100% of the relevant benchmark. At the time of setting up the ETS, the Commission had a close look at the impacts and concluded that these measures are adequate to protect the European energy intensive industries. The current low carbon prices further alleviate possible impacts.

The Commission regularly undertakes reviews and studies to monitor the carbon leakage risks. Impact Assessments undertaken in the area of climate change policies systematically examine the risk of carbon leakage.

In addition, in the state aid Guidelines related to the Emission Trading System ([1]), the Commission recognised the sector of inorganic chemicals as eligible for state aid to compensate part of the increased electricity costs faced by installations in those sectors. Member States are free to decide whether or not to grant state aid to companies active in the eligible sectors to compensate for such costs.

There does not seem to be any link between the EU emissions trading system and the investment in increased production in Turkey, which benefits from favourable access to natural soda ash.

([1]) OJ, C154, 5.6.2012, p. 4.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005531/13
a la Comisión
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Desigualdad en Cantabria

La tasa de más de 6 millones de parados que ya acumula España ha hecho mella en los ingresos de las familias. Más de 1,9 millones de hogares españoles, según la última Encuesta de Población Activa, tiene a todos sus miembros en paro. Y menos del 67 % de los registrados en las oficinas de empleo reciben alguna ayuda o prestación del Estado.

Según un informe de la organización OXFAM, las políticas de austeridad y de recortes sociales podrían incrementar el número de personas en riesgo de pobreza y exclusión en casi 18 millones de españoles en el 2022, el 40 % de la población. España ocupa en la actualidad las posiciones más preocupantes de récord en parados y en las estadísticas que miden la desigualdad social, y se ha convertido, por primera vez, en el país de los Veintisiete con mayor distancia entre las rentas altas y las bajas.

En Cantabria, la desigualdad incide con mayor dureza sobre las mujeres. Cantabria es una de las autonomías españolas con mayor brecha salarial por sexo; la segunda, después de Asturias (28,67 %), con un 27,73 % de remuneración menos. Las trabajadoras cántabras perciben una media de entre 5 000 y 6 000 euros anuales brutos menos que los varones en salarios y algo menos de 2 000 euros al año en pensiones. Estos datos provocan que una de cada cuatro cántabras esté en situación de riesgo de pobreza (la tasa está en el 22 % según el INE).

¿Considera la Comisión la reducción de la desigualdad un objetivo clave para salir de la crisis económica y cumplir la Estrategia Europa 2020?

¿Qué recomendaciones, sobre todo respecto a la acuciante desigualdad que viven las mujeres, ha dado Comisión a España para evitar que esta situación empeore?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(15 de julio de 2013)

1. Promover la igualdad salarial es una de las prioridades de la estrategia de la Comisión para la igualdad entre mujeres y hombres 2010-2015. La Comisión considera que el fomento de la igualdad entre los sexos, incluida la promoción de la igualdad salarial, es importante para alcanzar los objetivos de la Estrategia Europa 2020. A la vista de ambas estrategias, la Comisión está observando de cerca las políticas nacionales adoptadas para mejorar la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres en el mercado de trabajo, incluida la igualdad de remuneración, y para impulsar la integración social de las mujeres en general.

2. Una de las prioridades de la Comisión de cara a los próximos años será vigilar la aplicación y ejecución correctas de las cláusulas relativas a la igualdad salarial de la Directiva 2006/54/CE ([1]). La Comisión está preparando un informe sobre la aplicación de esa Directiva. En respuesta a la Resolución del Parlamento Europeo sobre la igualdad salarial de mayo de 2012, se centrará especialmente en la evaluación de la aplicación en la práctica de las cláusulas relativas a la igualdad salarial en todos los Estados miembros, incluida España.

En el contexto del Semestre Europeo, la Comisión ha adoptado una recomendación específica para España para que adopte y aplique las medidas necesarias para reducir el número de personas en riesgo de pobreza o marginación social mediante el refuerzo de las políticas activas del mercado de trabajo, a fin de mejorar la empleabilidad de las personas más alejadas de dicho mercado y mejorar la focalización y aumentar la efectividad y la eficacia de las medidas de apoyo, incluida la calidad de los servicios de apoyo a la familia.

([1]) Directiva 2006/54/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 5 de julio de 2006, relativa a la aplicación del principio de igualdad de oportunidades e igualdad de trato entre hombres y mujeres en asuntos de empleo y ocupación (refundición) (DO L 204 de 26.7.2006, p. 23-26).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005531/13
to the Commission
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Inequality in Cantabria

Spanish families are feeling the pinch from the country's unemployment rate of 6 million. The latest Spanish Labour Force Survey (EPA) shows that there are over 1.9 million households with all of their members unemployed. Moreover, fewer than 67% of those registered with employment services are receiving any State benefits.

The NGO Oxfam reports that austerity policies and social cuts could increase the number of Spaniards at risk of poverty and social exclusion to 18 million by 2022; that is, 40% of the population. Spain is currently setting worrying records in unemployment figures and social-inequality statistics, and has become, for the first time, the Member State with the greatest difference between high and low incomes.

In Cantabria, inequality hits women hardest. With a difference of 27.73%, Cantabria is one of the Spanish regions with the largest gender pay gaps, second only to Asturias, with 28.67%. On average, Cantabria's working women's gross pay is between EUR 5 000 and EUR 6 000 lower than that of men, while their pensions are just under EUR 2 000 lower. These figures mean that one in four Cantabrian women is at risk of poverty; the Spanish National Statistical Institute (INE) puts the figure at 22%.

Does the Commission consider reducing inequality a key objective for emerging from the economic crisis and complying with the Europe 2020 strategy?

What recommendations has the Commission given Spain, particularly regarding the dire inequality that women experience, to prevent this situation from worsening?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

1. Promoting equal pay is one of the priorities of the Commission's Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015. The Commission considers that the promotion of gender equality, including the promotion of equal pay is important to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy. In light of both strategies, the Commission is monitoring closely the national policies adopted to improve gender equality in the labour market, including equal pay and to boost the social inclusion of women in general.

2. One of the Commission's priorities for the coming years will be to monitor the correct application and enforcement of the equal pay provisions of Directive 2006/54/EC ([1]). The Commission is currently preparing a Report on the application of this directive. Responding to the European Parliament's resolution on equal pay of May 2012, it will in particular focus on assessing the implementation in practice of the equal pay provisions in all Member States, including Spain.

In the context of the European Semester, the Commission has adopted a specific recommendation for Spain to adopt and implement the necessary measures to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion by reinforcing active labour market policies to improve employability of people further away from the labour market and by improving the targeting and increasing efficiency and effectiveness of support measures, including quality family support services.

([1]) Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast), OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23-36.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005532/13
a la Comisión
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Impacto socioeconómico de la crisis en las familias españolas: España y por Comunidades Autónomas

La Comunicación de la Comisión titulada «Promover la solidaridad entre las generaciones» establece claramente las tareas de la Alianza Europea para las Familias. Entre ellas se incluye el establecimiento de un observatorio europeo de mejores prácticas de política familiar dentro de la Fundación Europea para la Mejora de las Condiciones de Vida y de Trabajo (Eurofound) en Dublín. Se fijaba también el objetivo de establecer políticas de apoyo para garantizar a las familias condiciones de vida adecuadas, incluyendo prestaciones en metálico y exenciones fiscales.

Ante la situación actual de crisis económica, España ha optado por una política que no apoya el crecimiento de nuestra economía y que además pone a cientos de familias por debajo del umbral de la pobreza. Los recortes en Cantabria para el curso escolar 2012-2013 de tres millones en becas para libros de texto y 150 000 euros en comedores escolares se han unido a la reducción de la ayuda a familias numerosas.

España dedica a la política familiar sólo un 1,2 % de su PIB, frente al 2 % de la media europea. Ante esta situación ¿le ha facilitado la Alianza a la Comisión información sobre el impacto socioeconómico de la crisis en España por Comunidades Autónomas? ¿Qué consideraciones tiene del análisis de dichos datos? ¿Qué acciones piensa emprender la Comisión a fin de respaldar las condiciones de vida de las familias y así reducir la pobreza y la exclusión?

¿Considera la Comisión que el ajuste económico y social llevado a cabo por algunos Estados miembros en las prestaciones familiares y en las políticas favorables a las familias está en línea con el objetivo de reducir la pobreza y la exclusión de la Estrategia Europa 2020?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(8 de julio de 2013)

La Alianza Europea para las Familias se creó como una plataforma para el aprendizaje mutuo y el intercambio de buenas prácticas, y no es un organismo consultivo. Recientemente se sustituyó por la Plataforma Europea para la Inversión en la Infancia ([1]). El perfil de España en su sitio web informa sobre el creciente impacto negativo de la crisis.

Lamentablemente, la muestra de EU-SILC (estadísticas sobre la renta y las condiciones de vida en la EU), que miden la pobreza y la privación material, es demasiado pequeña para obtener resultados regionales fiables, al menos con respecto a los niños. Los últimos resultados de España confirman el aumento de la pobreza (infantil). El porcentaje de niños españoles en riesgo de pobreza o exclusión aumentó del 26,2 % en 2009 al 30,6 % en 2011. El porcentaje de niños españoles que viven en hogares con una intensidad de trabajo muy baja aumentó del 5 % en 2009 al 9,8 % en 2011 ([2]).

Aunque incumbe principalmente a los Estados miembros la responsabilidad de ayudar a las familias y los niños, la reducción de la pobreza es un objetivo fundamental de la Estrategia Europa 2020. La Comisión acaba de proponer al Consejo, en el contexto del Semestre Europeo, recomendaciones específicas por país sobre la pobreza y la exclusión social para quince Estados miembros. Mas concretamente, en la recomendación 6 se pide a España que reduzca el número de personas en situación de riesgo aumentando la empleabilidad de las personas con menor acceso al mercado de trabajo y mejorando el objetivo, la eficiencia y la eficacia de las medidas de apoyo a las familias.

Además, mediante el Paquete de Inversión Social ([3]) que se ha adoptado recientemente y que contiene una recomendación específica sobre la inversión en la infancia, la Comisión insta a los Estados miembros a intensificar su lucha contra la pobreza y a utilizar sus presupuestos, incluidos los fondos de la UE, de forma más eficaz y eficiente a fin de alcanzar resultados sociales positivos y duraderos para las familias y los niños.

([1]) Véase http://europa.eu/epic/
([2]) Véase DG EMPL: Evolución Social y del Empleo en Europa 2011, anexo con indicadores de inclusión social.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=es

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005532/13
to the Commission
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Socioeconomic impact of the crisis on Spanish families: across Spain and in individual regions

The Commission communication entitled 'Promoting solidarity between the generations' clearly sets out the duties of the European Alliance for Families (EAF). These include setting up a European observatory of best family-policy practices as part of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) in Dublin. It also set the objective of establishing support policies to secure suitable living conditions for families, including cash benefits and tax exemptions.

In the face of the current economic crisis, Spain has opted for a policy that does not support the growth of our economy and, moreover, leaves hundreds of families below the poverty line. For the school year 2012-2013, Cantabria has cut EUR 3 million in grants for textbooks and EUR 150 000 for school meals, which is on top of reduced support for large families.

Spain allocates only 1.2% of GDP to family policy, compared with the European average of 2%. In view of this situation, has the EAF given the Commission region-specific information on the socioeconomic impact of the crisis in Spain? What is its view of these statistics? What steps does the Commission plan to take to support families' living conditions, thereby reducing poverty and social exclusion?

Does the Commission consider the economic and social adjustment carried out by some Member States with regard to family benefits and family-friendly policies in line with the Europe 2020 strategy objective of reducing poverty and social exclusion?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

The EAF ([1]) was set up as a platform for mutual learning and exchange of best practices, it is not an advisory body. Recently it was replaced by EPIC ([2]). The Spanish country profile that is part of the website, reports on the increasing negative impact of the crisis.

Unfortunately the sample of EU-SILC, which measures poverty and material deprivation, is too small to allow for reliable regional results, at least for children. The latest data for Spain confirm the rise in (child) poverty. The share of Spanish children at risk of poverty or exclusion increased from 26.2% in 2009 to 30.6% in 2011. The share of Spanish children living in low work intensity households increased from 5% in 2009 to 9.8% in 2011 ([3]).

Although Member States are primarily responsible for supporting families and children, the reduction in poverty is a key objective of the Europe 2020 strategy. The Commission has just proposed to the Council, within the context of the European semester, country specific recommendations on poverty and social exclusion to 15 Member States. More concretely, Recommendation 6 asks Spain to take measures to reduce the number of people at risk by improving the employability of people further away from the labour market, and by improving the targeting, efficiency and effectiveness of family support measures.

Moreover, through its recently adopted Social Investment Package ([4]), which contains a specific Recommendation on investing in children, the Commission urges Member States to step up their fight against poverty, and to use their budgets including EU funds, more efficiently and effectively to achieve lasting positive social outcomes for families and children.

([1]) European Alliance for Families.
([2]) European Platform for Investing in Children, see http://europa.eu/epic/.
([3]) See DG EMPL, Employment and Social developments in Europe 2012, the annex with social inclusion indicators.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=en.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005533/13
a la Comisión
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Impulso al empleo en Cantabria

El Gobierno actual de Cantabria recibió 47 millones de euros del Fondo Social Europeo 2007-2013 para proyectos de formación profesional y otros programas de ayuda al empleo y creación de empleo.

Sin embargo, no vemos ningún avance en este sentido, siendo el paro uno de los mayores problemas de Cantabria. El último dato del que disponemos es que hay 58 623 parados inscritos en las oficinas públicas de empleo: 5 434 personas más que en abril de 2012.

La Comunidad Autónoma cántabra también se sitúa en los últimos puestos en términos interanuales. En el último año el desempleo ha crecido un 10,22 % en la región, el doble que en el conjunto nacional (+5,16 %), y supone la segunda mayor subida del país.

A la vista de la información ¿ha sido la Comisión informada sobre el porcentaje del FSE que se ha gastado por Comunidad Autónoma en España? ¿Cuál es el porcentaje correspondiente a la Comunidad Autónoma de Cantabria? ¿Considera la Comisión que se ha cumplido el objetivo de adaptabilidad y empleo que persigue el FSE?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(8 de julio de 2013)

La Comisión está de acuerdo en que uno de los principales retos a los que se enfrenta España es su cifra récord de desempleo. Debe prestarse especial atención a los jóvenes, a las personas con bajo nivel de cualificación y a los desempleados de larga duración. La Encuesta de Población Activa (EPA) de la Unión Europea ofrece estimaciones de población con respecto a las principales características del mercado laboral, como el desempleo. Con arreglo a los resultados de la EPA, en 2012 el índice de desempleo de Cantabria ascendía al 17,7 %, mientras que el de España era del 25,0 %. Esto representa un incremento frente a 2011, cuando estos porcentajes eran del 15,3 % en Cantabria y del 21,6 % en España.

El Fondo Social Europeo para el periodo 2007-2013 ha asignado un total de 47 millones de euros a la Comunidad Autónoma de Cantabria. El Programa Operativo (PO) regional dispone de una contribución total de la UE de 12,7 millones de euros. La región puede acceder también a una financiación de hasta 31 millones de euros procedentes del PO nacional «Adaptabilidad y Empleo» y de hasta 3,3 millones de euros del PO nacional «Lucha contra la Discriminación».

Las solicitudes de pago intermedio presentadas hasta mayo de 2013 para el PO «Cantabria» representan el 52 % del presupuesto total (el 55 % para todos los Programas Operativos españoles). De acuerdo con los datos recibidos de la Autoridad española de Gestión para el FSE, el presupuesto del PO regional está comprometido al 100 % y ya se ha pagado un 96 % a beneficiarios a nivel nacional.

El número total de participantes en actividades relacionadas con el FSE entre 2007 y 2013 fue de 18 584, lo que constituye más del 95 % de los inicialmente previstos. Solo en 2012, el número de personas que participaron en una acción financiada por el OP regional ascendió a 3 422 (2 289 mujeres y 1 133 hombres). En vista de los indicadores presentados en el último proyecto de informe de ejecución para 2012, la Comisión reconoce el impacto positivo de las acciones del FSE en la región.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005533/13
to the Commission
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Boosting employment in Cantabria

The current Cantabrian Regional Government has received EUR 47 million from the European Social Fund (ESF) 2007-2013 for professional training projects and other employment-support and job-creation programmes.

However, we can see no progress in this regard: unemployment is one of Cantabria's greatest problems. The most recent figures show 58 623 people registered as unemployed with the government unemployment service, which is 5 434 more than in April 2012.

The region of Cantabria also has one of the worst year-on-year rates. In the last year, unemployment has increased by 10.22% in the region; that is double the national total (+5.16%) and is the second-largest increase in the country.

In view of this information, has the Commission been given information on the percentage of ESF funding that each Spanish region has spent? What is the percentage for the region of Cantabria? Does the Commission consider Cantabria to have complied with the ESF's adaptability and employment objectives?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

The Commission agrees that one of the main challenges currently facing Spain is its record-high unemployment. Special attention should be paid to young people, the low-skilled and the long-term unemployed. The European Union Labour Force Survey (LFS) provides population estimates for the main labour market characteristics, such as unemployment. Based on the LFS results in 2012 Cantabria had an unemployment rate of 17.7% while Spain had an unemployment rate of 25.0%. It is an increase compared to 2011 when the rates were 15.3% in Cantabria and 21.6% in Spain.

The European Social Fund for the period 2007-2013 has allocated a total of EUR 47 million to the autonomous community of Cantabria. The Regional Operational Programme (OP) has a total EU contribution of EUR 12.7 million. The region is also eligible for up to EUR 31 million from the national OP 'Adaptabilidad and Empleo' and EUR 3.3 million from the national OP 'Lucha contra la Discriminación'.

The interim payment claims presented till May 2013 for the OP 'Cantabria' account for 52% of the total budget (55% for all the Spanish Operational Programmes). According to the data received from the Spanish Management Authority for ESF, 100% of the regional OP budget is committed and 96% is already paid to beneficiaries at national level.

The total number of participants in ESF related activities between 2007 and 2013 was 18.584, which represent more than 95% of the initially planned. Only in 2012 the number of people that took part in an action funded by the regional OP was 3.422 (2.289 women and 1.133 men). In view of the indicators presented in the last draft Implementation report for 2012 the Commission acknowledges the positive impact of the ESF actions in the region.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005534/13
a la Comisión
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Incendios forestales

Se acerca la temporada de incendios y una vez más tenemos que volver a insistir en la necesidad de implantar acciones eficaces, solidarias y coherentes de prevención. La situación no ha mejorado; es más, en los últimos diez años ha aumentado el número de incendios en Europa. Cada año arde en la Unión Europea una superficie media equivalente a más de 500 000 estadios de fútbol.

En el caso de España, Cantabria es la cuarta comunidad con un mayor número de incendios forestales. En 2012 registró 612 incendios que quemaron más de 12 000 hectáreas, 9 600 de superficie forestal leñosa. Estamos hablando de la desaparición del 3,5 % del total de la superficie forestal de la región y el 0,49 % de la arbolada.

La única respuesta del Gobierno regional cántabro fue el recorte y el despido de una cuarta parte de la plantilla de la que se dispone para frenar los incendios y actuar ante otras emergencias.

Habida cuenta de lo anterior, ¿podría dar a conocer la Comisión qué estrategias de prevención tiene intención de adoptar con objeto de combatir un fenómeno que anualmente asola Europa?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de junio de 2013)

El Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Rural ofrece a los Estados miembros la oportunidad de prestar apoyo a la prevención de incendios forestales y a la restauración y, por otro lado, se pueden cofinanciar programas y medidas sobre prevención de riesgos e infraestructuras medioambientales a través de la política de cohesión. En el marco de la gestión compartida de los fondos, corresponde a los Estados miembros y a las regiones decidir cómo utilizan los fondos y qué prioridad dan a la prevención de incendios.

El Sistema Europeo de Información sobre Incendios Forestales (EFFIS), del que forman parte la Comisión y la mayoría de los Estados miembros, facilita a los Estados miembros información sobre el riesgo de incendios forestales dos veces al día durante la temporada de incendios forestales, entre otras cosas.

Tras los buenos resultados cosechados en anteriores temporadas y a fin de reforzar el conocimiento de la situación y la coordinación entre los Estados miembros, el centro de respuesta ante situaciones de emergencia de ECHO va a organizar a lo largo de la temporada de incendios forestales de 2013 una videoconferencia semanal con los Estados miembros más afectados (Portugal, España, Francia, Italia, Grecia, Croacia y otros países, de forma *ad hoc*). Además, se va a publicar semanalmente un boletín de ECHO sobre incendios forestales, con el fin de fomentar el intercambio de información entre los Estados miembros.

En su propuesta de revisión del Mecanismo de Protección Civil de la UE (COM(2011) 934 final), presentada el 20 de diciembre de 2011, la Comisión propone aumentar los recursos de, aproximadamente, 25 millones de euros a 65 millones de euros al año, con el fin de ajustarlos al aumento de la frecuencia y la intensidad de las catástrofes y a la necesidad de llevar a cabo políticas más eficaces en materia de prevención, preparación y respuesta. Las negociaciones sobre la totalidad del presupuesto de la UE para 2014-2020 están actualmente en curso con la Autoridad Presupuestaria.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005534/13
to the Commission
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Forest fires

Forest fire season is approaching and once again we need to emphasise the need to take effective and consistent preventative measures that are grounded in solidarity. The situation has not improved. Furthermore, the number of fires in Europe has increased over the last 10 years. Every year in the EU, on average, an area equivalent to over 500 000 football stadiums burns.

Cantabria is the Spanish region with the fourth-largest number of forest fires. In 2012, 612 fires were recorded, which burned over 12 000 hectares, 9 600 of which were in heavily wooded areas. We are talking about the disappearance of 3.5% of the region's total woodland and 0.49% of its trees.

The Cantabrian Regional Government's sole response was a cut, making a quarter of the staff previously available for slowing the spread of fires and combating other emergencies redundant.

In view of the foregoing, can the Commission state what prevention strategies it intends to adopt to combat a phenomenon that ravages Europe every year?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(21 June 2013)

The European Rural Development fund provides the opportunity to Member States to support forest fire prevention and restoration while cohesion policy can also co-finance programmes and measures on risk prevention and environmental infrastructure. In the framework of the shared management of the funds, it is the Member States and regions that decide how they use the funds and the priority they give to forest fire prevention.

The European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS), in which the Commission and most Member States take part, provides, *inter alia*, information on forest fire risks to Member States twice a day during the forest fire season.

Following the good results of previous forest fire seasons and in order to enhance situational awareness and coordination among Member States the ECHO Emergency Response Centre (ERC) will organise over the 2013 forest fire season a weekly videoconference with the most fire prone Member States (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Croatia, and other countries on an ad hoc basis). In addition, an ECHO Forest Fires Bulletin will be issued on a weekly basis in order to enhance information-sharing between Member States.

In its proposal for a revision of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, COM(2011) 934 final, submitted on 20 December 2011, the Commission proposed an increase in resources (from approx. EUR 25 million to EUR 65 million per year) to reflect the increased frequency and intensity of disasters and the need for more robust prevention, preparedness and response policies. The negotiations on the whole EU budget for 2014-2020 are the subject of ongoing negotiations with the budgetary authority.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005535/13
a la Comisión
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Recortes en el ámbito de la cultura

El Gobierno español ha impuesto unos recortes presupuestarios que, en el caso de la cultura, son dramáticos. Instituciones emblemáticas sufren un recorte de más del 30 %. El Museo del Prado, el Museo Reina Sofía, el Teatro Real, el Gran Teatro del Liceo, y áreas fundamentales como la Dirección General de Industrias Culturales, la Red de Bibliotecas públicas o el Instituto de la Cinematografía son tan solo algunos de los ilustres afectados.

Las comunidades autónomas, tampoco salvan la cultura. El Gobierno cántabro ha impuesto un recorte del 32 % en los presupuestos de 2013. La gestión y promoción cultural y la conservación del patrimonio se ven por tanto recortadas casi a la mitad durante 2013.

Los mayores recortes en Cantabria los sufrirán dos áreas: la gestión y promoción cultural, que pasa de contar con más de 12 millones en el presente ejercicio a 6 872 617 en 2013, lo que supone una notable reducción del 45 %; y el patrimonio cultural, que contará con 1 734 017 frente a los actuales 2 567 074, lo que significa un descenso de más de un 33 %.

El emblemático Festival Internacional de Santander vuelve a ser por segundo año consecutivo uno de los grandes perjudicados por los recortes culturales, con un tijeretazo de un 25 %. También la Fundación Comillas, cuyo presupuesto descendió de tres millones a medio millón de euros en 2012. La financiación para el arte y la cultura en España se ha reducido drásticamente en el último año, y el panorama a corto y medio plazo parece desolador.

¿Es consciente la Comisión de que invertir en cultura puede potencial el crecimiento económico?

¿Nos puede detallar la proposición de la Comisión para la financiación de los programas culturales para el periodo 2014-2020 que actualmente se encuentran en negociación?

¿Subrayará la Comisión a España la necesidad de iniciar algún plan para mejorar los flujos financieros para el arte y la cultura?

Respuesta de la Sra. Vassiliou en nombre de la Comisión
(20 de junio de 2013)

La Comisión considera que la inversión en cultura sigue siendo importante y rentable incluso en épocas económicas difíciles. La cultura y el patrimonio han demostrado tener capacidad para crear puestos de trabajo a nivel local y han servido para mejorar las perspectivas económicas de ciudades y regiones. El sector cultural y el sector creativo representan un 3,3 % del PIB de la UE y dan empleo a 6,7 millones de personas (el 3 % del empleo total). En resumidas cuentas, la cultura desempeña un importante papel en la economía europea y tiene potencial para contribuir considerablemente a la recuperación económica.

«Europa Creativa» es el futuro programa de la UE dedicado a los sectores cultural y creativo para el período 2014-2020 ([1]); fue propuesto por la Comisión Europea en 2011 y actualmente se encuentra en fase de debate en el Consejo y el Parlamento. Los detalles sobre las medidas propuestas para el programa se pueden consultar en el sitio web que se indica en la nota a pie de página.

Las competencias de la UE en materia de cultura se rigen por el principio de subsidiariedad. Según el artículo 167 del Tratado de Funcionamiento de la Unión Europea, «la acción de la Unión favorecerá la cooperación entre Estados miembros y, si fuere necesario, apoyará y completará la acción de estos». Por lo tanto, la financiación en materia de cultura y patrimonio cultural es ante todo responsabilidad nacional.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005535/13
to the Commission
Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Culture cuts

The Spanish Government has imposed dramatic budget cuts in the area of culture. Iconic institutions are suffering cuts of over 30%. The Prado Museum, the Reina Sofía Museum, the Teatro Real theatre, the Gran Teatro del Liceo theatre, and key areas like the Directorate-General for Cultural Industries, the network of public libraries, and the Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts (ICAA) are just some of the famous institutions affected.

Nor are the regional governments sparing culture. The Cantabrian Regional Government has imposed a 32% cut on 2013 budgets. Budgets for managing and promoting culture, and for preserving heritage have been almost halved in 2013.

Cantabria's largest cuts will be in the areas of managing and promoting culture, whose budget has been cut by 45% from over EUR 12 million in the current financial year to EUR 6 872 617 in 2013, and cultural heritage, whose current budget of EUR 2 567 074 will be cut by over 33% to EUR 1 734 017.

For the second consecutive year, the iconic Santander International Festival has been one of the major victims of the culture cuts, with its budget slashed by 25%. The Comillas Foundation too had its budget cut from EUR 3 million to EUR 500 000 in 2012. Funding for art and culture in Spain has been reduced drastically in the last year, and the short- and medium-term outlook appears bleak.

Is the Commission aware that investing in culture can boost economic growth?

Can the Commission provide details of its proposal — currently under negotiation — for funding cultural programmes in the 2014-2020 period?

Will the Commission stress to Spain the need to implement a plan to increase funding for art and culture?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(20 June 2013)

The Commission believes that investment in culture remains important and valuable even during challenging economic times. Culture and heritage have a proven ability to create local jobs and have served to improve the economic outlook of cities and regions. Cultural and creative sectors account for 3.3% of EU GDP and employ 6.7 million people (3% of total employment). All in all, culture plays an important role in the European economy and has the potential to contribute strongly to economic recovery.

Creative Europe is the future EU programme dedicated to the cultural and creative sectors for the period 2014-2020 ([1]), proposed by the European Commission in 2011 and now under discussion in Council and Parliament. Details on the measures proposed for the programme can be obtained from the website indicated in the footnote.

EU competences in the field of culture are governed by the subsidiarity principle. According to Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the role of the Union should be 'encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action'. Therefore, funding for culture and cultural heritage is primarily a national responsibility.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/index_en.htm

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-005536/13
aan de Commissie
Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE)
(17 mei 2013)

Betreft: Vennootschapsbelasting voor havenbedrijven

Onlangs werd bekend dat de Europese Commissie de generieke vrijstelling van vennootschapsbelasting voor de Nederlandse overheidsbedrijven, waaronder de havenbedrijven wil afschaffen.

De havenbedrijven zouden als overheidsbedrijven economische activiteiten uitoefenen en daarmee concurreren met particuliere bedrijven die wel vennootschapsbelasting betalen. Hierdoor zou er een concurrentienadeel ontstaan volgens de Europese Commissie.

De Nederlandse havenbedrijven concurreren echter niet met particuliere Nederlandse bedrijven, maar met de andere Europese zeehavens. En uit een onderzoek van Ernst & Young blijkt dat de havenbedrijven in Duitsland, België en Frankrijk geen (equivalenten van) vennootschapsbelasting betalen. Invoering van vennootschapsbelasting zou voor de Nederlandse havenbedrijven leiden tot een concurrentienadeel ten opzichte van andere Europese havenbeheerders.

1. Is de Commissie bekend met het onderzoek van Ernst & Young?

2. Is de Commissie met mij van mening dat de Nederlandse Havens concurreren met de havens in de andere lidstaten en dus vanuit dat perspectief beoordeeld dienen te worden?

3. Is de Commissie met mij van mening dat de Havenbedrijven van Amsterdam en Rotterdam beoordeeld dienen te worden vanuit hun internationale positie?

4. Bent u van mening dat invoering van een dergelijk voorstel van vennootschapsbelasting pas mogelijk is onder de voorwaarde dat alle Europese overheidsbedrijven op dezelfde generieke wijze worden benaderd?

5. Is de Commissie bereid om een internationaal onderzoek uit te voeren naar de concurrentiepositie van havenbedrijven op basis van financieel-fiscale beleidsmaatregelen, voordat ze met een generiek Vpb-voorstel voor deze categorie van overheidsbedrijven komt?

6. Zo ja, wanneer zou dit onderzoek plaatsvinden en wanneer zullen deze uitkomsten bekend zijn?

Antwoord van de heer Almunia namens de Commissie
(17 juni 2013)

1. De Commissie is op de hoogte van een nota van Ernst & Young ([1]) over de belastingplicht van EU-zeehavens, in opdracht van de haven van Rotterdam.

2-3. De Commissie heeft niet specifiek Nederlandse havens ([2]) onderzocht maar heeft in haar aanbeveling van 2 mei 2013 met dienstige maatregelen voor Nederland geconcludeerd dat de vrijstelling van vennootschapsbelasting voor overheidsbedrijven deze laatste een selectief voordeel in de zin van de staatssteunregels biedt. Als overheidsbedrijven genieten de Nederlandse havens eveneens dit selectieve voordeel. De belastingvrijstelling ([3]) biedt Nederlandse havens een selectief voordeel ten opzichte van andere ondernemingen die in Nederland economische activiteiten uitvoeren en die zich in een feitelijk en juridisch vergelijkbare situatie ([4]) bevinden. Het feit dat de Nederlandse havens concurreren met havens in andere lidstaten neemt dit selectieve voordeel niet weg.

([1]) Van juli 2012.
([2]) De Commissie heeft begrepen dat de vragen 2 en 3 verwijzen naar een beoordeling van de Nederlandse havens op grond van de EU-mededingingsregels, en in het bijzonder van de staatssteunregels. .
([3]) Deze vrijstelling gaat terug tot 1956.
([4]) Deze ondernemingen bevinden zich in een feitelijk en juridisch vergelijkbare situatie in het licht van de doelstelling van de Nederlandse wetgeving inzake vennootschapsbelasting (namelijk om belastingen te heffen op de bedrijfswinst).

4. Het mogelijke bestaan van soortgelijke onrechtmatige staatssteunmaatregelen in andere lidstaten is voor Nederland geen reden om zijn wetgeving inzake vennootschapsbelasting niet in overeenstemming met de EU-wetgeving te brengen ([5]). Bij ontstentenis van een harmonisatie van de directe belastingen staat het de lidstaten vrij zelf te bepalen hoe zij hun overheidsbedrijven belasten. Als een lidstaat echter ondernemingen belast die zich met economische activiteiten bezighouden, maar sommige ondernemingen vrijstelt op basis van hun rechtsvorm of eigenaar, leidt dit op het eerste gezicht tot een selectief voordeel volgens de staatssteunregels.

5-6. Het onderzoek van Ernst & Young suggereert dat de havens in sommige lidstaten een vrijstelling van vennootschapsbelasting genieten. De diensten van de Commissie zijn voornemens naar alle lidstaten een vragenlijst te sturen om informatie over de vennootschapsbelasting voor havens te verkrijgen. Deze vragenlijst, die eveneens over infrastructuurkwesties zal gaan, is voorzien vóór augustus. Het is nog te vroeg om te kunnen zeggen wanneer de eerste resultaten bekend zullen zijn.

([5]) C-372/97, Jurispr. 2004, blz. I-3679, punt 67 (Italië tegen Commissie); T-298/97, Jurispr. 2000, blz. II-2319, punt 100 (Alzetta Mauro).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-005536/13
to the Commission
Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Corporation tax for port undertakings

It recently became known that the Commission wished to abolish the blanket exemption from corporation tax for Dutch public undertakings, including port undertakings.

The Commission states that publicly owned port undertakings perform economic operations and therefore compete with private undertakings which are required to pay corporation tax. The Commission sees this as placing the private undertakings at a competitive disadvantage.

However, Dutch port undertakings compete not with private businesses based in the Netherlands but with other European sea ports. A survey by Ernst & Young indicates that port undertakings in Germany, Belgium and France do not pay corporation tax (or equivalents to it). If corporation tax were to be imposed on Dutch port undertakings, this would place them at a competitive disadvantage in relation to other European port managers.

1. Is the Commission aware of the survey by Ernst & Young?

2. Does the Commission agree that Dutch ports compete with ports in other Member States and should therefore be appraised in that light?

3. Does the Commission agree that the Amsterdam and Rotterdam port undertakings should be assessed in the light of their international position?

4. Does the Commission consider that it would only be possible to introduce such a proposal for corporation tax on condition that all European publicly owned undertakings are treated in the same general way?

5. Will the Commission conduct an international survey of the competitive position of port undertakings on the basis of financial and fiscal policy measures before it submits a general proposal on corporation tax for this category of publicly owned undertaking?

6. If so, when will such a survey be conducted and when will the findings be known?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(17 June 2013)

1. The Commission is aware of a memo on tax liability of EU Seaports by E&Y ([1]), commissioned by the Port of Rotterdam.

2-3. The Commission has not specifically examined Dutch ports ([2]) but has, in its recommendation of 2 May 2013 proposing appropriate measures to the Netherlands, concluded that the corporate tax exemption for public undertakings grants them a selective advantage within the meaning of the state aid rules. As public undertakings, Dutch ports also benefit from this selective advantage. This tax exemption ([3]) grants Dutch ports a selective advantage compared to other undertakings involved in economic activities in the Netherlands and which are in a comparable factual and legal situation ([4]). The fact that Dutch ports compete with ports in other Member States does not remove this selective advantage.

([1]) Dated July 2012.
([2]) The Commission understands that questions 2 and 3 refer to an assessment of Dutch ports under the EU competition rules and the state aid rules in particular.
([3]) The exemption dates back to 1956.
([4]) The undertakings are in a comparable legal and factual situation in light of the objective of the Dutch corporate tax law (i.e. to tax profits of companies).

4. The possible existence of similar unlawful state aid measures in other Member States does not justify the Netherlands not bringing its corporate tax law into conformity with EC law ([5]). In the absence of direct taxation harmonisation, Member States are free to determine how to tax their public companies. However, when a Member State taxes companies involved in economic activities and exempts certain undertakings on the basis of their legal form or ownership this amounts prima facie to a selective advantage according to the state aid rules.

5-6. The E&Y study suggests that ports in some Member States benefit from a corporate tax exemption. The Commission services plan to send a questionnaire to all Member States to get information on corporate taxation of ports. The launch of this questionnaire, which will also cover infrastructure issues, is envisaged before August. It is too early to assess when the first findings will be known.

([5]) C-372/97, ECR 2004, I-3679, para 67 (Italy v Commission); T-298/97, ECR 2000, II-2319, para 100 (Alzetta Mauro).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005537/13
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(17. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: Preisfindung im OTC-Ölhandel

Die Kommission hat zusammen mit der EFTA (Europäische Freihandelsassoziation) unlängst Razzien bei verschiedenen Ölkonzernen durchgeführt, um festzustellen, ob bei der freiwilligen Angabe der Vertragsabschlüsse an den Informationsdienstleister Platts absichtliche Manipulationen stattfanden, um die von Platts berechneten OTC-Preise künstlich in die Höhe zu treiben. Nachdem davon ausgegangen werden kann, dass Ölkonzerne ihren Reichtum nicht durch Nächstenliebe und Altruismus erworben haben, kann angesichts der gegebenen Anreizsituation und den daraus nun mutmaßlich folgenden kriminellen Aktivitäten eine Kritik am aktuellen System der OTC-Preisbildung kaum von der Hand gewiesen werden. Insbesondere ist dabei die freiwillige Informationsübermittlung der Ölkonzerne an Platts bezüglich Handelsmengen eine elementare Schwäche. Geht man von der gewaltigen Bedeutung des Ölpreises für Bürger und Wirtschaft der EU aus, kann hier auch nicht von einem geringfügigen Problem gesprochen werden.

1. Teilt die Kommission die Ansicht bezüglich der systematischen Schwäche im Fall einer Preisdeklarierung via Platts mittels freiwillig von Ölkonzernen mitgeteilten Informationen zum OTC-Handel?

2. Falls ja, Sieht die Kommission hier jetzt einen Bedarf, in Bezug auf den Handel innerhalb der EU oder für den Fall, dass eine Handelsseite der EU angehört, systematische Änderungen zur Preisbildung festzulegen, um nicht auf die Aufrichtigkeit und Nächstenliebe der Ölkonzerne angewiesen zu sein?

3. Welche neue ökonomischen Gefahren sieht die Kommission in einer solchen gesetzlichen Regelung zur korrekten Abbildung der Marktpreise oder, anders ausgedrückt: Welche Gründe hat es, dass es diese Regelung bisher noch nicht gibt und wir auf dieses Goodwill-System angewiesen sind?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(12. Juli 2013)

1. Die Kommission führt zurzeit eine kartellrechtliche Untersuchung zur Preisnotierung bei Öl und Biokraftstofferzeugnissen durch. Zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt ist es noch zu früh, um Schlussfolgerungen aus den Ergebnissen dieser Untersuchung zu ziehen. Außerdem untersucht die Kommission eingehend die Kartellsachen im Zusammenhang mit einer Reihe von Benchmark-Zinssätzen wie dem LIBOR, dem EURIBOR und dem TIBOR. Diese Untersuchungen dürften gegen Ende dieses Jahres abgeschlossen sein.

2./3. Die Kommission hat rasch und proaktiv auf die Mängel im System zur Festsetzung der Benchmarks reagiert, die die jüngsten Aussagen zur Manipulation des EURIBOR, TIBOR und LIBOR zu Tage gebracht haben:

— Die Kommission hat umgehend gehandelt, um Änderungen der Vorschläge für eine Verordnung ([1]) und eine Richtlinie ([2]) über Insider-Geschäfte und Marktmanipulation, einschließlich strafrechtlicher Sanktionen, anzunehmen, und hierdurch ein klares Verbot der Manipulation von Benchmarks auszusprechen. Über diese Vorschläge wird derzeit im Europäischen Parlament und im Rat verhandelt.

([1]) Geänderter Vorschlag für eine Verordnung des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates über Insider-Geschäfte und Marktmanipulation (Marktmissbrauch), KOM(2012)421 endg., 2011/0295 (COD): http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/abuse/index_de.htm

([2]) Geänderter Vorschlag für eine Richtlinie über strafrechtliche Sanktionen für Insider-Geschäfte und Marktmanipulation, KOM(2012)420 endg., 2011/0297 (COD): http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/abuse/index_de.htm

— Am 5. September 2012 wurde eine Konsultation ([3]) mit dem Ziel eingeleitet, auf jeder Stufe des Benchmark-Verfahrens, einschließlich der Bereitstellung der Daten, die in die Benchmarks einfließen, etwaige Mängel festzustellen. Das Thema der Konsultation war breit angelegt und erfasste alle Benchmarks, einschließlich derer für Rohstoffe wie etwa die Rohölpreise. Insbesondere wurde auf die Mängel eingegangen, die auftreten können, wenn die Eingabedaten Gegenstand von Interessenkonflikten sind oder keine ausreichende Transparenz besteht. Im Sommer 2013 soll hierzu ein Legislativvorschlag vorgelegt werden.

Am 6. Juni 2013 haben die Europäische Wertpapier- und Marktaufsichtsbehörde (ESMA) und die Europäische Bankenaufsichtsbehörde (EBA) die Grundsätze für Verfahren der Festsetzung von Benchmarks („Principles for Benchmark-Setting Processes(“) ([4]) vorgestellt, die den Marktteilnehmern einen allgemeinen Regelungsrahmen für die Festsetzung von Benchmarks vorgeben.

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2012/benchmarks_en.htm
([4]) http://www.esma.europa.eu/news/Press-release%E2%80%94ESMA-and-EBA-publish-final-principles-benchmarks?t=326&o=home

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005537/13
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Pricing in the over-the-counter oil trade

The Commission, in conjunction with EFTA (the European Free Trade Association), recently raided the offices of a number of oil companies to find out whether information about contracts supplied to the price-reporting agency Platts had been deliberately manipulated in order to artificially inflate the benchmark over-the-counter (OTC) prices that the agency determines. On the premise that it is not compassion and altruism which have helped the oil companies to get rich, it is hard to dismiss criticism of the existing system of OTC price setting, given the incentive it offers to criminal behaviour and the current suspicion that such behaviour has occurred. A particular and fundamental weakness in the system is its reliance on the oil companies' voluntarily transmitting information about trading volumes to Platts. Given how important the price of oil is to ordinary people and to the EU economy, this is not a minor problem.

1. Does the Commission agree that there is an inbuilt weakness in the system whereby a price determination by Platts is based on information about OTC trading supplied voluntarily by the oil companies?

2. If so, does the Commission see a need, in the case of intra-EU trading or where one party to a transaction is within the EU, to impose systematic changes in the way that prices are set, so as not to have to rely on the honesty and compassion of the oil companies?

3. What does the Commission see as the new economic risks inherent in legislating in this way for the correct setting of market prices; or, to put the question differently, why do we not yet have such legislation, and why are we still reliant on the existing goodwill system?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

1. The Commission is currently conducting an antitrust investigation into the price reporting of oil and biofuel products. At this stage it is too early to draw any conclusions about the findings of the investigation. The Commission is also investigating vigorously the cartel cases related to a number of benchmark rates including LIBOR, EURIBOR and TIBOR. These investigations are expected to be concluded around the end of this year.

2-3. The Commission has responded promptly and proactively to the weaknesses in the benchmarks setting system revealed by the recent allegations of the manipulation of the EURIBOR, TIBOR and LIBOR:

— the Commission acted promptly to adopt amendments to the proposals for a regulation ([1]) and a directive ([2]) on insider dealing and market manipulation, including criminal sanctions, to clearly prohibit the manipulation of benchmarks. These proposals are under negotiation in the European Parliament and the Council;

— on 5 September 2012, a consultation ([3]) was launched with the aim of identifying shortcomings at every stage of the benchmark process including the contribution of data to benchmarks. The scope was wide ranging and addressed all benchmarks, including commodity benchmarks such as oil prices. In particular, it highlighted shortcomings that may arise where the contributors of the input data are subject to conflicts of interest or where transparency is inadequate. A proposal for legislation is now foreseen for the summer 2013.

On 6 June 2013 the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) and the European Banking Authority (EBA) launched Principles for Benchmark-Setting Processes ([4]) which provides market participants with a general framework for benchmark setting.

([1]) Amended proposal for a regulation on insider dealing and market manipulation, COM(2012) 2011/0295 (COD): http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/abuse/index_en.htm
([2]) Amended proposal for a directive on criminal sanctions for insider dealing and market manipulation, COM(2012) 2011/0297 (COD): http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/abuse/index_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2012/benchmarks_en.htm
([4]) http://www.esma.europa.eu/news/Press-release%E2%80%94ESMA-and-EBA-publish-final-principles-benchmarks?t=326&o=home

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005538/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(17 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Reconocimiento de la Delegada del Gobierno de España en Cataluña a la División Azul

El pasado 16 de mayo de 2013, la Delegación del Gobierno de España en Cataluña celebró un acto conmemorativo por el 169 aniversario de la creación de la Guardia Civil. En dicha celebración la Delegada del Gobierno de España en Cataluña, María de los Llanos de Luna, otorgó un reconocimiento oficial del Gobierno a la asociación cívico-militar Hermandad de combatientes de la División Azul, unidad española de voluntarios fascistas que luchó junto a Hitler.

Esta división militar fascista fue un estandarte del régimen de Franco que luchó entre 1941 y 1943 a las órdenes del ejército alemán para combatir el comunismo de la Unión Soviética, y que partícipe de los objetivos militares de un régimen nacionalsocialista de Alemania que produjo horror en todo el continente europeo al decretar la muerte de millones de personas. La condecoración de dicha división de manos de una representante oficial del Gobierno de España supone un verdadero crimen de enaltecimiento del fascismo y el nazismo que en muchos Estados miembros podría conllevar penas de cárcel, pero especialmente supone un insulto a los familiares de las millones de víctimas que el nazismo produjo en Europa.

En la respuesta a mi anterior pregunta sobre la Fundación Francisco Franco E-010099/2012, la Comisión informó de que la Decisión marco 2008/913/JAI «obliga a todos los Estados miembros de la UE a sancionar la incitación pública intencionada a la violencia o al odio contra grupos o personas en función de su raza, color…». Teniendo en cuenta que no es la primera vez que representantes del actual Gobierno de España se ponen en entredicho por su apoyo abierto o silencioso al régimen franquista y, por tanto, de su fomento del odio y la violencia, y ante la condecoración por la administración pública de una asociación fascista, de una brigada militar que pretendía asesinar personas por su ideología o pertenencia étnica, consideramos pertinente preguntar a la Comisión:

¿Considera la Comisión que el Gobierno español ha incumplido con este acto la citada Decisión marco 2008/913/JAI enalteciendo desde la propia administración pública la violencia fascista y nacionalsocialista?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de agosto de 2013)

Los Estados miembros tenían la obligación de incorporar a su Derecho interno el 28 de noviembre de 2010 a más tardar la Decisión marco 2008/913/JAI relativa a la lucha contra determinadas formas y manifestaciones de racismo y xenofobia. Actualmente la Comisión está supervisando las medidas de ejecución de los Estados miembros, incluidas las aprobadas por España, y elaborará un informe al respecto al final de 2013 a más tardar. No obstante, la Comisión recuerda que no está permitido incoar procedimientos de infracción sobre este asunto hasta el 1 de diciembre de 2014.

Por otro lado, es y seguirá siendo competencia de las autoridades nacionales investigar los casos de incitación al odio o negación del Holocausto y perseguir a los autores de tales delitos, en el pleno respeto del Derecho de la Unión.

Las autoridades públicas, los partidos políticos y la sociedad civil deben condenar enérgicamente los comportamientos racistas y xenófobos y luchar contra los mismos. La Comisión destaca la importancia de preservar la memoria de los crímenes pasados, en especial los del Holocausto y los cometidos durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, e insta a los Estados miembros a tomar las medidas necesarias para garantizar su recuerdo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005538/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Recognition of the División Azul by the Spanish Government's delegate to Catalonia

On 16 May 2013 the Spanish Government's delegation in Catalonia held a ceremony to commemorate the 169th anniversary of the birth of the Guardia Civil, during which the government's delegate to Catalonia, Maria de los Llanos de Luna, gave an official decoration to the civil-military association Hermandad de combatientes de la División Azul (Brotherhood of Combatants of the Blue Division).

The División Azul was a unit of Spanish fascist volunteers that fought in the communist Soviet Union between 1941 and 1943 as part of Hitler's Wehrmacht under the banner of Franco's regime but under the orders of the Nazi regime that committed atrocities across Europe and killed millions of people. The decorating of this division by a Spanish Government official amounts to the crime of extolling fascism and Nazism, which in many Member States would be punishable by a custodial sentence, and is above all an insult to the families of the millions of victims of Nazism in Europe.

In its reply to my Question No E-010099/2012 concerning the Francisco Franco Foundation, the Commission stated that 'Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA obliges all EU Member States to penalise the intentional public incitement to violence or hatred against groups or individuals defined by reference to their race, colour …' As this is not the first time that representatives of Spain's current government have been called to book for their overt or tacit endorsement of the Franco regime, and for therefore supporting its record of hatred and violence, and since this administration has publicly decorated a fascist association representing a military brigade that sought to kill people on the basis of their race or creed,

Does the Commission not think that the Spanish Government has violated Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA by extolling fascist and Nazi violence in this way?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(21 August 2013)

Member States were obliged to transpose the framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating racism and xenophobia into their national laws by 28 November 2010. The Commission is currently monitoring Member State's implementing measures, including those adopted by Spain, and will draw up a report on this issue by the end of 2013. The Commission would, however, like to recall that it is not authorised to launch infringement proceedings in this regard until 1 December 2014.

In parallel, it is, and will remain, in the competence of national authorities to investigate any instances of hate speech or Holocaust denial and to prosecute the perpetrators of such offences, while fully respecting Union law.

Public authorities, political parties, and civil society must indeed strongly condemn and actively fight against racist and xenophobic behaviour. Furthermore, the Commission underlines the importance of preserving the memory of the past crimes, in particular of the Holocaust and of the crimes committed during World War II, and urges Member States to take the necessary measures to ensure their remembrance.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005539/13
alla Commissione
Alfredo Antoniozzi (PPE)
(17 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Oneri amministrativi a carico dei raggruppamenti nell'ambito del settimo Programma quadro (PQ)

I raggruppamenti (*cluster*) sono importanti motori dello sviluppo economico nell'Unione europea, stimolano la crescita economica e arrecano vantaggi al sistema economico. In varie occasioni, la Commissione ha dichiarato di sostenere decisamente i raggruppamenti in quanto attori economici fondamentali, soprattutto quando sono costituiti da PMI che generano sinergie e contribuiscono dunque alla competitività dell'UE.

Attualmente, tuttavia, le norme giuridiche degli Stati membri relative allo statuto dei raggruppamenti di PMI e ai modelli in materia di responsabilità non sono uniformi, il che rappresenta un ostacolo per la partecipazione dei raggruppamenti stessi ai programmi del settimo PQ e alle relative convenzioni di sovvenzione. L'attuazione di Orizzonte 2020 e delle nuove convenzioni di sovvenzione tipo ivi previste potrebbe consentire una notevole riduzione degli oneri amministrativi, nonché una semplificazione delle norme che disciplinano la partecipazione ai progetti e delle regole contrattuali per l'adesione alle convenzioni di sovvenzione. Tali disposizioni dovrebbero essere redatte in modo da promuovere la partecipazione dei raggruppamenti di PMI, tenendo debitamente conto delle diversità esistenti tra gli Stati membri in termini di statuto giuridico, norme di carattere finanziario e contabile e modelli in materia di responsabilità.

Alla luce di quanto sopra, può la Commissione indicare quali misure si stanno adottando nel quadro della preparazione del programma Orizzonte 2020 e degli atti giuridici ad esso collegati per ridurre gli oneri amministrativi incontrati dai raggruppamenti nel settimo PQ?

Risposta di Máire Geoghegan-Quinn a nome della Commissione
(5 luglio 2013)

La Commissione condivide l'opinione dell'onorevole deputato: i raggruppamenti, compresi quelli di PMI, possono essere importanti motori dello sviluppo economico e della competitività dell'Unione europea. Nella misura in cui sono composti da una varietà di entità diverse (PMI, centri di ricerca e università ecc.), i raggruppamenti possono anche fornire un prezioso contributo e ai progetti transfrontalieri d'innovazione e ricerca finanziati nell'ambito del programma quadro.

Molti raggruppamenti si organizzano come persone giuridiche per poter partecipare in quanto partner a pieno titolo o in quanto terzi alle azioni del programma Orizzonte 2020. Se un raggruppamento non può essere rappresentato da un'organizzazione, può diventare esso stesso parte terza di un'azione di Orizzonte 2020.

Fatta salva l'adozione delle pertinenti disposizioni sulle regole di partecipazione a Orizzonte 2020 che sono di particolare rilievo per i raggruppamenti (articolo 19, paragrafo 5 e articolo 32, paragrafo 2), la partecipazione e il finanziamento di terzi diventerebbe molto meno oneroso nel programma Orizzonte 2020 rispetto al VII programma quadro. I raggruppamenti saranno autorizzati a fornire notevoli contributi ai progetti Orizzonte 2020 e a ricevere finanziamenti senza dover sottoscrivere un accordo di sovvenzione con la Commissione o con un organo di finanziamento. L'accordo di sovvenzione e relative linee guida istituiscono e illustrano le particolarità tecniche di partecipazione e finanziamento.

Infine, singoli membri di un raggruppamento, ad esempio un centro di ricerca, o un gruppo di essi, potranno partecipare alle azioni Orizzonte 2020 e condividere i risultati con altri membri del raggruppamento purché soddisfino i criteri di ammissibilità e rispettino le regole di partecipazione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005539/13
to the Commission
Alfredo Antoniozzi (PPE)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Administrative burden encountered by clusters under FP7

Clusters are powerful driving forces behind economic development in the European Union. They spur economic growth and bring benefits to the economic system. The Commission has on several occasions stated its clear support for clusters as essential economic actors, especially where they are made up of SMEs combining synergies and thus contributing to the EU's competitiveness.

However, at present the Member States have differing legal rules as regards the status and liability models of SME clusters at national level, and this is acting as an obstacle in the way of their participation in FP7 research programmes and the relevant grant agreements. The implementation of Horizon 2020 and its new model grant agreements may allow a significant reduction in administrative burdens and a simplification of the rules governing participation in projects and the contractual rules relating to access to grant agreements. These rules should be laid down in such a way as to promote the participation of SME clusters, taking due account of the different types of legal status, financial and accounting rules and liability models applicable at national level.

In the light of the above, will the Commission state what measures are being taken as part of the preparation of the H2020 Programme and related legal acts to reduce the administrative burden encountered by clusters under FP7?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(5 July 2013)

The Commission shares the Honourable Member's view that clusters, including SME clusters, can be important drivers for economic development and competitiveness in the European Union. As they bring together a variety of different entities, such as SMEs, research organisations and universities, clusters can also provide a valuable contribution to cross-border research and innovation projects funded under the framework Programme.

Many clusters establish cluster organisations which are legal entities that may participate as full partners or as third parties in Horizon 2020 actions . If a cluster cannot be represented by a cluster organisation, the cluster itself may become a third party in a Horizon 2020 action.

Subject to the adoption of the relevant provisions of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation that are of particular importance for clusters (Articles 19 (5) and Article 32 (2)) their participation and funding as third parties would become much less cumbersome in Horizon 2020 than in FP7. Clusters would be allowed to provide considerable contributions to Horizon 2020 projects and to receive funding without having to enter into a grant agreement with the Commission or funding body. The grant agreement and its accompanying guidelines will further set out and explain the technical details of their participation and funding.

Finally, it would be possible that individual members of a cluster such, e.g. a research organisation, or a group of them, become participants in Horizon2020 actions, sharing results with other cluster members, provided that they fulfil the eligibility criteria and respect the rules for participation.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-005540/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D)
(17 Μαΐου 2013)

Θέμα: Μεταφορές επιβατών στις νησιωτικές περιοχές της ΕΕ

Οι νησιωτικές περιοχές της ΕΕ, και ιδίως τα μικρά ελληνικά νησιά, αντιμετωπίζουν μόνιμες δυσκολίες όσον αφορά τη διασφάλιση της μεταφοράς εμπορευμάτων και προσώπων, και της πρόσβασης στις δημόσιες υπηρεσίες. Ακόμη και όταν η απόκτηση επιβατηγών πλοίων — που εξυπηρετούν το δημόσιο συμφέρον παρέχοντας τακτική και αξιόπιστη πρόσβαση στα μικρά νησιά — είναι επιλέξιμη για τη χορήγηση επιδότησης σύμφωνα με τους κανόνες που διέπουν τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία της ΕΕ, τα έξοδα λειτουργίας των πλοίων αυτών είναι τόσο υψηλά που είναι αδύνατον να ανακτηθούν μέσω της εμπορικής εκμετάλλευσης των εν λόγω γραμμών. Για τον λόγο αυτό, ο ιδιωτικός τομέας επιδεικνύει πολύ μικρό ενδιαφέρον όσον αφορά την παροχή κατάλληλων υπηρεσιών σε μικρά ή απομακρυσμένα νησιά με μικρό πληθυσμό.

Με βάση τα παραπάνω, ζητείται από την Επιτροπή να απαντήσει στις παρακάτω ερωτήσεις:

1. Μέχρι ποια όρια επιτρέπεται, σύμφωνα με τους κανόνες της ΕΕ για τις κρατικές ενισχύσεις όσον αφορά τη χρηματοδότηση των υπηρεσιών κοινής ωφελείας, η παροχή αποζημιώσεων από τον δημόσιο τομέα (από το κράτος, τις περιφέρειες ή τους δήμους) για τα έξοδα λειτουργίας των πλοίων (μέσω εθνικής, περιφερειακής, δημοτικής ή ενωσιακής χρηματοδότησης) προκειμένου να εξασφαλιστούν επαρκείς συνδέσεις προς και μεταξύ των εν λόγω νησιών με εισιτήρια σε προσιτή τιμή; Εφαρμόζονται οι κανόνες με τον ίδιο τρόπο ανεξάρτητα από την πηγή της χρηματοδότησης που χρησιμοποιείται από τον δημόσιο φορέα για την παροχή των αποζημιώσεων;

2. Ποιοι τύποι δαπανών για την παροχή υπηρεσιών στον τομέα των δημοσίων μεταφορών μπορούν να καλυφθούν μέσω αυτών των αποζημιώσεων προκειμένου να διασφαλιστεί ότι τα εισιτήρια θα έχουν προσιτές τιμές; Είναι κάποιες από αυτές τις δαπάνες επιλέξιμες για χρηματοδότηση από την ΕΕ;

3. Όσον αφορά τα παραπάνω ερωτήματα, ισχύουν διαφορετικοί κανόνες όταν ο δημόσιος φορέας διαχειρίζεται κάποιο πλοίο που ανήκει σε ιδιωτικό φορέα;

Απάντηση του κ. Αλμούνια εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(27 Ιουνίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή συμμερίζεται πλήρως τις ανησυχίες που αφορούν στην ανάγκη των νησιωτικών περιοχών για αξιόπιστες και οικονομικά προσιτές μεταφορικές συνδέσεις. Υπό την έννοια αυτή, τα κράτη μέλη διαθέτουν ευρεία διακριτική ευχέρεια να καθορίζουν τη λειτουργία θαλάσσιων γραμμών ως υπηρεσία γενικού οικονομικού συμφέροντος (ΥΓΟΣ). Η εν λόγω διακριτική ευχέρεια περιορίζεται κυρίως από τον εκ του νόμου ορισμό της εν λόγω υπηρεσίας ως ΥΓΟΣ και την αναλογικότητα οποιασδήποτε αποζημίωσης χορηγούμενης σε επιχειρήσεις μεταφορών για την εκτέλεσή της.

Οι σχετικοί κανόνες για τις κρατικές ενισχύσεις καθορίστηκαν με την απόφαση 2012/21/ΕΕ της Επιτροπής, της 20ής Δεκεμβρίου 2011, σχετικά με την εφαρμογή του άρθρου 106 παράγραφος 2 της Συνθήκης για τη λειτουργία της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης στις κρατικές ενισχύσεις υπό μορφή αντιστάθμισης για την παροχή δημόσιας υπηρεσίας που χορηγούνται σε ορισμένες επιχειρήσεις επιφορτισμένες με τη διαχείριση υπηρεσιών γενικού οικονομικού συμφέροντος ([1]), και το ενωσιακό πλαίσιο για τις κρατικές ενισχύσεις υπό μορφή αντιστάθμισης για την παροχή δημόσιας υπηρεσίας (2011) ([2]). Οι εν λόγω κανόνες ισχύουν εξίσου, ανεξάρτητα από την πηγή της δημόσιας χρηματοδότησης.

Τα κράτη μέλη επιτρέπεται να χρηματοδοτούν ελεύθερα τις δαπάνες που πραγματοποιούνται για την εκπλήρωση των υποχρεώσεων παροχής δημόσιας υπηρεσίας, στο βαθμό που η αποζημίωση δεν υπερβαίνει το ποσό που χρειάζεται για την κάλυψη των εν λόγω δαπανών, λαμβανομένων υπόψη των σχετικών εσόδων καθώς και ενός ευλόγου κέρδους. Ωστόσο, το λειτουργικό κόστος (π.χ. εισιτήρια) δεν είναι επιλέξιμο για συγχρηματοδότηση από τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία.

Στο βαθμό που τηρούνται όλες οι σχετικές προϋποθέσεις, το κατά πόσο μια επιχείρηση μεταφορών που εκτελεί ΥΓΟΣ μισθώνει, χωρίς να έχει στην ιδιοκτησία της, τα μεταφορικά μέσα που χρησιμοποιούνται για την παροχή της εν λόγω υπηρεσίας, είναι άσχετο προς τον σκοπό εκτίμησης της κρατικής ενίσχυσης.

([1]) ΕΕ L 7 της 11.1.2012.
([2]) ΕΕ C 8 της 11.1.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005540/13
to the Commission
Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Passenger transport in the EU's island regions

The EU's island regions, and in particular the small Greek islands, have to face permanent difficulties in ensuring both the transport of goods and persons and access to public services. Even where the acquisition of vessels for passenger transport — serving the public interest by providing regular and reliable access to small islands — is eligible for subsidy under the EU Structural Funds' rules, the running costs of these vessels are too high to be recovered through the commercial exploitation of the routes in question. For this reason, the private sector has very little interest in providing adequate services to remote or small islands with low populations.

Against this background, the Commission is kindly asked to answer the following questions:

1. What are the limits to EU state aid rules as regards the financing of services of general interest allowing the public sector (whether state, regional or municipal) to provide compensation for the running costs of vessels (through national, regional, municipal or Union funding) in order to ensure adequate connections to and between such islands at affordable ticket prices? Do the rules apply in the same way regardless of the source of the financing used by the public entity to provide such compensation?

2. What types of costs for providing public transport services can be covered through such compensation in order to ensure affordable ticket prices? Are any of these costs eligible for EU funding?

3. With regard to the above questions, do different rules apply where a public entity operates a vessel that is owned by a private entity?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(27 June 2013)

The Commission fully shares the concerns related to reliance of island regions on reliable and affordable transport links. In this sense, Member States have wide discretion to define the operation of maritime services as a service of general economic interest (SGEI). Such discretion is mainly limited by the lawful definition of the service in question as an SGEI and the proportionality of any compensation granted to transport undertakings for its operation.

The relevant state aid rules have been defined by Commission Decision 2012/21/EU of 20 December 2011 on the application of Article 106(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to state aid in the form of public service compensation granted to certain undertakings entrusted with the operation of services of general economic interest ([1]) and the European Union framework for state aid in the form of public service compensation (2011) ([2]). These rules are equally applicable regardless of the source of public financing.

Member States may freely finance the costs incurred in the discharge of public service obligations to the extent that the compensation does not exceed what is necessary to cover these costs, taking into account the relevant receipts and a reasonable profit. However, the operational cost (e.g. tickets) is not eligible for co-financing from the Structural Funds.

To the extent that all relevant conditions are observed, whether a transport undertaking operating an SGEI leases, rather than owns, the transport means used to provide the service in question is irrelevant for the purpose of state aid assessment.

([1]) OJ L 7, 11.1.2012.
([2]) OJ C 8, 11.1.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005541/13
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement Directive (IPRED) consultation

I have been contacted by a constituent regarding the recent Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement Directive (IPRED) consultation. My constituent has expressed the following concerns about the consultation:

The online submission process failed several times when he tried to submit his opinions about the directive. His first set of answers simply disappeared. In an attempt to retrieve his saved drafts, he sought help from the e-mail addresses given on the consultation website.

He managed to submit his opinions on Thursday, 28 March 2013, well before the closing date of the consultation, but was forced to use short answers, and to submit the form immediately, so as not to lose them again. As a consequence, he was unable to present his full views on the important matters raised.

On Tuesday, 2 April, he received the following reply: 'Please notice that the mentioned IPM survey has been closed in the meantime by the responsible authority'. He later received a second e-mail which said that his help request had been resolved, but he believes that it had simply been ignored.

My constituent has also informed me that he has learned that other people taking part in the consultation have encountered similar difficulties.

My constituent is also concerned about the fact that the opening questions were based on the premise that intellectual monopolies, like copyrights and patents, are necessary and that more of them would be a good thing. He believes that this is a contentious issue that should not have been assumed in the consultation, whose task was to solicit the views of European citizens, not to impose a particular viewpoint.

Given that my constituent believes that this consultation is deeply flawed, both in terms of its content and its implementation, could the Commission state:

1. whether it would consider re-opening the consultation?

2. if so, given the issues with the web-based input form, will it allow people to download the questionnaire and answer it using whatever means they find convenient?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(4 July 2013)

The Commission is aware and would like to apologise for the technical problems that occurred during the public consultation on civil enforcement of IPR in particular in the last days of the consultation. Problems were duly reported to the competent services to ensure appropriate follow-up and improvements.

The Commission does not consider that the regrettable technical incidents that took place are of a magnitude that would necessitate re-opening the consultation. The period for submitting responses was 4 months ([1]) which is longer than standard delay of 12 weeks, the general public were informed of the forthcoming survey back in April 2012 ([2]). The vast majority of stakeholders that intended to participate had the possibility to effectively do so. At any rate, any contributions can be sent to the Commission and will be carefully read and taken into account in the policy making process, even if, in view of their late submission, they do not appear in the summary report of the responses that will be published in the summer. In case the constituent provided his/her identity in the survey, he/she can contact the Commission to check whether his/her contribution was accepted by the IPR system. If not, his/her case will be considered.

([1]) From 30.11.2012 to 30.3.2013.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/iprenforcement/docs/conference20120426/summary_en.pdf

The public consultation was focused exclusively on the issue of civil enforcement of IPR, not on the questions whether such rights should exist or their scope. All potential respondents were informed as to the relevant scope of data to be provided ([3]). The survey allowed for the views of all parties whether they support implementing stricter and more efficient measures or opposed that view or felt that the status quo is preferable. All questions were provided in an open form in order to guarantee a possibility to express all shades of opinion.

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2012/intellectual-property-rights_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005542/13
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Spanish 'habitages d'us turistic' law

I have been contacted by a constituent who is concerned about the Spanish 'habitages d'us turistic' law, which he claims will restrict rental possibilities for privately owned properties in Spain.

My constituent tells me that he travels to Spain a couple of times each year and that he normally books rooms in private flat-shares or small apartments. He says that this new law stipulates that landlords must have permits to advertise properties for holiday rental.

My constituent tells me that this law is being strictly enforced in parts of Barcelona and that, in some cases, the authorities are demanding that property owners found to be in breach of the law pay fines of up to EUR 90 000. He believes that the Spanish Government has introduced this law in a bid to raise revenue for the state treasury by imposing disproportionate penalties on property owners until the Commission puts a halt these fines.

Could the Commission answer the following:

1. Is it aware of the Spanish 'habitages d'us turistic' law?

2. Does it believe that this is an unreasonable law, and one which the Spanish authorities should repeal?

3. If so, what pressure is it putting on the Spanish Government to repeal this law?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(23 July 2013)

It is only recently that the Commission learned about the 'habitages d'us turistic' law. According to the information received by the Commission informally, the law would concern the 'professional' or 'semi-professional' renting of private houses but would not cover the occasional renting of private houses to tourists.

As the Commission explained in its recent reply to Question E-005152/2013, depending on the precise scope of the legislation such measures could constitute a restriction to property rights or fall within the scope of the provision of the freedom to provide services. If such activity was to be considered service provision, authorisation requirements (or permits) would constitute a restriction to the freedom of establishment, as acknowledged by the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union and according to Article 9(1) of Directive 2006/123/EC on services in the internal market ('Services Directive').

Authorisation schemes may only be maintained if they are non-discriminatory, justified by the public interest and proportionate. Moreover, they need to comply with Articles 10 to 13 of the Services Directive. Examples of overriding reasons of public interest that can justify authorisation requirements include: the protection of consumers, the protection of the urban environment and town planning. When imposing measures on such grounds, a Member State should demonstrate that they are proportionate and that there are no less restrictive means to protect these overriding grounds of public interest.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005543/13
to the Commission
Roger Helmer (EFD)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Freedoms in Croatia

The EU's commitment to respect freedom and pluralism of the media, the right to information and freedom of expression is enshrined in Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights ([1]).

Croatia's government is allegedly undermining media freedom and freedom of speech through its state-run broadcaster HRT, paid by Croatia's citizens. A number of people working at HRT were removed from their positions and demoted 'following criticism from the country's Prime Minister Milanovic'. OSCE expressed concern ([2]) about the treatment of journalists and called 'the government and the HRT management to refrain any action that could lead to censorship and threaten editorial independence.'

According to media reports, HRT's director, Goran Radman ([3]) is tied to alleged conflict of interest cases ([4]), serves on the supervisory board of Hypo Alpe Adria Bank ([5]), Croatia, which was reportedly involved in major corruption scandals ([6]). Hence, it would be in Mr Radman's self-interest to shelter government officials embroiled in corruption and involved in conflicts of interest from investigative journalists.

What action is the Commission taking to address and resolve these problems in Croatia?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(10 July 2013)

The Commission seeks to ensure respect for media freedom and pluralism within its competences and also addresses this issue with candidate countries. As stated in its Comprehensive Monitoring Report of October 2012, it is considered that 'freedom of expression, including freedom and pluralism of the media is provided for in Croatia law and is generally respected'.

Concerning the HRT General Director in May 2013, the Conflict of Interest Commission found him guilty of 'potential conflict of interest' and fined him 15 000 Kuna (about EUR 2 000).

Immediately prior to Croatia's accession, the Commission had the opportunity to discuss in depth issues pertaining to freedom of the media and expression during the 'Speak Up! 2' Conference held in Brussels on 20 June. After accession, as an EU Member State, Croatia will be subject to the same requirements for implementation of the acquis, the same monitoring and the same measures — if the EU values and the acquis are not respected — as all other EU Member States.

The need for EU Member States to respect media freedom and pluralism was also addressed in the report of the independent High-Level Group on Media Freedom and Pluralism presented on 21 January 2013. The European Commission is currently analysing the results of the public consultations on the recommendations of this report.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2000/c_364/c_36420001218en00010022.pdf
([2]) http://www.panorama.am/en/society/2013/03/21/dunja-mijatovic/.
([3]) http://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/novi-postupak-protiv-radmana-tvrtku-nautar-clan-je-no-hypa-clanak-523277.
([4]) http://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/index-doznaje-radman-vlasnik-i-direktor-firme-koja-posluje-s-hrtovim-oglasivacima/658729.aspx.
([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=E-2012-003637&language=EN.
([6]) http://adriaticinstitute.blogspot.be/2013/04/open-letter-to-german-chancellor-angela.html#!/2013/04/open-letter-to-german-chancellor-angela.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005544/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(17 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Gestione dei fondi europei in favore dell'occupazione giovanile

Lo scorso mercoledì 15 maggio 2013, il Parlamento ha lanciato un allarme: a partire dal prossimo novembre non ci saranno più fondi disponibili per finanziare azioni in favore dell'occupazione giovanile ed è previsto un taglio di 2,5 miliardi di euro al Fondo Sociale Europeo.

Tra le prime soluzioni avanzate, il Presidente Barroso ha proposto di anticipare a giugno o luglio di quest'anno i primi finanziamenti previsti per il 2014. Tale iniziativa volta a far fronte all'aumento del tasso di disoccupazione giovanile non ha però incontrato il parere favorevole del Parlamento che si trova a gestire le difficoltà legate al pagamento delle somme stabilite per il 2012: 16 miliardi stanziati per lo scorso anno non sono infatti ancora stati assegnati. Al fine di saldare il debito per l'anno 2012 e garantire il quadro finanziario pluriennale per il periodo 2014-2020, il Parlamento ha proposto un compromesso che prevede per ciascuno Stato membro il versamento di una quota.

Qual è la posizione della Commissione sulla questione?

Come intende essa salvaguardare questi fondi oggi più che mai necessari data la congiuntura economica negativa che penalizza il mercato del lavoro giovanile?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(8 luglio 2013)

Nel febbraio 2013 il Consiglio europeo ha avviato l'iniziativa a favore dell'occupazione giovanile, il cui scopo consiste nell'incrementare i finanziamenti per le regioni europee maggiormente colpite dalla disoccupazione giovanile. La Commissione ha modificato di conseguenza le proposte legislative in materia, ossia il «regolamento relativo al Fondo sociale europeo» COM(2013)145 del 12 marzo 2013 ed il «regolamento recante disposizioni comuni» COM(2013)146 del 12 marzo 2013.

Il 27 marzo 2013 la Commissione ha adottato il progetto di bilancio rettificativo n. 2 del bilancio generale 2013 COM(2013)183 che richiede un aumento degli stanziamenti di pagamento pari a 11,2 miliardi di EUR, di cui 9 miliardi di EUR a favore della coesione per la crescita e l'occupazione (rubrica 1b). Gli stanziamenti di pagamento richiesti consentiranno di coprire con il bilancio 2013 tutti gli obblighi giuridici incombenti alla fine del 2012 e quelli che dovessero presentarsi nel 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005544/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: EU funds for action on youth employment

On Wednesday 15 May 2013, Parliament drew attention to the fact that funding for action on youth employment will run out in November with EUR 2.5 billion projected to be cut from the European Social Fund.

Among the various solutions put forward, President Barroso proposed bringing the initial 2014 funding forward to June or July 2013. However, this proposal made in response to the rise in youth unemployment, has not been accepted by Parliament, which is having to deal with the tricky problem of the EUR 16 billion committed but not yet paid in respect of 2012. In order to make good the 2012 shortfall and to secure the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework, Parliament proposed a compromise arrangement under which each Member State would pay a share of the shortfall.

What is the Commission's stance on this matter?

How does it intend to safeguard this funding, which is now more important than ever in view of the impact that the economic crisis is having on the youth labour market?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

In February 2013 the European Council launched the Youth Employment Initiative, aimed to provide additional funding to Europe's worst affected regions with regard to youth unemployment. The Commission has consequently amended the legislative proposals i.e. the so-called 'European Social Fund Regulation' COM(2013) 145 of 12 March 2013 and the 'Common Provisions Regulation' COM(2013) 146 of 12 March 2013.

On 27 March 2013, the Commission adopted the draft amending budget number 2 to the general budget 2013 COM(2013) 183 requesting an increase of payment appropriations of EUR 11.2 billion of which EUR 9 billion for Cohesion for Growth and Employment (Heading 1b). The requested payment appropriations will allow all the legal obligations left pending at the end of 2012, and those arising in 2013, to be covered in the 2013 budget.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005546/13
alla Commissione
Guido Milana (S&D)
(17 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Protezione di astici e aragoste

Un numero considerevole di astici ed aragoste vivi è importato ogni anno nell'Unione europea per il consumo umano. Pochi sono i dati disponibili in relazione all'impatto del trasporto sul benessere di questi animali.

1. Dispone la Commissione di dati relativi al numero di aragoste e astici vivi importati nell'Unione europea ogni anno, o nel 2012, divisi per Stato membro di destinazione?

2. Dispone altresì di dati sul numero di aragoste e astici che giungono con arti fratturati oppure morti presso i posti di ispezione frontaliera europei oppure nei luoghi di destinazione dell'Unione europea?

3. Perché aragoste e astici importati vivi (provenienti dalla natura selvatica e destinati al consumo umano) sono considerati e certificati come «prodotti ittici per il consumo umano» secondo la normativa europea (Regolamento (CE) 1250/2008) invece di essere considerati animali?

4. Ritiene essa che il fatto che aragoste e astici importati vivi (provenienti dalla natura selvatica e destinati al consumo umano) siano certificati come «prodotti ittici» invece di animali costituisca una violazione dell'articolo 13 del Trattato di Lisbona?

5. Intende stabilire una regolamentazione adeguata sulla protezione di aragoste e astici durante tutte le fasi del loro commercio cosi come è stato fatto per la maggior parte delle altre specie animali?

6. Intende infine considerare la necessità di estendere anche a crostacei e molluschi la relazione e la proposta legislativa, che dev'essere sottoposta al Parlamento e al Consiglio non oltre l'8.12.2014, in merito alla protezione dei pesci nel momento dell'uccisione?

Risposta di Maria Damanaki a nome della Commissione
(15 luglio 2013)

1. Stando ai dati Eurostat, le importazioni di astici (Homarus spp.) verso l'UE ammontavano rispettivamente a 9 669 tonnellate nel 2010, 10 163 nel 2011 e 8 811 nel 2012. Oltre il 99 % delle esportazioni proveniva dagli Stati Uniti e dal Canada. In termini di importazione di astici vivi per Stato membro, l'Italia ha rappresentato quasi il 30 % del totale, seguita da Spagna (27 %), Francia (18 %), Belgio (12 %) e Germania (4 %).

2. La Commissione non è a conoscenza dell'arrivo ai posti d'ispezione frontalieri di partite di crostacei morti o con arti rotti.

3. La questione contenuta nell'interrogazione 3 è dovuta alla definizione di «prodotti ittici» di cui al punto 3.1 dell'allegato I del regolamento (CE) n. 853/2004 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio ([1]), che stabilisce norme specifiche in materia di igiene per gli alimenti di origine animale. I crostacei sono definiti prodotti ittici.

4. Ai sensi dell'articolo 13 del TFUE, «l'Unione e gli Stati membri tengono pienamente conto delle esigenze in materia di benessere degli animali (…)». Classificando ai fini della sicurezza alimentare tali animali tra i prodotti ittici non si violano le disposizioni in materia di benessere.

5.-6. Il campo d'applicazione del regolamento (CE) n. 1/2005 ([2]) del Consiglio e del regolamento (CE) n. 1099/2009 ([3]) del Consiglio è limitato agli animali vertebrati. Attualmente la Commissione non intende proporre l'emendamento di tali disposizioni in modo da renderle applicabili anche agli invertebrati, quali i decapodi.

([1]) GU L 139 del 30.4.2004.
([2]) GU L 3 del 5.1.2005.
([3]) GU L 303 del 18.11.2009.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005546/13
to the Commission
Guido Milana (S&D)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Protection of lobsters and crawfish

A large number of live lobsters and crawfish are imported into the EU every year for human consumption. There is not much data available regarding the impact of transportation on the welfare of these creatures.

1. Does the Commission have any figures on the live crawfish and lobsters imported into the EU every year, or in 2012, for example, according to Member State of destination?

2. Does it also have figures showing how many crawfish and lobsters arrive with broken limbs or dead at EU border inspection posts or in the Member State of destination?

3. Why are live crawfish and lobsters (taken from the wild for human consumption) considered and certified as 'fishery products for human consumption' under EC law (Regulation (EC) No 1250/2008) instead of living beings?

4. Does the Commission consider the fact that these live crawfish and lobsters are certified as 'fishery products' instead of living beings to be a breach of Article 13 TFEU?

5. Will it establish proper rules on the protection of crawfish and lobsters during transport at every marketing stage, as have been established for most other animal species?

6. Will it consider whether crustaceans and shellfish also need to be covered by the legislative proposal on the protection of fish when harvested? (This proposal should be submitted to Parliament and the Council no later than 8 December 2014.)

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

1. According to Eurostat data, imports of lobsters (*Homarus spp.*) to the EU were respectively 9 669 tonnes in 2010, 10 163 in 2011 and 8 811 in 2012. More than 99% of exports came from the United States and Canada. In terms of destination by Member States, Italy accounted for nearly 30% of imports of live lobsters, followed by Spain (27%), France (18%), Belgium (12%) and Germany (4%).

2. The Commission is not aware of consignments arriving with broken limbs or dead at border inspection posts.

3. The issue in question 3 is due to the definition of 'fishery products' laid down in Point 3.1 of Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council ([1]) laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin. Crustaceans are fishery products.

4. According to Article 13 TFEU, 'the Union and the Member States shall (…) pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals (…)'. Considering these animals as fishery products for food safety purposes does not breach the welfare requirements.

5, 6. The scope of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 ([2]) and of Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 ([3]) is limited to vertebrate animals. The Commission currently does not intend to propose to amend legislative requirements so as to make them applicable to invertebrates such as decapods.

([1]) OJ L 139, 30.4.2004.
([2]) OJ L 3, 5.1.2005.
([3]) OJ L 303, 18.11.2009.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005547/13
alla Commissione
Guido Milana (S&D)
(17 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Revisione ed innalzamento dei limiti massimi di yessotossine

Il regolamento (CE) 853/2004 stabilisce norme specifiche in materia di igiene per gli alimenti di origine animale e al capitolo V fissa i limiti massimi di biotossine marine presenti in questi molluschi, espressi in µg o mg per Kg di parte edibile (pe). Nel caso delle yessotossine (YTX), questi limiti corrispondono a 1 mg di equivalente yessotossine/kg pe.

Il comparto della molluschicoltura italiana, con 113 mila tonnellate di cozze e vongole prodotte nel 2011, costituisce il 70 % delle produzioni italiane di acquacoltura con un valore di mercato pari a circa 1 miliardo di euro. Nell'ultimo decennio, i lunghi periodi di sospensione della raccolta e della commercializzazione, causati dalla presenza della biotossina con valori oltre i limiti fissati dalla regolamentazione comunitaria, hanno provocato un progressivo collasso della produzione e delle imprese con ricadute economiche e occupazionali negative su tutto il comparto.

Fra il gruppo di biotossine marine che interessano la produzione di molluschi bivalvi, le yessotossine risultano tra le più innocue per il consumo umano (in termini di valutazione del rischio, a livello mondiale non sono mai stati riportati casi di intossicazione nell'uomo, mentre la Commissione del Codex Alimentarius non inserisce queste tossine fra quelle a rischio per la salute umana).

Nel luglio 2006 la Commissione europea ha chiesto all'EFSA di fornire un parere scientifico in relazione all'adeguatezza di detti limiti e dei relativi metodi di prova. L'EFSA ha espresso uno specifico parere scientifico nell'agosto 2009 (gruppo di esperti scientifici sui contaminanti nella catena alimentare «CONTAM» — EFSA-Q-2006-065D) e, per le yessotossine, ha suggerito un aumento del limite attuale da 1 mg/kg a 3,75 mg/kg pe.

Può la Commissione riferire:

1. quali procedure siano state attivate ai fini della revisione e dell'innalzamento dei limiti di yessotossine (YTX) in molluschi bivalvi vivi prodotti e commercializzati in ambito UE;

2. quale sia lo stato di avanzamento, ad oggi, di tali procedure nonché i tempi necessari alla entrata in vigore dei suddetti limiti;

3. quali valori limite di riferimento intenda considerare e se questi saranno fissati in considerazione di quelli già indicati dall'EFSA, pari cioè a 3,75 mg/kg pe?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(20 giugno 2013)

La Commissione, in occasione della riunione del 16 aprile 2013 del Comitato permanente per la catena alimentare e la salute degli animali, ha proposto di votare un progetto di regolamento della Commissione che innalza il limite delle yessotossine portandolo a 3,75 mg/kg di polpa di mollusco. Il progetto di regolamento ha riscosso l'unanimità.

Il regolamento, al termine delle procedure di adozione in cui è coinvolto il Parlamento, entrerà in vigore il ventesimo giorno successivo alla pubblicazione sulla Gazzetta ufficiale dell'Unione europea che si potrebbe ragionevolmente prevedere per ottobre-novembre del corrente anno.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005547/13
to the Commission
Guido Milana (S&D)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Revising and increasing maximum yessotoxin limit values

Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 lays down specific hygiene rules for foods of animal origin. In Chapter V, maximum limit values of marine biotoxins found in molluscs are defined in mcg or mg/kg of shellfish flesh. For yessotoxin, the limit is 1 mg of yessotoxin equivalents per kg of shellfish flesh.

The Italian shellfish sector, which harvested 113 000 tonnes of mussels and clams in 2011, accounts for 70% of Italian aquaculture production with a market value of around EUR 1 billion. In the last decade, harvesting and marketing have been suspended for extended periods due to biotoxin levels in molluscs exceeding the limits set by EU rules and this has led to a gradual collapse in production and businesses with negative repercussions for the economy and employment across the sector.

Yessotoxins are the least poisonous to humans of the marine biotoxins which affect the production of bivalve molluscs (as far as risk assessment is concerned, on a global scale, no cases of human intoxication have ever been reported and the Codex Alimentarius Commission does not include the toxin among those which are a risk to human health).

In July 2006, the European Commission asked the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to give its scientific view on the suitability of the aforementioned limits and the various test methods. In August 2009, the EFSA CONTAM Panel (Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain — EFSA-Q-2006-065D) gave its scientific view and suggested that for yessotoxin, the current limit of 1 mg/kg be increased to 3.75 mg/kg of shellfish flesh.

Can the Commission say:

1. what procedures have been undertaken to revise and increase the acceptable limits of yessotoxin (YTX) in live bivalve molluscs produced and marketed in the EU;

2. what progress has been made with these procedures so far and how long it will be before the aforementioned limits enter into force;

3. what reference limit values it intends to use and whether they will take into consideration the limit value suggested by the EFSA of 3.75 mg/kg of shellfish flesh?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(20 June 2013)

The Commission, during the Standing Committee of Food Chain and Animal Health on 16th April 2013, proposed for vote a draft Commission Regulation increasing the limit of yessotoxins to 3.75 mg/kg of shellfish flesh. The draft was supported by unanimity.

The regulation, following the adoption procedures involving the EU Parliament, will enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union* which can reasonably be expected by October-November this year.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005548/13
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(17. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Kosten für EU-Battlegroups (Gefechtsverbände)

Die im Juni 2004 ins Leben gerufenen EU-Battlegroups kamen bisher noch nie zum Einsatz.

Welche Kosten sind seit 2004 für die Einrichtung und die ständige Bereitschaft der EU-Battlegroups entstanden?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(8. Juli 2013)

Das 2006 vereinbarte EU-Gefechtsverbandskonzept sieht (wie seine Vorläufer) vor, dass die Kosten für die Bereitstellung und die ständige Bereitschaft der EU-Gefechtsverbände von den am Einsatzplan beteiligten EU-Mitgliedstaaten getragen werden. Informationen zu diesen den Mitgliedstaaten entstandenen Kosten müssen nach diesem Konzept jedoch nicht übermittelt werden. Im Fall des Einsatzes eines EU-Gefechtsverbands können bestimmte Kosten als gemeinsame Kosten über den Mechanismus ATHENA finanziert werden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005548/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Cost of EU battlegroups

The EU battlegroups established in June 2004 have never been deployed to date.

What costs have been incurred since 2004 for the establishment and permanent state of readiness of the EU battlegroups?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

According to the EU Battlegroup Concept as agreed in 2006 (and also in preceding versions), the costs for the establishment and permanent state of readiness for the EU Battlegroups lie with the EU Member States participating in the Battlegroup roster. No reporting of data relating to the costs incurred by Member States is foreseen in the Concept. In the event of the deployment of an EU Battlegroup, certain costs may be designated as common costs to be financed through the ATHENA mechanism.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005549/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(17. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: Umsetzung der Rechtsvorschriften zum Energiebinnenmarkt

Im Februar 2011 erklärten die EU-Staats- und Regierungschefs, der Energiebinnenmarkt müsse bis 2014 vollendet werden. Ein Schritt zur Vollendung des Energiebinnenmarktes war die Verabschiedung der Elektrizitäts- (2009/72/EG) sowie der Erdgasrichtlinie (2009/73/EG) (drittes Energiepaket), die bereits bis 2011 umgesetzt werden sollten. Bis April 2012 hatten mit Finnland, Schweden und dem Vereinigten Königreich drei Mitgliedstaaten beide Richtlinien noch nicht umgesetzt. Österreich und Estland hatten bis dahin lediglich die Erdgasrichtlinie umgesetzt ([1]).

1. Haben Österreich und Estland seit April 2012 die Elektrizitätsrichtlinie umgesetzt? Wenn ja, zu welchem Zeitpunkt ist dies geschehen, und sind die Staaten für die verzögerte Umsetzung mit Sanktionen belegt worden?

2. Wenn nicht, welche Maßnahmen hat die Kommission ergriffen, um die beiden Länder zur Umsetzung der Richtlinie zu bewegen?

3. Haben Finnland, Schweden und das Vereinigten Königreich seit April 2012 die Elektrizitätsrichtlinie, die Erdgasrichtlinie oder beide Richtlinien umgesetzt? Wenn ja, zu welchem Zeitpunkt ist dies geschehen, und sind die Staaten für die verzögerte Umsetzung mit Sanktionen belegt worden?

4. Wenn nicht, welche Maßnahmen hat die Kommission ergriffen, um die drei Mitgliedstaaten zur Umsetzung der Richtlinie zu bewegen?

5. Welche Auswirkungen hat die verspätete oder noch nicht erfolgte Umsetzung der Richtlinien auf andere Mitgliedstaaten und den europäischen Elektrizitäts- und Erdgasbinnenmarkt?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(3. Juli 2013)

Die Kommission hat im Jahr 2011 38 Vertragsverletzungsverfahren wegen unvollständiger Umsetzung der Richtlinien 2009/72/EG und 2009/73/EG eingeleitet. Im Anschluss daran hat sie 2012 und 2013 alle eingehenden Mitteilungen über Umsetzungsmaßnahmen geprüft, gegebenenfalls mit Gründen versehene Stellungnahmen abgegeben und in einigen Fällen Verfahren beim Gerichtshof der Europäischen Union (EuGH) eingeleitet. Die Kommission wird die Umsetzung und die umfassende Einhaltung des dritten Energiepakets auch weiterhin überwachen.

Obwohl die Kommission bereits Aufforderungsschreiben und mit Gründen versehene Stellungnahmen wegen unvollständiger Umsetzung beider Richtlinien an Finnland gerichtet hatte, waren die Richtlinien nach Einschätzung der Kommission am 21. November 2012 noch immer nicht vollständig umgesetzt worden. Die Kommission wandte sich in diesen Fällen daher an den EuGH ([2]). Auch Estland und das Vereinigte Königreich hatten beide Richtlinien nach Ansicht der Kommission am 24. Januar 2013 noch nicht vollständig umgesetzt. Die Kommission rief daher auch in diesen Fällen den EuGH an ([3]). In allen genannten Fällen ersuchte sie den Gerichtshof, gemäß Artikel 260 Absatz 3 AEUV ein Zwangsgeld zu verhängen.

Nachdem im September 2011 Vertragsverletzungsverfahren wegen fehlender Umsetzung eingeleitet worden waren, meldete Österreich im September 2012 die vollständige Umsetzung der Elektrizitätsrichtlinie. Die Kommission beendete daher das Vertragsverletzungsverfahren im Oktober 2012. Auch Schweden hat die Richtlinien inzwischen vollständig umgesetzt, nachdem im September 2011 Vertragsverletzungsverfahren wegen fehlender Umsetzung der Elektrizitäts- und Gasrichtlinie eingeleitet worden waren, so dass die Kommission die Verfahren im Oktober 2012 einstellte.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-410_de.htm
([2]) IP/12/1236.
([3]) IP/13/42.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005549/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Transposition of legislation on the internal energy market

In February 2011, the EU Heads of State and Government declared that the internal energy market was to be complete by 2014. One of the steps involved in the completion of the internal energy market was the adoption of the Electricity Directive (2009/72/EC) and the Gas Directive (2009/73/EC) (third energy package), which were to be transposed by 2011. Three Member States, namely Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom, had still not transposed the two directives by April 2012. Austria and Estonia had only transposed the Gas Directive up to that point ([1]).

1. Have Austria and Estonia transposed the Electricity Directive since April 2012? If so, when did this happen and have sanctions been imposed on these Member States for delaying transposition?

2. If not, what steps has the Commission taken to encourage the two countries to transpose the directive?

3. Have Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom transposed the Electricity Directive, the Gas Directive or both directives since April 2012? If so, when did this happen and have sanctions been imposed on these Member States for delaying transposition?

4. If not, what steps has the Commission taken to encourage the three Member States to transpose the directive?

5. What impact has the delay or failure to transpose the directives had on other Member States and on the European internal electricity and gas market?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(3 July 2013)

In 2011, the Commission opened 38 cases concerning the non-transposition of Directives 2009/72/EC and 2009/73/EC. The Commission has been following up on these proceedings in 2012 and 2013 by assessing all notifications of transposition measures, addressing reasoned opinions and referring certain cases to the European Court of Justice (ECJ). The Commission continues to monitor transposition as well as comprehensive compliance checks with the third package.

On 21 November 2012, after having addressed letters of formal notice and reasoned opinions for partial transposition of both Directives, the Commission considered that Finland still failed to fully transpose both Directives. It consequently took a decision to refer the cases to the ECJ ([2]). Similarly, on 24 January 2013, the Commission considered that Estonia and the United Kingdom still failed to fully transpose the two Directives. It consequently took a decision to refer the cases to the ECJ ([3]). In all these cases the Court has been requested to impose a penalty in line with Article 260(3) TFEU.

Following the opening of infringement proceedings in September 2011 for non-transposition, Austria notified full transposition of the Electricity Directive in September 2012. Consequently, the Commission closed the infringement case in October 2012. Similarly, following the opening of infringement proceedings in September 2011 for non-transposition of the Electricity and Gas Directives, Sweden achieved full transposition and the Commission closed the cases in October 2012.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-410_de.htm
([2]) IP/12/1236.
([3]) IP/13/42.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005550/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(17. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: Energieabkommen mit der Schweiz

Im April 2013 kam das für Energie zuständige Mitglied der Kommission Günther Oettinger in Brüssel mit der Schweizer Bundesrätin Doris Leuthard zusammen, um über ein bilaterales Energieabkommen zwischen der EU und der Schweiz zu verhandeln. Bereits seit mehreren Jahren verhandeln beide Parteien über einen Vertragsentwurf. Bis 2014 will die EU den Energiebinnenmarkt vollenden.

1. Welche konkreten Punkte wurden bei dem Treffen zwischen Oettinger und Leuthard im April 2013 angesprochen?

2. Welche konkreten Ergebnisse brachte das Treffen zwischen Oettinger und Leuthard?

3. Erachtet es die Kommission angesichts der bereits mehrere Jahre andauernden Verhandlungen als realistisch, dass es bis 2014 zu einem Energieabkommen mit der Schweiz kommt?

4. Wo liegen die Hauptstreitpunkte, die den erfolgreichen Abschluss eines Energieabkommens zwischen der EU und der Schweiz bisher verhinderten?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(20. Juni 2013)

1. Das für Energie zuständige Mitglied der Kommission hat den Stand der Verhandlungen über ein Energieabkommen zwischen der Schweiz und der EU bei einem Treffen am 19.4.2013 mit der schweizerischen Energieministerin Leuthard erörtert.

Dabei wurden die wichtigsten Punkte der laufenden Verhandlungen behandelt, darunter der Umgang mit bestehenden langfristigen Verträgen oder die Anwendung der Transparenzvorschriften („REMIT"-Vorschriften). Weitere Themen waren die Notwendigkeit, faire Wettbewerbsbedingungen hinsichtlich staatlicher Subventionen für Elektrizitätsunternehmen sicherzustellen, sowie mögliche Ziele für erneuerbare Energien und institutionelle Fragen.

2. Nach Ansicht beider Seiten haben sich ihre Standpunkte in den zahlreichen strittigen Fragen stark angenähert. Vor einer endgültigen Einigung bedarf es jedoch noch weiterer Anstrengungen.

3. Die Verhandlungen laufen tatsächlich bereits seit einiger Zeit. Eine Einigung ist schwierig, aber machbar. Beide Seiten sind sich dabei der symbolischen und politischen Bedeutung des Jahres 2014 bewusst. Die wichtigsten Hindernisse betreffen weniger die technischen Aspekte, bei denen eine Einigung bereits in Reichweite scheint, sondern eher institutionelle Fragen.

4. Bei den institutionellen Fragen geht es um die Umsetzung, die praktische Anwendung und die Überwachung rechtlicher Bestimmungen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005550/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Energy agreement with Switzerland

In April 2013, the Commissioner with responsibility for energy, Günther Oettinger, met with Swiss Federal Councillor, Doris Leuthard, in order to negotiate a bilateral energy agreement between the EU and Switzerland. The two parties have been negotiating a draft agreement for several years. The EU plans to complete the internal energy market by 2014.

1. What specific points were discussed at the meeting between Mr Oettinger and Ms Leuthard in April 2013?

2. What, in specific terms, were the results of the meeting between Mr Oettinger and Ms Leuthard?

3. In view of the fact that negotiations have already lasted several years, does the Commission believe it realistic to expect to reach an energy agreement with Switzerland by 2014?

4. What are the main points of disagreement that have impeded the successful conclusion of an energy agreement between the EU and Switzerland to date?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(20 June 2013)

1. The Commissioner responsible for Energy met Swiss Energy Minister Leuthard on 19.4.2013 to discuss the state of play regarding the negotiations of the electricity agreement between Switzerland and the EU.

The discussion covered the main issues in the ongoing negotiations including issues such as the treatment of existing long-term contracts or the implementation of transparency rules ('REMIT'-legislation). Further topics included the need to ensure a level playing field in terms of state subsidies for electricity companies, possible targets for renewable energy and institutional issues.

2. Both sides agreed that the positions on the numerous contentious issues have come much closer. However, further efforts are needed on the way to finalise the agreement.

3. The process has indeed taken quite some time. The goal is challenging, but possible. Both sides are aware of the symbolic and political importance of the year 2014. The main obstacles are less on the technical nature, where an agreement seems to be in reach, but rather on the institutional level.

4. Institutional issues are related to the implementation, practical application and monitoring of the legal rules.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005551/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(17 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: «Barrosogate» y efectividad de la OLAF

Desde el pasado 16 de octubre con la dimisión del Comisario John Dalli, los escándalos de corrupción en la cúpula de la Comisión Europea están llenando portadas de numerosos medios de comunicación. Dicho impacto mediático se ha multiplicado cuando este escándalo ha pasado de implicar al ex Comisario de Salud y Consumo, que ha resultado ser inocente, a implicar al mismo Presidente de la Comisión Europea.

Es así como el caso en los medios de comunicación ha pasado de ser denominado por la prensa como *«Dalligate» a nombrarse «Barrosogate». El origen de la controversia es que la cúpula de la Comisión Europea conocía la inocencia de Dalli, pero promovieron su dimisión como cabeza de turco para salvar a la propia institución. La inocencia del Comisario apunta a que el intento de beneficiar a la industria del tabaco a través de la nueva directiva europea sobre productos del tabaco provino de niveles políticos aún más altos que los del político maltés.*

La Oficina Europea Anti-Fraude (OLAF) ya *elaboró un informe en el que exculpaba al Comisario Dalli. Este informe fue leído por la cúpula de la Comisión, que continuó exigiendo su dimisión. Debido a esto la justicia de Bélgica va a abrir de nuevo dicha investigación para esclarecer dónde se sitúa el origen de la corrupción en la Comisión. Atravesamos un momento en que las instituciones europeas están siendo acusadas de tan solo velar por los intereses de los grandes bancos y compañías, y escándalos como este no hace más que confirmarlo.*

¿Cuál fue la razón por la que el Presidente de la Comisión hizo dimitir a John Dalli, pese a que en aquel momento disponía del informe de la OLAF que lo exculpaba?

¿Piensa la OLAF reabrir el expediente de investigación del caso Dalli, a la luz de las nuevas pruebas y nuevas informaciones divulgadas?

¿Dispone de información sobre cuáles fueron los puntos de la directiva de productos del tabaco en los que la industria del tabaco trataba de influir a través de Dalli? ¿Cuáles eran sus propuestas?

Respuesta del Sr. Barroso en nombre de la Comisión
(25 de julio de 2013)

1. Como la Comisión ya aclaró en sus respuestas a los cuestionarios de la Comisión de control presupuestario de 30 de noviembre de 2012 y 13 de junio de 2013, el ex comisario presentó su dimisión tras convenir con el Presidente en que su permanencia en el cargo era políticamente insostenible.

2. La OLAF no ha manifestado a la Comisión su intención de volver a abrir la investigación. Conforme a las normas por las que se rige su actividad (Reglamento 1073/1999) y a sus prácticas habituales, la OLAF tiene autonomía decisoria para incoar investigaciones cuando existen pruebas referentes a asuntos de su competencia.

3. Las propias tabacaleras han expresado sus opiniones sobre la revisión de la Directiva sobre los productos del tabaco en sus respuestas a la consulta pública ([1]), en las alegaciones escritas suplementarias y en las reuniones con el Comisario y los servicios responsables, cuyas actas han sido publicadas ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/tobacco/consultations/tobacco_cons_01_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/tobacco/events/index_en.htm#anchor2

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005551/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: 'Barrosogate' and the effectiveness of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)

Since 16 October 2012, when Commissioner John Dalli resigned, corruption scandals involving the Commission leadership have been splashed across the front pages of many newspapers. This media attention stepped up a gear when this scandal switched from involving the former Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, who turned out to be innocent, to involving the President of the Commission himself.

This is how the case in the media went from being dubbed 'Dalligate' by the press to 'Barrosogate'. The crux of the controversy is that the Commission leadership knew that Dalli was innocent but pushed for him to resign, making him a scapegoat to save the institution. Commissioner Dalli's innocence suggests that the attempt to gain an advantage for the tobacco industry through the EU's new Tobacco Products Directive came from even higher political echelons than Maltese politics.

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) drafted a report which exonerated Commissioner Dalli. The Commission leadership read this report but continued to call for his resignation. Because of this, the Belgian courts are going to reopen the investigation to get to the bottom of the corruption within the Commission. The European institutions are currently being accused of only looking after the interests of large banks and companies, and scandals like this only bear out that accusation.

Why did the President of the Commission force John Dalli to resign, despite having at the time OLAF's report, which exonerated him?

Is OLAF planning to reopen the investigation into the Dalli case in view of the new evidence and new information that has come to light?

Does the Commission have any information on which aspects of the Tobacco Products Directive the tobacco industry attempted to influence through Commissioner Dalli? What were the industry's proposals?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(25 July 2013)

1. As the Commission has already clarified in replies to questionnaires from the Committee on budgetary Control on 30 November 2012 and 13 June 2013, the former Commissioner resigned having agreed with the President that it was politically untenable for him to remain in office.

2. The Commission has not been informed by OLAF whether it is intending to re-open the investigation. According to the rules governing the OLAF activity (Regulation 1073/1999) and its usual practice, OLAF makes its own decision on whether to open investigations if there is evidence regarding cases that come within its remit of competence.

3. Tobacco firms themselves have made known their viewpoints on the revision of the Tobacco Products Directive in their responses to the public consultation ([1]), in additional written submissions, and in meetings with the Commissioner and services in charge. Minutes of those meetings have been published. ([2])

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/tobacco/consultations/tobacco_cons_01_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/tobacco/events/index_en.htm#anchor2

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005552/13
an die Kommission
Martin Ehrenhauser (NI)
(17. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: „Police Working Group on Terrorism"

Im Jahr 1979 wurde die „Police Working Group on Terrorism" (Polizei-Arbeitsgruppe Terrorismus — PWGT) gegründet. Europol hat in dieser informellen Arbeitsgruppe Beobachterstatus. Darüber hinaus werden Informationen, die im Rahmen der PWGT zusammengetragen werden, auch in das Informationssystem SIS II eingetragen.

1. Welche Vorteile ergeben sich für Europol an der Teilnahme als Beobachter an der PWGT?

2. Ist Europol in das Informationsnetz der PWGT integriert? Falls ja: Wie nimmt Europol an der Kommunikation teil? Werden Daten von Europol in das Informationsnetz eingespeist und/oder nutzt Europol Informationen aus dem Informationsnetz? Falls nein: warum nicht; ist eine Integration geplant?

3. Plant Europol eine intensivere Einbindung in die PWGT über den Beobachterstatus hinaus? Falls nein: warum nicht?

4. Wie beurteilt die Kommission den Umstand, dass neben dem Thema Terrorismus auch andere Themenbereiche wie (politischer) Extremismus in der Gruppe behandelt werden?

5. Wie viele Datensätze in welchen Bereichen wurden bisher auf der Grundlage von Informationen der PWGT in das SIS II eingetragen?

6. Werden Informationen der PWGT in weiteren europäischen Datenbanken, etwa von Europol, gespeichert? Wenn ja: in welchen?

Antwort von Frau Malmström im Namen der Kommission
(16. Juli 2013)

1. Europol wird regelmäßig über die Maßnahmen der Mitgliedstaaten zur Terrorismusbekämpfung unterrichtet und stellt im Gegenzug allgemeine Informationen über eigene Maßnahmen sowie Einschätzungen zu Trends und Entwicklungen zur Verfügung.

2. Europol ist nicht in das Informationsnetz der PWGT integriert. Europol speist keine Daten in das Informationsnetz ein und nutzt Informationen aus dem Informationsnetz nur, wenn diese Daten offiziell übermittelt werden.

3. Europol plant keine intensivere Einbindung in die PWGT. Das Informationsnetz beruht auf einer Absichtserklärung ([1]), die keine Regelung zu Fragen der Haftung und Verantwortlichkeit enthält. Daher kann Europol keine operativen und personenbezogenen Daten mit dem Informationsnetz austauschen.

4. Diese Frage fällt in die Zuständigkeit der Mitgliedstaaten, die aufgrund der Verträge allein für die nationale Sicherheit zuständig sind ([2]), wozu auch die entsprechende polizeiliche und nachrichtendienstliche Tätigkeit zur Datensammlung und Beurteilung des Bedrohungspotenzials gehört. Die Mitgliedstaaten haben aufgrund der Verträge sicherzustellen, dass ihre Nachrichtendienste und Strafverfolgungsbehörden verhältnismäßig und verantwortlich vorgehen und dabei die Bürgerrechte und die legitimen Sicherheitsinteressen anderer Mitgliedstaaten oder der EU als Ganzes achten. In diesem Zusammenhang ist es durchaus möglich, dass sich die Gruppe mit Themen wie Extremismus, gewalttätigem Extremismus und Extremismus, der zu Terrorismus führt, befasst.

([1]) Memorandum of Understanding.
([2]) Artikel 4 Absatz 2 EUV und Artikel 72 und 73 AEUV.

5. In Artikel 27 der Verordnung (EG) 1987/2006 und Artikel 40 des Beschlusses 2007/533/JI des Rates ([3]) ist festgelegt, welche Behörden der Mitgliedstaaten Ausschreibungen in SIS II unmittelbar abfragen, eingeben, ändern oder löschen dürfen. Das Verzeichnis dieser Behörden wurde veröffentlicht ([4]). Es obliegt den Mitgliedstaaten, festzustellen, ob ein Fall eine Aufnahme der Ausschreibung in das SIS II rechtfertigt (gemeinsamer Artikel 21 der SIS II-Rechtsinstrumente). Die Kommission kann daher nicht angeben, ob eine Ausschreibung auf die PWGT zurückzuführen ist.

6. Europol verfügt über keine Informationen über die Speicherung von Informationen der PWGT in anderen europäischen Datenbanken.

([3]) Über die Einrichtung, den Betrieb und die Nutzung des Schengener Informationssystems der zweiten Generation (SIS II).
([4]) ABl. C 103 vom 9.4.2013, S. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005552/13
to the Commission
Martin Ehrenhauser (NI)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Police Working Group on Terrorism

The Police Working Group on Terrorism (PWGT) was established in 1979. Europol has observer status in this informal working group. In addition, information gathered within the framework of the PWGT is also recorded in the SIS II information system.

1. What are the benefits for Europol of participating as an observer in the PWGT?

2. Is Europol integrated in the PWGT information network? If so: how does Europol participate in communications? Does Europol feed data into the information network and/or does Europol use information from the information network? If not, why not; are there any plans for integration?

3. Is Europol planning more intensive participation in the PWGT that goes beyond observer status? If not, why not?

4. How does the Commission view the fact that, in addition to terrorism, other subjects, such as (political) extremism, are also dealt with in the group?

5. How many records have been entered into SIS II on the basis of information from the PWGT, and in which areas?

6. Is information from the PWGT stored in other European databases, such as those operated by Europol? If so, in which ones?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(16 July 2013)

1. Europol is regularly informed about Member States' counter-terrorism activities and in return provides general information on its activities and opinions on trends and developments.

2. Europol is not integrated in the PWGT information network. It does not provide data to that network. Europol uses data from the network when these data are sent to it according the official procedures.

3. There are no particular plans for closer participation. The network is based on a MoU ([1]), which does not cover issues of liability and accountability, so Europol cannot share operational and personal data with the network.

4. This falls under the responsibility of Member States, which, under the Treaties, have sole responsibility for national security ([2]), including related police and intelligence work in gathering information and assessing threats. Member States are bound by the Treaties to ensure their intelligence and law enforcement bodies act in a proportionate and responsible way, respecting the rights of citizens and the legitimate security interests of other Member States or the EU as a whole. In this context, the group may have to look at issues relating to extremism, violent extremism, and extremism leading to terrorism.

5. Article 27 of Regulation (EC) 1987/2006 and Art. 40 of Council Decision 2007/533/JHA ([3]) set out which Member State authorities can search directly, as well as enter, modify or delete an alert in SIS II. The list of such authorities was published ([4]). It is the decision of the Member State whether a case warrants an alert in SIS II (common Articles 21 of the SIS II legal instruments. The Commission is therefore not in a position to state if an alert was initiated by PWGT.

6. Europol has no information on the storage of PWGT data in other European databases.

([1]) Memorandum of Understanding.
([2]) Article 4(2) of the TEU and Article 72 and 73 of the TFEU.
([3]) On the establishment, operation and use of the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II).
([4]) OJ C 103, 9.4.2013, p. 1.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005553/13
à la Commission
Constance Le Grip (PPE)
(17 mai 2013)

Objet: Évolution de la législation européenne relative aux substances allergènes contenues dans les parfums

À la suite des conclusions du Comité scientifique pour la protection des consommateurs rendues en juin 2012 au sujet des ingrédients allergènes contenus dans les produits cosmétiques, de nombreuses inquiétudes ont été exprimées tant par les industriels du secteur de la parfumerie que par les consommateurs des produits évoqués. Ce rapport s'ajoute aux nombreuses difficultés que rencontrent les parfumeurs pour maintenir la qualité et la diversité de leur offre, dans un contexte où leurs possibilités deviennent de plus en plus limitées à cause de la réglementation toujours plus stricte des matières premières qu'ils utilisent.

Dans une déclaration du 2 novembre 2012, le porte-parole de l'ancien commissaire à la santé et la politique des consommateurs, John DALLI, affirmait que la Commission «est encore très loin d'envisager une modification de la législation européenne», et qu'il n'était pas question d'obliger certains grands parfumeurs français qui avaient exprimé leurs inquiétudes à retirer du marché leurs parfums les plus connus.

La Commission peut-elle préciser quelles sont les suites qu'elle envisage de donner aux conclusions du Comité scientifique et selon quel calendrier?

La Commission peut-elle préciser où en est le processus de consultation avec les industriels et les représentants d'intérêts concernés?

La Commission envisage-t-elle la possibilité de classer certains parfums comme «exception culturelle» et de leur accorder une législation spécifique, ou bien cette éventualité n'a-t-elle pas du tout été étudiée?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(24 juin 2013)

Comme elle l'a indiqué dans sa réponse à une précédente question (E-004701/2013 ([1])), la Commission n'a pas encore proposé formellement de mesures pour donner suite aux conclusions du comité scientifique sur les ingrédients parfumants allergènes contenus dans les produits cosmétiques. Elle réfléchit à l'opportunité de consacrer des études supplémentaires à certaines des substances visées par ces conclusions. Les mesures de suivi doivent garantir une information appropriée des consommateurs et prévoir des restrictions à l'utilisation des allergènes les plus puissants, l'objectif étant de préserver la santé publique des risques induits par ces ingrédients allergènes. De nouvelles discussions avec les États membres et les autres parties prenantes sont prévues pour juin 2013.

Certaines de ces parties prenantes ont déjà été consultées: il s'agissait d'évaluer les répercussions sociales (protection des consommateurs, disponibilité des produits et emploi) et économiques des solutions envisageables.

La législation de l'Union européenne sur les produits cosmétiques met l'accent sur la sûreté de ces produits et de leurs ingrédients. Cela n'exclut pas de prévoir des exceptions fondées sur une certaine culture.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/fr/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005553/13
to the Commission
Constance Le Grip (PPE)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Changes to European legislation on allergens in perfumes

Following the adoption in June 2012 by the Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety of its conclusions on allergens in cosmetic products, many concerns have been voiced by both perfume manufacturers and consumers of the products in question. This report comes on top of the numerous problems faced by perfumers in maintaining the quality and diversity of their products at a time when the opportunities open to them are becoming increasingly limited by ever more stringent regulation of the raw materials they use.

In a statement issued on 2 November 2012, the spokesperson for the then Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, John Dalli, said that the Commission was still a long way from planning amendments to EU legislation, and that there could be no question of forcing certain large French perfume houses which had expressed their concerns to withdraw their best-known perfumes from the market.

Can the Commission state what action it plans to take in response to the conclusions of the Scientific Commission, and within what time frame?

Can the Commission state what progress has been made in holding consultations with manufacturers and stakeholders?

Does the Commission believe it will be possible to categorise certain perfumes as 'cultural exceptions' and to adopt specific legislation for them, or has this possibility not been examined at all?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(24 June 2013)

As indicated in its reply to a previous Question E-004701/2013 ([1]), the Commission has not yet formally proposed measures for the implementation of the scientific opinion on fragrance allergens in cosmetic products. It is currently considering whether additional studies would be needed in relation to several of the substances addressed in this scientific opinion. Measures to implement the scientific opinion need to ensure adequate consumer information, together with restrictions for the strongest allergens, in order to address the risks of fragrance allergens for human health. Further discussions with Member States and other stakeholders are foreseen for June 2013.

Discussions have already been carried out with stakeholders in order to assess the social (in terms of protection of consumers, availability of products and employment) and the economic impacts of the possible policy options.

The focus of the relevant provisions of the EU cosmetic legislation is to ensure safety of cosmetic products and ingredients. This does not allow to foreseen exceptions based on a certain culture.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005554/13
alla Commissione
Susy De Martini (ECR), Cristiana Muscardini (ECR), Carlo Fidanza (PPE), Giovanni La Via (PPE), Clemente Mastella (PPE), Aldo Patriciello (PPE), Marco Scurria (PPE), Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE), Fabrizio Bertot (PPE), Lara Comi (PPE), Salvatore Tatarella (PPE), Roberta Angelilli (PPE), Mara Bizzotto (EFD) e Claudio Morganti (EFD)
(17 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Incidente al porto di Genova

Il recente tragico incidente (9 vittime e 4 feriti) verificatosi nel porto di Genova, con il crollo della torre di controllo causato dallo scontro della nave portacontainer Jolly Nero — 239 metri di lunghezza per 30 di larghezza — contro la sua base, pone all'attenzione delle autorità responsabili, tanto nazionali quanto comunitarie, il problema degli standard di sicurezza delle navi e di quello dei porti d'attracco.

È indubbio, infatti, che accanto alla sicurezza delle navi, esista anche la questione della sicurezza dei porti, la cui agibilità non deve essere limitata da situazioni ambientali che potrebbero causare difficoltà di movimento e rischi catastrofici.

Un ulteriore elemento che pure rientra nella questione «sicurezza» è la garanzia della professionalità specifica dei presidenti e dei dirigenti delle Autorità portuali, in particolare quando ad essi compete non solo la gestione ordinaria, ma anche la pianificazione dello sviluppo dell'area portuale in relazione agli standard di sicurezza sopra menzionati.

In Italia la disciplina del procedimento di nomina dei presidenti delle Autorità portuali è dettata dall'articolo 8 della legge 84/94, modificato dall'articolo 6 del decreto-legge 136/2004. In esso è previsto che il presidente dell'Autorità portuale debba essere nominato, previa intesa con la Regione interessata, con decreto ministeriale, nell'ambito di una terna di esperti di massima e comprovata qualificazione professionale nei settori dell'economia dei trasporti e portuale, designati rispettivamente dalla Provincia, dai Comuni e dalle Camere di commercio competenti sul territorio. Le autorità locali o nazionali dovrebbero dunque avere l'obbligo di nominare persone competenti e, data la fondamentale importanza socioeconomica dei sistemi portuali, anche l'Unione europea potrebbe intervenire, ancorché indirettamente, sulla regolarità e la trasparenza di tali nomine.

Alla luce di quanto sovraesposto, nonché dell'importanza del porto di Genova nell'ambito della programmazione TEN-T, può la Commissione precisare se:

1. a proposito di sicurezza marittima, ha elementi per valutare la congruità del portacontainer che ha causato l'incidente con gli standard previsti dalla direttiva 2009/16/CE entrata in funzione il 1° gennaio 2011;

2. ritiene che tale direttiva debba essere integrata anche da norme comuni riguardanti gli standard minimi di sicurezza nell'ambito dei porti e le misure regolamentari per garantire la professionalità specifica dei presidenti e dei dirigenti dei porti;

3. intende attivare l'Agenzia europea per la sicurezza marittima (EMSA) per un'inchiesta di merito sui fatti di Genova;

4. ritiene corretta l'ubicazione della torre all'interno del porto di Genova, anche confrontandola con quella di altri porti europei equivalenti e se è a conoscenza dell'esistenza di piani per lo sviluppo del porto?

Risposta di Siim Kallas a nome della Commissione
(28 giugno 2013)

1. La direttiva 2009/16/CE consente a uno Stato di approdo di ispezionare qualsiasi nave battente bandiera straniera nei propri porti. Pertanto, poiché l'incidente in questione vede coinvolta una nave battente bandiera italiana in un porto italiano, la direttiva 2009/16/CE non è rilevante ai fini della questione. Dovrebbe, invece, essere competenza delle autorità italiane accertare che la nave rispettasse le norme infortunistiche attualmente in vigore.

2. La questione delle qualifiche professionali delle autorità portuali non rientra nel campo di applicazione della direttiva 2009/16/CE. Nella comunicazione adottata recentemente sul riesame della politica portuale dell'UE ([1]), la Commissione richiama l'attenzione sulla necessità di disporre di personale in possesso delle adeguate competenze, formazione e qualifiche nei porti europei in considerazione della crescente complessità delle operazioni portuali ([2]).

3. La direttiva 2009/18/CE, che stabilisce i principi fondamentali in materia di inchieste sugli incidenti nel settore del trasporto marittimo, stabilisce che gli Stati membri provvedano affinché l'indagine di sicurezza sia effettuata dall'organo inquirente conformemente alla direttiva in seguito ad un sinistro marittimo molto grave. In questo caso, poiché l'incidente in questione ha comportato diverse vittime e si ritiene un sinistro marittimo molto grave e poiché ha coinvolto una nave battente bandiera italiana, l'organismo competente a condurre tale indagine è l'organo inquirente italiano per i sinistri marittimi, e non l'Agenzia europea per la sicurezza marittima (EMSA).

4. La Commissione non è in grado di giudicare se l'ubicazione della torre di controllo del porto di Genova sia corretta o meno. Le decisioni sugli schemi e l'ubicazione degli impianti portuali sono di competenza delle autorità responsabili. Nell'ambito della programmazione TEN-T, la Commissione ha sostenuto alcuni progetti riguardanti il porto di Genova e le sue connessioni con l'entroterra ([3]).

([1]) COM(2013)295 final, del 23 maggio 2013.

([2]) Nell'ambito del settimo programma quadro di RST per il trasporto del 2013 «Per un sistema portuale competitivo e sostenibile», è stata proposta un'azione specifica per la valutazione dei requisiti di formazione e le risorse umane nei porti.

([3]) Le informazioni su questi progetti sono reperibili sul sito web dell'Agenzia esecutiva TEN-T: http://tentea.ec.europa.eu/en/home/.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005554/13
to the Commission
Susy De Martini (ECR), Cristiana Muscardini (ECR), Carlo Fidanza (PPE), Giovanni La Via (PPE), Clemente Mastella (PPE), Aldo Patriciello (PPE), Marco Scurria (PPE), Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE), Fabrizio Bertot (PPE), Lara Comi (PPE), Salvatore Tatarella (PPE), Roberta Angelilli (PPE), Mara Bizzotto (EFD) and Claudio Morganti (EFD)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Accident at the Port of Genoa

The recent tragic accident at the Italian Port of Genoa caused by the Jolly Nero container ship (which measures 239 m by 30 m) ramming the base of the control tower and making it collapse, leaving nine dead and four injured, has drawn the attention of both national and EU authorities to the problem of ship and port safety standards.

Ship and port safety undoubtedly go hand in hand and should not be compromised by any potentially disastrous hazards restricting manoeuvrability.

Port safety also depends on the professional competence of port authority presidents and administrators, particularly where they are responsible for not only the day-to-day running of ports but also port planning in compliance with the abovementioned safety standards.

Under the procedure laid down in Article 8 of Act 84/1994, as amended by Article 6 of Decree-Law 136/2004, Italian port authority presidents are, subject to the agreement of the region concerned, appointed by ministerial decree from a shortlist of applicants with the highest degree of expertise and proven professional credentials in port and transport management designated by the provincial and municipal authorities and local chambers of commerce. The local and national authorities should accordingly be required to ensure the competence of those appointed and, given the fundamental social and economic importance of ports, EU involvement, even of an indirect nature, might well be appropriate with a view to ensuring the proper and transparent conduct of proceedings.

In light of the above and given the importance of the Port of Genoa in the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) programme:

1. Can the Commission state whether the container ship which caused the accident complied with the maritime safety standards set out in Directive 2009/16/EC, which entered into operation on 1 January 2011?

2. Does it consider that this directive should be accompanied by a common set of minimum port safety standards and regulatory provisions regarding the specific professional qualifications which must be held by port authority presidents and administrators?

3. Does it intend to call on the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) to investigate the Genoa disaster?

4. Does it consider that the Port of Genoa control tower was correctly located compared with the layout of other European ports, for example? Is it aware of any development plans regarding the Port of Genoa?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(28 June 2013)

1. Directive 2009/16/EC allows a port State to inspect foreign flagged vessels in its ports. Therefore, since the accident in question involved an Italian flagged vessel in an Italian port Directive 2009/16/EC is not relevant and the question of whether the vessel complied with the applicable safety standards should be addressed to the competent authorities in Italy.

2. The question of professional qualifications of port authorities is outside the scope of Directive 2009/16/EC. In the recently adopted Communication on the EU Ports Policy ([1]) Review, the Commission refers to the need of having employees with the right skills, training and qualifications in European ports in view of increasing complexity of ports operations ([2]).

([1]) COM(2013) 295 final of 23 May 2013.
([2]) A particular action for examining training requirements and human resources in ports has been launched under the 7th RTD Framework programme for transport 2013 'Towards a competitive and resource efficient port system'.

3. Directive 2009/18/EC establishing the fundamental principles governing the investigation of accidents in the maritime transport sector provides that Member States shall ensure that a safety investigation is carried out by the investigative body established in accordance with the directive after very serious marine casualties. Given that the accident in question, resulting in multiple fatalities, is a very serious marine casualty and that it involved an Italian flagged vessel, the competent body to carry out this investigation is the Italian Marine Casualties Investigative Body, not EMSA.

4. The Commission is not in a position to judge whether the location of the control tower of the Port of Genoa is appropriate or not. Decisions about layouts and location of port installations are the responsibility of the responsible authorities. In the context of the TEN-T, the Commission has supported certain projects concerning the Port of Genoa and its hinterland connections ([3]).

([3]) Information on those projects can be found in the website of the TEN-T Executive Agency: http://tentea.ec.europa.eu/en/home/.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-005555/13
aan de Commissie
Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE)
(17 mei 2013)

Betreft: Onwettige repatriëring van asielzoekers en de rol van de EU

In de Nederlandse media ([1]) werd bericht dat een Guineese „taskforce" in opdracht van de Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek van het Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie (niet-reguliere of ongeldige) reisdocumenten verstrekt aan afgewezen Guineese asielzoekers. De reisdocumenten worden niet op reguliere wijze verstrekt (bijvoorbeeld door de Guineese ambassade), maar door overheidsambtenaren die uit Conakry worden ingevlogen. In één geval werd een afgewezen asielzoeker die door de „taskforce" was voorzien van documenten, niet tot Guinee toegelaten omdat de documenten bij binnenkomst niet werden geaccepteerd. Ook zijn er voorbeelden bekend van terugkerende asielzoekers die door de „taskforce" waren voorzien van documenten maar die bij hun aankomst in Guinee gevangen werden gezet. Op facturen die aan de Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek zijn geadresseerd, wordt het „taskforce"-project „EU project 35 IRES" genoemd.

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van het bestaan van een Guineese „taskforce" die de terugkeer van afgewezen asielzoekers faciliteert door in Nederland (niet-reguliere of ongeldige) reisdocumenten te verstrekken?

2. Dragen Frontex of het Europees terugkeerfonds financieel bij aan de terugkeer van afgewezen asielzoekers die door de „taskforce" van papieren zijn voorzien?

3. Is Frontex of een ander EU-agentschap betrokken bij het organiseren van de terugkeer van afgewezen asielzoekers die reizen met door bovengenoemde (of een vergelijkbare) „taskforce" verstrekte reispapieren?

4. Is de Commissie van mening dat de Nederlandse manier om (ongeldige of niet-officiële) terugkeerdocumenten te faciliteren haaks staat op het beginsel van non-refoulement, en daarom in strijd is met het Verdrag betreffende de status van vluchtelingen?

5. Kent de Commissie andere lidstaten die gebruik maken van vergelijkbare methodes waarbij ambtenaren uit derde landen (uit Guinee of andere landen) ongeldige of niet-officiële terugkeerdocumenten verstrekken? Zo ja, welke lidstaat of lidstaten?

6. Kent de Commissie de vermelding „EU project 35 IRES" die staat op de facturen welke aan de Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek worden geadresseerd?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(25 juni 2013)

Noch de Commissie noch Frontex zijn op de hoogte van het bestaan van de Guineese taskforce die het geachte Parlementslid beschrijft.

Frontex heeft geen financiële bijdrage geleverd aan en was niet betrokken bij de terugkeer van personen aan wie de Guineese autoriteiten documenten hebben afgegeven. Er hebben sinds 2011 geen gezamenlijke terugkeeroperaties meer plaatsgevonden naar Guinee.

De Commissie weet niet wat de referentie „*EU project 35 IRES*" zou kunnen betekenen in de context van het Terugkeerfonds. In het jaarprogramma 2012 van het Terugkeerfonds voor Nederland is evenwel een maatregel met de naam „IRES 1" opgenomen. De maatregel betreft de uitvoering van gedwongen terugkeeroperaties door onder meer:

1) de ontwikkeling van de samenwerking met derde landen en de opstelling van geïntegreerde terugkeerplannen;

2) de bevordering van de samenwerking tussen diverse instanties (binnen de Nederlandse overheid) op het gebied van terugkeer;

3) de verbetering van het identificatieproces; en

4) operationele samenwerking (uitvoering van terugkeeroperaties).

([1]) http://nos.nl/artikel/426571-uitzetting-guineers-omstreden.html, http://nos.nl/artikel/426573-schimmige-guineese-reispapieren.html

De Nederlandse autoriteiten zijn op grond van de Terugkeerrichtlijn 2008/115/EG verplicht om het beginsel van non-refoulement (zoals erkend in het internationale recht) in elk individueel geval van terugkeer te respecteren. Het gebruik van bijzondere reisdocumenten van derde landen om deze landen terugkerende vluchtelingen te doen aanvaarden, doet daar geen afbreuk aan.

De Commissie is niet op de hoogte van de toepassing van methoden die vergelijkbaar zijn met de door het geachte Parlementslid beschreven methode, in andere lidstaten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005555/13
to the Commission
Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: Unlawful repatriation of asylum-seekers and the role of the EU

It has been reported in the Dutch media ([1]) that a Guinean 'task force', commissioned by the 'Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek' (the Dutch Repatriation and Departure Service), issues (non-regular/non-valid) travel documents for rejected Guinean asylum-seekers. The travel documents are not issued in the regular way (i.e. by the Guinean Embassy) but by government officials flown in from Conakry. In one known instance a rejected asylum-seeker, furnished with documents from the 'task force', was not allowed into Guinea because the documents were not accepted on arrival. Examples of repatriated asylum-seekers carrying documents from the 'task force' being imprisoned on arrival in Guinea are also known. On invoices addressed to the 'Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek', the 'task force' project is called 'EU project 35 IRES'.

1. Is the Commission aware of the existence of a Guinean 'task force' that facilitates the return of rejected asylum-seekers by issuing (non-regular/non-valid) travel documents in the Netherlands?

2. Do Frontex or the European Return Fund contribute financially to the return of rejected asylum-seekers with papers issued by the 'task force'?

3. Is Frontex or any other EU agency involved in the organisation of the return of rejected asylum-seekers travelling with papers issued by the abovementioned (or similar) 'task force(s)'?

4. Is the Commission of the opinion that the Dutch way of facilitating (non-valid/non-official) return papers is contrary to the principle of non-refoulement, and is therefore in breach of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees?

5. Is the Commission aware of any other Member State making use of similar methods by which third-country officials (from Guinea or other countries) issue non-valid/non-official return papers? If so, which Member State(s)?

6. Is the Commission familiar with the reference 'EU project 35 IRES' which appears on the invoices addressed to the 'Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek'?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(25 June 2013)

Neither the Commission nor Frontex are aware of the existence of a Guinean 'task force' as described by the Honourable Member.

Frontex did not contribute financially and was not involved in the return of persons with papers issued by the Guinean authorities. There have been no joint return operations to Guinea from 2011 until today.

Regarding the Return Fund, the Commission is not familiar with the reference '*EU project 35 IRES*'. However, the current 2012 annual programme for the Return Fund for the Netherlands includes an action named 'IRES 1'. The action concerns the carrying out of forced return operations through different activities, such as:

1) The development of cooperation with third countries and the drafting of integrated return plans;

2) The fostering of inter-agency cooperation (within the Dutch administration) in return matters;

3) The improvement of identification processes; and

4) Operational cooperation (carrying of return operations).

The use of particular third country travel documents for obtaining acceptance of returnees by third countries has no impact at all on the general obligation on the Dutch authorities under the Return Directive 2008/115/EC to respect the principle of *non-refoulement* (as recognised by international law) in each individual case of return.

([1]) http://nos.nl/artikel/426571-uitzetting-guineeers-omstreden.html, http://nos.nl/artikel/426573-schimmige-guineese-reispapieren.html

The Commission is not aware of methods similar to those described by the Honourable Member being used in any of the Member States.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-005556/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(17 Μαΐου 2013)

Θέμα: Συμφωνία σύνδεσης ΕΕ-Ουκρανίας

Η Ουκρανία είναι μια ευρωπαϊκή χώρα που έχει κοινή ιστορία, κοινές αξίες και αρχές με τα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ και κοινά σύνορα με τη Σλοβακία, την Πολωνία, την Ουγγαρία και τη Ρουμανία. Η υπογραφή μιας Συμφωνίας σύνδεσης μεταξύ Ουκρανίας και ΕΕ θα ήταν επωφελής και για τις δύο πλευρές. Η δημιουργία μιας σφαιρικής και σε βάθος ζώνης ελευθέρων συναλλαγών με την Ουκρανία θα ήταν επίσης επωφελής. Μια τέτοια Συμφωνία σύνδεσης θα έχει θετικό αντίκτυπο στην Ευρώπη σε περιόδους οικονομικής κρίσης, καθώς θα ενισχύσει τις περιφερειακές πολιτικές της ΕΕ παρέχοντας κίνητρο και στις υπόλοιπες χώρες της Ανατολικής Ευρώπης (επί του παρόντος χώρες εκτός της Ένωσης) να γίνουν μέλη της Ένωσης. Η Ουκρανία προετοιμάστηκε και είναι έτοιμη να υπογράψει μια τέτοια συμφωνία στη Βίλνα στο πλαίσιο της επόμενης συνόδου κορυφής για την Ανατολική Εταιρική Σχέση.

Ερωτάται επομένως η Επιτροπή:

1. Προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να προβεί στην υπογραφή της Συμφωνίας σύνδεσης με την Ουκρανία το 2013, ενθαρρύνοντας κατά συνέπεια την Ουκρανία στην πορεία της προς την ευρωπαϊκή ολοκλήρωση;

2. Είναι η Επιτροπή έτοιμη να επιδείξει μια «Πολιτική ανοικτών θυρών» (και όχι δύο μέτρων και δύο σταθμών) για το λαό της Ουκρανίας προωθώντας τη διαδικασία της ολοκλήρωσης;

3. Συνειδητοποιεί η Επιτροπή ότι, υπογράφοντας μια τέτοια Συμφωνία σύνδεσης με την Ουκρανία, διευρύνει χωρίς αμφιβολία τις γεωπολιτικές επιλογές της ΕΕ καθώς και την πολιτική της για την Ανατολική Ευρώπη;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(24 Ιουνίου 2013)

Στις 10 Δεκεμβρίου 2012, το Συμβούλιο Εξωτερικών Υποθέσεων ανανέωσε την πρόθεσή του να υπογράψει την συμφωνία Εταιρικής Σχέσης ΕΕ-Ουκρανίας, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της εις βάθος και σφαιρικής ζώνης ελευθέρων συναλλαγών (DCFTA), μόλις οι ουκρανικές αρχές επιδείξουν αποφασιστικότητα και απτή πρόοδο σε τρεις βασικούς τομείς, ιδίως μέχρι την έναρξη της εαρινής διάσκεψης κορυφής της Ανατολικής Εταιρικής Σχέσης στο Βίλνιους στις 28/29 Νοεμβρίου τρέχοντος έτους: κατάλληλες επακόλουθες ενέργειες μέχρι τις βουλευτικές εκλογές του 2012· αντιμετώπιση του ζητήματος της επιλεκτικής δικαιοσύνης και πρόληψη της επανεμφάνισης κρουσμάτων της· και εφαρμογή των μεταρρυθμίσεων που περιέχονται στην από κοινού συμφωνηθείσα ατζέντας σύνδεσης. Αναφέρθηκαν περαιτέρω προσδοκίες σε σχέση με την ανάγκη να λάβει η Ουκρανία αποφασιστικά μέτρα για την ανάσχεση της επιδείνωσης της κατάστασης των επιχειρήσεών της και του επενδυτικού κλίματος.

Στις 15 Μαΐου 2013, η Επιτροπή ενέκρινε την πρόταση απόφασης του Συμβουλίου για την υπογραφή και προσωρινή εφαρμογή της συμφωνίας σύνδεσης. Οι προτάσεις της Επιτροπής συνιστούσαν ένα απαραίτητο βήμα τεχνικής προώθησης των προπαρασκευαστικών ρυθμίσεων της ΕΕ, ώστε να καταστεί δυνατή η υπογραφή στη Σύνοδο Κορυφής του Βίλνιους. Ταυτόχρονα, η Επιτροπή εκτιμά ότι η υπογραφή της συμφωνίας εξακολουθεί να εξαρτάται από την αποφασιστική δράση και την απτή πρόοδο των ουκρανικών αρχών σε όλα τα κριτήρια που καθορίζονται από τα συμπεράσματα του Συμβουλίου του 2012. Η Επιτροπή, σε συνεργασία με την ΕΥΕΔ, θα εξακολουθήσει να παρακολουθεί την πρόοδο της Ουκρανίας.

Εναπόκειται πλέον στις ίδιες τις ουκρανικές αρχές να αντιμετωπίσουν διεξοδικά τα εκκρεμή ζητήματα, ώστε να καταστεί δυνατή η υπογραφή της συμφωνίας. Αυτό θα αποτελούσε ένα ιστορικό βήμα στις σχέσεις ΕΕ-Ουκρανίας.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005556/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(17 May 2013)

Subject: EU-Ukraine association agreement

Ukraine is a European country that shares common values, principles and a common history with the EU Member States, and that shares borders with Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and Romania. An association agreement between Ukraine and the EU would be beneficial for both parties. Establishing a deep and comprehensive free trade area would also be beneficial. The association agreement would have a positive impact in Europe at a time of economic crisis, as it would strengthen the EU's regional policies and give those Eastern European countries which are not currently members of the EU an incentive to join. Ukraine has prepared itself for such an agreement and is ready to sign it within the framework of the next Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius.

We therefore ask the Commission:

1. Does it intend to proceed with the signing of an association agreement with Ukraine in 2013, thus encouraging Ukraine on its path towards European integration?

2. Is the Commission ready to demonstrate an 'open door policy' (without double standards) for the people of Ukraine by pushing the process of integration?

3. Can the Commission state whether it is aware that the signing of such an association agreement with Ukraine will extend the geopolitical choices for the EU and its Eastern European Policy?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(24 June 2013)

On 10 December 2012, the Foreign Affairs Council reaffirmed its readiness to sign the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, including its DCFTA, as soon as the Ukrainian authorities demonstrate determined action and tangible progress in three key areas, possibly by the time of the Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit on 28/29 November this year: appropriate follow-up actions to the 2012 parliamentary elections; addressing the issue of selective justice and preventing its recurrence; and implementing the reforms set out in the jointly agreed Association Agenda. Additional expectations were listed in relation to the need for Ukraine to take determined actions to improve its deteriorating business and investment climate.

On 15 May 2013, the Commission adopted the proposal for a Council Decision on the Signing and Provisional Application of the Association Agreement. The Commission's proposals was a necessary step in order to enable the EU technically to move ahead with the preparatory arrangements to enable a possible signing at the Vilnius Summit. At the same time, the Commission takes the view that the signing of the Agreement remains conditional on determined action and tangible progress by Ukrainian authorities on all of the benchmarks set out by the 2012 Council Conclusions. The Commission together with the EEAS will continue to monitor Ukraine's progress.

It is now up to the Ukrainian authorities to address the outstanding issues in order to enable the signing of the Agreement. This would represent a historic breakthrough in EU-Ukraine relations.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-005558/13
do Komisji
Janusz Wojciechowski (ECR)
(20 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Informacje na temat toczących się procedur wobec Polski na podstawie art. 31 z Rozporządzenia Rady (WE) nr 1290/2005

1. Jakie procedury w odniesieniu do Polski są toczone na podstawie art. 31 z Rozporządzenia Rady(WE) nr 1290/2005 w sprawie finansowania WPR?

2. Ile toczy się takich procedur dotyczących wyłączenia z finansowania Unii Europejskiej, jakiego rodzaju środków one dotyczą i jakich kwot?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Daciana Cioloşa w imieniu Komisji
(12 lipca 2013 r.)

1. Komisja nie ujawnia takich informacji na temat toczących się procedur kontroli zgodności rozliczeń.

2. Finansowanie UE dla Polski w ramach Europejskiego Funduszu Rolniczego Gwarancji (EFRG) i Europejskiego Funduszu Rolnego na rzecz Rozwoju Obszarów Wiejskich (EFRROW) nie zostało zawieszone.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005558/13
to the Commission
Janusz Wojciechowski (ECR)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Information on current proceedings against Poland under Article 31 of Council Directive (EC) No 1290/2005

1. What proceedings are currently pending against Poland under Article 31 of Council Directive (EC) No 1290/2005 on the financing of the common agricultural policy?

2. How many of the proceedings which are pending relate to the suspension of EU funding, and what type and what amount of funding is involved?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

1. The Commission does not disclose such information on its open conformity clearance proceedings.

2. There is no suspension of EU funding for Poland as far as the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) or the European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) are concerned.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-005559/13
adresată Comisiei
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(20 mai 2013)

Subiect: Sectorul laptelui

Împreună cu alte state membre, România a solicitat prelungirea cotelor de lapte după 2015, dar această măsură a fost respinsă. La 31 decembrie 2013 expiră și procesarea laptelui neconform, iar Comisia Europeană nu mai acceptă încă o prelungire.

În aceste condiții, peste 800.000 de mici fermieri riscă să dispară după eliminarea cotelor de lapte din 2015.

Ca atare, care este strategia Comisiei și cum pot fi efectiv ajutați micii fermieri din sectorul laptelui, care riscă să dispară după 2015?

Răspuns dat de dl Cioloș în numele Comisiei
(10 iulie 2013)

Prin introducerea cotelor pentru lapte, sectorul produselor lactate a fost restructurat pentru obținerea unor unități de producție mai viabile din punct de vedere economic: în ultimii 10 ani, aproape 50% din fermierii producători de lactate și-au încetat activitatea, dar producția a fost preluată de alții.

Pe lângă ceea ce a fost deja prevăzut în propunerile legislative pentru PAC de după 2013 în ceea ce privește sprijinul pentru sectorul laptelui, Comisia desfășoară în prezent un studiu suplimentar pentru a obține o analiză prospectivă privind cea mai probabilă evoluție a sectorului laptelui bazată pe punctul de vedere al unui număr de experți independenți, având în vedere eliminarea în viitor a cotelor. Unul dintre cele două subiecte principale incluse în acest studiu este „producția durabilă de lapte, inclusiv dimensiunea sa teritorială”, concentrându-se asupra rolului pe care îl are sectorul laptelui în menținerea unor comunități rurale dinamice, în special în zonele cele mai fragile. Contractantul are sarcina de a identifica regiunile expuse riscurilor, de a descrie elementele care pot sprijini dezvoltarea durabilă a sectorului, inclusiv dimensiunile sale economice și teritoriale și de a propune măsuri adecvate în acest sens.

În plus, propunerea Comisiei privind sprijinul pentru dezvoltarea rurală prevede printre prioritățile sale restructurarea fermelor care se confruntă cu probleme structurale majore, cu scopul de spori competitivitatea și viabilitatea acestora.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005559/13
to the Commission
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Dairy sector

Romania requested, along with other Member States, for milk quotas to be extended after 2015, but this measure has been rejected. The processing of non-compliant milk will also expire on 31 December 2013, with the Commission no longer accepting another extension for this.

In these circumstances, more than 800 000 small farmers are likely to go out of business after the milk quotas are abolished in 2015.

Therefore, what strategy does the Commission have, and what effective assistance can be provided to the small farmers in the dairy sector likely to go out of business after 2015?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(10 July 2013)

Also with milk quota in place, the dairy sector has been restructured towards economically more viable production units: over the past 10 years nearly 50% of the dairy farmers stopped their activity, but the production was taken over by others.

Apart from what has already been foreseen in the legal proposals for the CAP after 2013 in terms of support for the milk sector, the Commission is currently running an additional study to obtain a prospective analysis on the most likely evolution of the milk sector based on the viewpoints of a number of independent experts in the future context without quotas. One of the two main subjects covered by this study is 'Sustainable milk production including its territorial dimension', focusing on the milk sector's role in maintaining vibrant rural communities, especially in the most fragile areas. The contractor is meant to identify regions at risk, describe elements that may underpin the sustainable development of the sector including its economic and territorial dimensions and suggest appropriate actions.

In addition, the Commission proposal for support for rural development contemplates among its priorities the restructuring of farms facing major structural problems, in order to enhance their competitiveness and viability.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005560/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL) e João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(20 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Dia Internacional dos Museus

A 18 de maio, celebra-se o Dia Internacional dos Museus. As políticas e orientações da União Europeia e do governo português, que têm no chamado «memorando de entendimento» a sua versão mais atual, estão a gerar um insustentável processo de declínio económico, retrocesso social e cultural. Assiste-se à destruição e perversão do princípio de serviço público da Cultura.

As consequências desta situação sobre os museus são dramáticas. Para além do financiamento, os museus enfrentam um condicionamento extremo nas atividades de preservação, investigação e dinamização, devido à rarefação e precariedade de pessoal qualificado e técnica e cientificamente especializado. Esta situação empurra muitos profissionais para o desemprego e os salários dos que permanecem vão sendo reduzidos para níveis insustentáveis. A existência de muitos museus e das suas coleções está seriamente ameaçada e a iniciativa própria vai sendo cerceada. Os museus são recursos únicos que não apenas produzem conhecimento, educam e formam, mas que têm igualmente um papel importante do ponto de vista do seu contributo para o desenvolvimento económico e social. Os museus não podem ser considerados como um adereço da sociedade e a sua função cultural e social não pode ser entendida como um privilégio das elites.

A ameaça pende, não apenas sobre os museus, mas sobre toda a Cultura enquanto serviço público, que deve assegurar a todos o acesso à criação e à fruição cultural. É o papel da Cultura enquanto elemento central na formação da consciência da soberania e da identidade histórico-cultural de cada país e de cada povo e o seu diálogo de iguais com todas as culturas de todos os povos do mundo que está a ser ferido.

Reconhece a Comissão que as políticas e orientações definidas no «memorando de entendimento» e pela União Europeia estão a provocar na Cultura e, em particular, nos museus a sua destruição enquanto serviços públicos, subordinando-os aos mecanismos de mercado e às suas lógicas de lucro?

Resposta dada por AndroullaVassiliou em nome da Comissão
(25 de junho de 2013)

A Comissão concorda com os Senhores Deputados quanto ao papel importante dos museus para a proteção e a promoção do património cultural, a criação de identidade cultural e histórica, bem como à sua ampla contribuição para o desenvolvimento económico e social. No entanto, a União Europeia não dispõe de competências específicas neste domínio. Em conformidade com o artigo 167.° do Tratado sobre o Funcionamento da União Europeia, a União deveria «incentivar a cooperação entre Estados-Membros e, se necessário, apoiar e completar a sua ação» no domínio da cultura. Por conseguinte, as diversas questões políticas (incluindo o financiamento e o funcionamento de museus), bem como a preservação, a proteção, a conservação e a renovação do património cultural são, antes de mais, uma responsabilidade nacional.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005560/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL) and João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: International Museum Day

International Museum Day is celebrated every year on 18 May. EU policies and guidelines and those of the Portuguese Government, the latest version of which are contained in the 'memorandum of understanding', are leading to an unsustainable process of economic, social and cultural decline. The principle of culture as a public service is being destroyed and corrupted.

This situation has drastic consequences for museums. In addition to funding issues, museums are facing extremely challenging conditions in their preservation, research and promotional activities, due to the numbers of qualified and technically and scientifically specialised staff being cut and the precariousness of their employment. This situation is forcing many professionals into unemployment and the wages of those who remain are being cut to unsustainable levels. The existence of many museums and their collections is under serious threat and the search is on for the right solution. Museums are unique resources that not only create knowledge, educate and train people, but also play an important role in terms of their contribution to economic and social development. Museums cannot be considered as a luxury for society and their cultural and social function cannot be seen as a privilege of the elite.

There is a threat not only to museums but to all culture as a public service, which must guarantee access for everyone to cultural creation and enjoyment. Culture's role as a central element in the formation of every country's and every people's sense of sovereignty and historical and cultural identity, and their dialogue on an equal basis with all the cultures of all the peoples of the world is being damaged.

Does the Commission acknowledge that the policies and guidelines set out in the 'memorandum of understanding' and by the European Union are destroying culture and, in particular, museums as public services, leaving them at the mercy of market mechanisms and their profit-based approach?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(25 June 2013)

The Commission shares the Honourable Member's view of the important role of museums in terms of protection and promotion of cultural heritage, creation of historical and cultural identity and their wider contribution to economic and social development. However, the European Union does not have a specific competence in this field. According to Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Union should be 'encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action' in the field of culture. Therefore, the different policy issues (including funding and functioning of museums), as well as the upkeep, protection, conservation and renovation of cultural heritage are primarily a national responsibility.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005561/13
à la Commission
Philippe Boulland (PPE)
(20 mai 2013)

Objet: Protection du consommateur dans l'espace aérien

Le territoire d'un État inclut son espace terrestre, maritime mais aussi aérien. Il est désormais courant d'acheter des produits à bord des avions de ligne, et ce par paiement en espèce mais aussi par carte de crédit.

Selon cette logique, une personne survolant le territoire français et utilisant une carte de crédit française dans un avion de ligne ne devrait pas payer de taxes supplémentaires lors de la transaction puisqu'elle se trouve sur le territoire national.

— Les compagnies aériennes européennes surtaxent-elles les transactions effectuées par carte de crédit à bord de leurs avions?

— Les banques surtaxent-elles les transactions effectuées par carte de crédit sur les paiements effectués à bord des avions de ligne européens?

— La Commission n'estime-t-elle pas que cette analyse devrait être prise en compte afin de protéger les consommateurs à bord des avions de ligne?

— Si l'espace aérien est bien la continuité de l'espace territorial, une carte de crédit nationale ne devrait-elle pas être utilisée dans l'espace aérien national sans aucune taxe supplémentaire que ce soit pour le client ou pour la compagnie?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Reding au nom de la Commission
(22 juillet 2013)

Conformément à l'article 52, paragraphe 3, de la directive sur les services de paiement ([1]), les banques ne sont pas autorisées à appliquer de surtaxes.

En ce qui concerne les taxes supplémentaires facturées par les commerçants, préoccupation qui semble être à la base de la question posée par l'Honorable Parlementaire, la disposition susmentionnée précise que le prestataire de services de paiement n'empêche pas le bénéficiaire d'appliquer des frais ou de proposer une réduction au payeur pour l'utilisation d'un instrument de paiement donné. En ce qui concerne les interdictions de surtaxes établies par les États membres eux-mêmes, l'Union ne leur impose pas, à ce stade, de prévoir de telles interdictions. La disposition susmentionnée prévoit que les États membres *peuvent* interdire ou limiter le droit de demander des frais compte tenu de la nécessité d'encourager la concurrence et de favoriser l'utilisation de moyens de paiement efficaces. Sur cette base, 14 États membres (dont la France) ont décidé d'interdire les surtaxes. La directive sur les services de paiement fait actuellement l'objet d'une révision, et la question des surtaxes sera également examinée. D'après les plans actuels, une modification de la directive devrait être proposée cet été.

La question des surtaxes est également abordée dans la nouvelle directive 2011/83/UE sur les droits des consommateurs ([2]). Celle-ci prévoit, à l'article 19, que, s'agissant de l'utilisation d'un moyen de paiement donné, les États membres interdisent aux professionnels de facturer aux consommateurs des frais supérieurs aux coûts qu'ils supportent pour l'utilisation de ces mêmes moyens.

([1]) Directive 2007/64/CE, JO L 319 du 5.12.2007, p. 1.
([2]) JO L 304 du 22.11.2011, p.64. Les États membres sont tenus d'appliquer les dispositions nationales qu'ils ont prises pour transposer la directive depuis le 13 juin 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005561/13
to the Commission
Philippe Boulland (PPE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Consumer protection in the air

The territory of a Member State includes its land, its maritime waters and also its airspace. It is common practice these days for products to be bought during airline flights, using either cash or a credit card.

Based on this logic, someone using a French credit card in a passenger plane while flying over French territory should not pay additional taxes on the transaction, because they are within French territory.

— Are European airlines levying excess charges for credit card transactions carried out on their planes?

— Are banks levying excess charges for credit card transactions when the payments are made on board European passenger planes?

— Does the Commission not believe that account should be taken of the above facts in order to protect consumers on board passenger planes?

— If airspace is a continuation of land space, should it not be possible to use a credit card issued in any country in the airspace of that country without either the customer or the airline paying any additional taxes?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(22 July 2013)

It follows from Article 52(3) of the Payment Services Directive ([1]) that banks are not entitled to impose surcharges.

As regards surcharges imposed by merchants, which appear to be the concern underlying the question raised by the Honourable Member, the abovementioned provision specifies that the service provider shall not prevent the payee from requesting from the payer a charge or from offering him a reduction for the use of a given payment instrument. As regards prohibitions of surcharging imposed by Member States themselves, Union law does not at this stage require them to impose such prohibitions. According to the provision referred to above, Member States *may* prohibit or limit the right of merchants to surcharge taking into account the need to encourage competition and promote the use of efficient payment instruments. 14 Member States have, as a result, decided to prohibit surcharging (including France). The Payment Services Directive is currently subject to a revision, and the issue of surcharging will equally be looked at. According to the current plans, a proposal to amend the directive is scheduled for this summer.

Surcharges are further addressed in the new Consumer Rights Directive 2011/83/EU ([2]). Its Article 19 requires Member States to prohibit traders from charging consumers, in respect of the use of a given means of payment, fees that exceed the cost borne by the trader for the use of such means.

([1]) Directive 2007/64/EC, OJ L 319, 5.12.2007, p. 1.
([2]) OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 64. Member States shall apply their national provisions transposing the directive as from 13 June 2013.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005562/13
à la Commission
Philippe Boulland (PPE)
(20 mai 2013)

Objet: Application du principe de précaution aux nanomatériaux dans l'Union européenne

Les nanomatériaux sont à l'heure actuelle utilisés dans plus de 2 000 produits de grande consommation. Alors que la toxicité des nanomatériaux manufacturés est avérée, les connaissances scientifiques exactes sur ces matériaux restent lacunaires, et cette hétérogénéité retarde la mise en œuvre de mesures de précaution.

En France, l'Agence nationale de sécurité sanitaire de l'alimentation, de l'environnement et du travail (ANSES) a préconisé à plusieurs reprises le principe de précaution du fait du risque potentiel que ces nanomatériaux représentent pour la population, les salariés et les riverains des installations industrielles fabriquant ces produits.

— La Commission estime-t-elle que des mesures de précaution devraient être mises en place pour tenir compte de la toxicité avérée des nanomatériaux?

— Sachant que l'autorité de santé au travail des États-Unis (NIOSH) a préconisé en mars 2013 de limiter la concentration de certains nanomatériaux (nanotubes et nanofibres de carbone) dans certains produits, la Commission compte-t-elle en tenir compte dans ses analyses?

Réponse donnée par M. Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(5 août 2013)

1. Les dispositions du règlement REACH ([1]) reposent explicitement sur le principe de précaution. Elles exigent de manière générale que les substances soient enregistrées avant leur fabrication, leur mise sur le marché ou leur utilisation. De manière implicite, REACH concerne également les nanomatériaux. L'enregistrement permet de déterminer les risques et la façon d'en tenir compte.

2. Aujourd'hui, des dispositions législatives spécifiques relatives aux nanomatériaux existent pour les produits biocides, les additifs alimentaires, les matériaux en contact avec les aliments, l'information sur les denrées alimentaires, et les cosmétiques.

3. Le règlement sur les cosmétiques fait clairement référence au principe de précaution ([2]). Les produits cosmétiques contenant des nanomatériaux doivent être notifiés à la Commission avant leur mise sur le marché. En cas de doute, une évaluation des risques réalisée par des experts indépendants peut être exigée et, si nécessaire, des mesures restrictives sont prises. Les nanomatériaux servant de colorants, agents conservateurs et filtres ultraviolets ne peuvent être utilisés qu'une fois qu'ils figurent aux annexes concernées du règlement sur les cosmétiques.

4. Sur la base du niveau actuel des connaissances scientifiques concernant les risques découlant des nanomatériaux, il n'est pas nécessaire d'introduire des mesures spécifiques supplémentaires de gestion de risques pour les nanomatériaux en tant que tels. En matière d'évaluation des risques, la Commission privilégie une approche au cas par cas. Dans le cadre du 7e PC, un projet à grande échelle (NANOREG) examinera des questions spécifiques concernant les essais réglementaires des nanomatériaux. Des mesures de gestion de risques appropriées pourront être introduites en améliorant les outils législatifs existants visant à faire face à des risques particuliers. Actuellement, la Commission examine la façon dont les annexes du règlement REACH peuvent être modifiées pour tenir compte des nanomatériaux.

5. Une proposition de document fixant des critères relatifs aux nanotubes de carbone a été présentée au Comité scientifique compétent en matière de valeurs limites d'exposition professionnelle (CSLEP) par le Centre commun recherche. Cette proposition, qui mentionne l'information l'institut national de la sécurité et de l'hygiène du travail des États-Unis (NIOSH) à laquelle il est fait référence dans la question, devrait être discutée par le CSLEP.

([1]) Règlement (CE) n° 1907/2006 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 18 décembre 2006, JO L 136 du 29.5.2007, p. 3.
([2]) Règlement (UE) n° 1223/2009 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 30 novembre 2009, JO L 342 du 22.12.2009, p. 59.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005562/13
to the Commission
Philippe Boulland (PPE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Application of the precautionary principle to nanomaterials in the European Union

Nanomaterials are currently used in over 2 000 consumer products. Although the toxicity of manufactured nanomaterials has been proven, our detailed scientific knowledge of these materials is still incomplete, and this heterogeneity is delaying the implementation of precautionary measures.

The French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety (ANSES) has repeatedly made the case for applying the precautionary principle in view of the potential risk that these nanomaterials pose to the general public and to the people working in and living next to the industrial plants manufacturing these products.

— Does the Commission believe that precautionary measures should be taken in view of the proven toxicity of nanomaterials?

— Does the Commission intend to factor into its analysis the fact that in March 2013 the US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommended limiting the concentration of certain nanomaterials (carbon nanotubes and nanofibres) in certain products?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(5 August 2013)

1. The REACH Regulation ([1])is explicitly underpinned by the precautionary principle. It requires that substances generally must be registered prior to being manufactured, placed on the market or used. Implicitly REACH also covers nanomaterials. The registration enables determining risks and how to address them.

2. Today specific legislative provisions on nanomaterials exist for Biocidal Products, Food Additives, Food Contact Materials, Food Information, and Cosmetics.

3. The Cosmetics Regulation explicitly refers to the precautionary principle ([2]). Cosmetic products containing nanomaterials must be notified to the Commission before being placed on the market. In case of concern a risk assessment by independent experts can be requested and if necessary restrictive measures may be taken. Nanomaterials used as colorants, preservatives and UV-filters must only be used once they are included in the respective Annexes of the Cosmetics Regulation.

3. Based on the current level of scientific information about risks from nanomaterials, there are no grounds to introduce additional specific risk management measures for nanomaterials as such. The Commission favours a case by case risk assessment approach. A large FP7 project (NANOREG) will address specific questions for the regulatory testing of nanomaterials. By improving the existing legislative tools to tackle specific risks appropriate risk management measures can be introduced. Currently the Commission examines how the REACH Annexes can be modified to take account of nanomaterials.

5. A draft criteria document for the Scientific Committee on Occupational Exposure Limits (SCOEL) on Carbon Nanotubes has been submitted by the Joint Research Centre. The draft, which mentions the NIOSH information alluded to in the question, is expected to be discussed by the SCOEL.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 OJL 136/3.
([2]) Regulation (EU) No 1223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2001, OJL 342/5.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005563/13
à la Commission
Philippe Boulland (PPE)
(20 mai 2013)

Objet: Encadrement de la reconnaissance mutuelle des diplômes

Des dérives sur le principe de reconnaissance mutuelle des diplômes sont de plus en plus flagrantes. Récemment, c'est l'université Fernando Pessoa qui a illustré le risque d'un non-encadrement plus strict des établissements étrangers qui délivrent des diplômes reconnus dans les autres pays européens.

Ainsi, cette université privée portugaise a ouvert des antennes en France et forme des étudiants dans le médical et le paramédical. Les étudiants s'inscrivent donc à l'université portugaise (moyennant d'importants frais de scolarité) afin d'éviter la rude sélection et le numerus clausus imposés en France à ces filières. Les étudiants viennent donc étudier en France dans les antennes de l'université portugaise et disposeront à la fin de leurs études d'un diplôme délivré par l'université portugaise et reconnu en France.

1. La Commission n'estime-t-elle pas qu'il y a là une dérive du système de reconnaissance mutuelle des diplômes, puisque les universités privées, non soumises à l'approbation du gouvernement, peuvent mettre en place des antennes pour contourner le système mis en place dans un État membre?

2. Les universités-antennes ne sont pas officiellement habilitées à délivrer des diplômes; est-il donc normal de reconnaître officiellement les années de formation accomplies dans ces établissements?

Réponse donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(23 juillet 2013)

La directive 2005/36/CE ([1]) s'applique à la reconnaissance de diplômes officiels délivrés par des autorités désignées à cet effet dans les États membres. D'après les informations dont dispose la Commission, il semble que les diplômes en question aient été délivrés par une université portugaise ([2]), alors que certaines parties de la formation ont été accomplies en France. Les formations ont été suivies dans des établissements qui n'auraient pas été officiellement autorisés à délivrer de diplômes en France.

La liberté de créer des antennes d'établissements d'enseignement ou de proposer des services transfrontaliers s'applique au domaine de l'éducation, dans la mesure où les formations sont financées essentiellement par des fonds privés ([3]).

La Cour de justice de l'Union européenne a examiné, dans plusieurs affaires ([4]), dans quelle mesure un État membre est tenu de reconnaître les diplômes délivrés par un autre État membre lorsque les études ont été entièrement ou partiellement accomplies sur son propre territoire ([5]). La Cour a invariablement établi ([6]) que ces diplômes relevaient exclusivement du cadre du système éducatif de l'État membre qui les délivre.

Par conséquent, dans le cas présent, ce n'est pas un établissement français qui délivre le diplôme mais l'université portugaise, suivant ses propres règles.

Toutefois, en vertu de l'article 50, paragraphe 3, de ladite directive, en cas de doutes justifiés, l'État membre d'accueil peut vérifier que certaines conditions sont remplies, par exemple, que la formation dispensée a été officiellement certifiée par l'établissement qui délivre le diplôme.

([1]) Directive 2005/36/CE du Parlement et du Conseil du 7 septembre 2005 relative à la reconnaissance des qualifications professionnelles, JO L 255 du 30.9.2005, p. 22.

([2]) La Commission n'a pas connaissance des circonstances spécifiques relatives à l'université portugaise privée mentionnée par l'Honorable Parlementaire.

([3]) Arrêt de la Cour de justice de l'Union européenne du 7 décembre 1993 dans l'affaire C-109/92, Wirth, point 17.

([4]) Affaires C-151/07, C-274/05 et C-84/07.

([5]) Dans l'affaire C-151/07, la Cour a fait observer que l'État membre d'accueil était tenu de reconnaître un diplôme obtenu dans un autre État membre, après que la personne concernée se soit soumise à des mesures de compensation, le cas échéant, et ce, même si une partie de la formation a été dispensée sur le territoire de l'État membre d'accueil dans un établissement qui n'était pas autorisé à délivrer de diplôme par cet État.

([6]) Affaire C-274/05, point 32.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005563/13
to the Commission
Philippe Boulland (PPE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Framework for the mutual recognition of diplomas

The principle of the mutual recognition of diplomas is being abused ever more blatantly. Most recently, a case involving the University of Fernando Pessoa has highlighted the risk of failing to provide a stricter framework for foreign establishments which award diplomas recognised in the other EU Member States.

This private Portuguese university has opened satellite campuses in France, where it trains medical and paramedical students. This means that students can enrol with a Portuguese university, incurring substantial tuition fees, in order to avoid the rigorous selection process and admission quotas in force in France for these subjects. After completing their studies in the French satellite campuses of the Portuguese university, students end up with a diploma issued by the Portuguese university and recognised in France.

1. Does the Commission not believe that this represents abuse of the system for the mutual recognition of diplomas, since it means that private universities, which require no state approval, can set up satellite campuses in order to circumvent the system in place in a given Member State?

2. Satellite universities are not officially authorised to issue diplomas; is it therefore right that the years of training completed in these establishments should be officially recognised?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(23 July 2013)

Directive 2005/36/EC ([1]) applies to the recognition of formal qualifications issued by authorities designated for this purpose in Member States. From the information available to the Commission, it seems that the diplomas in question were awarded by a Portuguese university ([2]), while parts of the training were completed in France. The courses were followed in institutions which allegedly were not officially authorised to issue diplomas in France.

The freedom to set up branches of educational establishments or to engage in the cross-border provision of services applies to the field of education, to the extent that the courses are financed essentially from private funds. ([3])

The European Court of Justice has examined in several cases ([4]) to what extent one Member State is obliged to recognise diplomas from another Member State, where the studies were (entirely or partly) completed on their own territory ([5]). The ECJ has consistently found ([6]) that such qualifications belong solely to the framework of the educational system of the Member State awarding the qualification.

Accordingly, in the current case it is not a French institution which delivers the diploma, but the Portuguese university under its own rules.

Nonetheless, under Article 50 (3) of the directive, in case of justified doubts, the host Member State may verify the existence of certain conditions e.g. if the training course at the establishment which had provided the training has been formally certified by the awarding institution.

([1]) Directive 2005/36/EC of Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications, OJ L 255, 30.9.2005.
([2]) The Commission is not aware of the specific circumstances concerning the private Portuguese university mentioned by the Honourable Member.
([3]) ECJ, judgment of 7 December 1993, Case C-109/92 Wirth, paragraph 17.
([4]) Cases C-151/07, C-274/05 and C-84/07.
([5]) In Case C-151/07 the ECJ pointed out that the host Member State is required to recognise a diploma, subject to the completion of compensation measures if applicable, obtained in another Member State. This is the case even if part of the training was provided on the territory of the host Member State in a training institution which was not designated for this purpose by that state.
([6]) Case C-274/05, point 32.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005564/13
à la Commission
Philippe Boulland (PPE)
(20 mai 2013)

Objet: Mise en place d'un système d'alerte enlèvement européen

Le système «Amber Alert» est un système d'alerte en cas d'enlèvement d'enfants qui vise à diffuser largement des messages d'alerte par les stations de radio, l'internet, la télévision. Il est aussi possible pour les citoyens américains de s'inscrire à la liste de diffusion par mail, SMS.

Un système similaire est à l'état de projet pilote dans l'Union européenne: appelé «Alerte Amber Initiative pour l'Europe», il vise à mettre en place un système d'alerte transfrontalière à l'échelle européenne pour les enfants enlevés. Pour le moment, la Commission n'a publié qu'une page web consacrée aux mécanismes d'alerte en ligne qui permet aux citoyens de s'inscrire à une base de données d'alerte et de se tenir informés des disparitions d'enfants en Europe.

L'efficacité d'un tel système réside dans la généralisation de l'information, et non sur une simple base volontaire de quelques citoyens qui s'inscrivent aux alertes.

1. Pour rendre le système plus efficace, la Commission n'estime-t-elle pas que le futur système «Amber Alert» européen devrait être automatiquement diffusé?

2. Le système devrait-il être placé sous le contrôle d'Europol dans le cadre d'une véritable coopération transfrontalière?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Reding au nom de la Commission
(31 juillet 2013)

La Commission européenne souhaite attirer l'attention de l'Honorable Parlementaire sur le fait que le projet pilote «Amber Alert Europe» est une initiative privée créée avec le soutien financier du 7^e^ programme-cadre. Il ne s'agit pas d'une initiative de l'Union européenne, et ce projet n'a pas été publié sur le site officiel de l'Union européenne. En outre, il n'a pas été conçu comme un instrument de coopération officielle entre les États membres et ne peut pas être placé sous la surveillance ou la direction d'Europol.

Depuis qu'elle a publié, à la fin de l'année 2008, un document de travail décrivant les bonnes pratiques pour le déclenchement d'une alerte transfrontière en cas d'enlèvement d'enfant ([1]), la Commission européenne a cherché à promouvoir la coopération entre les États membres dans ce domaine. En outre, des fonds ont été octroyés en permanence depuis 2010, dans le cadre du programme Daphné, pour permettre la mise en place de systèmes d'alertes nationaux en cas d'enlèvement et l'amélioration de la coopération dans les affaires transfrontières. Cette coopération, notamment en termes de transmission des alertes et d'échange d'informations détaillées en temps réel, se fait actuellement par l'intermédiaire du système d'information Schengen et des bureaux nationaux Sirène.

([1]) SEC(2008)2912 final, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/funding/rights/call_10014/ramc_ag_annex_5_2008_en.pdf (en anglais). .

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005564/13
to the Commission
Philippe Boulland (PPE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Establishment of a European abduction alert system

The 'AMBER Alert' system is a child abduction alert system aimed at the wide distribution of alert messages via radio, the Internet and television. US citizens can also subscribe to updates via e-mail and text message.

A similar system is currently running as a pilot project in the European Union. Known as the 'AMBER Alert Initiative for Europe', its aim is to establish a cross-border European alert system for abducted children. So far the Commission has published only one web page with details of online alert mechanisms and how citizens can subscribe to an alert database to stay informed about cases of missing children in Europe.

In order for a system of this kind to be effective, it is important for information to be widely disseminated instead of relying on the willingness of certain citizens to subscribe to alerts.

1. In order to make the system more effective, does the Commission not believe that the future European 'Amber Alert' system should be based on the principle of automatic dissemination?

2. Should the system be placed under the aegis of Europol in order to achieve genuine cross-border cooperation?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(31 July 2013)

The European Commission would like to draw the Honourable Member's attention to the fact that the 'Amber Alert Europe' pilot project is a private initiative which was set up with financial support from the FP7 Programme. It is neither an initiative of the European Union nor has it been published on the European Union's official website. Furthermore, it is not intended as a formal cooperation instrument between Member States and cannot be placed under the oversight or management of Europol.

Since the European Commission published the 'Best practices for launching a cross-border child abduction alert' ([1]) at the end of 2008, it has sought to promote cooperation among the Member States in this field. Furthermore, funding has been provided continuously since 2010, through the Daphne programme, to set up national abduction alert systems and to enhance cooperation in cross-border cases. Such cooperation, including instant transmission of alerts and exchange of detailed information, is currently operational through the Schengen Information System and the national SIRENE bureaus.

([1]) SEC(2008)2912 final, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/funding/rights/call_10014/ramc_ag_annex_5_2008_en.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005565/13
alla Commissione
Sonia Alfano (ALDE)
(20 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Parere motivato relativo alla procedura d'infrazione n. 2010/4227 e deferimento alla Corte di Giustizia dell'Unione europea

Il 21 novembre 2012 la Commissione europea, nell'ambito della procedura d'infrazione n. 2010/4227, aperta grazie alla denuncia del signor. Marco Bazzoni, ha trasmesso al governo italiano le sue osservazioni circa il non corretto recepimento della direttiva 89/391/CEE. Il parere motivato è un documento nel quale si espone chiaramente e a titolo definitivo i motivi per i quali si ritiene che vi sia stata violazione del diritto dell'Unione e con cui si ingiunge allo Stato membro di conformarsi al diritto europeo entro un dato termine, in genere entro due mesi.

Nella risposta all'interrogazione parlamentare E-001789/2013, la Commissione comunicava che le autorità italiane avevano risposto al parere motivato in data 24 Gennaio 2013 e che la risposta era all'analisi dei servizi competenti. Nella lettera Ares(2013)1013528 del 6 maggio 2013 inviata al signor Bazzoni, i servizi della Commissione europea contemplavano l'opportunità di proporre al Collegio della Commissione, che la questione relativa al differimento dell'obbligo di presentare un documento di valutazione del rischio nel caso di imprese nuove o di cambiamenti sostanziali per le imprese esistenti vada deferita alla Corte di giustizia dell'Unione europea (CGUE).

Per l'esonero del datore di lavoro in caso di delega e subdelega, i servizi della Commissione, sulla base della risposta italiana al parere motivato, comunicavano di non disporre di esempi concreti di casi in cui questo sistema di delega e subdelega di funzioni abbia portato a una violazione della legislazione dell'UE, rivelando così l'inadeguatezza del sistema, e chiedevano al signor. Bazzoni tutte le informazioni, in particolare le decisioni dei tribunali italiani, atte ad aiutare i servizi nella valutazione della questione, invitandolo a rispondergli entro 4 settimane con nuove informazioni, tali da fargli cambiare parere. In caso contrario, questo punto della denuncia sarebbe stato chiuso.

1. Può la Commissione dire, come mai l'Italia, nonostante avesse avuto due mesi di tempo per adeguarsi al parere motivato, non l'ha fatto, ma ha inviato un'ulteriore risposta, in cui ribadiva le questioni poste con la risposta del 8 Dicembre 2011, con l'intento di fare archiviare la procedura d'infrazione?

2. Può la Commissione fornire una risposta dettagliata sul perché, nonostante il parere motivato, nonostante l'Italia non si fosse adeguata a tale parere entro 2 mesi, non ha deferito subito l'Italia alla CGUE?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(9 luglio 2013)

A norma dell'articolo 17 del trattato sull'Unione europea la Commissione ha il compito di vigilare sull'applicazione del diritto dell'Unione, sotto il controllo della Corte di giustizia dell'Unione europea.

Secondo quanto stabilito all'articolo 258 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea (TFUE) se uno Stato membro non si conforma al parere motivato emesso dalla Commissione, questa può adire la Corte di giustizia.

Il TFUE attribuisce esplicitamente alla Commissione il potere discrezionale di adire la Corte. Tale interpretazione trova conferma nella giurisprudenza costante della Corte. Ad esempio, nella causa 247/87 ([1]) la Corte ha ritenuto che:

Infatti solo se ritiene che lo Stato membro sia venuto meno ad uno degli obblighi che gli incombono la Commissione emette un parere motivato. Inoltre, nell'ipotesi in cui lo Stato non si conformi a detto parere nel termine prescritto, l'istituzione ha comunque il potere, ma non l'obbligo, di adire la Corte onde far accertare la presunta inosservanza.

L'obiettivo della Commissione in un procedimento per infrazione consiste nel vigilare sull'applicazione del diritto dell'Unione. Tale obiettivo può essere conseguito in vari modi, dei quali adire la Corte è solo uno. Tale rinvio non è fine a se stesso.

([1]) Causa 247/87 Star Fruit Company SA/Commissione [1989] ECR 291.

La Commissione sta proseguendo i lavori sul procedimento per infrazione 2010/4227. In seguito all'analisi della risposta al parere motivato fornito dall'Italia il denunciante all'origine di tale procedimento per infrazione è stato in particolare informato in merito ad alcuni aspetti delle argomentazioni legali formulate dalle autorità italiane. Il suddetto denunciante ha quindi fornito nuovi elementi che sono attualmente oggetto di analisi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005565/13
to the Commission
Sonia Alfano (ALDE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Reasoned opinion on infringement procedure No 2010/4227 and referral to the European Court of Justice

In the context of infringement procedure No 2010/4227, initiated as a result of a complaint from Mr Marco Bazzoni, on 21 November 2012 the Commission sent the Italian Government, in the form of a reasoned opinion, its observations concerning the failure to implement Directive 89/391/EEC correctly. A reasoned opinion is a document which sets out, clearly and definitively, the reasons why the Commission believes there has been a breach of EC law, and it contains an instruction to Member States to comply with EC law by a given deadline, which is generally set at two months.

In the Commission's answer to Written Question E-001789/2013 it stated that the Italian authorities had replied to the reasoned opinion on 24 January 2013 and that their reply was being evaluated by the relevant department. In letter Ares(2013)1013528 of 6 May 2013, forwarded to Mr Bazzoni, the Commission department suggested that the College of Commissioners might be asked to refer to the European Court of Justice (CJEU) the issue of deferring the deadline for complying with the requirement to submit a risk assessment in connection with the establishment of new businesses or in the event of significant changes to existing businesses.

As regards the release of the employer from his responsibilities in the event of delegation or sub-delegation of work, on the basis of the Italian response to the reasoned opinion the Commission stated that it did not have concrete examples of cases where this arrangement had led to a breach of EC law and thus provided evidence of the inadequacy of the arrangements. The Commission asked Mr Bazzoni to supply all the relevant information, in particular the Italian court rulings, in order to help the competent department assess the issues involved. The Commission requested that he reply within four weeks submitting new information such as to make the department change its mind, otherwise that aspect of the complaint would be declared closed.

1. Can the Commission say why Italy, despite having had two months to meet the requirements set out in the reasoned opinion, failed to do so and instead sent another reply reiterating the problems set out in its reply of 8 December 2011 with the intention of securing the closure of the infringement procedure?

2. Can the Commission explain in detail why it did not refer Italy immediately to the CJEU, even though it issued a reasoned opinion and even though Italy failed to meet the requirements set out therein within two months?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

Under Article 17 of the Treaty on the European Union, the Commission is entrusted with overseeing the application of Union law under the control of the Court of Justice of the European Union.

In accordance with Article 258 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), if a Member State does not comply with the reasoned opinion delivered by the Commission, the latter may bring the matter before the Court of Justice.

The TFEU clearly gives the Commission discretionary power in bringing cases before the Court. This interpretation is supported by the Court's constant case law. For example, in Case 247/87 ([1]) the Court took the view that:

It is only if it considers that the Member State in question has failed to fulfil one of its obligations that the Commission delivers a reasoned opinion. Furthermore, in the event that the State does not comply with the opinion within the period allowed, the institution has in any event the right, but not the duty, to apply to the Court of Justice for a declaration that the alleged breach of obligations has occurred.

The Commission's aim in an infringement procedure is to oversee the application of Union law. That aim can be achieved in several ways, only one of which involves referring the matter to the Court. Such referral is not an aim in itself.

([1]) Case 247/87 *Star Fruit Company SA* v *Commission* [1989] ECR 291.

The Commission is continuing its work on infringement procedure 2010/4227. In particular, further to the analysis of the reply to the reasoned opinion provided by Italy, the complainant at the basis of this infringement proceeding, was informed about some aspects of the legal argumentation put forward by the Italian authorities. As a result, the mentioned complainant submitted new elements which are currently subject to analysis.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005566/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(20 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Utilizzo dei Fondi strutturali europei: aggiornamenti

Nella risposta alla mia interrogazione E-005489/2012 su «Utilizzo dei Fondi strutturali europei», la Commissione affermava che, in data 1 giugno 2012, a favore dell'Italia erano stati stanziati 28,7 miliardi di euro in Fondi strutturali per il periodo di programmazione 2007-2013 e che ne erano stati spesi solamente 7.

Rimandava inoltre, per la consultazione sui livelli di spesa dei programmi regionali italiani, al sito della Ragioneria Generale dello Stato, alla sezione «Monitoraggio interventi comunitari programmazione 2007-2013».

Considerando che il sito in questione non è più aggiornato dal giugno 2012, può la Commissione indicare:

— Qual è l'ammontare complessivo dei Fondi strutturali impiegati dal sistema Italia alla data della risposta alla presente interrogazione?

— Qual è l'ammontare dei Fondi strutturali erogati per ogni singola Regione alla data della risposta alla presente interrogazione?

— Sono stati erogati fondi europei per la creazione e il mantenimento del sito indicato e, in caso affermativo, come spiega il venir meno del servizio per il cittadino italiano?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(12 luglio 2013)

Le informazioni richieste sono ora disponibili sul portale «OpenCoesione» del nuovo sito web www.opencoesione.it, che sostituisce il sito menzionato dall'onorevole parlamentare. Il nuovo portale, presentato al Parlamento il 14 ottobre 2012, presenta i dati forniti dal sistema di monitoraggio (MonitWeb) dei programmi italiani finanziati dal Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale e dal Fondo sociale europeo gestito dal Ministero dell'Economia e delle Finanze dello Stato italiano (MEF-RGS-IGRUE).

Il portale in questione, basato sul modello «open data», permette al pubblico di accedere direttamente allo stato di avanzamento di qualsiasi progetto o programma.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005566/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Use of European Structural Funds: updates

In its answer to my question E-005489/2012 on the 'Use of European Structural Funds', the Commission stated that, on 1 June 2012, Italy was allocated EUR 28.7 billion of structural funding for the 2007-2013 programming period and that only EUR 7 billion had been spent.

Moreover, in order to view the spending levels of all Italian regional programmes, the Commission referred me to the 'Monitoring of EU measures for the 2007-2013 programming period' section of the State General Accounting Department's website.

Since the website in question has not been updated since June 2012, can the Commission indicate:

— the total amount of Structural Funds used by Italy as of the date of the answer to this question;

— the amount of Structural Funds allocated to each region as of the date of the answer to this question;

— whether EU funds were allocated for the creation and maintenance of the aforementioned website, and if so, can it explain why this service for Italian citizens has not been updated?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par M. Hahn au nom de la Commission
(12 juillet 2013)

Les informations demandées sont maintenant disponibles sur le portail «OpenCoesione», du nouveau site web www.opencoesione.it qui remplace le site mentionné par l'Honorable Parlementaire. Ce portail, qui a été présenté au Parlement le 14 octobre 2012, reprend les données fournies par le systéme de monitorage (MonitWeb) des programmes italiens financés au titre du Fonds européen de développement régional et du Fonds social européen géré par le ministère italien de l'économie et des finances (MEF-RGS-IGRUE).

Le portail, qui est basé sur le modèle «open data», permet au public d'accéder directement à l'état d'avancement de chaque projet et programme.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-005567/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(20 Μαΐου 2013)

Θέμα: Έλλειψη ανθρώπινου δυναμικού στην παροχή μακροχρόνιας φροντίδας — Αξιολόγηση σχεδιασμού

Σύμφωνα με στοιχεία ([1]) της Allianz περισσότερα από 50 εκατομμύρια πολίτες της ΕΕ θα χρίζουν μακροχρόνιας φροντίδας το 2060, όπου ο αριθμός των ατόμων με ηλικία μεγαλύτερη των 65 αναμένεται να ανέλθει σε 152 εκατομμύρια. Την ίδια στιγμή, σύμφωνα με έκθεση ([2]) της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής υπολογίζεται πως θα υπάρξει δυναμικό έλλειμμα 2 εκατομμυρίων εργαζομένων στην υγεία μέχρι το 2020, αν συμπεριληφθούν και τα επαγγέλματα που σχετίζονται με τη μακροχρόνια φροντίδα, ενώ, μόνο σε επίπεδο νοσηλευτών, το έλλειμμα υπολογίζεται σε 590 000 εργαζόμενους με αποτέλεσμα να μην καλύπτεται το 14% των συνολικών υπηρεσιών. Δεδομένου ότι υφίστανται ήδη πρωτοβουλίες ([3]) και προετοιμασία για την κάλυψη αναγκών σε επίπεδο δεξιοτήτων, καινοτόμων τρόπων κατάρτισης και εκπαίδευσης αλλά και των κατευθύνσεων για το χώρο της υγείας για την περίοδο 2014-2020 ([4]) σχετικά με την αντιμετώπιση των ελλείψεων σε ανθρώπινο δυναμικό, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Σε ποια κράτη μέλη εντοπίζονται στην παρούσα φάση οι μεγαλύτερες ελλείψεις ανθρώπινου δυναμικού στο χώρο της μακροχρόνιας φροντίδας;

2. Θεωρεί ότι ο σχεδιασμός, ενόψει της νέας περιόδου που επικεντρώνεται κυρίως στον προγραμματισμό, την κινητικότητα, τη μετανάστευση και στην ανάπτυξη ικανοτήτων, μπορεί να καλύψει επαρκώς το βασικό ζητούμενο που είναι η προσέλκυση νέων επαγγελματιών στο χώρο της μακροχρόνιας φροντίδας; Ποιες συγκεκριμένες δράσεις έχουν προβλεφθεί προς αυτή την κατεύθυνση;

3. Διαθέτει στοιχεία για διεθνείς βέλτιστες πρακτικές όσον αφορά την ενίσχυση της προσφοράς ανθρώπινου δυναμικού σε ένα τέτοιο τομέα;

Απάντηση του κ. Borg εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(15 Ιουλίου 2013)

1. Δεν υπάρχουν αρκετά συγκρίσιμα ευρωπαϊκά δεδομένα για να εκτιμηθούν οι ελλείψεις σε ανθρώπινους πόρους στον τομέα της μακροχρόνιας φροντίδας, γεγονός που εν μέρει οφείλεται στην έλλειψη σαφούς καθορισμού του προσωπικού φροντίδας, που καλύπτει νοσηλευτικό προσωπικό και προσωπικούς φροντιστές, και επίσης στην έλλειψη ενημέρωσης για τον μεγάλο αριθμό άτυπων φροντιστών που παρέχουν υπηρεσίες μακροχρόνιας φροντίδας. Σύμφωνα με στοιχεία του ΟΟΣΑ ([5]), λιγότερο από το 5% του συνόλου των εργαζομένων στον τομέα της υγείας απασχολούνται στον τομέα της φροντίδας στην Ουγγαρία, στη Σλοβενία, στην Αυστρία, στην Εσθονία και στην Τσεχική Δημοκρατία, σε αντίθεση με 10% στη Δανία και 9% στη Σουηδία.

2. Δεν έχει προγραμματιστεί καμία ειδική δράση σε επίπεδο ΕΕ για την προσέλκυση νέων επαγγελματιών στον τομέα της μακροχρόνιας φροντίδας. Ωστόσο, το σχέδιο δράσης της ΕΕ για το εργατικό δυναμικό στον τομέα της υγείας ([6]), που φιλοδοξεί να συμβάλει στην αντιμετώπιση των προβλημάτων που αντιμετωπίζει ο τομέας της υγείας στην ΕΕ και να δώσει ώθηση στην απασχόληση, περιλαμβάνει δύο σχετικές δράσεις για τον τομέα μακροπρόθεσμης φροντίδας: πρώτον, μια ευρωπαϊκή μελέτη χαρτογράφησης καινοτόμων στρατηγικών των κρατών μελών για την πρόσληψη και την παραμονή σε επαγγέλματα του τομέα της υγείας ([7]), συμπεριλαμβανομένου του νοσηλευτικού προσωπικού φροντίδας. Δεύτερον, μια μελέτη σκοπιμότητας για την δημιουργία ενός τομεακού συμβουλίου δεξιοτήτων στον τομέα της νοσηλείας και της φροντίδας που διενεργήθηκε με τη χρηματοδοτική στήριξη της ΕΕ ([8]).

([1]) https://www.allianz.com/en/press/news/business/asset_management/news_2013-05-08.html
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/workforce/docs/staff_working_doc_healthcare_workforce_en.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/workforce/policy/skills/index_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/docs/prop_prog2014_en.pdf
([5]) Βάση δεδομένων του ΟΟΣΑ για το 2008.
([6]) Το έγγραφο εργασίας των υπηρεσιών της Επιτροπής SWD(2002)93 τελικό, της18ης Απριλίου 2012, αποτελεί μέρος της δέσμης μέτρων για την απασχόληση, που διατίθεται στη διεύθυνση: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/andor/headlines/news/2012/04/20120418_en.htm
([7]) Πρόσκληση υποβολής προσφορών each/2013/07 όσον αφορά αποτελεσματικές στρατηγικές πρόσληψης και παραμονής για τους εργαζομένους στον τομέα της υγείας, η οποία είναι διαθέσιμη στη διεύθυνση http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/health/tenders_h08_2013.html
([8]) Μελέτη σκοπιμότητας για το εργατικό δυναμικό στον τομέα της νοσηλείας και της φροντίδας· http://www.skillsfornursingandcare.eu./

3. Μελέτη του ΟΟΣΑ ([9]), που συγχρηματοδοτήθηκε από την Επιτροπή, παρέχει μια διεθνή επισκόπηση των στρατηγικών για την προσαρμογή της παροχής προσωπικού μακροχρόνιας φροντίδας στην αυξανόμενη ζήτηση και περιλαμβάνει πληροφορίες σχετικά με χώρες του ΟΟΣΑ που έχουν αναπτύξει ειδικά προγράμματα κατάρτισης για να προσελκύσουν εργαζομένους στον τομέα της μακροχρόνιας φροντίδας.

([9]) Έγγραφα εργασίας του ΟΟΣΑ αριθ. 44 σχετικά με το εργατικό δυναμικό μακροχρόνιας φροντίδας: Επισκόπηση και στρατηγικές για την προσαρμογή της προσφοράς στην αυξανόμενη ζήτηση, 17 Μαρτίου 2009.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005567/13
to the Commission
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Shortage of human resources for long-term care/planning evaluation

According to information from Allianz ([1]), over 50 million EU citizens will be reliant on long-term care by 2060, at which point there are expected to be 152 million people over 65 years old. At the same time, according to a European Commission report ([2]), there is expected to be a shortfall of 2 million healthcare workers by 2020, including long-term carers. There is expected to be a shortfall of 590 000 nurses, meaning that 14% of care required will not be covered. Given that initiatives have already been taken ([3]) and preparations are being made to meet requirements in terms of skills, innovative training and education methods and action in the health sector for 2014-2020 ([4]), in order to address the shortage of human resources, will the Commission say:

1. Which Member States have the largest shortfall in human resources in the long-term care sector?

2. Does it consider that planning in the run-up to the new period, which focuses mainly on programming, mobility, immigration and the skill development, can adequately address the basic problem, which is to attract new professionals to the long-term care sector? What specific action has been planned in this direction?

3. Does it have information on international best practices to improve the supply of human resources in such sectors?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

1. There is a lack of comparable European data to estimate shortfalls in human resources in the long-term care sector, partly due to the challenge of defining care personnel, which covers nursing and personal carers, and also the lack of information on the high number of informal carers who provide long-term care. According to OECD data ([5]), less than 5% of all health workers were employed in the care sector in Hungary, Slovenia, Austria, Estonia and the Czech Republic, in contrast to 10% in Denmark and 9% in Sweden.

2. There is no specific EU-level action planned to attract new professionals to the long-term care sector. However, the EU Action Plan for the Health Workforce ([6]), which aims to help tackle the challenges facing the EU healthcare sector and to boost jobs, includes two relevant actions for the long term care sector: first, a European study mapping Member States' innovative strategies to recruit and retain people in the health professions ([7]), including nursing care personnel. Secondly, a feasibility study for the establishment of an EU sector skills council in the area of nursing and care was carried out with the financial support of the EU ([8]).

3. An OECD study ([9]), co-funded by the Commission, provides an international overview of strategies to adapt the supply of the long-term care health workforce to growing demand and includes information on OECD countries which have developed specific training programmes to attract long-term care workers.

([1]) https://www.allianz.com/en/press/news/business/asset_management/news_2013-05-08.html
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/workforce/docs/staff_working_doc_healthcare_workforce_en.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/workforce/policy/skills/index_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/docs/prop_prog2014_en.pdf
([5]) OECD Health Database 2008.
([6]) Commission Staff Working Document SWD(2012) 93 final of 18 April 2012 is part of the Employment Package, which is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/andor/headlines/news/2012/04/20120418_en.htm
([7]) Call for Tender EACH/2013/07 concerning Effective Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Health Workers, which is available at http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/health/tenders_H08_2013.html
([8]) Feasibility study for the nursing and care workforce; http://www.skillsfornursingandcare.eu/
([9]) OECD Health Working Papers No 44 on The Long Term Care Workforce: Overview and Strategies to Adapt Supply to a Growing Demand, 17 March 2009.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-005568/13
komissiolle
Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)
(20. toukokuuta 2013)

Aihe: Komission alaisen e-Prior-ryhmän toiminta

Komission alaisuuteen perustettu e-Prior-ryhmä kutsui vuonna 2012 yhdessä PricewaterhouseCoopers -tilintarkastusyhteisön (PwC) kanssa yksityisiä sähköisen hankinnan alan toimijoita osallistumaan hankkeeseen nimeltä ”Sähköisen hankinnan hyvien käytäntöjen kultainen kirja”. Toimijoille kerrottiin, että kyseisen hankkeen tavoitteena oli koota yhteen Euroopan julkisten hankintojen parhaat käytännöt. Osallistuville yrityksille, jotka olivat pääosin pk-yrityksiä, taattiin, että kaikkea tietoa käsiteltäisiin luottamuksellisesti eikä sitä käytettäisi väärin tai luovutettaisi muille.

Maaliskuussa 2013 PwC kuitenkin esitteli Euroopan laajuista sähköistä hankintamenettelyjärjestelmää (eTendering) koskevan etenemissuunnitelman yhteistyössä e-Prior-ryhmän kanssa. Kävi ilmi, että kyseinen järjestelmä perustui kokonaan pienehköjen sähköisen hankinnan alan yritysten kehittämiin toimintatapoihin, jotka kyseiset yritykset olivat aiemmin luottamuksellisesti paljastaneet PwC:lle ja e-Prior-ryhmälle. Julkisuuteen kerrottiin, että uuteen järjestelmään kuuluisi kaikkiaan 24 parasta käytäntöä, jotka PwC oli kerännyt markkinoilla olevien järjestelmien joukosta. Kyseisen uuden järjestelmän kehittäisi e-Prior-ryhmä, neuvonantajanaan PwC, ja kehittäjinä olisivat samat henkilöt, joilla oli aiemmin pääsy sähköisiltä hankintayrityksiltä kerättyyn luottamukselliseen tietoon.

— Oliko tiedonkeruun alkuperäisenä tarkoituksena käyttää saatua tietoa Kultaisen kirjan laatimisen lisäksi myös eTendering-järjestelmän rakentamisessa? Miksi komission e-Prior-ryhmä ei tässä tapauksessa selkeästi kertonut tästä hankkeeseen osallistuneille yrityksille?

— Katsooko komissio, että e-Prior-ryhmän ja PwC:n toiminta on tässä tapauksessa ollut oikeudenmukaista ja laillista, kun otetaan huomioon, että ne ovat käyttäneet väärin luottamuksellista tietoa muun muassa kaupallisiin tarkoituksiin?

— Katsooko komissio, että muiden edellä mainittuihin hankkeisiin osallistuneiden yritysten, joista suurin osa on pk-yrityksiä, tekijänoikeudet on asianmukaisesti turvattu?

— Havaitseeko komissio minkäänlaista ristiriitaa siinä, että sen rahoittaman eTendering-alustan kehittämisestä vastaa yritys, joka on käyttänyt väärin luottamuksellista tietoa?

Michel Barnier’n komission puolesta antama vastaus
(15. heinäkuuta 2013)

Komissio kutsui vuonna 2012 yhdessä PwC:n ([1]) kanssa sähköisiin hankintamenettelyihin liittyviä palveluntarjoajia osallistumaan hankkeeseen ”Sähköisen hankinnan hyvien käytäntöjen kultainen kirja”. Hankkeen tavoitteena oli esittää erilaisia hyviä toimintatapoja kaikille markkinatoimijoille Euroopan sähköisten hankintojen julkisen sektorin toiminnan kasvattamiseksi. Osallistuville tahoille ilmoitettiin, että ”kultainen kirja” julkaistaisiin, jotta siitä olisi etua laajemmin, tuomatta esiin mitään tahoa erikseen (kaikki tiedot kerättiin nimettöminä), ja että konsulttiyritys käsittelisi kaikkia luottamuksellisia tietoja asianmukaisesti.

e-Prior-hanke käynnistyi vuonna 2007, ja PwC on yksi monista hankkeeseen osallistuvista sopimuspuolista liityttyään hankkeeseen tänä vuonna. e-Prior-järjestelmää kehitetään avoimen lisenssijärjestelmän mukaisesti, jotta kaikki jäsenvaltioiden viranomaiset voivat käyttää sitä perustana luodessaan omaa räätälöityä järjestelmäänsä. Tavoitteena on alentaa kustannuksia siirryttäessä sähköisiin julkisiin hankintoihin kaikkialla EU:ssa. Muiden järjestelmien tavoin e-Prior-järjestelmän eritelmiä voidaan tarkistaa, jotta varmistetaan, että ne ovat kultaisen kirjan suositusten mukaiset. e-Prior ei ole pakollinen EU:n laajuinen sähköinen tarjousjärjestelmä, koska markkinoilla on saatavilla monia muita järjestelmiä.

PwC on tehnyt hyväksytyn tarjouksen näistä kahdesta sopimuksesta komission kanssa. PwC:tä sitoo kultainen kirja -hankkeen luottamuksellisuuslauseke, eikä komission tiedossa ole, että PwC olisi kerännyt tai paljastanut mitään kaupallisesti arkaluonteista tietoa, minkä kultainen kirja -hankkeeseen osallistuneet tahot olisivat väitteen mukaan vapaaehtoisesti paljastaneet. Arvoisan parlamentin jäsenen kysymyksen seurauksena komissio kuitenkin selvittää PwC:ltä, että se on noudattanut asianmukaisesti luottamuksellisuuslauseketta.

([1]) PricewaterhouseCoopers.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005568/13
to the Commission
Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Actions of e-Prior group within the Commission

In 2012 the e-Prior group set up within the Commission, together with the audit firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), invited private e-procurement suppliers to participate in a project called the 'Golden Book of e-Procurement Good Practice'. The goal of this project, as communicated to suppliers, was to create a set of best practices for European public sector procurement. The participant companies (mainly SMEs) were given a guarantee that all information would be treated in confidentiality and would not be misused or shared.

However, in March 2013 PwC, in cooperation with the e-Prior group, presented a roadmap for a Europe-wide eTendering system. It turned out that this system was built entirely on features which smaller e-procurement companies had developed and had earlier made available to PwC and the e-Prior group on a basis of confidentiality. The audience was told that the new system would include all of the 24 best practices which PwC had gathered from the existing systems on the market. This new system was to be developed by the e-Prior group, with PwC acting in an advisory role, and by the same people who had earlier had access to the confidential information of e-procurement companies.

— Was the original purpose of the information-gathering to use this information not only to create the Golden Book but also subsequently in the creation of the eTendering system? If so, why did the Commission's e-Prior group not clearly inform the participant companies of this?

— Does the Commission consider the practices of the e-Prior group and PwC to be fair and legal in this case, given that they have misused confidential information, including for commercial purposes?

— Does the Commission consider that the property rights of the other companies, most of them SMEs, involved in the abovementioned projects have been properly safeguarded?

— Does the Commission see any contradiction in funding the development of an eTendering platform operated by a company that has misused confidential information?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

In 2012 the Commission, together with PwC ([1]) invited e-procurement service providers to participate in a project called the 'Golden Book of e-Procurement Good Practice'. The goal of this project was to set out a range of best practices for all market participants in order to stimulate the growth of European public sector of e-procurement. The participating platforms were informed that the Golden Book would be published for the benefit of the wider public, without endorsing any specific platform (all the information collected has been made anonymous) and any confidential information treated with due confidence by the consultant.

The e-Prior project started in 2007 and PwC is one of the many contractors taking part in it since the company joined the project this year. The e-Prior system is built under an open license scheme to enable any interested authorities in Member States to use it as a basis for creating their own customised system. The objective is to lower the cost of e-procurement adoption across the EU. Like any other platform, e-Prior system specifications could be reviewed to ensure compliance with the Golden Book recommendations. E-Prior is not an obligatory EU-wide e-tendering system, as a large range of other systems are available on the market.

PwC has been the successful bidder for these two contracts with the Commission. PwC is bound by a confidentiality clause in the Golden Book project and the Commission is not aware of PwC collecting or disclosing any commercially sensitive information, which are alleged to have been voluntarily revealed by the participants to the Golden Book project. However, following the question from the Honourable Member, the Commission will inquire with PwC whether the confidentiality clause had been duly kept.

([1]) PricewaterhouseCoopers.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-005569/13
a Bizottság számára
Tabajdi Csaba Sándor (S&D), Göncz Kinga (S&D) és Herczog Edit (S&D)
(2013. május 20.)

Tárgy: Szélsőjobboldali erőszak Ukrajnában

A szélsőjobboldali ukrajnai Szvoboda (Szabadság) párt a 2012-es ukrajnai parlamenti választáson parlamenti erővé vált, ami azzal fenyeget, hogy elfogadottá válnak Ukrajnában a szélsőséges, idegengyűlölő, kisebbségellenes, antiszemita eszmék és jelszavak. A párt elnöke „moszkvai zsidó maffiáról" beszélt, a párt egyik képviselője pedig gyűlöletkeltően nyilatkozott egy ukrán zsidó származású amerikai színésznőről. A Szvoboda párt politikusai a kampány alatt több alkalommal tettek antiszemita kijelentéseket és tartottak megfélemlítő, idegengyűlölő és antiszemita felvonulásokat is Nyugat-Ukrajnában.

Vélhetően szintén a Szvoboda párthoz köthető ukrán nacionalisták március 15-én két magyarországi kirándulócsoportra támadtak rá Ungváron – melyek zömét kiskorú gyerekek alkották –, és becsmérlő szavak mellett letépték róluk a magyar nemzeti ünnep tiszteletére viselt kokárdákat. A párt szintén márciusban Beregszászon megfélemlítő célú fáklyás felvonulást tartott a magyar kisebbség ellen, és határozottan fellépett a helyi magyar nyelvű kisebbségi oktatás ellen is.

Az Európai Unió és Ukrajna között tárgyalások folynak a vízumliberalizációról, illetve a szabadkereskedelmi megállapodásról. Az EU az elmúlt két évben többször figyelmeztette Ukrajnát, hogy Julia Tyimosenko ellenzéki vezető bebörtönzése sérti a jogállamiság alapelveit. Többször megfogalmazta, hogy a szabadkereskedelmi megállapodás megkötésének feltétele az emberi jogok tiszteletben tartása.

Mindezt figyelembe véve tervezi-e a Bizottság, hogy figyelmezteti Ukrajnát: elfogadhatatlanok a szélsőjobboldali felvonulások és a kisebbségek tagjai ellen elkövetett erőszakos cselekmények?

Figyelmeztetni kívánja-e a Bizottság az ukrán vezetést arra, hogy a szélsőségek térnyerése negatívan befolyásolhatja Ukrajna közeledését az Európai Unióhoz?

Milyen eszközökkel kívánja a Bizottság biztosítani, hogy Ukrajnában tiszteletben tartsák a kisebbségek, így a magyar közösség jogait?

Catherine Ashton főképviselő/alelnök válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2013. július 8.)

Az EU politikai társulásra és gazdasági integrációra irányuló elkötelezettsége Ukrajna iránt a közös értékek tiszteletben tartásán alapul.

Ebben az összefüggésben a Bizottság szolgálatai és az Európai Külügyi Szolgálat (EKSZ) megkülönböztetés elleni tevékenységének alapja az Európai Unió Alapjogi Chartájának 21. cikke, amely tilt bármilyen – többek között az etnikai vagy társadalmi csoporthoz tartozás és a nemzetiség alapján történő – megkülönböztetést. A cél az ukrán kormány támogatása az európai standardoknak megfelelő átfogó jogi keret kidolgozásában, valamint a reformintézkedések megfelelő végrehajtásának nyomon követése.

A gyűlölet-bűncselekmények állandó jelleggel szerepelnek az Ukrajnával folytatott, megkülönböztetésmentességről szóló tárgyalások napirendjén. A Bizottság szolgálatai és az EKSZ minden kommunikációs csatornát felhasználnak ahhoz, hogy közvetítsék az ukrán kormány felé azt, hogy a megkülönböztetésnek vagy a gyűlölet-bűncselekményeknek kitett személyekkel szembeni erőszakra vonatkozó valamennyi állítást gyorsan és hatékonyan ki kell vizsgálni, és az ilyen erőszakos cselekmények elkövetőit az igazságszolgáltatás elé kell állítani. Mind a nyilvános nyilatkozatokon, mind az EU kijevi küldöttségének munkáján keresztül az Unió továbbra is határozott üzeneteket küld az ukrán hatóságoknak arról, hogy bármilyen megkülönböztetés ellentétben áll Ukrajna EU-val kapcsolatos reformterveivel.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005569/13
to the Commission
Csaba Sándor Tabajdi (S&D), Kinga Göncz (S&D) and Edit Herczog (S&D)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Far-right violence in Ukraine

In the 2012 parliamentary elections in Ukraine, members of the far-right Ukrainian Freedom Party were elected to the national parliament, the effect of which is a sanctioning of ideas and slogans which are extreme, xenophobic, anti-minority and anti-Semitic. The party's leader has talked about the 'Moscow Jewish mafia', and one of its MPs made a statement about an American actress of Ukrainian-Jewish descent which was liable to incite hatred. A number of times during the campaign, party members made anti-Semitic comments and held demonstrations in western Ukraine which were intimidatory, xenophobic and anti-Semitic.

On 15 March, Ukrainian nationalists, presumably also connected to Svoboda, attacked two groups of Hungarians — made up mainly of young children — who were hiking in Ungvár and, using abusive language, tore off the cockades they were wearing to mark the Hungarian national day. Also in March, the party held a torchlight procession in Beregszász aimed at intimidating the Hungarian minority and has spoken out strongly against the teaching of the Hungarian minority in the area in their own language.

Negotiations are under way between the EU and Ukraine on visa liberalisation and a free trade agreement. Several times during the past two years the EU has warned Ukraine that the imprisonment of opposition leader Yulia Tymoshenko is in breach of the fundamental principles of the rule of law. It has repeatedly stated that the conclusion of a free trade agreement is conditional on respect for human rights.

In light of the above, does the Commission intend to warn Ukraine that demonstrations by far-right groups and violence against members of minorities are unacceptable?

Does it intend to warn the Ukrainian leadership that the rise of extreme groups may have a negative impact on Ukraine's association with the EU?

What means does the Commission intend to use in order to ensure that the rights of minorities in Ukraine, and in particular those of the Hungarian minority, are respected?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

The EU's engagement with Ukraine towards political association and economic integration is based on the respect for common values.

In this context, the Commission services and the European External Action Service (EEAS) base their work of promoting anti-discrimination on Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union which prohibits discrimination on any grounds, including ethnic or social group and nationality. The aim is to help the Ukrainian Government develop a comprehensive legislative framework in line with European standards as well as to monitor the appropriate implementation of the reform measures taken.

In the framework of the discussions with Ukraine on anti-discrimination, hate crimes are constantly part of the agenda. The Commission services and the EEAS use all channels of communication with the Ukrainian authorities to convey the message that all allegations of use of violence against people that are subject to discrimination actions or hate crimes must be promptly and effectively investigated and that the perpetrators of such violence should be brought to justice. Through public statements, but also through the work done by the EU Delegation in Kyiv, the EU furthermore continues to pass strong messages to the Ukrainian authorities that discrimination on any grounds is against Ukraine's EU-related reforms agenda.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005570/13
ao Conselho
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Lei europeia das sementes

Considerando que:

— Foi discutida recentemente uma proposta de regulamento pelos comissários europeus, que prevê a obrigação de registo de todas as variedades de sementes que possam trocar de mãos, mesmo que cedidas a título gratuito;

— Tal proposta trará custos e processos administrativos impeditivos para a maioria dos agricultores que usam sementes próprias, horticultores, associações de preservação de sementes tradicionais e pequenas empresas de produção de sementes;

— A maioria dos agricultores diz que o referido regulamento discrimina «severamente as sementes e o material de propagação de plantas de polinização aberta, regionais e tradicionais, a favor das sementes industriais e dos operadores corporativos», pelo que há um risco de inviabilizar «os sistemas informais de troca e venda de sementes, que são a base da segurança alimentar, nomeadamente em países em desenvolvimento»;

— Várias associações do setor referem que esta proposta representa um ataque aos agricultores e à «herança biocultural comum», pondo em causa «a maioria das dezenas de milhares de variedades locais de plantas de cultivo, selecionadas e adaptadas por agricultores durante milénios»;

Pergunto ao Conselho:

1. Em que ponto se encontra a referida situação?

2. Não considera que, no caso de ser aprovada a proposta de regulamento, iremos incorrer num claro retrocesso em termos de agro-biodiversidade, segurança alimentar e autossuficiência dos países da UE?

3. Faz sentido um regulamento que beneficiará apenas algumas empresas multinacionais do setor?

Resposta
(11 de setembro de 2013)

Em 6 de maio de 2013, a Comissão adotou um conjunto de propostas ([1])referentes a um pacote legislativo com vista a modernizar o quadro legislativo para a organização de controlos oficiais e o acervo em matéria de saúde animal, fitossanidade e material de reprodução vegetal, a fim de reforçar a segurança da cadeia agroalimentar.

Como parte deste pacote, foi enviada ao Conselho em 6 de maio de 2013 a proposta de regulamento do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho relativo à produção e à disponibilização no mercado de material de reprodução vegetal (legislação aplicável ao material de reprodução vegetal) ([2]). O quadro legislativo do material de reprodução vegetal baseia--se no artigo 43.° do Tratado sobre o Funcionamento da União Europeia (TFUE). O Parlamento Europeu será colegislador, nos termos do processo legislativo ordinário.

O Conselho iniciou recentemente os seus debates, não tendo ainda adotado posição.

([1]) 9459/13, 9464/13, 9468/13, 9574/13, 9527/13.
([2]) 9527/13.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005570/13
to the Council
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: European seed law

In view of the following:

— the fact that the Commission has recently discussed a proposal for a regulation making it mandatory to register all seed varieties that may change hands, even if given away for free;

— the fact that this proposal will entail administrative costs and processes that are prohibitive for farmers who use their own seeds, as well as gardeners, associations for preserving traditional seeds and small seed production companies;

— the fact that the majority of farmers say that the aforementioned regulation discriminates severely against the seeds and propagating material of regional and traditional open-pollinated plants in favour of industrial seeds and corporate operators, and that this risks rendering unviable informal systems for exchanging and selling seeds, which are the basis of food security, particularly in developing countries;

— the fact that several farmers' organisations say that this proposal represents an attack on farmers and shared biological heritage, jeopardising the majority of the tens of thousands of local crop varieties, selected and adapted by farmers over millennia.

Can the Council state:

1. What stage has this situation reached?

2. Does it not take the view that, if this proposal for a regulation is adopted, we will take a clear step backwards in terms of the Member States' agrobiodiversity, food security and self-sufficiency?

3. Does a regulation that will only benefit a few agricultural multinationals make sense?

Reply
(11 September 2013)

On 6 May 2013, the Commission adopted a set of proposals ([1]) concerning a legislative package of reforms with a view to modernising the legal framework governing official controls and animal and plant health and plant reproductive material for a safer food chain.

As part of this package, the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the production and making available on the market of plant reproductive material (plant reproductive material law) ([2]) was forwarded to the Council on 6th May 2013. The legislative framework for plant reproductive material legislation is based on Article 43 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The European Parliament will be co-legislator under the ordinary legislative procedure.

The Council has just commenced discussions and has not yet adopted its position.

([1]) 9459/13, 9464/13, 9468/13, 9574/13, 9527/13.
([2]) 9574/13.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005571/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(20 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Por qué no: «Programa Goethe»

El pasado día 7 de mayo recibí la respuesta a mi pregunta «De Erasmus a Goethe» relativa a facilitar el turismo de las personas jubiladas (E-002848/2013). Me ha alegrado conocer la existencia de esos programas de «Turismo Senior» y, ya he buscado más información de otros anteriores como «Calypso». Sin embargo, quisiera conocer más detalles que sin duda me podrá facilitar la Comisión.

1) ¿Me podría indicar la cuantía que, por ejemplo, han aportado las instituciones europeas en el último año a ese programa de «Turismo Senior»?

2) ¿No cree que podría abrirse a personas de todos los países europeos y no sólo a los nacionales de Bulgaria, Eslovaquia, Lituania, Polonia, República Checa y Rumania, como recoge la convocatoria que he leído en las páginas web «europeseniorturism.eu»?

3) Y me permito insistir ¿por qué no bautizar ese programa con el nombre de Goethe, incansable viajero por Europa?

Respuesta del Sr. Tajani en nombre de la Comisión
(31 de julio de 2013)

Es importante aclarar que el programa «Europe Senior Tourism» ([1]) al que hace referencia Su Señoría no es una iniciativa de la Comisión, sino que se trata de un proyecto español que promueve el turismo en temporada baja ofreciendo a los ciudadanos europeos de más de cincuenta y cinco años la posibilidad de pasar sus vacaciones en España en fechas que no coincidan con la temporada turística alta.

Aprovechando el programa español, así como la iniciativa Calypso ([2]), entre cuyos grupos destinatarios figuran las personas de cierta edad, en mayo de 2012 la Comisión puso en marcha su iniciativa a escala de la UE titulada «Turismo Senior» ([3]). Como ya se indicó en la respuesta a la pregunta E-002848/2013, esta iniciativa de la Comisión desea incentivar la creación de un mercado interior transnacional de la UE para viajeros de edad, especialmente durante la temporada baja. A finales de junio de 2013 se publicó una convocatoria de propuestas ([4]) con un presupuesto de 1 millón de euros destinada a apoyar esta iniciativa de la Comisión.

Además, cinco de los diez proyectos Calypso cofinanciados por la Comisión hasta el momento están centrados específicamente en desarrollar modelos de intercambio transnacional turístico para las personas de cierta edad ([5]).

Su Señoría puede estar seguro de que estas iniciativas de la Comisión (tanto Calypso como «Turismo Senior»), con una dimensión europea, tienen carácter voluntario y sus destinatarios son todos los Estados miembros de la UE.

En cuanto al nombre que propone Su Señoría para el programa, la Comisión toma nota del mismo y lo tendrá en cuenta si considera necesario cambiar la denominación de la iniciativa «Turismo Senior».

([1]) http://www.europeseniortourism.eu/es/
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/calypso/index_es.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/tourism-seniors/index_es.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=6766&tpa=0&tk=&lang=es
([5]) En el contexto de la convocatoria de propuestas Calypso para 2012, resultó seleccionado el proyecto OFF2013, centrado en las personas de cierta edad y sus familias (http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/calypso/activities/documents_calypso/off2013-summary_en.pdf), que recibió una cofinanciación de 150 000 euros de la Comisión.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005571/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Why not: 'Goethe Programme'

On 7 May 2013, I received an answer to my question 'From Erasmus to Goethe' on facilitating tourism for retired persons (E-002848/2013). I was pleased to learn of the existence of these 'Senior Tourism' programmes and I have already found out more about other earlier programmes, such as 'Calypso'. However, I should like to know more details, which I am sure the Commission could provide.

1. Could the Commission indicate the amount that the European institutions have invested in this 'Senior Tourism' programme, for example, in the last year?

2. Does it not think that it could be opened up to people from all European countries and not just citizens who are resident in Bulgaria, Slovakia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic and Romania, as listed in the notification I read on the 'europeseniortourism.eu' website?

3. May I also emphasise, why not name this programme after Goethe, a tireless traveller throughout Europe?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(31 July 2013)

It is important to clarify that the 'Europe Senior Programme' ([1]) to which the honourable Member of the Parliament makes reference is not a Commission initiative, but a Spanish national project which promotes low season senior tourism by offering European citizens over the age of 55 the chance to spend their holidays in Spain during the off-peak tourist season.

Capitalising on the Spanish programme as well as on the Calypso initiative ([2]), whose target groups includes the seniors, in May 2012, the Commission launched its EU-level 'senior tourism initiative' ([3]). As already underlined in the reply to Question E-002848/2013, this Commission initiative wishes to incentivise the creation of an EU transnational domestic market for senior travel, in particular during the low season. A call for proposals ([4]) for a budget of 1 million EUR was published end of June 2013 to support this Commission initiative.

Further to this, among the 10 Calypso projects co-funded by the Commission so far, 5 projects focused specifically on developing transnational low season tourism exchange models for seniors ([5]).

The honourable Member of the Parliament can be reassured that the Commission's initiatives (both Calypso and the 'senior tourism initiative') have an EU dimension and target, on a voluntary basis, all the EU Member States.

As for the suggested acronym, the Commission will certainly keep note of it, if it will be considered as necessary to rename its 'senior tourism initiative'.

([1]) www.europeseniortourism.eu
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/calypso/index_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/tourism-seniors/index_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=6766&lang=en
([5]) In the context of the Calypso call for proposals 2012, the project OFF2013 focusing on seniors and families was selected with a co-financing of 150.000 EUR from the Commission (http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/calypso/activities/documents_calypso/off2013-summary_en.pdf).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005572/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(20 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Difusión de los logros europeos

El pasado 14 de mayo recibí de la Comisión la respuesta a mi propuesta de singularizar una vez por mes uno de los muchos logros que consiguen las instituciones europeas a través de tradicionales medios de comunicación (referencia E-002847/2013). Creo que no se entendió bien mi idea porque en ningún momento he puesto en duda la labor de los servicios de prensa de las instituciones europeas ni tampoco de las delegaciones de Europe Direct. A mi juicio, habría que considerar que, del mismo modo que las instituciones están promoviendo una desigual difusión de noticias a través de nuevos canales electrónicos privados como Facebook o diversas redes sociales privadas, sería también oportuno seleccionar un logro al mes para presentarlo a la ciudadanía en las cuñas radiofónicas o en las páginas de los periódicos en papel.

No tengo que recordar a la Comisión las grandes diferencias que todavía subsisten entre las cifras de los usuarios de Facebook o redes sociales privadas con las cifras que recogen las encuestas de difusión de medios radiofónicos y periodísticos en los diversos países de la Unión Europea.

Por ello, me permito insistir: ¿no considera la Comisión que podría planificar una sencilla campaña de publicidad institucional ofreciendo, por ejemplo, cada mes un logro muy concreto de la actuación de las instituciones europeas?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(2 de agosto de 2013)

La Comisión es consciente de la importancia de los medios de comunicación tradicionales y, por tanto, colabora estrechamente con la prensa, la radio y las cadenas de televisión tanto en Bruselas como a través de sus representaciones en todos los Estados miembros. En el marco de esa colaboración, destaca constantemente los logros conseguidos en beneficio de los ciudadanos.

La Comisión considera que, en general, una cobertura periodística independiente de los asuntos de la UE es la mejor manera de informar a los ciudadanos a través de los medios tradicionales.

Durante el Año Europeo de los Ciudadanos 2013 se están realizando esfuerzos adicionales para dar a conocer a todos los grupos de ciudadanos los logros de la política de la UE. La prensa y los medios de comunicación audiovisuales informan ampliamente y con toda independencia de los aproximadamente cuarenta y cinco diálogos con los ciudadanos que la Comisión organiza en el contexto del Año Europeo de los Ciudadanos, en los que son protagonistas los logros y derechos de los ciudadanos en el día a día.

En estos diálogos, miembros de la Comisión y del Parlamento Europeo, además de políticos nacionales o regionales, debaten con los ciudadanos sobre el futuro de la UE, sobre cuestiones concretas de la vida cotidiana y sobre la salida de la crisis.

Con el fin de apoyar el periodismo radiofónico independiente, la Comisión también ha decidido prestar apoyo a Euranet Plus, una red profesional europea de estaciones radiofónicas independientes. El acto inaugural se celebró el 19 de junio de 2013 en el Parlamento Europeo. El material que comparten diariamente las radios asociadas les permite dar una cobertura de gran calidad a los asuntos europeos.

La Comisión también da su apoyo a la producción y difusión de programas sobre asuntos europeos a través de la cadena de televisión europea Euronews mediante un acuerdo de asociación celebrado en 2010, en el que se establecen las condiciones por las que Euronews disfruta de total independencia editorial.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005572/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Communicating EU achievements

On 14 May 2013, I received a reply from the Commission with regard to my proposal to single out, once a month, one of the many achievements of the European institutions using traditional media outlets (reference E-002847/2013). I think that my idea was misunderstood, because at no point have I questioned the work of the European institutions' press services or the Europe Direct offices. In my opinion, just as the institutions are focusing more on distributing news stories via new private electronic channels such as Facebook or other private social networks, we should also consider choosing one achievement per month to present to citizens via radio spots or printed newspapers.

I need not remind the Commission of the vast differences that still exist between the number of people who use Facebook or private social networks and the figures recorded in studies on radio and newspaper distribution in the different EU countries.

Therefore, I must stress: does the Commission not think that it could plan a simple institutional publicity campaign illustrating, for example, a very concrete achievement each month resulting from the actions of the European institutions?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(2 August 2013)

The Commission is aware of the importance of traditional media and therefore works closely with newspapers, radio and TV stations both in Brussels as well through its Representations in all Member States — and constantly points to achievements in the interest of citizens.

The Commission believes that in general independent reporting about EU affairs is the best way to inform citizens through traditional media.

During the European Year of Citizens 2013 additional efforts are being made to show to all groups of citizens the achievements of EU policy making. Newspapers and audiovisual media report extensively — and in total independence — about the 45 Citizens' Dialogues that the Commission is organising in the context of the European Year of Citizens in which achievements and daily rights of citizens play an important role.

In these Dialogues many Members of the Commission. together with Members of the European Parliament as well as national or regional politicians, debate with citizens about the future of the EU, concrete questions of everyday life and about the way out of the crisis.

To support independent radio reporting about European affairs the Commission decided to support Euranet Plus, a network of professional and independent radio stations in Europe. The launching event was held on 19 June 2013 in the European Parliament. Materials shared by partner radios on a daily basis generate high-quality coverage of European affairs.

The Commission also supports the production and broadcast of programmes on European affairs by the European TV channel Euronews through a partnership agreement concluded in 2010, which sets the terms of Euronews' full editorial independence.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005573/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(20 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Diferencia de los tipos impositivos de los libros electrónicos

La Comisión Europea ha respondido a la inquietud que mostramos algunos diputados sobre las amplias diferencias entre los tipos impositivos que gravan los libros electrónicos y ha recordado, por un lado, que hay una propuesta de modificación de la normativa sobre ese impuesto y, por otro, que ha denunciado a los Estados de Francia y Luxemburgo ante el Tribunal de Justicia porque entiende que es contraria al Derecho comunitario la aplicación de un tipo reducido a esos bienes culturales.

Reconociendo la trascendencia de ambas actuaciones, persiste aún cierta preocupación que traslado a esa Comisión. En España, e igualmente en otros países miembros de la Unión, algunos importantes editores han anunciado que trasladarán el domicilio fiscal de sus portales de venta de libros electrónicos a París, al tener Francia unos tipos muy reducidos de IVA. En este sentido pueden leerse las declaraciones que ha realizado el empresario José Manuel Lara en los medios de comunicación españoles con relación a «www.casadellibro.com».

1) En la denuncia que ha presentado ante el Tribunal de Justicia ¿ha solicitado alguna medida cautelar para evitar los efectos perversos que generarán los traslados de domicilios fiscales ante el mantenimiento de la presente desigualdad durante el próximo año que, como mínimo, durará la tramitación del proceso judicial?

2) Las grandes diferencias entre los tipos impositivos en el IVA, como bien sabe la propia Comisión y así lo recoge en el documento que publicó el pasado 14 de enero, ¿cómo han incidido en la propuesta que está realizando sobre la reforma de dicho impuesto ante los efectos nocivos para el mercado interior europeo de esa «competencia desleal» de los sistemas tributarios?

3) En caso de que el Tribunal de Justicia desestime la denuncia de la Comisión al entender posible la aplicación de un tipo reducido a esos bienes culturales, frente a la consideración de los libros electrónicos como material informático ¿presentará la Comisión alguna propuesta para evitar la desigualdad de tipos impositivos o establecer alguna medida compensatoria ante el descenso de la recaudación tributaria de los países que han sufrido «la fuga de empresas»?

Respuesta del Sr. Šemeta en nombre de la Comisión
(16 de julio de 2013)

La Comisión ha adoptado oficialmente la decisión de llevar a Francia y a Luxemburgo ante el Tribunal de Justicia de la Unión Europea, ya que los tipos reducidos de IVA que aplican a los libros digitales no son compatibles con la Directiva de la UE sobre el IVA ([1]). No obstante, la Comisión todavía no ha sometido de hecho el asunto al Tribunal.

La Directiva del IVA solo fija la cuantía mínima de los tipos normal y reducido del IVA, que los Estados miembros están obligados a respetar al decidir el nivel de los tipos del IVA aplicables en sus territorios. La Comisión no tiene la intención de modificar este principio básico en el marco de la revisión del ámbito de aplicación de los tipos reducidos del IVA contemplada en la Comunicación sobre el futuro del IVA ([2]). Por consiguiente, las diferencias entre los tipos del IVA aplicados por los Estados miembros son inevitables.

La Comisión inició en 2012 una evaluación global de la actual estructura de tipos del IVA, basándose en los tres principios rectores que se establecen en la Comunicación sobre el futuro del IVA ([3]). Este proceso de evaluación está todavía en curso. Se ha puesto en marcha una consulta pública sobre la revisión de la legislación existente sobre los tipos reducidos del IVA ([4]). Un informe que resume los resultados de la consulta, junto con las observaciones, se puede consultar en la página web de la Comisión ([5]). No obstante, la Comisión todavía no ha adoptado ninguna decisión política sobre la ampliación o la reducción del ámbito de las entregas a las que se puede aplicar el tipo reducido del IVA.

([1]) Directiva 2006/112/CE del Consejo, de 28 de noviembre de 2006, relativa al sistema común del impuesto sobre el valor añadido (Directiva sobre el IVA) — (DO L 347 de 11.12.2006, p. 1).
([2]) COM(2011) 851 final de 6.12.2011.
([3]) COM(2011) 851 final.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/2012_vat_rates_en.htm
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/2012_vat_rates_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005573/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Difference in tax rates for e-books

The Commission has responded to the concern expressed by some members regarding the vast differences between the tax rates applied to e-books and has recalled, firstly, that there is a proposal to amend the legislation on this tax and, secondly, that it has reported France and Luxembourg to the Court of Justice because it understands that the application of a reduced rate for these cultural goods runs counter to Community law.

While I recognise the importance of both actions, there are still some concerns I should like to put to the Commission. In Spain, and in other EU Member States, some major publishing houses have announced that they will transfer the tax domicile of their e-book sales platforms to Paris, as France has very low VAT rates. In this regard, the declarations made by businessman José Manuel Lara to the Spanish media on the subject can be read at www.casadellibro.com

1. In the complaint submitted to the Court of Justice, was there a request for any precautionary measures to avoid the adverse effects caused by moving tax domiciles if the current inequality is to be maintained for the next year, which is the minimum amount of time the judicial proceedings are likely to take?

2. How have the vast differences between the VAT rates, which the Commission is well aware of, as stated in the document published on 14 January 2013, impacted on the proposal that it is making on the reform of this tax, given the harmful effects of this 'unfair competition' between tax systems for the European internal market?

3. Should the Court of Justice reject the Commission's complaint by ruling that it is possible to apply a reduced rate to these cultural goods, with e-books being considered IT material, will the Commission present any proposals to prevent inequality among tax rates or establish any compensatory measures given the reduced tax revenue for countries which have suffered 'capital flight'?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(16 July 2013)

The Commission has taken the formal decision to refer France and Luxembourg to the Court of Justice of the European Union because the reduced VAT rates they apply to digital books are not compatible with the EU VAT Directive ([1]). However, the referral was not yet materially executed by the Commission.

The VAT Directive establishes only the minimum levels of the standard and reduced VAT rates which Member States are obliged to respect when they decide on the level of the VAT rates applicable within their territories. The Commission does not intend to change this basic principle in the context of the review of scope of the VAT reduced rates set out in the communication on the future of VAT ([2]). Differences among the VAT rates applied by the Member States are therefore inevitable.

The Commission launched in 2012 an overall assessment of the current VAT rate structure based on three guiding principles which are set out in the communication on the future of VAT ([3]). This assessment process is still ongoing. A public consultation on the review of existing legislation on reduced VAT rates ([4]) was launched. A report summarising the outcome of the consultation, along with the submissions, is available on the Commission's website ([5]). The Commission has however not yet taken any policy decisions on increasing or reducing the scope of supplies to which the reduced VAT rate can be applied.

([1]) Council Directive 2006/112/EC of 28 November 2006 on the common system of value added tax (the VAT Directive) — (OJ L 347, 11.12.2006, p. 1).
([2]) COM(2011)851 final of 6.12.2011.
([3]) COM(2011) 851 final.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/2012_vat_rates_en.htm
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/index_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005574/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(20 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Inseguridad y agresiones contra comunidades, líderes reclamantes de tierra y organizaciones defensoras de derechos humanos en Colombia

Durante las últimas semanas, organizaciones defensoras de derechos humanos están alertando del agravamiento de su situación en Colombia. Particularmente alarmante resulta ser la situación de las comunidades de Curbaradó, Jiguamiandó y Cacarica en la región de Urabá y de la organización Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz (CIJP) quien les acompaña jurídica y políticamente.

A pesar de las denuncias presentadas y las acciones tomadas por la Delegación de la Unión Europea en Bogotá en las semanas pasadas, la CIJP sigue denunciando ser víctima de seguimientos, interceptaciones ilegales y amenazas entre las cuales está un plan de atentado. Particularmente alto es el riesgo de los integrantes de su junta directiva, Danilo Rueda, Abilio Peña y Alberto Franco (contra cuyo vehículo ya dispararon en febrero 2013). Si bien la Unidad Nacional de Protección de Colombia se ha comprometido con el seguimiento del caso y la implementación de todas las medidas de protección necesarias para proteger la vida y la integridad de estos defensores, buena parte de las medidas siguen sin aplicarse.

Los mismos defensores denunciaron haber sido amenazados por paramilitares mientras se desplazaban en una embarcación en el río Atrato hacia la cuenca de Cacarica. La CIJP, quien acompaña jurídicamente a las comunidades de Cacarica reunidas en la asociación Cavida por los desplazamientos y asesinatos a los cuales fueron sometidas en acciones militares y paramilitares, también alerta sobre las amenazas a los líderes de Cavida, en particular en contra de Marco Velázquez. Asimismo la CIJP acompaña a los habitantes de las Zonas Humanitarias de Curbaradó y Jiguamiandó y ha denunciado que persiste la falta de cumplimiento de los autos de la Corte Constitucional en términos de restitución de tierras, plan de prevención y protección y medidas colectivas. Hace pocos días se dio a conocer una lista de seis personas que los paramilitares amenazan con asesinar: dos de estas personas, Enrique Cabezas y Guillermo Díaz, son líderes reclamantes de tierra y habitantes de las Zonas Humanitarias.

¿Está al tanto la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante de estas situaciones y del riesgo que corre la vida de todos estos defensores de los derechos humanos?

¿Piensa expresar públicamente su preocupación frente a estos hechos y pedir el desmantelamiento de todas las estructuras paramilitares y la investigación de las violaciones de derechos humanos denunciadas?

En el marco de las cláusulas de derechos humanos que contempla el Acuerdo de Asociación UE-Colombia/Perú, ¿considera la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante oportuno dirigirse formalmente a las autoridades colombianas para mostrarle su preocupación y solicitarle medidas de protección efectivas?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(10 de julio de 2013)

La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta observa de cerca la situación de los derechos humanos en Colombia a través de los servicios de la UE, incluida la Delegación de la UE en Bogotá, que se ha ocupado, entre otras cosas, del asunto de la CIJP a principios de este año.

La UE está al corriente de la difícil situación de los líderes de los procesos de reparación y de restitución de tierras y recibe constantemente información sobre las amenazas y la violencia sufridas. Planteará este asunto en la reunión de 17 de junio de su dialogo sobre derechos humanos con Colombia, en la que las políticas y las medidas ejecutivas del Gobierno colombiano para proteger a los grupos vulnerables ocuparán un lugar central en el orden del día.

La UE y los Estados miembros también apoyan los distintos aspectos de los procesos de reparación y restitución de tierras al contribuir a capacitar a los organismos públicos responsables y reforzar las organizaciones de la sociedad civil que representan a los reclamantes de tierras, entre otras cosas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005574/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Insecurity and attacks on communities, leaders reclaiming land and human rights organisations in Colombia

In recent weeks, human rights organisations have warned of the deterioration of their situation in Colombia. The situation in the communities of Curbaradó, Jiguamiandó and Cacarica in the region of Urabá is particularly alarming, as it that of the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP), which supports them both legally and politically.

Despite the complaints filed and the action taken by the European Union Delegation in Bogotá in recent weeks, the CIJP is still claiming that it is facing surveillance, illegal interceptions and threats, including an assassination plot. The risk is particularly high for members of its leadership, Danilo Rueda, Abilio Peña and Alberto Franco (whose vehicle already came under fire in February 2013). While the Colombian National Protection Unit has made a commitment to monitor the case and implement all the necessary protection measures to protect the lives and integrity of these defenders, many of the measures have yet to be applied.

These same defenders claim that they were threatened by paramilitaries while transporting a boat along the Atrato River towards the Cacarica river basin. The CIJP, which provides legal support to the communities of Cacarica which form part of the CAVIDA association because of the displacements and killings to which they were subjected during military and paramilitary action, is also warning of threats against the leaders of CAVIDA, particularly Marco Velázquez. In addition, the CIJP supports the inhabitants of the humanitarian zones in Curbaradó and Jiguamiandó and has reported that there is still a lack of compliance with the rulings of the Constitutional Court with regard to the restitution of land, prevention and protection plans and collective action. A few days ago, a list came to light of six people whom the paramilitaries are threatening to kill: two of these individuals, Enrique Cabezas and Guillermo Díaz, are leaders trying to reclaim land and inhabitants of the humanitarian zones.

Is the Vice-President/High Representative keeping abreast of these situations and of the risk to the lives of all of these human rights defenders?

Is the Vice-President/High Representative planning to publicly express her concern about this situation and call for the dismantling of all paramilitary structures and an investigation into the alleged human rights violations?

Within the framework of the human rights clauses in the EU-Colombia/Peru Association Agreement, does the Vice-President/High Representative believe it would be appropriate to formally address the Colombian authorities in order to show her concern and to ask them for effective protection measures?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(10 July 2013)

The HR/VP is following the human rights situation in Colombia closely through the EU services, including the EU Delegation in Bogotá which has been active i.a. in the case of of the CIJP earlier this year.

The EU is aware of the difficult situation for leaders in reparation processes and land restitution, and is receiving continous information about the threats and violence suffered. It will raise this matter in the context of the 17 June meeting of its human rights dialogue with Colombia, where the Colombian government's policies and implementing measures to protect vulnerable groups will occupy a central place on the agenda.

The EU and Member States also support different aspects of the reparation and land restitution processes in, i.a. helping to build the capacity of the responsible government bodies and strengthening civil society organisations representing land claimants.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005575/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(20 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Controles vejatorios en vuelos internos de la Unión Europea

El pasado 10 de mayo, las autoridades policiales encargadas del control de fronteras en el aeropuerto de Estocolmo en Skavsta retuvieron arbitrariamente en el calabozo a un ciudadano español, Marcos D. C., que no había cometido ningún tipo de delito. Durante su retención fue obligado a desnudarse y se le amenazó de varias formas durante un interrogatorio de casi una hora.

Dichos acontecimientos han sido denunciados ante las autoridades españolas y suecas, pero no se trata de un caso aislado, sino que existen múltiples ejemplos de tratos vejatorios por parte de la policía fronteriza a ciudadanos de otros Estados miembros de la Unión Europea. Todo tipo de detenciones ilegales y abusos en el ejercicio de la autoridad han sido denunciados en numerosos países, pero la gran mayoría de violaciones a este respecto quedan en la completa impunidad puesto que los viajeros suelen carecer del tiempo necesario para interponer denuncias, buscar las respectivas asistencias consulares, etc. Estas denuncias terminan realizándose en el país de origen del viajero, generando dilatados procesos judiciales que en muy pocas ocasiones desembocan en sanción alguna para los culpables.

Este trato no es exclusivo de la policía fronteriza de Suecia, sino que se viola la intimidad de los viajeros procedentes de los Estados miembros de la Unión Europea en numerosos aeropuertos comunitarios. Los viajeros, pese a tener la condición de ciudadano de un Estado miembro de la UE, se encuentran ante una situación de total desprotección ante los abusos policiales de la policía fronteriza de los diferentes Estados miembros.

¿Cuántas denuncias de tratos vejatorios, retenciones ilegales, abuso de autoridad, etc. se reciben en la Unión Europea en controles aeroportuarios?

¿Cuántas de estas denuncias alcanzan a terminar con la imputación de los policías involucrados en dichos delitos? ¿Cuántos policías fronterizos han sido condenados por este tipo de abusos?

¿Considera que el sistema de control aeroportuario produce una situación de indefensión del viajero y que debería emplear su iniciativa legislativa para mejorar la protección de viajero en estos casos? ¿No considera la Comisión que en casos como el expuesto se viola el derecho de los ciudadanos europeos a circular libremente por el territorio de la UE?

Respuesta de la Sra. Malmström en nombre de la Comisión
(15 de julio de 2013)

La Comisión no está al corriente del asunto concreto al que se refiere su Señoría.

De conformidad con el artículo 20 del Código de fronteras Schengen ([1]), las fronteras interiores pueden cruzarse sin que las personas sean sometidas a controles fronterizos, con independencia de su nacionalidad. Así pues, las autoridades de los Estados miembros no están autorizadas a llevar a cabo controles fronterizos únicamente por el motivo de que una persona esté cruzando la frontera interior. No obstante, esto no afecta al ejercicio de las competencias de policía de las autoridades competentes de los Estados miembros con arreglo a la legislación nacional, en la medida en que el ejercicio de esas competencias no surta un efecto equivalente a los controles fronterizos.

El artículo 21 del Código de fronteras Schengen dispone que el ejercicio de las competencias de policía no puede considerarse, en particular, equivalente al ejercicio de inspecciones fronterizas cuando las medidas policiales no tengan como objetivo el control de fronteras, estén basadas en información y experiencia policiales de carácter general sobre posibles amenazas a la seguridad pública y estén destinadas, en especial, a combatir la delincuencia transfronteriza.

Su Señoría se refiere a otros incidentes acaecidos en aeropuertos de la UE. La Comisión solicita que facilite información más detallada para que pueda ser lo más precisa posible en sus contactos con las autoridades nacionales pertinentes.

([1]) Reglamento (CE) n° 562/2006 (DO L 105 de 13.4.2006, p. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005575/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Humiliating controls on internal flights within the European Union

On 10 May 2013, border control authorities at Stockholm Skavsta airport arbitrarily detained a Spanish citizen, D. C. Marcos, who had not committed any kind of crime. During his detention, he was forced to strip naked and was threatened in various ways in an investigation that lasted almost one hour.

These events have been reported to the Spanish and Swedish authorities, but this is not an isolated incident; there are many examples of the humiliating treatment of citizens from other EU Member States by border control officers. Unlawful detentions and abuse of any kind in the exercise of authority have been denounced in many countries, but most of these violations go completely unpunished, as travellers usually do not have time to file a complaint, seek out consular assistance, etc. Complaints are filed in the traveller's country of origin, leading to lengthy judicial proceedings which rarely result in any kind of punishment for those responsible.

This behaviour is not exclusive to Swedish border control officers; the privacy of passengers from EU Member States is being violated at many EU airports. Despite being citizens of an EU Member State, travellers are faced with a situation in which they have absolutely no protection from the abuse perpetrated by border control officers in the different Member States.

How many complaints of humiliating treatment, unlawful detentions, abuse of power, etc. has the EU received with regard to airport controls?

How many of these complaints result in the officers involved in these crimes being charged? How many border control officers have been convicted of this kind of abuse?

Does the Commission believe that the airport control system puts travellers in a vulnerable position and that it should use its legislative initiative to improve the protection of travellers in these cases? Does it not believe that such cases represent a violation of the right of European citizens to move freely within the territory of the EU?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

The Commission is not aware of the particular case mentioned by the Honorable Member.

According to Article 20 of the Schengen Borders Code ([1]), internal borders may be crossed without any border checks on persons, irrespective of their nationality, being carried out. Authorities of the Member States are thus not allowed to carry out border checks solely for the reason that the person is crossing the internal border. However, this does not affect the exercise of police powers by competent authorities of Member States under national law, insofar as the exercise of those powers does not have an effect equivalent to border checks.

Article 21 of the SBC specifies that the exercise of police powers may not be considered equivalent to the exercise of border checks when the police measures do not have border control as an objective, are based on general police information and experience regarding possible threats to public security and are aimed, in particular, at combating cross-border crime.

The Honourable Member refers to other incidents taking place at EU airports. The Commission would ask that he provide more detailed information to enable the Commission to be as precise as possible in contacts with the relevant national authorities.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 562/2006, OJ L 105, 13.4.2006, p. 1.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-005576/13
do Komisji
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(20 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Szanse na zniesienie wiz dla Polaków podróżujących do USA

W ostatnich dniach w Kongresie Stanów Zjednoczonych wznowiono prace nad reformą prawa imigracyjnego. Mający spore szanse na przyjęcie nowy projekt ustawy przewiduje możliwość stosowania odstępstw od sztywnych wymogów ruchu bezwizowego wobec obywateli krajów spełniających określone warunki. Interpretacja proponowanych zapisów pozwala na objęcie takim rozwiązaniem Polski.

W imieniu oraz w interesie polskich obywateli podróżujących do Stanów Zjednoczonych zwracam się z prośbą o odpowiedź na następujące pytania:

1. Czy instytucje podległe Komisji zaangażują się czynnie (poprzez monitoring, negocjacje, lobbing) w proces prac nad przedmiotową ustawą w amerykańskim Kongresie celem zabezpieczenia interesów wszystkich obywateli Wspólnoty?

2. Czy w obliczu rozpoczynających się negocjacji umowy handlowej z USA możliwe jest podniesienie przez Komisję kwestii ruchu bezwizowego na linii UE – USA?

3. Czy rozszerzenie ruchu bezwizowego do USA i ustanowienie swobody podróżowania jest traktowane jako jeden z priorytetów Unii w relacjach z tym państwem?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Cecilię Malmström w imieniu Komisji
(5 lipca 2013 r.)

Najważniejszym celem Unii Europejskiej oraz jednym z jej priorytetów w stosunkach z USA jest osiągnięcie pełnej wzajemności wizowej poprzez jak najszybsze objęcie wszystkich państw członkowskich UE amerykańskim programem znoszenia wiz.

Komisja wykorzystuje każdą okazję do przypomnienia władzom amerykańskim o czterech ostatnich państwach członkowskich, których nie obejmuje zasada wzajemności. W szczególności kwestia wzajemności wizowej jest stałym punktem rozmów podczas posiedzeń ministrów sprawiedliwości i spraw wewnętrznych UE i USA oraz posiedzeń urzędników wysokiego szczebla zajmujących się tym samym obszarem.

W tym kontekście Komisja śledzi z wielkim zainteresowaniem postępy w pracach nad przyjęciem nowego prawa imigracyjnego w USA, zwłaszcza jeżeli chodzi o przepisy dotyczące możliwości rozszerzenia amerykańskiego programu znoszenia wiz dzięki nowemu sposobowi obliczania procentu odrzuconych wniosków oraz możliwości, pod pewnymi warunkami, zniesienia kryteriów odmawiania wiz przez amerykańskiego sekretarza Departamentu Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego.

Reforma prawa imigracyjnego w USA była kilkakrotnie omawiana podczas spotkań z przedstawicielami władz amerykańskich. Komisja wykorzystuje takie okazje, aby dowiedzieć się, jak wygląda bieżący stan rzeczy oraz jakie są perspektywy na przyszłość związane z przyjęciem nowego prawa imigracyjnego.

Pogłębienie stosunków handlowych między UE i USA może sprawić, że więcej osób będzie podróżować między naszymi dwoma kontynentami. W tym kontekście Komisja dąży do zbadania, wspólnie z USA, nowych możliwości współpracy w zakresie mobilności, biorąc również pod uwagę kwestię wzajemności wizowej, mimo tego że dialog dotyczący amerykańskiego programu znoszenia wiz oraz wzajemności wizowej nie wchodzi w zakres negocjacji dotyczących transatlantyckiego partnerstwa w dziedzinie handlu i inwestycji.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005576/13
to the Commission
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Likelihood of visas being abolished for Poles travelling to the US

The US Congress has recently started work again on its reform of immigration law. The new bill, which has a good chance of becoming law, provides for derogations from the inflexible rules on visa-free travel to be granted to citizens of countries which meet the specified criteria. The proposed provisions can be interpreted in such a way as to suggest that Poland will be entitled to benefit from these derogations.

On behalf and in the interests of Polish citizens travelling to the United States, I would like to ask the following questions:

1. Are the Commission institutions taking a proactive approach to the work being carried out on the US Congress bill, by monitoring, negotiating and lobbying in order to protect the interests of all EU citizens?

2. Would it be possible for the Commission to raise the issue of visa-free travel between the EU and the US in the context of the newly-opened negotiations on the EU-US trade agreement?

3. Does the EU regard expanding visa-free travel to the US and establishing freedom of movement as priorities in its relations with the country?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(5 July 2013)

The European Union's ultimate goal and one of the main priorities in its relations with the United States is to achieve full visa reciprocity by ensuring that the four remaining EU Member States join the US Visa Waiver Program as soon as possible.

The Commission uses every opportunity to reiterate its concerns about the remaining cases of non-reciprocity with the US authorities. In particular, visa reciprocity is a standing agenda item of every EU-US Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial meeting and of every EU-US Justice and Home Affairs Senior Officials Meeting.

In this context the Commission follows with great interest the progress made by the US in adopting new immigration legislation, and especially the provisions permitting expansion of the US Visa Waiver Program by introducing a new way of calculating the refusal rate and the possibility for the Secretary of the US Department of Homeland Security, under certain conditions, to waive the visa refusal criteria.

US immigration reform has been on the agenda of several recent meetings with US authorities, and the Commission used these opportunities to enquire about the state of play and prospects for adoption of the new migration legislation.

The deepening of trade relations between the US and the EU is likely to generate an increase in transatlantic travel. In this context, the Commission is committed to exploring with the US new avenues for cooperation on mobility issues, also taking into account the reciprocity issue, even though the US Visa Waiver Program and the dialogue on visa reciprocity do not fall within the scope of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-005578/13
do Komisji
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(20 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Bezpieczeństwo danych osobowych w Internecie

13 maja 2013 r. na antenie TVP INFO pani komisarz Viviane Reding mówiła m.in. o potrzebie zaufania obywateli do sposobu ochrony ich danych, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem sieci. Zgadzam się z koniecznością opracowania klarownych i skutecznych, ale także rozsądnych uregulowań prawnych w tym zakresie. Jest to w interesie konsumentów oraz właściwego funkcjonowania biznesu online.

Tytułem doprecyzowania, proszę o udzielenie odpowiedzi:

1. W obecnej sytuacji możemy już chyba mówić o zjawisku szpiegostwa internetowego na szeroką skalę. Czy Komisja ma na względzie konieczność przeciwdziałania nadmiernemu gromadzeniu informacji o danych osobowych przez globalne firmy IT?

2. Niektóre portale (w szczególności tzw. społecznościowe) nierzadko „wyłudzają" od użytkowników wrażliwe (a niekoniecznie niezbędne) informacje. Przykładowo Facebook, zasłaniając się kwestiami zabezpieczenia hasła do profilu, domaga się udostępnienia numeru telefonu komórkowego. Czy proponowane zmiany przepisów o ochronie danych osobowych obejmują również takie przypadki?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Viviane Reding w imieniu Komisji
(6 sierpnia 2013 r.)

Szpiegostwo internetowe i nadmierne gromadzenie danych osobowych to problemy, które zostały spotęgowane w wyniku nagłego wzrostu przetwarzania danych osobowych w Internecie. Komisja opracowała szereg wniosków w celu zwiększenia ochrony danych osobowych i bezpieczeństwa Internetu, w szczególności będący obecnie przedmiotem oceny współprawodawców wniosek w sprawie ogólnego rozporządzenia o ochronie danych ([1]), które ma zastąpić aktualnie obowiązującą unijną dyrektywę 95/46/WE o ochronie danych ([2]). Ponadto celem dyrektywy 2002/58/WE ([3]) o prywatności i łączności elektronicznej, zmienionej dyrektywą 2009/136/WE, jest ochrona poufności komunikatów, zarówno ich treści, jak i danych związanych z tymi komunikatami, przekazywanymi za pomocą publicznie dostępnych usług łączności elektronicznej, takich jak Internet.

Zgodnie z art. 6 ust. 1 lit. c) dyrektywy 95/46/WE przetwarzanie danych osobowych, takich jak numer telefonu, musi być prawidłowe, stosowne oraz nienadmierne ilościowo w stosunku do celów, dla których zostały one zgromadzone lub dalej przetworzone. Jeśli dane te są przetwarzane przez administratora danych dla celów bezpieczeństwa, przetwarzanie to musi być ściśle ograniczone do tych celów.

Zaproponowany wniosek w sprawie ogólnego rozporządzenia o ochronie danych stosuje się również do portali społecznościowych przetwarzających dane osobowe. W rozporządzeniu tym wyraźnie uwzględniono również zasadę minimalizacji danych, a także wymóg wobec administratorów danych dotyczący przestrzegania zasad ochrony danych już w fazie projektowania oraz jako opcji domyślnej.

([1]) COM(2012) 11.
([2]) Dyrektywa 95/46/WE Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady z dnia 24 października 1995 r. w sprawie ochrony osób fizycznych w zakresie przetwarzania danych osobowych i swobodnego przepływu tych danych, Dz.U. L 281 z 23.11.1995, s. 31.
([3]) Dyrektywa 2002/58/WE Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady z dnia 12 lipca 2002 r. dotycząca przetwarzania danych osobowych i ochrony prywatności w sektorze łączności elektronicznej (dyrektywa o prywatności i łączności elektronicznej), Dz.U. L 201 z 31.7.2002, s. 37.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005578/13
to the Commission
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Security of personal data on the Internet

On 13 May 2013, during a television appearance on TVP INFO, Commissioner Reding talked about the need for public confidence in data protection practices, in particular on the Internet. I agree that we need to develop regulations in this area which are not only clear and effective, but also reasonable. This would serve the interests of consumers and promote the proper functioning of e-business.

I would like to ask the following in order to clarify certain issues:

1. Internet spying is already regarded by many as a widespread problem. Is the Commission aware of the need to prevent global IT firms from gathering excessive amounts of personal data?

2. It is not uncommon for certain websites, in particular social networking sites, to 'coax' sensitive information from their users which is not strictly necessary. For example, Facebook asks for a mobile telephone number under the guise of enhancing account security. Will the proposed amendments to the provisions on personal data protection also cover cases similar to these?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(6 August 2013)

Internet spying and the gathering of excessive amounts of personal data are issues that are amplified by the explosion in the processing of personal data over the Internet. The Commission has made several proposals to reinforce the protection of personal data and the security of the Internet, in particular with the Commission's proposal for a General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ([1]), under examination of the co-legislators, which should replace the current EU Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC ([2]). Furthermore, the ePrivacy Directive 2002/58/EC ([3]), as amended by Directive 2009/136/EC, protects the confidentiality of communications, including both the content and any data related to such communications by means of publicly available electronic communication services such as the Internet.

In line with Article 6 (1)(c) of the directive 95/46/EC, the processing of personal data such as a phone number must be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purposes for which they are collected and/or further processed. If that personal data is processed for security purposes by the controller, the processing must be strictly limited to this purpose.

The proposed GDPR also applies to social networking sites processing personal data, and explicitly spells out the principle of data minimisation, and an obligation for controllers to implement the principles of data protection by design and by default.

([1]) COM(2012) 11.
([2]) Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, OJ L 281, 23.11.1995, p. 31.
([3]) Directive 2002/58/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 2002 concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector (Directive on privacy and electronic communications), OJ L 201, 31.07.2002, p.37.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-005579/13
do Komisji
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(20 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Zapowiedź działań G7 na rzecz globalnych standardów podatkowych

Podczas konferencji w Aylesbury (maj 2013) przedstawiciele grupy siedmiu najbardziej uprzemysłowionych państw świata w sposób zdecydowany wystąpili przeciwko praktykom obchodzenia i unikania zobowiązań podatkowych. O opracowanie stosownych zaleceń zwrócono się do OECD. Polska jest jednym z krajów UE ponoszących ogromne straty związane m.in. ze stosowaniem przez międzynarodowe korporacje cen transferowych oraz transferu zysków pomiędzy oddziałami w różnych krajach. Przykładem są wielkopowierzchniowe sieci handlowe w zdecydowanej większości unikające opodatkowania w miejscu prowadzenia działalności.

Proszę o ustosunkowanie się do poniższych kwestii:

1. Czy Komisja podziela przedmiotowe stanowisko grupy G7 skupiającej cztery największe kraje członkowskie?

2. Czy Unia Europejska rozważa podjęcie niezależnych działań w powyższym zakresie?

3. Czy planowane jest horyzontalne podejście względem spraw podatkowych celem ujednolicenia i zrównoważenia zasad rozliczania podatkowego międzynarodowych przedsiębiorstw w poszczególnych państwach Wspólnoty?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Algirdasa Šemetę w imieniu Komisji
(2 lipca 2013 r.)

Podczas konferencji w maju 2013 r. w Aylesbury grupa G7 istotnie potwierdziła znaczenie wspólnych działań na rzecz zwalczania unikania zobowiązań podatkowych i uchylania się od opodatkowania. Stanowi to uzupełnienie i poparcie dla wcześniejszych oświadczeń wydanych dotychczas przez G8 i G20 oraz ich wezwania skierowanego do OECD w celu rozwiązania kwestii erozji podstawy opodatkowania i przenoszenia zysków. Komisja przyjmuje z zadowoleniem i wspiera te inicjatywy.

Komisja także określiła swoją własną strategię w tym zakresie w komunikacie w sprawie planu działania zakładającego poprawę skuteczności walki z oszustwami podatkowymi i uchylaniem się od opodatkowania (COM(2012) 722 final) oraz w dwóch zaleceniach: w sprawie agresywnego planowania podatkowego (C(2012) 8806 final) i w sprawie środków mających na celu zachęcenie państw trzecich do stosowania minimalnych norm dobrych rządów w dziedzinie opodatkowania (C(2012) 8805 final). Towarzyszą temu skuteczne działania, takie jak propozycje zmian w dyrektywie w sprawie współpracy administracyjnej przedstawione przez Komisję dnia 12 czerwca 2013 r.

Koordynowanie środków podatkowych między państwami członkowskimi ma kluczowe znaczenie dla uniknięcia problemu rozbieżności i luk w przepisach. Można to osiągnąć poprzez wprowadzenie na poziomie UE wspólnej skonsolidowanej podstawy opodatkowania osób prawnych, zgodnie z propozycją Komisji z 2011 r. ([1])

([1]) COM(2011) 121 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005579/13
to the Commission
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: G7 announcement of global action on tax standards

During a conference held in Aylesbury in May 2013, representatives of the group of the seven most industrialised countries in the world took a decisive stand against tax avoidance and evasion practices. The OECD has been asked to draft recommendations on the subject. Poland is one of the EU Member States which suffer enormous losses due in part to the use of transfer prices by multinational corporations and profit transfers between subsidiaries in different countries. The large retail chains are a good example of this, since the vast majority of them avoid paying tax where they do business.

I would like to ask the Commission the following questions:

1. Does the Commission subscribe to the position taken by the G7, a group which includes the four largest Member States?

2. Is the European Union considering taking action itself in this area?

3. Are there any plans for a horizontal approach to tax issues, with a view to standardising and ensuring the equivalency of rules on the tax liability of multinational enterprises in the individual EU Member States?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(2 July 2013)

During its meeting in May 2013 in Aylesbury, the G7 indeed agreed on the importance of collective action to tackle tax avoidance and evasion. This comes in addition to and in support of previous statements already released by the G8 and the G20 and their call upon the OECD to address Base Erosion and Profit Shifting by multinational companies. The Commission welcomes and supports these developments.

The Commission itself has set out its strategy in this area in its communication on an Action Plan to strengthen the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion (COM(2012) 722 final) and two Recommendations on Aggressive tax planning (C(2012) 8806 final) and measures intended to encourage third countries to apply minimum standards of good governance in tax matters (C(2012) 8805 final). This is followed up by effective action such as the amendments to the directive on administrative cooperation proposed by the Commission on 12 June 2013.

Coordinating tax measures between Member States to prevent mismatches and close loopholes is of key importance. Ultimately, this could be achieved via the introduction at EU level of a Common Consolidated Corporate tax base (CCCTB) as proposed by the Commission in 2011 ([1]).

([1]) COM(2011)121 final.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-005580/13
do Komisji
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(20 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Projekt gazociągu Jamał II

Prezes Gazpromu Aleksiej Miller poinformował podczas konferencji w białoruskim Witebsku (14 maja 2013 r.) o rozpoczęciu prac nad przygotowaniem techniczno-ekonomicznych założeń projektu gazociągu Jamał II. Opracowywanie strategii ma potrwać do końca br., kiedy to przewiduje się przedstawienie projektu do publicznej oceny. Podpisane w kwietniu memorandum pomiędzy Gazpromem a polską spółką EuRoPol Gaz, w tej sprawie, spowodowało falę nieporozumień, a nawet chaos na różnych szczeblach polskiej administracji.

Celem doprecyzowania faktów oraz zasięgnięcia dodatkowych informacji zwracam się z prośbą o udzielenie odpowiedzi:

1. Czy Komisja monitoruje prace związane z porozumieniem krajów członkowskich z rosyjskim potentatem gazowym w sprawie budowy gazociągu Jamał II?

2. Czy Komisja została poinformowana o wspomnianym wyżej memorandum przed jego podpisaniem?

3. Czy Komisja zamierza włączyć się w prace przygotowawcze dotyczące założeń ww. projektu?

4. Czy działania podejmowane przez zainteresowane kraje członkowskie w przedmiotowej kwestii pozostają w zgodzie z zaleceniami Komisji i strategią bezpieczeństwa energetycznego Unii Europejskiej?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Günthera Oettingera w imieniu Komisji
(18 lipca 2013 r.)

1.-2. Komisja nie została powiadomiona o memorandum, którego dotyczy zapytanie Szanownego Pana Posła.

Zgodnie z decyzją nr 994/2012/UE ([1]) państwa członkowskie mają obowiązek przedkładać Komisji umowy międzyrządowe, które zawarły z państwami trzecimi, jeżeli umowy te mają wpływ na funkcjonowanie rynku wewnętrznego energii. Obowiązek ten nie ma zastosowania w odniesieniu do umów między przedsiębiorstwami.

3. Komisja nie uczestniczy w pracach przygotowawczych dotyczących komercyjnych projektów infrastrukturalnych, lecz jest gotowa, by spotkać się z potencjalnymi inwestorami i przedstawić wyjaśnienia dotyczące obowiązujących ram regulacyjnych, jeżeli inwestorzy wyrażą taką potrzebę. W tym względzie Komisja będzie w dalszym ciągu ściśle współpracować z władzami polskimi, tak jak z powodzeniem miało to miejsce do tej pory.

4. O ile Komisji wiadomo, żadne państwo członkowskie UE nie podjęło działań w odniesieniu do memorandum, którego dotyczy zapytanie Szanownego Pana Posła.

([1]) Decyzja Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady nr 994/2012/UE z dnia 25 października 2012 r. w sprawie ustanowienia mechanizmu wymiany informacji w odniesieniu do umów międzyrządowych w dziedzinie energii między państwami członkowskimi a państwami trzecimi, Dz.U. L 299.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005580/13
to the Commission
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Yamal-II gas pipeline project

During a conference in the Belarusian city of Vitebsk on 14 May 2013, the CEO of Gazprom, Alexey Miller, discussed the start of preparatory work on the technical and economic foundations of the Yamal-II gas pipeline project. The process of drafting a strategy should last until the end of 2013, when the presentation of the project to the public is envisaged. A memorandum on this matter, which was entered into by Gazprom and the Polish company EuRoPol Gaz in April 2013, has provoked a wave of confusion and even chaos at various levels of the Polish administration.

Given the need to clarify the facts and to gain additional information, could the Commission please answer the following questions:

1. Is the Commission monitoring work connected with the agreement between EU Member States and the Russian gas giant Gazprom on the construction of the Yamal-II gas pipeline?

2. Was the Commission notified of the aforementioned memorandum before it was signed?

3. Does the Commission intend to participate in preparatory work on the project's foundations?

4. Are the actions taken in this matter by the Member States concerned compliant with the Commission's instructions and the EU's energy security strategy?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(18 July 2013)

1-2. The Commission was not notified of the memorandum mentioned by the Honourable Member of Parliament.

According to Decision No 994/2012/EU ([1]), Member States have the obligation to submit to the Commission intergovernmental agreements which they have concluded with third countries where such agreements have an impact on the internal energy market. That obligation does not apply to agreements between commercial entities.

3. The Commission does not participate in the preparatory work of commercial infrastructure projects but it is available to meet with potential investors and clarify the applicable regulatory framework if the investors so wish. The Commission will in this regard continue to cooperate closely with the Polish authorities as it has successfully done in the past.

4. To the knowledge of the Commission, there was no action taken by an EU Member State in relation to the memorandum in question.

([1]) Decision No 995/2012/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing an information exchange mechanism with regard to intergovernmental agreements between Member States and third countries in the field of energy, OJ L 299.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-005581/13
do Komisji
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(20 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Używanie określeń „polskie obozy koncentracyjne"

W ostatnim czasie po raz kolejny w artykule jednego z amerykańskich dzienników pojawiło się określenie „polskie obozy koncentracyjne". Materiał został oprotestowany, rzecz jasna, przez ambasadę Polski w Waszyngtonie. Podobne przypadki jednakże regularnie występują w przestrzeni publicznej, również europejskiej. Polscy posłowie niejednokrotnie podejmowali starania na rzecz właściwej terminologii tych haniebnych instytucji III Rzeszy, często niestety pozostawały one bez echa.

Zwracam się z pytaniem, czy możliwe jest podjęcie przez Komisję szerokiej akcji informacyjnej w Unii Europejskiej celem przeciwdziałania niewłaściwemu określaniu niemieckich obozów funkcjonujących w okupowanej Polsce?

Ponadto proszę o informacje, jakie działania realizowały w ostatnich latach instytucje podległe Komisji dla wyeliminowania tych ewidentnych nadużyć?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Viviane Reding w imieniu Komisji
(15 lipca 2013 r.)

Pielęgnowanie pamięci Holokaustu i innych zbrodni przeciwko ludzkości, popełnionych przez reżim nazistowski, ma kluczowe znaczenie dla propagowania kultury praw podstawowych, w szczególności wśród młodzieży i u przyszłych pokoleń. Służy to zapewnieniu, aby już nigdy nie doszło do tak tragicznych wydarzeń i do podziałów wśród narodów Europy.

Komisja krzewi tę pamięć m.in. za pośrednictwem działania „Aktywna pamięć europejska" w ramach programu „Europa dla obywateli". Działanie to obejmuje finansowanie projektów mających na celu wspieranie działań, debat i refleksji związanych z upamiętnieniem aktów masowej eksterminacji i masowych deportacji dokonanych przez reżimy nazistowski i stalinowski. Działanie „Aktywna pamięć europejska" służy zakorzenieniu europejskiego obywatelstwa i demokracji oraz wspólnych wartości i kultury w kontekście pamięci europejskiej.

W latach 2007-2013 sfinansowano ok. 300 projektów. Komisja zaproponowała zwiększenie środków przydzielanych na działanie „Aktywna pamięć europejska" w ramach przyszłego programu „Europa dla obywateli" na lata 2014-2020 z 4 % do 20 %.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005581/13
to the Commission
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Use of the term 'Polish concentration camps'

Recently yet another article appeared in an American newspaper referring to 'Polish concentration camps'. The article naturally enough led to the protests from the Polish Embassy in Washington. However, similar incidents are occurring regularly in the public sphere, including in Europe. Polish politicians have made many attempts to ensure that appropriate terminology is used when referring to the shameful institutions of the Third Reich. Regrettably, these efforts have often been in vain.

Would it be possible for the Commission to undertake a wide-ranging information campaign in the EU in order to counter the improper categorisation of German camps which were located in occupied Poland?

What steps have the Commission's bodies taken to put an end to these obvious abuses?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

Keeping alive the memory of the Holocaust and of other crimes against humanity committed by the Nazi regime is essential to promote a culture of fundamental rights, in particular among younger and future generations. It is a way to ensure that such atrocities never happen again and that Europe's people can never again be divided.

The Commission promotes this memory, in particular through the 'Active European Remembrance' Action, of the 'Europe for citizens' programme. The Active European Remembrance Action funds projects aiming at fostering action, debate and reflection related to preservation of memory of mass extermination and mass deportations committed by Nazi and Stalinist regimes. The Remembrance Action is a way to anchor the European citizenship and democracy, shared values, common history and culture in the context of European memory.

Around 300 projects have been funded between 2007-2013. The Commission proposed an increase of budget allocated to Remembrance from 4% to 20% in the future Europe for Citizens programme (2014-2020).

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-005582/13
do Komisji
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(20 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Kontrakty dla obywateli Białorusi

Liczba białoruskich obywateli otrzymujących zezwolenia na pracę w krajach członkowskich Unii Europejskiej systematycznie rośnie, wciąż jednak pozostając na stosunkowo niskim poziomie. Niedawno ekspert niezależnego Białoruskiego Instytutu Badań Strategicznych (BISS) Andrej Jelisiejeu opublikował artykuł, w którym informuje, że najwięcej zezwoleń na pracę Białorusini otrzymują w Polsce oraz we Włoszech. W końcu 2011 r. w krajach tych legalną pracę podejmowało odpowiednio 9 350 i 4 200 mieszkańców wschodniego sąsiada UE. Otwarcie europejskich rynków na białoruskich pracowników nie tylko przynosi korzyści gospodarcze krajom Wspólnoty, ale może również stanowić element polityki względem reżimu w Mińsku, poprzez pogłębienie problemów związanych z odpływem wykwalifikowanej siły roboczej.

W odniesieniu do powyższego proszę o informacje:

1. Czy Komisja dysponuje aktualnymi danymi odnośnie liczby białoruskich pracowników w poszczególnych krajach UE oraz prognozami na nadchodzące lata?

2. Czy Komisja podziela stanowisko szerszego udostępnienia europejskich rynków pracy dla obywateli Białorusi?

3. Czy, w ramach Partnerstwa Wschodniego, rozważa się zacieśnienie współpracy z Białorusią w celu rozszerzenia programów dla studentów oraz programów doskonalenia zawodowego dla młodych pracowników?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Štefana Füleg w imieniu Komisji
(26 lipca 2013 r.)

1. Z danych Eurostatu wynika, że w 2011 r. w państwach członkowskich UE wydano około 75 620 pozwoleń na pobyt dla obywateli Białorusi. Stanowi to 3,2 % ogólnej liczby 2,35 mln pierwszych zezwoleń na pobyt wydanych w 2011 r. przez państwa członkowskie UE. Jeżeli chodzi o całkowitą liczbę obywateli Białorusi mieszkających w państwach członkowskich, Eurostat nie dysponuje statystykami dla całej UE. Z państw, dla których takie dane są dostępne, najwięcej obywateli Białorusi posiada stałe miejsce zamieszkania we Włoszech (31 937), następnie w Niemczech (24 638), Republice Czeskiej (4 330), Hiszpanii (3 850) oraz Polsce (3 849).

2. Swobodny przepływ pracowników jest fundamentalną zasadą UE i generalnie stosuje się ją także do obywateli państw EOG.

Państwa członkowskie mają prawo do otwierania krajowych rynków pracy dla obywateli państw trzecich. Jest to kwestia dwustronna pomiędzy państwem członkowskim a danym państwem trzecim.

Jeżeli chodzi o Białoruś, UE jest gotowa rozpocząć negocjacje w sprawie ułatwień wizowych i umów o readmisji, które mogą przyczynić się do rozwoju kontaktów międzyludzkich z korzyścią dla ogółu obywateli Białorusi. UE wyraża ubolewanie z powodu braku odpowiedzi ze strony Białorusi na wystosowane przez Komisję Europejską w czerwcu 2011 r. zaproszenie do rozpoczęcia negocjacji.

3. Kontakty międzyludzkie stanowią obszar priorytetowy w stosunkach z Białorusią. Białoruś jest beneficjentem finansowanych przez UE międzyregionalnych i regionalnych programów promujących mobilność studentów i kontakty międzyludzkie, takich jak Erasmus Mundus, kursy językowe dla młodych Białorusinów oraz nadchodzący program mobilności poświęcony kontaktom międzyludzkim.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005582/13
to the Commission
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Contracts for Belarusian citizens

The number of Belarusians who hold work permits for EU Member States is growing steadily, but still remains at a relatively low level. Recently an expert at the independent Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies, Andrey Yeliseyeu, published an article in which he revealed that Belarusians receive the greatest number of work permits in Poland and in Italy. By the end of 2011, 9350 Belarusians were working legally in Poland and 4200 were working legally in Italy. The opening of European markets to Belarusian workers is not only bringing economic benefits to EU Member States, but it could also become an element of EU policy towards the regime in Minsk as it aggravates the problems associated with 'brain drain'.

1. Does the Commission have up-to-date information on the number of Belarusian workersin the individual Member States, and does it have estimates for the years to come?

2. Does the Commission share the view that European labour markets should be openedmore widely to Belarusians?

3. Is closer cooperation with Belarus as part of the Eastern Partnership being considered,with a view to expanding student programmes and professional training programmes foryoung workers?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(26 July 2013)

1. According to Eurostat, around 75 620 residence permits were issued to Belarusian citizens by EU MS in 2011. They represent 3.2% of 2.35 million first residence permits issued in 2011 by EU MS. As far as overall number of BY citizens residing in EU MS, there are no available Eurostat statistics for all EU MS. Among MS for which the data is available, number of BY citizens being usually resident is the highest in IT (31 937), followed by DE (24 638), CZ (4 330), ES (3 850) and PL (3 849).

2. Free movement of workers is a fundamental principle of EU and applies in general terms also to citizens of countries in the EEA.

MS have the right to open their domestic labour markets to third-country nationals. This is a bilateral matter between the MS and the third country.

As regards BY, the EU is ready to launch negotiations for visa facilitation and readmission agreements which would enhance people-to-people contacts to the benefit of BY population at large. The EU regrets the absence of response from BY to the EC's invitation in June 2011 to start negotiations.

3. People-to-people contacts are a priority area for relations with BY. BY is a beneficiary of interregional and regional EU-funded programmes promoting students mobility and people to people contacts, such as Erasmus Mundus, Languages Courses for Young Belarusians and the upcoming mobility scheme People to People Contacts.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-005583/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(20 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Poprawa stosunków Turcji z irackim Kurdystanem

Aspirująca do członkostwa w Unii Europejskiej Turcja zacieśnia więzi polityczne i gospodarcze z autonomicznym irackim regionem Kurdystanu. Dostęp do irackich surowców energetycznych znacząco wzmocni uzależnioną obecnie od rosyjskich dostaw Ankarę, co nie pozostanie bez wpływu również na bezpieczeństwo energetyczne Wspólnoty. Porozumienie turecko-kurdyjskie jest zatem bez wątpienia ważnym elementem wzmacniającym interesy krajów członkowskich UE, niesie jednakże niebezpieczeństwo zachwiania stabilności Iraku, który może zacząć dryfować w stronę Teheranu.

Proszę o ustosunkowanie się do następujących problemów:

1. Czy ESDZ monitoruje turecko-kurdyjskie relacje zmierzające do zacieśnienia współpracy i pozostaje w kontakcie z władzami Turcji w tej sprawie?

2. Czy i jakie czynności podejmuje europejska dyplomacja na forum międzynarodowym celem przeciwdziałania ewentualnemu rozpadowi państwa irackiego?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(12 lipca 2013 r.)

Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca bacznie obserwuje relacje turecko-irackie. W ostatnich latach Turcja zacieśniła swoje stosunki z Regionalnym Rządem Kurdystanu. UE z zadowoleniem przyjęła tę zmianę, także w kontekście szerszego dialogu politycznego UE-Turcja, a równocześnie nie przestaje podkreślać potrzeby poprawy stosunków między Ankarą a Bagdadem. Taka poprawa mogłaby znacznie przyczynić się do zwiększenia stabilności w regionie.

Sytuacja w Iraku była przedmiotem obrad na forum Rady do Spraw Zagranicznych w lutym i marcu. Stwierdzono wtedy, że UE powinna bardziej zaangażować się we wspieranie stabilności politycznej kraju. W konkluzjach Rady z kwietnia br. ministrowie spraw zagranicznych wyrazili zaniepokojenie wzrostem napięć i przemocy w Iraku i podkreślili, że UE jest zdecydowana, by być oparciem dla Iraku i wspierać go na drodze do stania się demokratycznym, zjednoczonym i bogatym krajem. W tym kontekście UE będzie nadal zacieśniać długofalowe relacje dwustronne, prowadzone obecnie między innymi w oparciu o umowę o partnerstwie i współpracy. UE porusza również kwestię wewnętrznej sytuacji w Iraku w kontaktach z partnerami w regionie, w tym – w ramach szerszego dialogu politycznego UE-Turcja – z Turcją.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005583/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Improvement in relations between Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan

Turkey, which has aspirations of becoming an EU Member State, is strengthening its political and economic links with the autonomous Iraqi region of Kurdistan. Having access to Iraqi energy resources would be a major boon to Ankara, which is currently reliant on Russian imports, and it would also have an influence on the EU's energy security. There is, therefore, no doubt that the Turkish-Kurdish agreement represents an important factor strengthening the interests of EU Member States. However, it also carries the risk of destabilising Iraq, which could start to gravitate towards Iran.

1. Is the EEAS monitoring Turkish-Kurdish relations as they move towards closer cooperation, and is it in contact with the Turkish Government on this issue?

2. Is European diplomacy taking action at international level to prevent any potentialcollapse of the Iraqi state? If so, what sort of action?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

The HR/VP is following closely relations between Turkey and Iraq. Turkey's relations with the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) have further developed in recent years. The EU has welcomed this development — also in the framework of the EU-Turkey wider political dialogue — while stressing consistently the need to improve relations between Ankara and Baghdad too. This would be extremely useful in the context of regional stability.

The Foreign Affairs Council discussed the situation in Iraq in February and March and agreed on the need to enhance EU engagement in order to promote political stability in the country. In their April Council conclusions, Foreign Affairs Ministers expressed concerns at the rising tensions and levels of violence in Iraq and reiterated EU's commitment to stand alongside Iraq and help the country develop as a democratic, unified and prosperous country. In this respect, the EU will continue to enhance long-term bilateral relations, now based notably on the partnership and cooperation agreement. The EU also raises the internal situation in Iraq with partners in the region, including Turkey in the framework of the EU-Turkey wider political dialogue.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005584/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Mianmar/Birmânia — crimes contra a humanidade

Considerando que:

— Em Mianmar/Birmânia, os conflitos entre muçulmanos de etnia «rohingya» e budistas de etnia «rakhine» vitimaram mais de 180 pessoas e originaram cerca de 100 mil deslocados;

— De acordo com um relatório da organização não-governamental *Human Rights Watch*, as autoridades de Mianmar/Birmânia foram cúmplices dos crimes contra a humanidade, dos quais a minoria muçulmana «rohingya» tem vindo a ser vítima;

Pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Tem conhecimento deste relatório?

2. Que avaliação faz da situação descrita?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(15 de julho de 2013)

A Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente segue atentamente a evolução da situação em Mianmar/Birmânia e tem conhecimento do relatório da organização não-governamental Human Rights Watch.

Os violentos conflitos sectários no Estado de Rakhine, assim como noutras regiões do país, que têm como alvo a minoria muçulmana, constituem um motivo de séria preocupação. Estes conflitos, que refletem divisões profundas na sociedade, não são novos na história do país e representam um risco para o processo de democratização e de reconciliação nacional. A Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente apelou às autoridades para que protejam a população civil contra a violência e investiguem as causas destes graves incidentes.

A situação foi debatida no Conselho «Negócios Estrangeiros», de 22 de abril de 2013, que pôs em destaque a necessidade de o Governo fazer face à violência entre comunidades e, nomeadamente, de analisar o estatuto do povo «rohingya». Com efeito, somos da opinião de que a questão da cidadania é fundamental e continuaremos a incentivar o Governo a rever a lei da cidadania de 1982. Ao longo das últimas semanas, o SEAE levantou várias vezes a questão junto das autoridades competentes, sublinhando também que os responsáveis pelos atos de violência de ambos os lados devem ser entregues à justiça. Durante a sua recente visita a Mianmar/Birmânia, o Representante Especial da UE para os Direitos Humanos reafirmou veementemente junto dos seus interlocutores a necessidade urgente de tratar as questões relacionadas com a violência e a discriminação entre comunidades, tendo-se igualmente encontrado com representantes do povo «rohingya».

Simultaneamente, é igualmente necessário que o governo aja no sentido de penalizar a incitação à violência e a expressão de pontos de vista incendiários nos meios de comunicação social. O Presidente U Thein Sein condenou publicamente a violência em maio passado e apelou à tolerância e à reconciliação. Embora não seja suficiente, este é um passo na boa direção.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005584/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Myanmar/Burma — Crimes against humanity

In view of the following:

— the fact that in Myanmar/Burma, clashes between ethnic Rohingya Muslims and ethnic Rakhine Buddhists have claimed the lives of 180 people and displaced around 100 000;

— the fact that a report by the NGO Human Rights Watch states that the authorities in Myanmar/Burma have been complicit in crimes against humanity, of which the Muslim Rohingya minority have been the victims.

Can the Vice-President/High Representative state:

1. Is she aware of this report?

2. What is her view of the situation?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

The High Representative/Vice-President follows with close attention the developments in Myanmar/Burma and is aware of the Human Rights Watch report.

The violent clashes along sectarian lines in Rakhine state but also in other parts of the country, with the Muslim minority as the target, are of grave concern. Such clashes are not new in the country's history. They point to deep-rooted divisions in the society and present a risk to the whole process of democratisation and national reconciliation. The HR/VP urged authorities to protect civilians from violence, and to investigate the causes of these disturbing incidents.

The Foreign Affairs Council of 22 April 2013 discussed the matter and stressed the need for the Government to deal with inter-communal violence and notably to address the status of the Rohingya. Indeed we believe that the issue of citizenship is fundamental and will continue to encourage the Government to revise the 1982 Citizenship law. The EEAS has raised the issue with the authorities on several occasions in past weeks also underlining that perpetrators from any side must be brought to justice. The EU's Special Representative for Human Rights during his recent visit to Myanmar/Burma, where he also met Rohingya representatives, forcefully raised with his interlocutors the need to urgently deal with intercommunal violence and discrimination.

At the same time there is also a need for government action to prosecute the incitation of violence and expression of inflammatory views in the media. President U Thein Sein has condemned violence publicly last May and called for tolerance and reconciliation. While certainly not sufficient, this is a step in the right direction.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005585/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Ataque islamita na Nigéria

Considerando que:

— A Nigéria, dividida entre o norte predominantemente muçulmano e o sul maioritariamente cristão, vive regularmente casos de violência inter-religiosa;

— Em termos globais, a violência ligada à insurreição dos islamitas e à sua repressão pelo exército já provocou mais de 3600 mortos desde 2009;

— Recentemente, uma série de ataques coordenados foram levados a cabo pelo grupo islamita Boko Haram na localidade de Bama, que provocaram 55 mortos;

Pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

De que forma pode a União Europeia intervir neste conflito, a fim de promover a paz e assegurar a liberdade religiosa dos cidadãos nigerianos?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(15 de julho de 2013)

A UE colabora com a Nigéria para ajudar a promover a paz e a liberdade religiosa no país, tanto através de um diálogo político contínuo sobre as medidas mais adequadas para os problemas como através de intervenções de ajuda específicas.

Em 21 de março de 2013, decorreu em Abuja a primeira sessão de diálogo local sobre a paz, a segurança e a estabilidade organizada pela Nigéria e pela União Europeia. Em 16 de maio de 2013, em Bruxelas, as duas Partes realizaram a quarta sessão do diálogo ministerial entre a União Europeia e a Nigéria. Em ambas as ocasiões, a UE sublinhou a necessidade de responder aos atuais desafios em matéria de segurança no quadro de uma abordagem global, que integre os aspetos da segurança, da governação e do desenvolvimento e tenha também em conta as causas profundas da violência através de reformas e de atividades que beneficiem em igual medida todos os grupos populacionais da Nigéria.

Em dezembro de 2012, uma missão da UE deslocou-se à Nigéria para examinar formas específicas de apoio à luta contra o terrorismo. Em consequência dessa missão, está atualmente a ser elaborado um pacote ao abrigo do Instrumento de Estabilidade para apoiar atividades nos domínios da segurança e do Estado de Direito. No âmbito do FED, a UE intervém em vários estados no setor social (saúde, água e saneamento), complementando essa intervenção com apoio à justiça e à boa governação. O respeito pela liberdade religiosa é abordado através de várias ações, nomeadamente no âmbito da estratégia da UE em matéria de direitos humanos para a Nigéria. Ao abrigo do 11.° FED, o programa de desenvolvimento da UE concentrar-se-á especialmente nas regiões do norte da Nigéria.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005585/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Islamist attack in Nigeria

In view of the following:

— the fact that Nigeria, divided between the predominantly Muslim north and the mainly Christian south, regularly experiences inter-religious violence;

— the fact that overall, violence linked to the Islamist insurrection and its suppression by the army has already resulted in over 3 600 deaths since 2009;

— the fact that recently, the Islamist group *Boko Haram* has carried out a series of coordinated attacks in the Bama area, leaving 55 dead.

Can the Vice-President/High Representative state:

How can the EU intervene in this conflict in order to promote peace and secure religious freedom for the Nigerian people?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

The EU is working with Nigeria to help it promote peace and religious freedom through both continuous political dialogue on appropriate approaches to the problems, as well as targeted aid interventions.

On 21 March 2013 in Abuja, Nigeria and the European Union held the first session of the local dialogue on peace, security and stability. On 16 May 2013 in Brussels the two sides held the fourth session of the EU-Nigeria Ministerial Dialogue. At both occasions the EU stressed the need to address the current security challenges with a comprehensive security/governance/development approach targeting also the root causes of violence through reforms and activities that equally benefit all groups of the Nigerian population.

In December 2012 an EU mission was in Nigeria to examine specific forms of support to fight terrorism. As a result a package under the Instrument for Stability is currently under preparation to support activities in the areas of security and the rule of law. Under the EDF the EU intervenes in several states in social sectors (health, water and sanitation) complemented by support to justice and good governance. Respect for freedom of religion is addressed through several actions including some which are part of the EU's Human Rights Strategy for Nigeria. Under the 11th EDF the EU development programme will have a special focus on the North of Nigeria.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005587/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Eleições gerais na Guiné-Bissau

Considerando que:

— No seguimento da última reunião da Assembleia Nacional Popular em Bissau, que contou com a participação de políticos, chefias militares, chefes religiosos e dirigentes sindicais, se chegou a um consenso sobre o novo modelo para o período de transição em curso na Guiné-Bissau desde o golpe de Estado militar de 12 de abril do ano passado;

— Foi obtido um acordo para que sejam realizadas eleições gerais no próximo mês de novembro;

Pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Prevê acompanhar as operações eleitorais na Guiné-Bissau?

2. Estão previstas medidas complementares que, no respeito pela autonomia da República da Guiné-Bissau, contribuam para a obtenção dos resultados previstos no consenso firmado?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(17 de julho de 2013)

A UE irá ponderar a possibilidade de apoiar a organização das eleições na Guiné-Bissau em função da apresentação de um plano credível e pormenorizado. A análise do processo eleitoral através do envio de uma missão de peritos eleitorais é uma opção que está atualmente a ser considerada.

A Comissão Europeia e a Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente estão também atualmente a preparar um pacote adicional de ações destinadas a prestar apoio direto à população. Estas ações pretendem abordar problemas no domínio do saúde, do fornecimento de água, da segurança alimentar e apoiar intervenientes de setores não estatais.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005587/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — General elections in Guinea-Bissau

In view of the following:

— the fact that the latest meeting of Guinea-Bissau's National People's Assembly, in which politicians, military leaders, religious leaders and union heads participated, reached a consensus on the new model for the transition period underway in Guinea-Bissau since the military *coup d'état* of 12 April 2012;

— the fact that a consensus was reached that general elections will be held in November.

Can the Vice-President/High Representative state:

1. Does she intend to monitor the elections in Guinea-Bissau?

2. Is she planning additional measures that would, while respecting Guinea-Bissau's autonomy, contribute to the agreement signed achieving the envisaged results?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(17 July 2013)

The EU will consider support to the organisation of the elections in Guinea-Bissau depending on the presentation of a detailed and credible plan. Electoral assessment through the deployment of an Election Experts Mission is an option which is currently being considered.

The European Commission and the High Representative/Vice-President are also currently working on an additional package of actions aiming at providing direct support to the population. These actions will address the health, water, food security and support to Non-State Actors sectors.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005588/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Tensão no Noroeste Asiático

Considerando que:

— A China não vai participar da cimeira deste ano com o Japão e a Coreia do Sul, como estava agendado;

— A China, o Japão e a Coreia do Sul poderiam ter aproveitado o momento para aumentar a estabilidade estratégica no Noroeste da Ásia, mas, em vez disso, as tensões deverão agora continuar a crescer;

Pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Como tem acompanhado a crescente tensão no Noroeste Asiático?

2. Que iniciativas têm sido adotadas pela UE para ajudar a aliviar a tensão nessa região?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(15 de julho de 2013)

A UE está a acompanhar de perto a evolução da situação no Nordeste Asiático. A situação no Mar da China Oriental e o aumento da tensão na Península da Coreia são particularmente preocupantes. Em setembro último, quando do agravamento do diferendo entre a China e o Japão, a Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente proferiu uma declaração em nome da UE. A UE, através de declarações, medidas restritivas e consultas frequentes com os principais intervenientes, tem colaborado estreitamente com a comunidade internacional para dar resposta ao risco de proliferação de armas de destruição maciça e de instabilidade provocada pelas atividades ilegais da RPDC.

A UE não toma uma posição quanto às ambições das várias partes envolvidas no Nordeste Asiático, mas está preocupada com o impacto que uma nova escalada dos riscos poderá ter na segurança regional e na economia mundial. Tal não impede, contudo, a prossecução de uma boa cooperação com os seus parceiros regionais, nomeadamente no âmbito do Conselho de Segurança da ONU, sobre a questão da RPDC. Prosseguem igualmente as negociações com o Japão, a China e a Coreia do Sul sobre um acordo de comércio livre.

A UE utiliza todos os meios disponíveis para promover a paz e a segurança na região. As divergências sobre questões marítimas deveriam ser resolvidas a longo prazo através do diálogo e com base no direito internacional, em particular o Direito do Mar (Unclos). A UE chamou várias vezes a atenção dos países em causa para este ponto, nomeadamente durante a visita da Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente à China em abril. Refira-se ainda que a UE também assinou o Tratado de Amizade e Cooperação em 2012.

Nos nossos próximos contactos (diálogo estratégico com a China, cimeiras com o Japão, a Coreia do Sul e a China, reunião ministerial do Fórum Regional da ASEAN), a UE continuará a incentivar todas as partes a resolver o desafio da segurança em prol da estabilidade, da previsibilidade e da prosperidade. A UE aceitou, em princípio, organizar um seminário sobre segurança marítima conjuntamente com a Indonésia, no contexto geral de cooperação UE-ASEAN (segundo semestre de 2013).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005588/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Tension in north-east Asia

In view of the following:

— the fact that China will not participate as planned in this year's summit with Japan and South Korea;

— the fact that China, Japan and South Korea could have taken advantage of this opportunity to increase stability in north-east Asia, but tensions will now surely increase instead.

Can the Vice-President/High Representative state:

1. How has she been monitoring the increasing tension in north-east Asia?

2. What initiatives has the EU been adopting to help relieve tension in the region?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

The EU is following closely developments in North-East Asia. The situation in the East China Sea and the heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula have been especially worrying. The HRVP issued a Statement on behalf of the EU last September when tensions sparked between China and Japan. The EU, through statements, restrictive measures and frequent consultations with key players, has also worked closely with the international community to address the risk of WMD proliferation and of instability brought about by the DPRK's illegal activities.

The EU takes no position regarding the respective claims in North-East Asia, but is concerned that further escalation risks severe impact on regional security and the global economy. However, this has not stood in the way of good cooperation between regional partners, in particular in the UNSC, on the DPRK issue. Japan, China and South Korea continue negotiations on a FTA.

The EU uses all available means to promote peace and security in the region. A long-term resolution of the differences on maritime issues should be sought through dialogue and based on international law, in particular Unclos. The EU has made this point several times to countries concerned, most recently during the HRVP's visit to China in April. The EU also signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in 2012.

In our upcoming contacts (Strategic Dialogue with China and the Summits with Japan, South Korea and China, ARF Ministerial) the EU will continue to encourage all sides to address security challenges in pursuit of stability, predictability and prosperity.The EU has agreed in principle to organise a seminar on maritime security with Indonesia, in the general context of EU-ASEAN cooperation (second half of 2013).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005589/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(20 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Espionaje de EE.UU. a la agencia de prensa Associated Press

El pasado viernes 10 mayo, la agencia de prensa estadounidense Associated Press (AP) recibió una filtración que le informaba de que el Departamento de Justicia del Gobierno de los Estados Unidos de América se había incautado de los registros de más de veinte líneas telefónicas pertenecientes a reporteros y delegaciones de la agencia de periodistas.

Este escándalo ha implicado la inhibición del Fiscal General de Estados Unidos en dicho caso, al estar siendo investigado por el FBI por dicha recopilación ilegal de información. Este caso está afectando a los más altos cargos del Gobierno y supone una violación de la libertad de expresión y la libertad de prensa, derechos fundamentales que normalmente la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante condena repetidamente en unos pocos países.

Con esta persecución ilegal de una agencia periodística, el Gobierno de EE.UU. confirma su actitud beligerante en contra de los medios de comunicación del país. Incautarse de los registros telefónicos de manera ilegal supone poner en peligro la privacidad de las fuentes de la citada agencia periodística y un serio ataque contra el periodismo, confirmando la actitud de la administración Obama de ejecutar un férreo control de la política interna y de sus propios ciudadanos. Este no es el primer escándalo en el que la administración Obama ha violado las libertades individuales de sus ciudadanos, por lo que es necesario sancionar dicha actitud para garantizar el respeto a dichas libertades.

La persecución y espionaje a periodistas también se está llevando a cabo en diferentes Estados miembros de la Unión Europea, como España, donde se han realizado detenciones arbitrarias de periodistas e incluso agresiones por parte de la policía, tal y como denuncié en mi pasada pregunta sobre la detención del fotoperiodista Eduardo León (E-012298/2011).

1. ¿Conoce la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante los hechos expuestos sobre la investigación ilegal de los registros telefónicos de periodistas norteamericanos?

2. ¿Ha condenado a la administración del Presidente Obama por perseguir las libertades fundamentales de prensa y expresión?

3. ¿Qué vías establece para garantizar la protección de las libertades fundamentales de expresión y prensa en los Estados miembros?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(5 de agosto de 2013)

La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta está al corriente del caso de espionaje telefónico a la agencia de noticias Associated Press (AP).

La libertad de expresión y la libertad de prensa son de suma importancia para la UE. En este sentido, la UE ha tomado buena nota de las palabras pronunciadas por el Fiscal General de EE.UU., Eric Holder, que el pasado 6 de junio de 2013 declaró que el Departamento de Justicia de EE.UU., al tiempo que debe seguir protegiendo la seguridad nacional, «tiene que velar también por la defensa de los derechos y libertades más sagrados […], incluida la libertad de prensa». En la misma declaración, el Fiscal General anunció que se procederá a revisar las directrices del Departamento de Justicia que actualmente regulan las investigaciones a periodistas.

Como ya señaló la Comisión en la respuesta a su anterior pregunta escrita E-012298/2011 ([1]), la libertad de expresión y de información constituye uno de los pilares fundamentales de la UE y está consagrado en el artículo 11 de la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea y en el artículo 10 del Convenio Europeo de Derechos Humanos (CEDH). La Comisión está plenamente comprometida a garantizar y promover el respeto de los derechos fundamentales en el ámbito de sus competencias. Con arreglo al artículo 51, apartado 1, de la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales, las disposiciones de la misma están dirigidas a los Estados miembros únicamente cuando apliquen el Derecho de la Unión. No obstante, aunque no exista vínculo con el Derecho de la Unión, siguen teniendo que garantizar el cumplimiento de sus obligaciones relativas a los derechos fundamentales, derivadas de los acuerdos internacionales, del CEDH y del Derecho interno.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2011-012298&language=ES

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005589/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — US spying on the press agency Associated Press

On Friday 10 May 2013, the US press agency Associated Press (AP) received a leak informing it that the US Government's Department of Justice had seized records of more than 20 telephone lines belonging to AP reporters and offices.

This scandal has led the United States Attorney General to recuse himself from the case, which is being investigated by the FBI as a result of this illegal information gathering. This case is affecting the upper echelons of the US Government and represents a violation of the fundamental rights of freedom of expression and freedom of the press, something which the Vice-President/High Representative would normally condemn repeatedly in some countries.

By illegally persecuting this press agency, the US Government is confirming its belligerent attitude against the country's media. The illegal seizure of telephone records jeopardises the privacy of this press agency's sources and is a serious attack against journalism, confirming the Obama administration's attitude of controlling its domestic policy and its own citizens with an iron fist. This is not the first scandal in which the Obama administration has violated the individual freedoms of its citizens, and it should therefore be sanctioned for this attitude in order to ensure respect for these freedoms.

Various EU Member States are also guilty of spying on and persecuting journalists. For example, in Spain, journalists have been arbitrarily detained and even attacked by police, as I denounced in my previous question on the arrest of photojournalist Eduardo León (E-012298/2011).

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the facts regarding the illegal investigation of US journalists' telephone records?

2. Has she condemned President Obama's administration for persecuting the fundamental freedoms of freedom of the press and freedom of expression?

3. What measures are being established to ensure that these fundamental freedoms are protected in the Member States?

Answer given by High-Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(5 August 2013)

The HR/VP is aware of the case of the Associated Press (AP) phone taps.

The EU attaches the utmost importance to freedom of expression and freedom of the press. In this regard, the EU took good note of the statement made by Attorney General (AG) Eric Holder on 6 June 2013 that, while the Department of Justice must continue to protect US national security, it 'must be just as vigilant in [the] defense of the sacred rights and freedoms (…), including the freedom of the press'. In the same statement, AG Holder announced the launch of a review of existing Justice Department guidelines governing investigations that involve reporters.

As the Commission said in reply to previous Written Question E-012298/2011 ([1]), freedom of expression and information constitutes one of the essential foundations of the EU, enshrined in Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The Commission is fully committed to ensuring and promoting the respect of fundamental rights within the scope of its competences. According to Article 51(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the provisions of the Charter are addressed to the Member States only when they are implementing Union law. Where there is no link to Union law, Member States are still bound to ensure that their obligations regarding fundamental rights — as resulting from international agreements, the ECHR and from internal legislation — are respected.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-005590/13
adresată Comisiei
Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D)
(20 mai 2013)

Subiect: Utilizarea cianurii în sectorul minier

În pofida unei solicitări oficiale a Parlamentului, formulată în rezoluția sa din 5 mai 2010 (P7_TA(2010)0145) ([1]), și a unor cereri suplimentare din partea unor deputați în PE, Comisia a afirmat că nu intenționează să interzică utilizarea cianurii în sectorul minier.

În scrisoarea sa din 8 noiembrie 2011 (ref. 1188233), Comisa a asigurat că „urmărește îndeaproape evoluțiile tehnologice din sectorul mineritului aurifer" și că va asigura „dezvoltarea unor noi tehnologii de extracție în domeniul mineritului aurifer" prin intermediul parteneriatului european pentru inovare privind materiile prime.

În plus, Comisia a estimat că actuala „legislație riguroasă și cuprinzătoare (…), odată ce va fi pusă în aplicare în mod cuvenit, ar trebui să prevină survenirea accidentelor și să reducă la minim efectele acestora asupra mediului".

Având în vedere cele de mai sus:

1. ar putea Comisia să prezinte măsurile concrete care au fost luate în vederea atingerii obiectivului menționat de aceasta, și anume dezvoltarea unor noi tehnologii de extracție?

2. ar putea Comisia să confirme faptul că legislația în vigoare impune operatorilor obligația clară de a acoperi costurile accidentelor, precum și costurile de mediu care rezultă în urma activităților de exploatație normale?

3. având în vedere riscurile recunoscute asociate utilizării cianurii în sectorul minier, intenționează Comisia să revină asupra deciziei sale de a nu propune interzicea acesteia?

4. intenționează Comisia să prevadă fonduri care să fie utilizate în mod specific pentru acțiuni de dezvoltare alternativă în cadrul regiunilor miniere, cum ar fi turismul sau protecția și promovarea siturilor arheologice?

Răspuns dat de dl Potočnik în numele Comisiei
(9 august 2013)

1. Parteneriatul european pentru inovare privind materiile prime este o dezvoltare a planului strategic de implementare (PSI), prin promovarea cooperării multidisciplinare între mediul universitar și sectorul industrial, în scopul de a oferi noi soluții tehnologice exemplare, eficiente din punct de vedere al costurilor, raționale și sigure pentru mediu, cu ajutorul cărora să se asigure aprovizionarea cu materii prime, inclusiv extracția, astfel încât să fie create noi locuri de muncă și să se genereze creștere în economia UE. Se preconizează că planul strategic de implementare (PSI) va fi adoptat de Grupul de coordonare la nivel înalt al parteneriatului european pentru inovare (EIP) în septembrie 2013. Implementarea acțiunilor depinde de angajamentele ulterioare pe care și le vor asuma UE, statele membre, sectorul industrial, mediul universitar și societatea civilă. La nivelul UE, inițiativa Orizont 2020 va aborda chestiunea noilor tehnologii extractive în contextul provocărilor societale pe care le reprezintă „combaterea schimbărilor climatice, utilizarea eficientă a resurselor și materiile prime".

2. Articolul 14 referitor la garanțiile financiare și articolul 15 referitor la responsabilitatea privind mediul din Directiva 2006/21/CE privind gestionarea deșeurilor din industriile extractive ([2]) , precum și Directiva 2004/35/CE privind răspunderea pentru mediul înconjurător în legătură cu prevenirea și repararea daunelor aduse mediului ([3]) impun operatorilor obligația de a acoperi costurile accidentelor și costurile de mediu care rezultă din activitățile profesionale normale.

3. Comisia ar dori să aducă în atenția distinșilor membri ai Parlamentului European răspunsul pe care l-a oferit la întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-6197/2012 ([4]) adresată de domnul Hassi și domnul Pietikäinen.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0145+0+DOC+XML+V0//RO
([2]) JO L 102, 11.4.2006.
([3]) JO L 143, 30.4.2004.
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2012-006197&language=EN

4. Politica de coeziune poate veni în sprijinul statelor membre și al regiunilor în vederea cofinanțării unor programe și proiecte legate de turism, precum și referitoare la patrimoniul natural și la cel cultural, în funcție de prioritățile de investiție pentru care au optat statele membre în programele operaționale relevante. În cadrul „gestionării partajate” a fondurilor, statele membre sunt cele care selecționează și implementează proiectele cofinanțate.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005590/13
to the Commission
Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Use of cyanide in the mining sector

Despite a formal call from Parliament in its resolution of 5 May 2010 (P7_TA(2010)0145) ([1]), and additional requests from individual MEPs, the Commission has stated that it does not intend to propose a ban on the use of cyanide in the mining sector.

In its letter of 8 November 2011 (ref. 1188233), the Commission gave assurances that it 'closely follows technological developments in the gold mining sector' and will 'ensure the development of new extraction technologies in the gold mining sector' through the European Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials.

Moreover, the Commission also reasoned that current 'comprehensive and strict legislation (…) once properly implemented, should prevent the occurrence of accidents and minimise their environmental impacts'.

In view of the above:

1. Could the Commission outline what concrete steps have been taken towards its stated goal of ensuring the development of new extraction technologies?

2. Could the Commission confirm that current legislation also includes a clear obligation on operators to cover the costs of accidents as well as the environmental costs resulting from normal occupational activities?

3. Given the established risks associated with using cyanide in the mining sector, will the Commission review its decision not to propose a ban?

4. Will the Commission consider targeting funds to be used specifically for alternative development in mining regions, such as tourism or the protection and promotion of archaeological sites?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(9 August 2013)

1. The European Innovation Partnership on Raw materials is developing the Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) through promoting multidisciplinary cooperation between academia and industry in order to deliver new exemplary cost-effective, environmentally sound and safe technological solutions for securing supply of raw materials, including extraction, to bring new jobs and growth to the EU economy. SIP is expected to be adopted by the High Level Steering Group of the EIP in September 2013. Implementation of the action is subject to further commitments from the EU, Member States, Industry, academia and civil society. At EU level, Horizon 2020 will address new extraction technologies in the Societal challenge on 'Climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials'.

2. Article 14 on financial guarantees and Article 15 on environmental liability of Directive 2006/21/EC on the management of waste from extractive industries ([2]) and Directive 2004/35/CE on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage ([3]) impose the obligation on operators to cover the costs of accidents as well as the environmental costs resulting from normal occupational activities.

3. The Commission would refer the Honourable Members to its answer to Written Question E-6197/2012 ([4]) by Mr Hassi and Mr Pietikäinen.

4. Cohesion Policy can support Member States and regions to co-finance programmes and projects related to tourism as well as on natural and cultural assets, depending on the priorities for investments selected by Member States in the relevant Operational Programmes. In the framework of the 'shared management' of the funds, it is the Member States that select and implement the co-funded projects.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0145+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN.
([2]) OJ L 102 of 11.4.2006.
([3]) OJ L 143 of 30.4.2004.
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2012-006197&language=EN.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005591/13
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD) e Giancarlo Scottà (EFD)
(20 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Restrizioni all'utilizzo di neonicotinoidi in agricoltura considerati responsabili di una grave moria di api mellifere

In seguito a studi svolti dall'Autorità europea per la sicurezza alimentare (EFSA) su richiesta della Commissione, che hanno evidenziato i rischi per la salute delle api connessi all'uso dei neonicotinoidi in agricoltura e alla luce del parere concorde espresso dall'Agenzia europea per l'ambiente (EEA), la Commissione ha ritenuto di decretare una moratoria di due anni che impone forti restrizioni all'utilizzo di alcune molecole rientranti in questa categoria, note coi nomi commerciali di Clothiadinin, Imidacloprid e Thiametoxam.

Tale moratoria riguarda, tuttavia, solamente l'utilizzo di detti prodotti su «coltivazioni visitate e impollinate dalle api», ignorando pertanto il rischio rappresentato da tali molecole, la cui tossicità è ormai accertata, per altre forme di vita animale, quali invertebrati acquatici, uccelli e altri insetti.

Va poi rilevato che restano escluse dalla moratoria quattro tra le sette molecole poste sotto accusa per la moria di api, nonché tutti i neonicotinoidi non ancora in commercio, come il Sulfoxaflor, ma che potrebbero essere introdotti sul mercato in tempi brevi.

È opportuno sottolineare come le api svolgano un ruolo fondamentale e strategico nell'impollinazione dei fiori e dunque nella riproduzione di gran parte delle specie vegetali terrestri. Ciò comporta che l'estinzione o, comunque, una forte riduzione della popolazione di api causerebbe un disastro ecologico di proporzioni inaudite e avrebbe ripercussioni pesantissime sulla produzione di derrate alimentari e quindi sulla società tutta. Non indifferente rimane il potenziale ingresso di tali composti come prodotti residuali in filiere alimentari. È noto come il miele, diretto prodotto alimentare della filiera delle api, sia soggetto ad inquinamento ambientale da fonti che sono legate a attività antropiche, tra cui l'utilizzo di prodotti chimici in agricoltura.

Ha la Commissione intenzione di valutare l'introduzione di un divieto generale e permanente di utilizzo delle molecole oggetto della moratoria?

Ritiene essa opportuno estendere la portata della moratoria, e dell'eventuale successivo divieto generalizzato, anche agli altri neonicotinoidi il cui utilizzo è stato scientificamente correlato con ragionevole probabilità all'anomala moria di api degli ultimi decenni?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(5 luglio 2013)

Una domanda di approvazione del sulfoxaflor è stata presentata conformemente alle regole contenute nel regolamento (CE) n. 1107/2009. Il fascicolo è ora all'esame dell'Autorità europea per la sicurezza alimentare. Attualmente nell'UE non esistono autorizzazioni nel merito.

La Commissione desidera inoltre rinviare gli onorevoli deputati alla propria risposta all'interrogazione scritta P-006069/2013 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005591/13
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD) and Giancarlo Scottà (EFD)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Restrictions on the use of neonicotinoids blamed for high bee mortality in agriculture

Following a number of studies carried out by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) at the Commission's behest, which highlighted the risks to bee health of neonicotinoid use in agriculture, and in the light of the agreement expressed by the European Environment Agency (EEA), the Commission has decided to enact a two-year moratorium imposing severe restrictions on the use of certain molecules within this class, which are known by the trade names clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam.

However, the moratorium only applies to the use of these products on 'bee-attractive crops', and thus ignores the risk posed by such molecules — the toxicity of which has by now been proven — to other forms of animal life, such as aquatic invertebrates, birds and other insects.

It should also be noted that the moratorium fails to include four of the seven molecules blamed for the spate of bee deaths, as well as all the neonicotinoids which are not yet on sale but which could be placed on the market shortly, such as sulfoxaflor.

It should be emphasised that bees play a fundamental and strategic role in flower pollination and hence in the propagation of most land plants. This means that if the bee population became extinct or even went into sharp decline, it would cause an ecological disaster on an unprecedented scale and would have a huge impact on food production and hence on society as a whole. There remains a very real possibility that these compounds may enter food chains as residual products. Honey, a foodstuff that comes direct from the hives, is known to be affected by human-induced environmental pollution, one source of which is chemicals used in agriculture.

Will the Commission consider imposing a permanent blanket ban on the use of the molecules covered by the moratorium?

Does it consider it appropriate to extend the scope of the moratorium and of any subsequent blanket ban so that it covers the other neonicotinoids whose use has been scientifically linked, with a reasonable degree of certainty, to the abnormally high bee mortality rate of recent decades?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(5 July 2013)

An application for the approval of sulfoxaflor has been submitted according to the rules laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009. The dossier is currently under evaluation by the European Food Safety Authority. No authorisations are in place for the time-being within the EU.

In addition, the Commission would refer the Honourable Members to its answer to Written Question P-006069/2013 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005592/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(20 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Entrenamiento con drones del ejército marroquí

Recientemente marines del ejército de los Estados Unidos organizaron un curso llamado «Curso de familiarización con pequeños vehículos voladores no pilotados» en Agadir (Marruecos). En este curso participaron miembros del ejército estadounidense, del ejército marroquí y del ejército alemán.

El curso se impartió durante los ejercicios anuales llamados «Ejercicios León Africano 13», en los que participaban por primera vez miembros del ejército alemán. Dichos ejercicios militares incluían el entrenamiento de miembros del ejército marroquí con aviones no tripulados. El ejército marroquí es una fuerza ocupante de los territorios del Sáhara Occidental que, según numerosas organizaciones internacionales, viola sistemáticamente los derechos humanos.

El empleo de drones en conflictos armados acarrea numerosos problemas jurídicos a la hora de determinar las responsabilidades legales en materia de crímenes de guerra. Sin embargo, en el marco de este ejercicio, dos países miembros de la OTAN han estado entrenando a unidades militares marroquíes en el manejo de este tipo de equipamiento militar, pese a conocer el carácter invasor de dichas fuerzas. El entrenamiento con este tipo de equipamiento supone un nuevo obstáculo en la búsqueda de una salida pacífica al conflicto del Sáhara Occidental, puesto que refuerza al ejército invasor pese a tratarse del ejército de un Estado que incumple el Derecho internacional y viola los derechos humanos. Con los drones de combate en sus manos, el ejército marroquí podrá continuar asesinando y violando derechos de manera totalmente impune.

— ¿Considera la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante que el entrenamiento en el empleo de drones del ejército marroquí puede implicar un mayor número de violaciones de derechos humanos en el Sáhara Occidental que queden totalmente impunes?

— ¿Piensa pedir explicaciones a Alemania por haber participado en un ejercicio militar en el que colabora con una fuerza invasora que ocupa ilegalmente los territorios del Sáhara Occidental y viola sistemáticamente los derechos humanos y el Derecho internacional?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(8 de julio de 2013)

La AR/VP no tiene información sobre una posible intención de Marruecos de utilizar «drones» para cometer violaciones de los derechos humanos en el Sáhara Occidental.

Según la información disponible, el ejercicio no implicó ninguna violación del Derecho internacional y, como confirma su Señoría, tuvo lugar en el territorio de Marruecos. Por lo tanto, la AR/VP no tiene intención de pedir explicaciones al Gobierno alemán.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005592/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Moroccan army drone training

Recently, US marines organised a so-called 'small unmanned flying vehicle familiarisation course' in Agadir (Morocco). Members of the US army, the Moroccan army and the German army participated in the course.

The course was conducted during the annual 'Exercise African Lion 13' exercises, in which members of the German army were participating for the first time. These military exercises included training members of the Moroccan army to use unmanned aircraft. The Moroccan army is an occupying force in the territories of Western Sahara which, according to many international organisations, systematically violates human rights.

The use of drones in armed conflicts gives rise to various legal problems when it comes to determining legal responsibilities in terms of war crimes. However, as part of this exercise, two NATO member countries have been training Moroccan military units in the use of this kind of military equipment, despite knowing that these are invading forces. Training with this kind of equipment constitutes yet another obstacle to finding a peaceful outcome to the conflict in Western Sahara, as it strengthens the invading army even though this army belongs to a State which does not comply with international law and which violates human rights. With the combat drones in its hands, the Moroccan army will be able to continue attacking and violating rights with total impunity.

— Does the Vice-President/High Representative believe that training the Moroccan army in the use of drones could lead to more unpunished human rights violations in Western Sahara?

— Does she intend to ask Germany to provide an explanation for its participation in a military exercise in which it collaborated with an invading force which is illegally occupying the territory of Western Sahara and systematically violating human rights and international law?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

The HR/VP has no information about any intention of Morocco to use drones to commit human rights violations in Western Sahara.

According to the information available, the exercise did not entail any violation of international law and, as the Honourable Member confirmed, the exercise took place on the territory of Morocco. Therefore, the HR/VP does not intend to request explanations from the German Government.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005593/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(20 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Progetti LIFE e uccisione di animali selvatici

Nel sito del Programma LIFE, nella sezione «LIFE news features 2013», si trova un articolo ([1]) relativo alle pratiche di caccia sostenibile, apparentemente supportate dallo stesso programma LIFE.

Nel testo si parla di fondi LIFE destinati a attività di protezione delle specie animali a rischio, ma anche di controllo di specie invasive (come il Nyctereutes procyonoides, cioè il cosiddetto cane procione o raccoon dog nei Paesi nordeuropei) e di progetti che vedono coinvolte associazioni venatorie.

Può la Commissione precisare se attualmente siano in corso — e se in passato vi siano stati — progetti cofinanziati dall'Unione europea attraverso il programma LIFE che prevedono l'uccisione tramite i cacciatori di determinate specie animali e, in caso di risposta positiva, specificare quali siano questi progetti e a quanto ammontano i fondi europei erogati per la loro realizzazione?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(10 luglio 2013)

Tra i progetti finanziati dall'Unione europea in materia di gestione e controllo della popolazione di animali selvatici attuati da o in collaborazione con i cacciatori, rientrano i seguenti:

LIFE09 NAT/SE/000344 — Gestione del cane procione invasivo nei paesi del nord Europa. Il progetto è attuato dall'Associazione svedese per la caccia e la gestione della fauna selvatica. Dotazione: 5 318 278 EUR; contributo dell'UE: 2 659 139 EUR.

LIFE09 NAT/UK/000020 — Reintroduzione dell'otarda (Otis tarda) nell'Inghilterra meridionale. Il progetto è svolto in collaborazione con i guardiacaccia che si occupano della gestione delle volpi. Dotazione: 2 182 175 EUR; contributo dell'UE: 1 636 631 EUR.

LIFE08 NAT/UK/000204 — Conservazione degli habitat e delle specie del machair in una serie di siti Natura in Scozia. Il progetto prevede una diminuzione del numero delle oche selvatiche non migratorie. Dotazione: 2 735 031 EUR; contributo dell'UE: 1 367 515,00 EUR.

LIFE09 NAT/LT/000581 — Sviluppo di una rete ecologica pilota grazie alle aree Nature Frame nel sud della Lituania. Il progetto è svolto in collaborazione con i cacciatori locali responsabili per la riduzione del numero di predatori delle specie bersaglio: volpi e cani procioni. Dotazione: 766 260 EUR; contributo dell'UE: 381 510 EUR.

LIFE11 NAT/PL/000428 — Protezione attiva delle popolazioni di animali delle aree pianeggianti di Capercaillie nella foresta di Bory Dolnośląskie e nella foresta vergine di Augustowska. Il progetto prevede una riduzione del numero di volpi, cani procioni, visoni americani, tassi europei e procioni mediante il subappalto dei servizi di caccia. Dotazione: 5 312 007 EUR; contributo dell'UE: 2 656 003 EUR.

Si noti che in tutti i progetti citati, la gestione e il controllo della popolazione di specie selezionate sono solo due di numerose misure adottate per conseguire obiettivi di tutela ambientale.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/news/newsletter/archive2013/documents/ln0413.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005593/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: LIFE projects and killing of wild animals

The 'LIFE news features 2013' section of the LIFE Programme's website contains an article ([1]) on sustainable hunting practices, which LIFE itself apparently supports.

The article talks not only about LIFE funds for activities to protect endangered animal species, but also about the control of invasive species (such as *Nyctereutes procyonoides*, or the raccoon dog) and projects involving hunting associations.

Can the Commission say whether any projects co-financed by the European Union through the LIFE Programme and involving the killing of certain animal species by hunters are currently being carried out or have been carried out in the past, and if so, can it name those projects and specify the amount of EU funding allocated to them?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(10 July 2013)

Among the projects funded by the European Union which involve population management and control of wild animals and are implemented by or in cooperation with hunters, are the following:

LIFE09 NAT/SE/000344 — Management of the invasive Raccoon Dog in the north-European countries. The project is implemented by Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management. Budget: EUR 5 318 278; EU contribution EUR 2 659 139.

LIFE09 NAT/UK/000020 — Reintroducing the great bustard Otis tarda to southern England. The project cooperates with gamekeepers responsible for managing foxes. Budget: EUR 2 182 175; EU contribution 1 636 631.

LIFE08 NAT/UK/000204 — Conserving machair habitats and species in a suite of Scottish Natura sites. The project involves reduction of the number of non-migratory greylag geese. Budget: EUR 2 735 031; EU contribution 1 367 515.00.

LIFE09 NAT/LT/000581 — Development of Pilot Ecological Network through Nature Frame Areas in Southern Lithuania. The project cooperates with local hunters responsible for reducing the numbers of predators on targeted species: foxes and racoon dogs. Budget: EUR 766 260; EU contribution EUR 381 510.

LIFE11 NAT/PL/000428 — Active protection of lowland populations of Capercaillie in the Bory Dolnośląskie Forest and Augustowska Primeval Forest. The project involves reduction of numbers of foxes, racoon dogs, American minks, European badgers and racoons through subcontracting the hunting services. Budget: EUR 5 312 007; EU contribution EUR 2 656 003.

It should be noted that in case of all the abovementioned projects population management and control of selected species is only one of several measures carried out to achieve nature conservation objectives.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/news/newsletter/archive2013/documents/ln0413.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005594/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Medidas para atualizar, simplificar e fortalecer a cadeia agroalimentar na Europa

Considerando que:

— As normas europeias relativas à saúde e segurança na cadeira agroalimentar encontram-se, atualmente, dispersas por 70 atos legislativos.

— A Comissão apresentou uma proposta que visa reduzir para 50 o número de atos legislativos sobre a matéria, simplificando as regras aplicáveis à cadeia alimentar.

Pergunto à Comissão:

1. Quais são os principais elementos deste pacote de medidas?

2. Quando se estima que a nova legislação entre em vigor?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(11 de julho de 2013)

O reexame da legislação relativa à cadeia agroalimentar visa apresentar um pacote legislativo modernizado e simplificado em matéria de saúde animal, fitossanidade, material de reprodução vegetal, controlos oficiais e despesas da Comissão, a fim de reforçar a aplicação das normas de higiene e de segurança para toda a cadeia agroalimentar.

Os principais elementos deste pacote de medidas estão descritos pormenorizadamente no sítio:
http://wcmcom-ec-europa-eu-wip.wcm3vue.cec.eu.int:8080/dgs/health_consumer/pressroom/animal-plant-health_en.htm

Os debates dos legisladores sobre as propostas da Comissão começaram agora, pelo que a Comissão não está em posição de prever a data de entrada em vigor dos diferentes elementos do pacote, o que dependerá da data de adoção de cada regulamento.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005594/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Measures to update, simplify and strengthen the agri-food chain in Europe

In view of the following:

— the fact that European health and safety regulations relating to the agri-food chain are currently spread across 70 pieces of legislation;

— the fact that the Commission has tabled a proposal aimed at reducing the number of pieces of legislation on this issue to 50, thereby simplifying the rules applicable to the food chain.

Can the Commission state:

1. What are the main elements of this package of measures?

2. When does it estimate that the new legislation will come into force?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(11 July 2013)

The revision of the agri-food chain legislation aims to deliver a modernised and simplified legislative package for animal health, plant health, plant reproductive material, official controls and Commission expenditure, in order to strengthen the enforcement of health and safety standards for the whole agri-food chain.

The main elements of this package of measures are described in detail at:
http://wcmcom-ec-europa-eu-wip.wcm3vue.cec.eu.int:8080/dgs/health_consumer/pressroom/animal-plant-health_en.htm

The legislator's discussions on the Commission proposals having just begun, the Commission is not in a position to predict the date of entry into force of the different parts of the package, which will depend on the date of adoption of each Regulation.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005595/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Reduções de comissões interbancárias não inclui Portugal

Considerando que:

— A *Visa Europe* propôs reduzir entre 40 % e 60 % as comissões interbancárias que aplica aos pagamentos feitos com cartões de crédito;

— A decisão da *Visa Europe* surge na sequência da interpelação da Comissão que, a 31 de julho de 2012, considerou que as comissões interbancárias multilaterais da Visa podiam restringir a competitividade entre os bancos e violar as regras da concorrência;

— No entanto, entre os países abrangidos pela decisão da *Visa Europe* não figura Portugal;

— Portugal continua a ter das taxas mais altas da Europa, o que prejudica todos os setores de atividade que usam os cartões bancários como meio de pagamento, retirando competitividade à economia nacional.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Como analisa a decisão da *Visa Europe* ao não incluir Portugal nos países abrangidos pela redução das comissões interbancárias que são aplicáveis aos pagamentos feitos com cartões de crédito?

Resposta dada por Joaquín Almunia em nome da Comissão
(16 de julho de 2013)

Os processos contra as comissões interbancárias que são aplicáveis aos pagamentos feitos com cartões de crédito da *Visa Europe* ([1]) e os compromissos propostos pela *Visa Europe* incluem comissões interbancárias transfronteiras e comissões interbancárias nacionais que são fixadas diretamente pela *Visa Europe*. Atualmente este não é o caso de Portugal, onde as comissões interbancárias para pagamentos feitos com cartões de crédito Visa são fixadas pela Visa Portugal, uma associação de emissores e adquirentes de cartões Visa.

As comissões interbancárias em Portugal, que se encontram entre as mais elevadas da UE, não são, por conseguinte, abrangidas diretamente pelos compromissos propostos. No entanto, a *Visa Europe* propôs também reformar o seu sistema de tal modo que os bancos poderão aplicar as comissões interbancárias transfronteiras aos seus clientes (comerciantes) noutros países («aquisição transfronteiras») ([2]). Na prática, isto significa que um operador comercial pode beneficiar de comissões interbancárias transfronteiras ao escolher um banco noutro país do EEE. Sob a pressão concorrencial criada por este compromisso, é possível que os bancos membros da Visa Portugal decidam reduzir as comissões interbancárias nacionais que cobram para as operações em Portugal.

Os processos da Comissão e o acórdão do Tribunal Geral no processo da MasterCard ([3]) prestam igualmente orientações às autoridades nacionais de concorrência se estes decidirem investigar as comissões interbancárias nacionais.

Para além da aplicação das suas regras antitrust, a Comissão adotou em 3 de outubro de 2012, o Ato para o Mercado Único II ([4]) propondo um conjunto de medidas para desenvolver o mercado único. Uma eventual proposta legislativa que trata da questão das comissões interbancárias para pagamentos por cartão foi considerada como uma das prioridades para o segundo trimestre de 2013. A Comissão está atualmente a analisar a possibilidade de propor legislação em matéria de comissões interbancárias.

([1]) Foi dirigida uma comunicação de objeções suplementar à Visa Europe em julho de 2012.
([2]) Ver MEMO/13/431.
([3]) Acórdão do Tribunal Geral no processo T-111/08, MasterCard Incorporated/Comissão.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/smact/index_pt.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005595/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Interbank fee reduction does not cover Portugal

In view of:

— the fact that Visa Europe is proposing to reduce interbank fees applied to credit card payments by 40% to 60%;

— the fact that Visa Europe's decision follows the Commission statement of 31 July 2012 that it objected to Visa's multilateral bank fees, since they could restrict interbank competitiveness and breach competition rules;

— the fact, however, that Portugal is not one of the countries covered by Visa Europe's decision;

— the fact that Portugal still has the highest fees in Europe, which is damaging for all business sectors that use credit cards as a means of payment, making the national economy less competitive.

What is the Commission's view of Visa Europe's decision not to include Portugal in the countries for which the interbank fees applied to credit card payments have been reduced?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(16 July 2013)

The proceedings against Visa Europe's credit card interchange fees ([1]) and the commitments proposed by Visa Europe cover cross-border interchange fees and domestic interchange fees that are set directly by Visa Europe. Currently this is not the case in Portugal where the interchange fees for Visa card transactions are set by Visa Portugal, an association of Visa card issuers and acquirers.

Interchange fees in Portugal, which are among the highest in the EU, are therefore not directly covered by the proposed commitments. However, Visa Europe has also proposed to reform its system in such a way that banks will be able to apply the cross-border interchange fees for their clients (merchants) in other countries ('cross-border acquiring') ([2]). In practice, this means that a merchant can benefit from cross-border interchange fees by choosing a bank in another country in the EEA. Under the competitive pressure created by this commitment it is possible that Visa Portugal's member banks will decide to reduce the domestic interchange fees that they charge for transactions in Portugal.

The Commission's cases and the General Court's judgment in the MasterCard case ([3]) also provide guidance to national competition authorities if they decide to investigate domestic interchange fees.

In addition to its antitrust enforcement, on 3 October 2012 the Commission adopted the Single Market Act II ([4]) proposing a set of actions to develop the Single Market. A possible legislative proposal addressing the issue of interchange fees for card payments was identified as one of the priorities with a target date of the second quarter of 2013. The Commission is currently analysing the possibility of proposing legislation on interchange fees.

([1]) A Supplementary Statement of Objections was addressed to Visa Europe in July 2012.
([2]) See MEMO/13/431.
([3]) Judgment of the General Court in Case T-111/08 *MasterCard Incorporated, e.a.* v *Commission*.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/smact/index_en.htm

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005596/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Língua Portuguesa é o quinto idioma mais utilizado na Internet

Considerando que:

— Segundo a União Internacional de Telecomunicações (UIT), a língua portuguesa é já o quinto idioma mais utilizado na Internet, tendo ultrapassado o árabe, o francês e o alemão;

— Isto significa que, atualmente, há já mais utilizadores lusófonos na Internet do que os 75 milhões de alemães, os 65 milhões que usam a língua árabe ou os 60 milhões que utilizam o francês;

— Os especialistas referem que, em poucos anos, o português poderá superar o japonês, hoje com 99 milhões de utilizadores na rede e que, atualmente, ocupa a quarta posição.

Pergunto à Comissão:

Que medidas têm sido adotadas pela Comissão para defender e promover a divulgação da língua portuguesa na UE e no mundo, como uma língua europeia fundamental e útil, à luz da sua implementação em todos os continentes e ao número de falantes?

Resposta dada por Androulla Vassiliou em nome da Comissão
(19 de julho de 2013)

O objetivo da política de multilinguismo da Comissão consiste em apoiar e complementar políticas educativas nacionais, com vista a alcançar o objetivo de permitir que todos os cidadãos europeus comuniquem na sua língua materna, mais duas línguas estrangeiras (objetivo de Barcelona). A Comissão coopera com os Estados-Membros e as partes interessadas, em conformidade com o princípio da subsidiariedade, para os apoiar nos seus esforços a este respeito, nomeadamente facilitando o intercâmbio de boas práticas. Promover a aprendizagem de uma língua específica como a língua portuguesa em detrimento das outras está, por conseguinte, fora do âmbito de competência da UE.

Neste contexto, a Comissão tem trabalhado desde 2002 com os Estados-Membros, na prossecução do objetivo de Barcelona, em especial através do desenvolvimento de um indicador de competência linguística ([1]), através da definição de ações estratégicas e de recomendações e pela inclusão das competências em línguas estrangeiras no grupo das competências essenciais para a aprendizagem ao longo da vida.

O programa de aprendizagem ao longo da vida ([2]) cofinanciou projetos e redes multilaterais e medidas de acompanhamento desde 2007 ([3]) no contexto de um montante médio de 10 milhões de euros por ano. Dos 1 800 projetos que receberam o Selo Europeu para as Línguas ([4]) desde 1999, 79 têm a língua portuguesa como língua-alvo.

([1]) http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11083_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm#
([3]) http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/results_projects/project_compendia_en.php
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/languages/european-language-label/index_pt.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005596/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Portuguese is the fifth most used language online

In view of the following:

— the fact that according to the International Telecommunications Union, Portuguese is the fifth most used language online, having overtaken Arabic, French and German;

— the fact that this means that there are more Portuguese speakers online than the 75 million German speakers, the 65 million using Arabic or the 60 million French users;

— the fact that experts say that, within a few years, Portuguese could overtake Japanese, which is currently in fourth place with 99 million online users.

Can the Commission state:

What steps has it been taking to advocate and promote the dissemination of Portuguese within the EU and worldwide as a core European language that is useful both because it is established on almost every continent and because of the number of people who speak it?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(19 July 2013)

The aim of the multilingualism policy of the Commission is to support and complement national educational policies aimed at reaching the objective of enabling every European citizen to communicate in one's mother tongue plus two foreign languages (Barcelona objective). The Commission works with Member States and stakeholders, in line with the principle of subsidiarity, to assist them in their efforts in this regard, notably by facilitating the exchange of good practices. Fostering the learning of one particular language such as Portuguese over the others is therefore beyond the remit of EU competence.

Within this context, the Commission has worked since 2002 with Member States towards the Barcelona objective, in particular, by developing an indicator of language competence ([1]), by setting out strategic action and recommendations, and by including skills in foreign languages among the key competences for lifelong learning.

The Lifelong Learning Programme ([2]) has (co)financed multilateral projects and networks and accompanying measures since 2007 ([3]) for an average amount of EUR 10 million per year. Of the 1800 projects that were awarded the European Language Label ([4]) since 1999, 79 have Portuguese as target language.

([1]) http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11083_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm
([3]) http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/results_projects/project_compendia_en.php.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/languages/european-language-label/index_en.htm

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005597/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Tarifas aduaneiras em Angola poderão subir para 50 % ainda este ano

Considerando que:

— Angola poderá aumentar as tarifas aduaneiras de 30 % para 50 % ainda este ano;

— De acordo com a agência Bloomberg, que divulgou, igualmente, uma entrevista com o ministro da Economia de Angola, o objetivo da introdução desta medida é proteger o comércio local.

Pergunto à Comissão:

1. Como analisa a introdução desta medida protecionista?

2. Não considera serem estas medidas contrárias ao espírito da Organização Mundial de Comércio?

Resposta dada por Karel De Gucht em nome da Comissão
(12 de julho de 2013)

Angola é membro da OMC desde 23 de novembro de 1996 e as suas tarifas aduaneiras estão vinculadas aos compromissos que assumiu como membro da OMC. Tais tarifas constituem taxas consolidadas e um membro da OMC não pode aumentar os direitos para além destas taxas consolidadas.

As mercadorias mencionadas no artigo de imprensa referem-se à cerveja, à água, aos refrigerantes, aos produtos agrícolas e aos animais.

A pauta aduaneira de Angola conta com 5 378 posições, das quais apenas 36 estão vinculadas a um direito inferior a 30 % (a 10 ou 15 % da taxa do direito).

As restantes rubricas pautais estão vinculadas a direitos que vão de 55 a 80 %, o que significa que o país pode aumentar os seus direitos até essas taxas.

Na realidade, as taxas de nação mais favorecida aplicadas em Angola são executadas até um máximo de 30 % dos direitos no que diz respeito a 147 rubricas, estando os restantes direitos abaixo desse limiar. Até à data, o país satisfaz os compromissos assumidos perante as concessões da OMC e está autorizado a aumentar os seus direitos aplicados enquanto estes permanecerem abaixo das suas taxas consolidadas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005597/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: Customs duties in Angola could rise to 50% this year

In view of the following:

— the fact that Angola could increase customs duties from 30% to 50% this year;

— the fact that Bloomberg, which has also published details of an interview with theAngolan Minister for the Economy, is reporting that the purpose of introducing thismeasure is to protect local businesses.

Can the Commission state:

1. What is its view of the introduction of this protectionist measure?

2. Does it not consider these measures contrary to the spirit of the World Trade Organisation?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

Angola has been a member of the WTO since 23 November 1996 and is binding its tariffs under the commitments it has taken as a WTO member. Such tariffs are called bound rates and a WTO member cannot raise duties beyond these bound rates.

The goods mentioned in the press article refer to beer, water, soft drinks, agricultural products and livestock.

The Angolan tariff schedule counts 5 378 tariff lines, amongst which only 36 lines are bound at a duty below 30% (at 10 or 15% of duty rate).

The rest of its tariff lines are bound to duties going from 55 to 80%, which means that the country is allowed to raise its duties up to those rates.

In reality, the Most Favoured Nation applied rates in Angola are implemented up to a maximum of 30% of duties for 147 lines, the rest of duties being under that threshold. So far, the country meets its commitments to the WTO concessions and is allowed to raise its applied duties as long as they stay below their bound rates.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005598/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Rede europeia para a promoção da literacia

Considerando que:

— Já foi lançado o processo de admissão de candidaturas para a criação de uma rede europeia para a promoção da literacia à luz do critério de referência do Quadro Europeu de Cooperação no domínio da Educação e Formação 2020;

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Qual a percentagem de jovens com um fraco aproveitamento em leitura, matemática e ciências, sabendo que, até 2020, tal deverá ser inferior a 15 %?

Resposta dada por Andoulla Vassiliou em nome da Comissão
(22 de julho de 2013)

De forma a estimular os esforços políticos para reduzir a percentagem de alunos com fraco aproveitamento nas áreas da leitura, da matemática e das ciências, em maio de 2009 o Conselho fixou o valor de referência para essas competências de base, ou seja, a redução da percentagem de alunos com fraco aproveitamento para menos de 15 % até 2020 ([1]). Este valor de referência contribui para avaliar os progressos dos Estados-Membros na melhoria dos resultados escolares e funciona como um alerta para a existência de problemas estruturais nos seus sistemas de ensino. O valor de referência baseia-se nos dados recolhidos através do Programa da OCDE para a Avaliação Internacional de Avaliação dos Estudantes (PISA). Os últimos dados disponíveis são os do estudo de 2009. Os dados do estudo PISA 2012 serão publicados em dezembro de 2013.

([1]) Este valor de referência decorre do estudo PISA, que distingue entre os vários níveis de desempenho. Os alunos que não conseguem atingir o nível 2 são considerados inadequadamente preparados para os desafios da sociedade do conhecimento e da aprendizagem ao longo da vida. Consequentemente, o nível de referência mede a percentagem de alunos com competências em leitura, matemática e ciências a nível 1 ou inferior.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005598/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(20 May 2013)

Subject: European Policy Network of National Literacy Organisations

In view of the following:

— the fact that the call for proposals on creating a European Policy Network of National Literacy Organisations has already been published in light of the European education and training framework benchmark 2020.

Can the Commission state:

What percentage of young people perform poorly in reading, mathematics and science, given that this rate must be below 15% by 2020?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(22 July 2013)

In order to help stimulate policy efforts to reduce the share of low-performing pupils in the areas of reading, maths and science, in May 2009 the Council set a benchmark for these basic skills, namely to decrease the proportion of low achievers to less than 15% by 2020 ([1]). This benchmark helps to assess the progress of Member States in improving educational outcomes and acts as a pointer for structural problems within their education systems. The benchmark is based on data collected through the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). The latest available data is from the 2009 survey. Data from the 2012 round of the PISA survey will be published in December 2013.

([1]) This benchmark derives from the PISA survey, which distinguishes between various levels of performance. Pupils who fail to reach level 2 are considered to be inadequately prepared for the challenges of the knowledge society and for lifelong learning. Therefore, the benchmark measures the share of pupils with reading, maths and science proficiency at level 1 or below.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005600/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Eleições legislativas na Bulgária

Considerando que:

— Os partidos políticos na Bulgária ofereceram entre 50 a 75 euros aos eleitores por cada voto nas últimas eleições legislativas do passado domingo;

— O Jornal Búlgaro «Standart» afirmou, com base em fontes do Ministério do Interior, que emissários de diversos partidos visitaram diferentes localidades, incluindo guetos de etnia cigana, para recolher faturas com a promessa de que as pagarão se os eleitores votarem «adequadamente».

Pergunto à Comissão:

1. Como analisa o caso descrito?

2. De que informações dispõe a Comissão que possam confirmar as referidas irregularidades?

Resposta dada por Viviane Reding em nome da Comissão
(4 de setembro de 2013)

A realização de eleições livres constitui a expressão mais elementar da democracia, devendo as eleições na UE respeitar as mais elevadas normas democráticas. É importante que exista um forte empenho dos Estados-Membros na garantia dessas normas democráticas.

Porém, a Comissão não tem poderes para controlar a realização de eleições legislativas nacionais na UE. Os Estados-Membros são competentes para determinar as condições em que se realizam tais eleições, em conformidade com as normas internacionais que os vinculam, cabendo às autoridades administrativas e judiciais nacionais competentes assegurar o respeito dessas normas. Qualquer violação da lei deve ser punida pelas autoridades responsáveis pela aplicação da lei.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005600/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Parliamentary elections in Bulgaria

In view of the fact that:

— political parties in Bulgaria offered voters EUR 50 to EUR 75 per vote in last Sunday's parliamentary elections;

— the Bulgarian newspaper *Standart* has reported, on the basis of Interior Ministry sources, that representatives of several parties visited various locations, including ethnic Roma ghettoes, to collect invoices with a promise to pay if voters cast their votes 'appropriately'.

Can the Commission state:

1. What is its view of the case described?

2. Does the Commission have any information that could confirm these irregularities?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2013)

Free elections are a basic expression of democracy and elections in the EU must follow the highest democratic standards. A strong commitment by the Member States is important to guarantee these democratic standards.

However, the Commission has no power to monitor the conduct of national parliamentary elections in the EU. Member States are competent to determine the conditions for the conduct of such elections in line with the international norms by which they are bound and it is up to the competent national administrative and judicial authorities to ensure compliance with these norms. Any violations of the law are for the law enforcement authorities to pursue.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005601/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Banco estrangeiro atua sem licença em Portugal

Considerando que:

— O *Holding Bank Finance and Investment Corporation*, entidade que tem vindo a apresentar-se na área privada, atua no país sem autorização do Banco de Portugal e não está habilitado a exercer uma atividade financeira.

— O Banco de Portugal esclareceu que a Holding Bank não está autorizada a receber depósitos ou outros fundos reembolsáveis, nem tão pouco a conceder crédito ou a exercer qualquer outra atividade financeira reservada às instituições sujeitas a supervisão.

Pergunto à Comissão:

De que informações dispõe sobre o *Holding Bank Finance and Investment Corporation*?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(4 de julho de 2013)

Não faz parte das competências da Comissão recolher informações sobre empresas locais específicas, tal como a mencionada na pergunta. O Banco de Portugal na sua qualidade de supervisor do sistema financeiro português acompanha os desenvolvimentos no setor financeiro e emitiu um alerta relativamente à Holding Bank Finance and Investment Corporation. O conteúdo do alerta pode ser consultado diretamente no sítio Web do Banco de Portugal através do seguinte endereço:
http://www.bportugal.pt/pt-PT/OBancoeoEurosistema/ComunicadoseNotasdeInformacao/Paginas/combp20130508-1.aspx

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005601/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Foreign bank operating in Portugal without a licence

In view of the fact that:

— the Holding Bank Finance and Investment Corporation, an organisation that has been active in the field of private banking, does not have Bank of Portugal authorisation to operate in the country's financial sector;

— the Bank of Portugal clarified that the Holding Bank Finance and Investment Corporation is not authorised to receive deposits or other funds, or to grant credit or exercise any other financial activity reserved for institutions subject to oversight.

Can the Commission state:

What information does it have about the Holding Bank Finance and Investment Corporation?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(4 July 2013)

It does not belong to the competencies of the Commission to collect information about specific local companies such as the one mentioned in the question. Banco de Portugal in his capacity of Portuguese financial system supervisor monitors developments in the financial sector and has issued a warning about the Holding Bank Finance and Investment Corporation. The content of the warning can be viewed directly on Banco de Portugal website under the following web address:
http://www.bportugal.pt/pt-PT/OBancoeoEurosistema/ComunicadoseNotasdeInformacao/Paginas/combp20130508-1.aspx

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005602/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Atos delegados e de execução

Considerando que:

— Através da delegação de poderes na Comissão Europeia, o legislador pode concentrar-se nas questões e escolhas políticas fundamentais e entregar o tratamento de outras questões não essenciais;

— O artigo 290.° do TFUE enquadra as situações em que é possível recorrer à delegação, estabelecendo, igualmente, as condições em que o legislador pode exercer um controlo sobre o exercício de poderes conferidos à Comissão;

— Os Estados-Membros são responsáveis pela execução dos atos jurídicos da União, mas, segundo o artigo 291.° do TFUE, quando sejam necessárias condições uniformes de execução, a competência para a execução destes atos deve ser atribuída à Comissão, os designados «atos de execução»;

— A decisão de, num caso concreto, utilizar um ato delegado ou ato de execução, determina se o Parlamento Europeu terá ou não a possibilidade de se pronunciar sobre essas medidas, respetivamente, uma vez que, num ato de execução, o Parlamento Europeu e o Conselho poderão, a qualquer momento, indicar à Comissão que o projeto de execução excede as competências de execução contempladas no ato de base, em cujo caso a Comissão deverá rever o projeto de ato. No entanto, a Comissão Europeia pode decidir manter o projeto de ato de execução.

Pergunto à Comissão:

1. Como avalia a situação de, frequentemente, a Comissão Europeia utilizar atos de execução quando os critérios aplicáveis aos atos delegados, estabelecidos no artigo 290.° do TFUE, estão claramente preenchidos?

2. Quais as principais benefícios apontados pela Comissão Europeia com o desaparecimentodo anterior sistema da «Comitologia»?

Resposta dada por Maroš Šefčovič em nome da Comissão
(3 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão apenas pode executar atos delegados ou de execução quando assim esteja previsto num ato legislativo tal como adotado pelo legislador. Ao elaborar propostas legislativas, a Comissão propõe que o ato seja classificado como delegado ou de execução com base numa análise cuidada da natureza do poder a ser conferido à Comissão tal como dispõem os critérios jurídicos do Tratado. O Tratado de Lisboa clarifica e sistematiza a natureza diversa dos poderes delegados e de execução que antes eram tratados no âmbito do mesmo quadro, criando dois quadros jurídicos diferentes dotados de diversos procedimentos que refletem esta distinção.

A utilização incorreta dos critérios estabelecidos nos artigos 290.° e 291.° do TFUE pode não só afetar a legalidade do ato legislativo de base mas também incidir sobre a validade dos atos subsequentes adotados pela Comissão. Por conseguinte, se o legislador conferir poderes de execução à Comissão quando lhe deveria ter conferido poderes delegados, a Comissão não poderá utilizar tais poderes em conformidade com o TFUE. No contexto da regulamentação em matéria de produtos biocidas ([1]), a Comissão decidiu pedir esclarecimentos ao Tribunal quanto à delimitação entre os artigos 290.° e 291.° do TFUE (ver o processo pendente Comissão/Conselho e Parlamento, C-427/12).

([1]) Regulamento (UE) n.° 528/2012 do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 22 de maio de 2012, relativo à disponibilização no mercado e à utilização de produtos biocidas (JO L 167 de 27.6.2012, p. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005602/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Delegated and implementing acts

In view of the fact that:

— by delegating powers to the Commission, Parliament can focus on core political issues and choices and hand over the tackling of other non-essential issues;

— Article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) sets out the situations that can be delegated, while also establishing the conditions under which the legislator can control the exercise of powers conferred on the Commission;

— the Member States are responsible for implementing legally binding EU acts, but Article 291 TFEU states that, where uniform conditions are needed, those acts are to confer implementing powers on the Commission, known as 'implementing acts';

— the decision to use a delegated act or an implementing act in a specific case determines whether or not Parliament will be able to have a say on these measures because, with an implementing act, Parliament and the Council can, at any time, indicate to the Commission that the draft implementing act exceeds the implementing powers covered by the act on which it is based, in which case the Commission has to review the draft act. However, the Commission can decide not to change the implementing act.

Can the Commission state:

1. What is its view of the situation whereby the Commission frequently uses implementing acts when the criteria applicable to delegated acts, as laid down in Article 290 TFEU, have clearly been met?

2. What does it consider to be the main benefits of the scrapping of the old 'comitology' system?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(3 July 2013)

The Commission can only use implementing or delegated acts where it is so provided in a legislative act as adopted by the legislator. In drafting legislative proposals, the Commission proposes that an act be classified as a delegated act or an implementing act based on a careful analysis of the nature of the power to be conferred on the Commission based on the Treaty's legal criteria. The Lisbon Treaty clarifies and systematises the differing nature of implementing and delegated powers which were previously treated under the same framework by creating two different legal frameworks with different procedures that reflect this distinction.

A misuse of the criteria set out in Articles 290 and 291 TFEU might not only affect the legality of the basic legislative act but it could also impinge on the validity of subsequent acts adopted by the Commission. As a consequence, if the legislator confers implementing powers on the Commission where delegated powers should have been conferred, the Commission would not be able to make use of those powers in compliance with the TFEU. In the context of the regulation on biocidal products ([1]), the Commission decided to seek clarification by the Court on the issue of delineation between Articles 290 and 291 TFEU (see pending case Commission v. Council and Parliament, C-427/12).

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 528/2012 of the European Parliament and the Council of 22 May 2012 concerning the making available on the market and use of biocidal products, OJ L 167, 27.06.2012, p. 1.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005603/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Maior transparência e facilidade na abertura de contas bancárias na UE

Considerando que:

— A Comissão Europeia apresentou, recentemente, uma proposta de diretiva com o objetivo de tornar as contas bancárias mais baratas, transparentes e acessíveis a todos;

— Existe uma fraca concorrência dentro da UE, uma vez que não existe uma mobilidade equivalente para os cidadãos, que se veem muitas vezes impossibilitados de abrir uma conta noutro Estado-Membro ou de mudar facilmente de um banco para o outro;

Pergunto à Comissão:

Quais as metas que a Comissão pretende atingir com a proposta apresentada?

Resposta dada por Michel Barnier em nome da Comissão
(11 de julho de 2013)

Um dos objetivos fundamentais da proposta de diretiva recentemente adotada relativa a contas de pagamento ([1]), consiste em garantir o acesso a contas de pagamento para todos os cidadãos da UE, independentemente do seu país de residência e facilitar a sua mobilidade.

A proposta contém uma cláusula de não discriminação que impedirá os prestadores de serviços de pagamento de recusar o acesso a uma conta de pagamento aos consumidores em função do seu lugar de residência ou da sua nacionalidade. Por conseguinte, o consumidor, que reside legalmente na UE terá o direito de abrir uma conta de pagamento junto de entidades situadas em qualquer ponto da União Europeia.

Além disso, a proposta irá facilitar o procedimento relativo à mudança de contas de pagamento, tanto a nível nacional como transfronteiras. A diretiva proposta contém um procedimento faseado para a mudança, que permitirá clarificar as tarefas específicas de cada prestador de serviços de pagamento, as suas responsabilidades ao longo de todo o processo e os prazos para a realização das suas tarefas.

O processo de mudança deve ser realizado no prazo de 15 dias, quando é executado pelos prestadores fornecedores situados no mesmo Estado-Membro e de 30 dias quando envolve prestadores situados em diferentes Estados-Membros.

Além disso, a proposta estabelece requisitos em matéria de apresentação comum das informações relativas às taxas através da introdução de formulários normalizados que serão elaborados utilizando uma terminologia harmonizada, bem como um conjunto de regras para os sítios Web de comparação, a fim de garantir a sua conformidade com os critérios de qualidade estabelecidos na diretiva.

O efeito combinado destas medidas contribuirá para melhorar substancialmente a mobilidade dos clientes em relação às contas de pagamento e contribuirá para promover um mercado único concorrencial no domínio dos serviços financeiros de retalho.

([1]) Diretiva relativa à comparabilidade dos encargos relacionados com as contas de pagamento, à mudança de conta de pagamento e ao acesso a contas de pagamento com características básicas, ver: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/finservices-retail/docs/inclusion/20130506-proposal_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005603/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Increased transparency and ease of opening bank accounts in the EU

In view of the fact that:

— the Commission recently tabled a proposal for a directive aiming to make bank accounts cheaper, more transparent and more accessible to all;

— competition is weak within the EU because Europeans do not have a uniform level of mobility, and they often find it impossible to open an account in another Member State and difficult to change banks.

Can the Commission state:

What are its intended goals from the proposal it has tabled?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(11 July 2013)

One of the key objectives of the recently adopted proposal for a directive on payment accounts ([1]) is to guarantee access to payment accounts for all EU citizens irrespective of their country of residence and to facilitate their mobility.

The proposal contains a non-discrimination clause which will prevent payment service providers from refusing access to a payment account to consumers by reason of their place of residence or nationality. Therefore, a consumer who is legally resident in the EU will be entitled to open a payment account with providers located anywhere in the Union.

Moreover, the proposal will facilitate the procedure for switching payment accounts both nationally and cross-border. The proposed Directive contains a step-by-step procedure for switching, which will clarify the specific tasks of each payment service provider, their responsibilities throughout the process and the deadlines to carry out their tasks.

The switching process must be carried out within 15 days when it is performed by providers located in the same Member State and 30 days when it involves providers located in different Member States.

In addition the proposal establishes common presentation requirements for information on fees by introducing standard form documents to be drafted using harmonised terminology as well as a set of rules for comparison websites in order to ensure compliance with the quality criteria set out in the directive.

The combined effect of these measures will substantially improve customers' mobility with respect to payment accounts and will contribute to foster a competitive single market in the key area of retail financial services.

([1]) Directive on the comparability of fees related to payment accounts, payment account switching and access to payment accounts with basic features , see http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/finservices-retail/docs/inclusion/20130506-proposal_en.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005604/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Portugueses identificam nos cogumelos compostos letais para perigosa bactéria

Considerando oseguinte:

— O estafilococo áureo multirresistente (MRSA) é insensível à maioria dos antibióticos e pode tornar-se uma ameaça para a saúde pública;

— Uma equipa portuguesa mostrou, pela primeira vez, que certos compostos presentes nos cogumelos são eficazes contra o estafilococo áureo multirresistente e já começou também a desvendar o mecanismo de ação desses compostos. Os resultados poderão permitir desenvolver novos medicamentos contra a ação desta bactéria.

— O MRSA é a principal causa de infeções hospitalares no mundo. Já em 2005, a mortalidade anual associada a esta «superbactéria» ultrapassava a do vírus da sida. Mais: estes perigosos micro-organismos também começam a aparecer «na rua», em pessoas saudáveis.

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento desta investigação?

2. Está previsto algum financiamento de apoio à investigação para combate a esta perigosa bactéria?

Resposta dada por Máire Geoghegan-Quinn em nome da Comissão
(8 de julho de 2013)

1. A Comissão está plenamente consciente da ameaça que o Staphylococcus aureus resistente à meticilina representa e da necessidade de desenvolver novos medicamentos para combater a resistência antimicrobiana (RAM). Uma grande variedade de compostos naturais (como as referidas pelo Senhor Deputado) estão a ser analisados na busca de novas pistas para medicamentos.

2. A Comissão apoia uma grande variedade de projetos de investigação que têm por objetivo combater a resistência antimicrobiana, incluindo projetos de investigação que estudam as características e propagação de várias bactérias resistentes, bem como projetos para resolver o problema da falta de novos medicamentos. Este ano, a Comissão está a financiar vários novos projetos de investigação que incidem especificamente sobre o desenvolvimento de medicamentos, vacinas e outras abordagens médicas para tratar infeções resistentes. Além disso, o desenvolvimento de novos medicamentos é incrementado através do programa «New Drugs for Bad Bugs» (Novos medicamentos para bactérias más) da Iniciativa sobre medicamentos inovadores (IMI) ([1]), uma parceria público-privada entre a Comissão Europeia e a Federação Europeia das Associações e Indústrias Farmacêuticas («EFPIA»). Prevê-se que o financiamento da investigação em matéria de resistência antimicrobiana continue a ser uma prioridade no âmbito do programa-quadro horizonte 2020, o próximo programa-quadro de investigação e inovação da UE.

([1]) http://www.imi.europa.eu/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005604/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Portuguese researchers identify compounds lethal to dangerous bacterium in mushrooms

In view of the following:

— the fact that methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is immune to the majority of antibiotics and could become a public health risk;

— the fact that a Portuguese team has shown for the first time that certain compounds present in mushrooms are effective against MRSA and has also already started to uncover these compounds' mechanism of action. The results could enable development of new drugs to combat this bacterium;

— the fact that MRSA is the main cause of hospital infections worldwide. By 2005, the annual death rate from this 'superbacterium' had already exceeded the AIDS virus. Furthermore, these dangerous micro-organisms are also starting to appear 'on the street', amongst healthy people.

Can the Commission state:

1. Is it aware of this research?

2. Is it planning any funding to support the research into combating this dangerous bacterium?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

1. The Commission is fully aware of the threat posed by methicillin-resistant 'Staphylococcus aureus' (MRSA) and the need to develop new drugs to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR). A wide variety of natural compounds (like the ones referred to by the Honourable Member) are currently being investigated in the search for novel drug leads.

2. The Commission supports a multitude of research projects that aim to combat AMR, including research projects that study the characteristics and spread of various resistant bacteria, as well as projects that address the lack of new drugs. This year, the Commission is funding a number of new research projects that focus specifically on the development of drugs, vaccines and alternative medical approaches to treat resistant infections. In addition to this, the development of new drugs is boosted via the 'New Drugs for Bad Bugs' programme of the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) ([1]), a public-private partnership between the European Commission and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA). Research funding for AMR can be expected to continue to be a priority under Horizon 2020, the next EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

([1]) http://www.imi.europa.eu/.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005605/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Maldivas — Violação de direitos humanos

Considerando o seguinte:

— O sistema judiciário das Maldivas, um arquipélago islâmico com uma população de cerca de 400 mil pessoas, tem elementos da «sharia» (lei islâmica) e do direito britânico.

— Uma menor de 15 anos, violada repetidamente pelo padrasto, foi condenada a 100 chibatadas, por ter relações sexuais antes do casamento.

— Segundo dados de 2011, 129 pessoas neste país foram condenadas a chibatadas pelo mesmo crime. Em 90 % dos casos eram mulheres e onze eram menores de idade.

O padrasto, suspeito de violação e da morte do feto gerado pela gravidez da menor, ainda aguarda julgamento, apesar da gravidade do crime.

Assim, pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento da situação referida?

2. Como a avalia?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(16 de agosto de 2013)

A UE está a acompanhar de perto a evolução da situação nas Maldivas incluindo o caso da rapariga de 15 anos condenada a flagelação, apesar de ser vítima de abusos sexuais.

Parece existir uma tendência para o aumento da influência islâmica nas Maldivas, o que está a afetar a política social bem como as medidas tomadas pelas forças da ordem e, apesar de o Governo ter ratificado a Convenção sobre a Eliminação de Todas as Formas de Discriminação contra as Mulheres (CEDAW) e da adoção da lei contra a violência doméstica, em abril de 2012, as mulheres ainda são vítimas de punições cruéis e estranhas. Existe uma resistência à reforma nalguns setores da sociedade e alguns juízes parecem guiar-se mais pela lei da sharia que pela Constituição. A conclusão da transição democrática nas Maldivas exige instituições mais fortes e uma participação internacional a longo prazo através do apoio à modernização do setor da justiça e à governação em geral. Para o efeito, também é necessária uma sociedade civil ativa e moderna.

A UE não está em condições de confirmar os valores relativos a outros casos referidos nas perguntas.

Tal como expresso na sua declaração de 1 de março deste ano ([1]), a AR/VP está consternada com esta sentença, particularmente repugnante tendo em conta o facto de a vítima da violação ser uma criança. A AR/VP reitera a esperança de que o processo seja retirado e a sentença anulada, em consonância com as obrigações internacionais das Maldivas.

([1]) http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/spokes/index_en.htm#top

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005605/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Maldives — Human rights violation

In view of the following:

— the fact that the legal system in the Maldives, an Islamic archipelago with a population of around 400 000, contains elements of Sharia (Islamic law) and of English law;

— the fact that a minor of 15, repeatedly raped by her stepfather, has been sentenced to 100 lashes for having sexual relations before marriage;

— the fact that according to 2011 figures, 129 people in the country have been sentenced to whipping for the same crime. In 90% of cases, they were women and 11 were not of legal age.

the fact that the stepfather, suspected of rape and of killing the foetus resulting from the minor's pregnancy, has still not been brought to justice, despite the seriousness of his crime.

Can the Commission state:

1. Is it aware of the aforementioned situation?

2. What is its assessment of it?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(16 August 2013)

The EU is following closely developments in the Maldives including the case of the 15-year-old girl condemned to flogging despite being a victim of sexual abuse.

It appears that there is a rising trend of Islamist influence in the Maldives, which is affecting social policy as well as the actions taken by the forces of order, and despite the government's ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the passage of the Domestic Violence Bill in April 2012, women and girls still face cruel and unusual punishment. There is a resistance to reform in some quarters, and some judges appear to be guided by Sharia law rather than by the Constitution. The completion of democratic transition in the Maldives requires stronger institutions and long-term international involvement through support for modernisation of the justice sector and governance generally. To that end, it also requires an active and forward-looking civil society.

The EU is not in a position to confirm the figures on other cases referred to in the questions.

As expressed in her statement of March 1 this year ([1]), the HR/VP is appalled by the sentence which is particularly repugnant in view of the fact that the rape victim is a child. The HR/VP would reiterate the hope that the case is withdrawn and the sentence retracted, in line with the Maldives' international obligations.

([1]) http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/spokes/index_en.htm#top

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005606/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Fortalecimento dos partidos neonazis

Considerando o seguinte:

— De acordo com um relatório apresentado em Budapeste, no Congresso Judaico Mundial, a crise económica está a impulsionar o crescimento dos partidos neonazis na Europa, que aproveitam para espalhar uma mensagem de nacionalismo, anticapitalismo e antissemitismo.

— De acordo com este estudo, a situação é de «alerta amarelo» e, com a situação económica a piorar, estes partidos podem ganhar ainda mais força.

Assim, pergunta-se à Comissão:

De que forma interpreta o ressurgimento e fortalecimento de partidos neonazis?

Resposta dada por Viviane Reding em nome da Comissão
(4 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão está a acompanhar de perto a situação descrita pelo Senhor Deputado e está profundamente preocupada com os incidentes racistas ou xenófobos que se verificam na UE.

A Comissão condenou já por diversas vezes todas as formas e manifestações de racismo e xenofobia, que são incompatíveis com os principais valores em que a UE assenta.

De acordo com a Decisão-Quadro 2008/913/JAI do Conselho relativa à luta contra o racismo e a xenofobia, todos os Estados-Membros da UE são obrigados a punir como infração penal a incitação pública intencional à violência ou ao ódio contra um grupo de pessoas ou os seus membros, definido por referência à raça, cor, religião, ascendência ou origem nacional ou étnica. A apologia, negação ou banalização grosseira, pública e intencional, dos crimes nazis também deverá tornar-se penalmente punível. Os partidos políticos que incitam à violência ou ao ódio com base num destes motivos podem ser abrangidos por essa disposição. A Comissão acompanha neste momento as medidas de execução dos Estados-Membros e elaborará um relatório sobre esta questão até ao final de 2013. Não tem, porém competência para dar início a um procedimento de infração com base na Decisão-Quadro até 1 de dezembro de 2014. Além disso, cabe às autoridades nacionais investigar os casos de incitamento ao ódio ou negação do Holocausto e punir os autores das infrações.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005606/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: The strengthening of neo-Nazi parties

In view of the following:

— the fact that, according to a report presented in Budapest at the World JewishCongress, the economic crisis is fostering the growth of neo-Nazi parties in Europe,which are exploiting the crisis to spread a message of nationalism, anti-capitalism andanti-Semitism;

— the fact that this study states that the situation is at 'amber alert' and, with theeconomic situation worsening, these parties could become stronger still.

Can the Commission state:

What is its interpretation of the resurgence and strengthening of neo-Nazi parties?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 July 2013)

The Commission is closely following the situation described by the Honourable Member and is deeply concerned about any racist or xenophobic incidents emerging in the EU.

The Commission has repeatedly condemned all forms and manifestations of racism and xenophobia, as they are incompatible with the principal values the EU is founded on.

According to Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating racism and xenophobia, all EU Member States are obliged to penalise the intentional public incitement to violence or hatred directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin. The intentional public condoning, denial or gross trivialisation of the Nazi crimes is also to be made criminally punishable. Political parties inciting violence or hatred based on one of these grounds can fall within the provision. The Commission is currently monitoring Member State's implementing measures and will draw up a report on this issue by the end of 2013. It is not, however, authorised to launch infringement proceedings on the basis of the framework Decision until 1 December 2014. Furthermore, it is for national authorities to investigate any instances of hate speech or Holocaust denial and to prosecute the perpetrators of such offences.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005608/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Retinopatia diabética

Considerando que:

— A retinopatia diabética é uma complicação ocular que surge nos diabéticos e a principal causa de cegueira evitável no mundo, entre os 20 e os 64 anos.

— Os sintomas clínicos desta doença podem demorar décadas a manifestarem-se, mas existem sinais precursores que, se detetados a tempo, podem permitir o diagnóstico com a antecedência necessária para um eventual tratamento.

— Um cientista português conseguiu, nos últimos anos, caracterizar de forma mais precisa as fases iniciais da retinopatia diabética, identificando diversos padrões de evolução associados a um maior ou menor risco de lesões graves e de cegueira.

Pergunto à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento desta investigação?

2. De que forma se pode reforçar o diagnóstico precoce e a prevenção desta doença a nível europeu?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(26 de junho de 2013)

1. A Comissão tem conhecimento dos diversos esforços envidados pela comunidade científica para abordar o diagnóstico precoce das retinopatias. No âmbito do Sétimo Programa-Quadro de Investigação e Desenvolvimento Tecnológico (7.° PQ, 2007-2013) ([1]), estão a ser investidos cerca de 40 milhões de euros em projetos relacionados com as retinopatias; por exemplo, em ensaios clínicos com vista a testar uma nova terapêutica para combater as retinopatias associadas à diabetes em vários centros clínicos de toda a Europa ([2]).

A proposta da Comissão relativa ao «Horizonte 2020 — Programa-Quadro de Investigação e Inovação (2014-2020)» ([3]) identifica «Saúde, alterações demográficas e bem-estar» como um dos seis desafios sociais que é necessário abordar, suscetíveis de proporcionar oportunidades para a investigação no domínio da diabetes.

2. A Comissão apoiou projetos, ao abrigo do programa «Saúde», que visam a prevenção, o diagnóstico e outros aspetos relativos à diabetes ([4]). No entanto, a realização de um diagnóstico precoce e a prevenção da diabetes, enquanto tais, são aspetos da gestão do sistema de saúde, que é da responsabilidade dos Estados-Membros.

Além disso, a Comissão está a apoiar uma ação conjunta entre os Estados-Membros e a Comissão relativa às doenças crónicas, cofinanciada pelo programa no domínio da Saúde. Parte desta ação conjunta incide especificamente na diabetes de tipo II, com o objetivo de estudar quais são os obstáculos que se colocam à prevenção, os exames de rastreio e o tratamento da diabetes, bem como para melhorar a cooperação entre os Estados-Membros neste domínio.

([1]) http://cordis.europa.eu/home_en.html
([2]) Projeto Eurocondor: http://eurocondor.eu/
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/projects/database.html?full=full

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005608/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Diabetic retinopathy

In view of the fact that:

— diabetic retinopathy is an ocular complication that emerges in diabetics and is the main cause of preventable blindness in the world amongst 20-64 year olds;

— the clinical symptoms of this disease can take decades to manifest themselves, but there are precursor signs which, if detected in time, can enable the early diagnosis necessary for possible treatment;

— in recent years, a Portuguese scientist has successfully characterised more precisely the initial stages of diabetic retinopathy, identifying several development standards associated with higher or lower risk of serious injury or blindness.

Can the Commission state:

1. Is it aware of this research?

2. How could early diagnosis and prevention of this disease be strengthened at European level?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(26 June 2013)

1. The Commission is aware of several efforts by the research community to address early diagnosis of retinopathies. Within the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7, 2007-2013) ([1]), about EUR 40 million are being invested in projects with a link to retinopathies, for example a clinical trial to test a new therapeutic treatment to combat diabetic retinopathy in several clinical centres across Europe ([2]).

The Commission's proposal for Horizon 2020 — The framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-1220) ([3]) identifies 'Health, demographic change and well-being' as one of the six societal challenges to be tackled, likely to provide opportunities for research on diabetes.

2. The Commision has supported projects through the Health programme, which are dealing with the prevention, the diagnosis and other aspects of diabetes ([4]). However, the provision of early diagnosis and prevention of diabetes as such is a health system management issue which falls under the responsibility of Member States.

In addition, the Commission is supporting a joint action on chronic diseases between Member States and the Commission, co-financed by the Health Programme. One part of the joint action is devoted to diabetes type II, to study barriers to prevention, screening and treatment of diabetes and to improve cooperation among Member States.

([1]) http://cordis.europa.eu/home_en.html
([2]) EUROCONDOR project http://eurocondor.eu/.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/projects/database.html?full=full.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005609/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Efeitos da austeridade nos direitos humanos

Considerando o seguinte:

— Entrou recentemente em vigor o Protocolo Facultativo ao Pacto Internacional sobre os Direitos Económicos, Sociais e Culturais, que possibilita a todas as pessoas, depois de esgotadas as instâncias nacionais e de falhado o trabalho dos governos na garantia de alguns direitos, procurarem diretamente justiça na ONU.

— No seguimento da entrada em vigor deste Protocolo, a Amnistia Internacional alertou a União Europeia para que sensibilize os responsáveis para os direitos humanos em tempo de crise, perante a austeridade que tem sido imposta em países com dificuldades.

— Em Portugal, a Diretora Executiva da Amnistia Internacional Portugal explicou que «a questão dos direitos humanos tem estado ausente das respostas que têm sido previstas ou decididas para fazer face à crise» e que é fundamental ter em consideração grupos mais vulneráveis como idosos, crianças, desempregados e minorias.

Assim, pergunta-se à Comissão:

Como avalia a posição da Amnistia Internacional?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(12 de agosto de 2013)

A Comissão também considera que os programas de ajustamento económico adotados para fazer face à crise atual têm de respeitar plenamente os direitos fundamentais. Note-se que a conformidade das medidas tomadas no quadro desses programas com as obrigações internacionais em matéria de direitos humanos é da responsabilidade dos Estados-Membros.

No caso específico do programa de ajustamento económico de Portugal, implementaram-se medidas para reforçar as redes de segurança. Em particular, estabeleceram-se condições mais favoráveis de acesso ao subsídio de desemprego e houve um aumento de 10 % no montante deste subsídio para os casais com ambos os membros desempregados e crianças a cargo. A pensão mínima foi aumentada.

As medidas de consolidação orçamental incluíram cortes nas remunerações e pensões do setor público e aumentos de impostos, pensados para ter maior impacto nos grupos com os rendimentos mais altos e proteger os rendimentos dos mais vulneráveis.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005609/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Effects of austerity on human rights

In view of the following:

— the fact that the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recently came into force. It enables all individuals to seek justice directly from the UN when they have exhausted all national courts and when all work by governments to guarantee certain rights has failed;

— the fact that since this protocol has come into force, Amnesty International has told the EU to raise senior officials' awareness of human rights at this time of crisis, in the face of the austerity that has been imposed on countries in difficulties;

— the fact that in Portugal, the Executive Director of Amnesty International Portugal explained that the human rights issue has been absent from the responses to the crisis that are being planned or decided on and that it is crucial to take into account the most vulnerable groups, such as older people, children, the unemployed and minorities.

Can the Commission state:

What is its view of Amnesty International's position?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(12 August 2013)

The Commission agrees that the economic adjustment programmes adopted in response to the current crisis must fully respect fundamental rights. It should be noted that compliance of the measures adopted in the framework of these programmes with international human rights obligations falls under the responsibility of Member States.

In the specific case of the economic adjustment programme for Portugal, measures were implemented to strengthening the safety nets. In particular, entitlement conditions for unemployment benefits were made more favourable and there was a 10% increase in the amount of unemployment benefits for couples in cases where both partners are unemployed and have dependent children. The minimum pension was increased.

Fiscal consolidation measures included cuts in public sector wages and pensions and increases in taxation. These measures were devised to have more impact on higher income groups and to protect incomes of the most vulnerable.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005610/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Austeridade provoca suicídio, depressão e doenças infecciosas

Um estudo publicado recentemente revela que a austeridade está a ter um efeito devastador sobre a saúde na Europa e América do Norte. De acordo com as conclusões dos dois estudiosos, os cortes orçamentais podem provocar suicídio, depressão e doenças infecciosas devido à redução do acesso a medicamentos e cuidados de saúde. De acordo com os valores apresentados, a austeridade já causou 10 mil suicídios e 1 milhão de casos de depressão na Europa e América do Norte.

1. Tem a Comissão conhecimento deste estudo?

2. Que avaliação faz a Comissão destes números?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(2 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão parte do princípio de que a questão se refere ao estudo *The Body Economic*: *Why Austerity kills*, de David Stuckler e Sanjay Basu, publicado em maio de 2013.

Tal como comunicado pela Comissão na Análise Anual do Crescimento de 2013 ([1]), as reformas dos sistemas de saúde têm de ser realizadas para assegurar a rentabilidade e sustentabilidade, avaliando o desempenho desses sistemas para alcançar o duplo objetivo de uma utilização mais eficiente dos recursos públicos e de um acesso a cuidados de saúde de elevada qualidade.

Além disso, no seu Pacote de Investimento Social ([2]), adotado em fevereiro de 2013, a Comissão instou os Estados-Membros a reorientar as políticas para o investimento social quando necessário, interligando estes esforços numa melhor utilização dos fundos da UE, em especial o Fundo Social Europeu. No âmbito deste pacote, o documento «Investir na Saúde» ([3]), revelou ainda que investir na saúde contribui para os objetivos da estratégia Europa 2020 para um crescimento inteligente, sustentável e inclusivo. Sublinhou que a consolidação financeira e as reformas estruturais dos sistemas de saúde têm de ser articuladas para continuar a cumprir os objetivos de política pública e assegurar que os ganhos de eficiência garantem o acesso universal aos cuidados de saúde e aumentam a sua qualidade.

Por último, a Comissão está a apoiar uma ação conjunta para a saúde mental e o bem-estar, que envolve 24 Estados-Membros, no âmbito do Programa de Saúde da UE. Esta ação conjunta irá identificar, com base em dados factuais, ações tendentes a fazer face à depressão e a prevenir o suicídio. A Ação Comum teve início em fevereiro de 2013.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/ags2013_en.pdf
([2]) Comunicação da Comissão intitulada «Investimento social a favor do crescimento e da coesão, designadamente através do Fundo Social Europeu, no período 2014-2020», COM(2013) 83 final de 20.2.2013, com documentos conexos.
([3]) Documento de trabalho (2013) 43 final de 20.2.1013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005610/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Austerity causes suicide, depression and infectious diseases

A recently published study reveals that austerity is having a devastating effect on people's health in Europe and North America. The two researchers conclude that budget cuts could lead to suicide, depression and infectious diseases on account of reduced access to medicine and healthcare. The figures presented show that austerity has already resulted in 10 000 suicides and 1 million cases of depression in Europe and North America.

1. Is the Commission aware of this study?

2. What is the Commission's view of these figures?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(2 July 2013)

The Commission assumes that the Question refers to the study 'The Body Economic: Why Austerity kills' by David Stuckler and Sanjay Basu, published in May 2013.

As communicated by the Commission in the Annual Growth Survey 2013 ([1]), reforms of healthcare systems should be undertaken to ensure cost-effectiveness and sustainability, assessing the performance of these systems against the twin aim of a more efficient use of public resources and access to high quality healthcare.

In addition, in its 'Social Investment Package' ([2]) adopted in February 2013, the Commission encouraged Member States to reorient policies towards social investment where needed, linking these efforts to the best use of the EU funds, notably the European Social Fund. Within this package, the document 'Investing in Health' ([3]), further showed that investing in health contributes to the Europe 2020 objective of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It underlined that financial consolidation and structural reform of health systems must go hand in hand to continue delivering on public policy goals and ensure that efficiency gains guarantee universal access and increase the quality of healthcare.

Finally, the Commission is currently supporting a Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being involving 24 Member States under the EU Health Programme. This joint action will identify evidence-based actions aimed at addressing depression and preventing suicide. The Joint Action started in February 2013.

([1]) See http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/ags2013_en.pdf
([2]) Commission Communication 'Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion — including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2010', COM(2013) 83 final of 20.2.2013 with related documents.
([3]) SWD(2013) 43 final of 20.2.1013.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005611/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Artrite reumatóide — Acesso a fármacos biológicos

A artrite reumatóide é uma doença reumática de natureza inflamatória, que leva à destruição progressiva e irreversível das articulações, e que afeta cerca de 40 mil portugueses e dois milhões de europeus. De acordo com uma especialista portuguesa, «a artrite reumatóide é uma doença sistémica grave que, se não for precocemente diagnosticada e tratada, tem elevado impacto socioeconómico», e «após 10 anos de doença, 50 % dos doentes podem estar incapacitados para o trabalho se não forem adequadamente tratados, assim como pode ficar reduzida a esperança média de vida, entre três a sete anos».

Um estudo recentemente publicado compara a prescrição de fármacos biológicos em 15 países da Europa, e revela diferenças nas percentagens de doentes com artrite reumatóide tratados com fármacos biológicos, colocando Portugal 12 pontos abaixo da média europeia. Em termos clínicos, os fármacos antirreumatismais modificadores da doença (DMARD) biológicos têm demonstrado proporcionar melhoria nos doentes que não respondem aos DMARD clássicos.

1. Tem a Comissão conhecimento deste estudo?

2. Como avalia a Comissão a disparidade verificada no acesso a este tipo de fármacos?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(11 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão não tem conhecimento do estudo referido pelo Senhor Deputado.

Em conformidade com o Tratado sobre o Funcionamento da União Europeia, artigo 168.°, relativo à saúde pública, os Estados-Membros são responsáveis pela definição das suas políticas de saúde e pela organização e prestação de serviços de saúde e de cuidados médicos. A questão do acesso a farmacoterapias é, portanto, um domínio da responsabilidade dos Estados-Membros e a Comissão não tem competência para intervir.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005611/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Rheumatoid arthritis — Access to biological drugs

Rheumatoid arthritis is a rheumatic disease that is inflammatory in nature. It gradually and irreversibly destroys joints, and affects around 40 000 Portuguese and 2 million European citizens. According to a Portuguese specialist, 'rheumatoid arthritis is a serious systemic disease which, if not diagnosed and treated early, has a high socioeconomic impact' and, 'after 10 years of illness, 50% of sufferers may be unable to work unless properly treated; it can also reduce average life expectancy by three to seven years'.

A recently published study compares the prescription of biological drugs in 15 European countries and reveals differences in the percentages of sufferers of rheumatoid arthritis treated with biological drugs; Portugal is 12% below the European average. In clinical terms, biological disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs) have been shown to bring about improvements in sufferers who do not respond to classic DMARDs.

1. Is the Commission aware of this study?

2. What is the Commission's view of the disparity in access to this type of drug?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(11 July 2013)

The Commission was not aware of the study mentioned by the Honourable Member.

According to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Article 168 on Public Health, Member States are responsible for the definition of their health policy and for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care. The issue of access to pharmacotherapies is therefore an area under the responsibility of the Member States and where the Commission has no competence to intervene.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005612/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Novo biomarcador de cancro

Um investigador português descobriu um novo marcador biológico de cancros no cérebro.

Este biomarcador poderá vir a ter importantes implicações clínicas que se prendem com a determinação do grau de malignidade dos tumores e «ajudar os clínicos a decidir, em cada caso, uma forma de tratamento adequada ao paciente».

A equipa que participou neste estudo admite ainda que o biomarcador poderá proporcionar «resultados importantes» noutras manifestações da doença oncológica, como a leucemia, o cancro do cólon e da próstata.

1. Tem a Comissão conhecimento desta nova descoberta?

2. Como a avalia a Comissão?

Resposta dada por Máire Geoghegan-Quinn em nome da Comissão
(8 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão está ciente da publicação, referida pelo Senhor Deputado, por investigadores do Arthur and Sonia Labatt Brain Tumour Research Centre em Toronto, do Centro de Investigação sobre o Cancro alemão em Heidelberga, da Universidade de Toronto e de várias outras instituições, sobre a identificação de um marcador de prognóstico nas crianças com cancro no cérebro ([1]) ([2]) ([3]).

A referida investigação consistiu na realização de análises do genoma em amostras de tumores de pacientes, tendo-se concluído que o promotor do gene «TERT» poderá ser utilizado como marcador de prognóstico nas crianças com cancro no cérebro. Em caso de confirmação, os resultados poderão conduzir a uma melhor avaliação do prognóstico dos pacientes — crianças e adultos — com cancro no cérebro. Estão em curso investigações semelhantes para outros cancros.

([1]) Castelo-Branco et al. (2013) Lancet Oncology 14: 534-42.
([2]) http://saude.sapo.pt/noticias/saude-medicina/investigador-portugues-descobriu-novo-biomarcador-de-cancro.html
([3]) http://www.bestmedicalnews.com/2013/05/new-biomarker-for-brain-cancer.html?m=0

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005612/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: New cancer biomarker

A Portuguese researcher has discovered a new biological marker for brain tumours.

This biomarker could have important clinical implications as regards determining how malignant a tumour is and in helping clinicians to decide on the appropriate way to treat the patient in each case.

The team that participated in this study also acknowledges that the biomarker could provide 'important results' in connection with other types of cancer, such as leukaemia, colon cancer and prostate cancer.

1. Is the Commission aware of this discovery?

2. What is the Commission's view of this?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

The Commission is aware of the publication, mentioned by the Honourable Member, by researchers from the Arthur and Sonia Labatt Brain Tumour Research Centre in Toronto, the German Cancer Research Centre in Heidelberg, the University of Toronto and several other institutions, identifying a prognostic marker in children with brain cancer ([1]) ([2]) ([3]).

The research cited consisted of performing genomic analyses of patients' tumour samples to conclude that the promoter of the 'TERT' gene could serve as a prognostic marker in children with brain cancers. If confirmed, results may lead to a better prognostic assessment of children and adult patients with brain cancer. Similar research is ongoing for other cancers.

([1]) Castelo-Branco et al. (2013) *Lancet Oncology* 14: 534-42.
([2]) http://saude.sapo.pt/noticias/saude-medicina/investigador-portugues-descobriu-novo-biomarcador-de-cancro.html
([3]) http://www.bestmedicalnews.com/2013/05/new-biomarker-for-brain-cancer.html?m=0

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005613/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Mutilação genital feminina

A Comissão Europeia advoga a tolerância zero contra a mutilação genital feminina, vista como uma violação dos direitos humanos. Esta mutilação, normalmente justificada por razões religiosas ou culturais, consiste na excisão ou infibulação dos genitais, e pode causar problemas de saúde permanentes ou a morte.

Cerca de meio milhão de mulheres que vivem na União Europeia sofreram mutilação genital e 20 mil mulheres pediram asilo na UE por causa da mutilação genital feminina. No mundo inteiro, 1 35 milhões de mulheres sofreram mutilação genital, tendo o número de raparigas em risco de sofrer mutilação genital subido de 2 milhões por ano — aproximadamente 6 000 por dia — para três milhões.

Nenhum dos Estados-Membros, incluindo Portugal — onde foram detetados casos —, tem uma provisão específica sobre asilo ligada ao problema.

Tendo em conta que existem já vários tratados que proíbem a mutilação genital feminina, que tipo de iniciativas pode a Comissão impulsionar ou apoiar, nomeadamente no continente africano, que contribuam para a erradicação desta prática?

Resposta dada por Andris Piebalgs em nome da Comissão
(15 de julho de 2013)

A luta contra a mutilação genital feminina constitui uma prioridade da UE em todas as vertentes da sua política de cooperação para o desenvolvimento, nomeadamente no que tocante à promoção dos direitos humanos nos países em causa. Trata-se de uma questão sensível, que é abordada no âmbito dos diálogos políticos e estratégicos. É, nomeadamente, concedido financiamento a organizações da sociedade civil e a instituições governamentais para reforçar a aplicação dos compromissos assumidos pelo país no sentido de pôr termo a esta prática lesiva.

As estimativas revelam que até 140 milhões de raparigas e mulheres foram objeto de alguma forma de mutilação genital feminina, com as consequentes complicações dolorosas. Apesar do número persistentemente elevado de raparigas submetidas a esta prática, há que realçar uma evolução positiva nos países em causa. Desde 2010, a cessação desta prática é uma prioridade para a União Africana, que esteve na origem da aprovação histórica pela Assembleia Geral das Nações Unidas, em 2012, de uma resolução sobre a eliminação da mutilação genital feminina ([1]). A resolução insta os países a tomarem todas as medidas necessárias, incluindo a aprovação e a aplicação de legislação proibindo a mutilação genital feminina, a protegerem as raparigas e as mulheres contra este tipo de violência, bem como a porem cobro à impunidade dos autores. A existência deste quadro comum deverá facilitar ainda mais a cooperação tendo em vista erradicar com esta prática.

Os ensinamentos retirados dos numerosos projetos que a UE apoiou durante um longo período de tempo em países parceiros indicam só se conseguirá fazer com que esta prática seja abandonada se se tiver em conta a dinâmica social complexa que lhe está subjacente. Um recente programa UE-UNICEF, concebido à luz desta realidade, obteve resultados significativos e constitui uma boa base para o prosseguimento das atividades com vista a eliminar esta prática lesiva ([2]).

A Comissão está atualmente trabalhar em iniciativas políticas sobre a mutilação genital feminina relativas tanto à UE como aos países parceiros.

([1]) http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/C.3/67/L.21/Rev.1&referer=http://www.npwj.org/node/5820&Lang=E
([2]) http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/fgm_insight_eng.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005613/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Female genital mutilation

The Commission advocates zero tolerance of female genital mutilation, which is seen as a human rights violation. This mutilation, normally justified on religious or cultural grounds, entails the amputation or infibulation of the genitals and can cause permanent health problems or death.

Around 500 000 women living in the EU have suffered genital mutilation and 20 000 women have sought asylum because of female genital mutilation. Worldwide, 135 million women have suffered genital mutilation. The number of girls at risk of genital mutilation has increased from 2 million per year — approximately 6 000 per day — to 3 million per year.

No Member State — including Portugal, where cases have been detected — has specific provisions for asylum linked to this problem.

Given that several treaties ban female genital mutilation, what type of initiative could the Commission promote or support — particularly in Africa — that would contribute to eradicating this practice?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

Fighting female genital mutilation (FGM) is a priority for the EU in all aspects of its development cooperation, including the promotion of human rights in the countries concerned. This sensitive issue is raised in policy and political dialogues. Funding is provided to civil society organisations and to governmental institutions to strengthen the implementation of the commitments taken on by countries to end this harmful practice.

Estimates show that up to 140 million girls and women have undergone some form of FGM and are living with painful complications. Despite the persistent high number of girls subjected to this practice, there is a positive evolution in the countries concerned. The African Union has made the abandonment of FGM a priority since 2010 and it spearheaded the historical adoption by the UN General Assembly in 2012 of a resolution on the elimination of FGM ([1]). The resolution i.a. urges countries to take all necessary measures, including enacting and enforcing legislation to prohibit FGM and to protect women and girls from this form of violence and to end impunity. The existence of this common framework should further facilitate cooperation to achieve an end to FGM.

The lessons learnt through the numerous projects that the EU has supported over a long period of time in relevant partner countries indicate that the abandonment of FGM can only be achieved by taking into account the complex underlying social dynamics. A recent EU-Unicef programme building on this recognition has achieved significant results and provides a good basis for further activities to contribute to the elimination of this harmful practice ([2]).

The Commission is currently developing policy initiatives on FGM, covering both the EU and partner countries.

([1]) http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/C.3/67/L.21/Rev.1&referer=http://www.npwj.org/node/5820&Lang=E
([2]) http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/fgm_insight_eng.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005614/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Coronavírus na Europa

Considerando o seguinte:

Os coronavírus são uma vasta família de vírus que inclui os que causam a gripe comum, mas também a síndrome respiratória aguda severa (SRAS), que matou cerca de 800 pessoas em 2003.

O novo coronavírus causa pneumonia e provoca uma falência renal rápida e pode ser contraído tanto por pessoas como por animais.

O Ministério da Saúde francês confirmou que um homem de 50 anos contraiu o vírus após ter partilhado o quarto de hospital no norte da França com outro homem, de 65 anos, a quem tinha sido diagnosticada a doença depois de ter regressado de uma viagem aos Emirados Árabes Unidos.

O Ministro da Saúde da Arábia Saudita anunciou a morte de mais duas pessoas naquele país devido a este vírus.

Segundo a mais recente atualização da OMS sobre o número de pessoas infetadas, desde 2012 foram confirmados 33 casos na Europa e no Médio Oriente. Destas 33 pessoas, 18 morreram.

Em declarações recentes, a OMS revelou uma grande preocupação com a capacidade de transmissão deste coronavírus.

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Tem acompanhado a situação?

2. Quais os dados de que dispõe relativamente ao atual ponto de situação desta doença?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(2 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão tem acompanhado o surto causado pelo Coronavírus da Síndroma Respiratória do Médio Oriente (MERS-CoV) desde setembro de 2012, em estreita colaboração com as autoridades de saúde dos Estados-Membros, a Organização Mundial de Saúde e o Centro Europeu de Prevenção e Controlo das Doenças.

No que se refere aos dados disponíveis sobre o atual ponto da situação, até 18 de junho de 2013 foram notificados 64 casos confirmados de MERS-CoV em todo o mundo, incluindo 38 vítimas mortais.

Todos os casos continuam associados a situações de transmissão na Arábia Saudita, no Catar, na Jordânia e nos Emirados Árabes Unidos. Os mais recentes casos confirmados de MERS-CoV na União foram notificados em 31 de maio pela Itália (três casos). Essa notificação elevou para 11 o número total de casos confirmados na União (dois em França, dois na Alemanha e quatro no Reino Unido). Até à data, não existem indícios de que esteja a ocorrer uma transmissão sustentada entre seres humanos. Os casos notificados na Europa confirmam que o vírus pode ser transmitido por uma pessoa infetada a uma pessoa saudável. No entanto, tal parece ocorrer apenas em situações de contacto próximo.

Sob pedido da Comissão, o Centro Europeu de Prevenção e Controlo das Doenças preparou três avaliações de risco, a última das quais foi atualizada em 17 de maio de 2013 ([1]). O vírus MERS-CoV foi amplamente debatido na sessão plenária do Comité de Segurança da Saúde, realizada em 5 de junho de 2013. Desde então, o Comité preparou várias declarações comuns, incluindo informação sanitária destinada às pessoas que viajam para os países em risco e aconselhamento para os profissionais de saúde que têm de cuidar de doentes com uma infeção confirmada ou possível por MERS-CoV.

([1]) http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/risk-assessment-middle-east-respiratory-syndrome-coronavirus-MERS-CoV-17-may-2013.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005614/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Coronavirus in Europe

In view of the following:

The fact that coronaviruses represent an extensive family of viruses which includes those that cause the common cold, but also severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), which killed around 800 people in 2003;

the fact that the new coronavirus causes pneumonia and leads to rapid kidney failure. It can be contracted by both people and animals;

the fact that the French Ministry of Health has confirmed that a 50 year-old man has contracted the virus after sharing his northern France hospital room with another man, aged 65, who had been diagnosed with the disease after returning from a trip to the United Arab Emirates;

the fact that the Saudi Ministry of Health has announced the death of a further two people in the country as a result of the virus;

the fact that the most recent World Health Organisation (WHO) update on the number of people infected is that 33 cases have been confirmed in Europe and the Middle East since 2012. Of those 33 people, 18 died; the fact that the WHO has recently issued statements expressing great concern at how easily this coronavirus is passed on.

Can the Commission state:

1. Has it been monitoring the situation?

2. What data does it have regarding the current state of play with this disease?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(2 July 2013)

The Commission has been monitoring the outbreak caused by the virus 'Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus' (MERS-CoV) since September 2012, in close contact with the health authorities in Member States, the World Health Organisation and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

Concerning the data available on the current situation, at 18 June 2013, 64 MERS-CoV confirmed cases have been reported worldwide including 38 fatalities.

All cases remain associated with transmission in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, and United Arab Emirates. The most recent MERS-CoV confirmed cases in the Union were notified on 31 May by Italy (three cases). These brought the total number of confirmed cases in the Union to 11 (two in France, two in Germany and four in the United Kingdom). So far there is no evidence that sustained human-to-human transmission is taking place. The cases notified in Europe support the evidence that the virus can be transmitted from an infected person to a healthy person. However, this appears to occur only through close contact.

At the request of the Commission, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control prepared three risk assessments, the last one updated on 17 May 2013 ([1]). MERS-CoV was extensively discussed during the plenary meeting of the Health Security Committee held on 5 June 2013. Since then the Committee has prepared common statements covering health information for persons travelling in countries at risk, and advice to healthcare workers caring for patients with confirmed or possible MERS-CoV infection.

([1]) http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/risk-assessment-middle-east-respiratory-syndrome-coronavirus-MERS-CoV-17-may-2013.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005615/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Doença pulmonar obstrutiva crónica

Cerca de 800 mil portugueses sofrem de doença pulmonar obstrutiva crónica (DPOC), uma patologia fortemente ligada ao tabaco, segundo as estimativas da Fundação Portuguesa do Pulmão. A DPOC atinge 14 % da população portuguesa com mais de 45 anos, sendo uma das doenças respiratórias mais comuns, e tem no tabagismo o principal fator de risco.

1. De que dados dispõe a Comissão sobre a doença pulmonar obstrutiva a nível europeu?

2. Uma vez que o tabagismo é o principal fator de risco das doenças respiratórias, como avalia a Comissão a hipótese de comparticipação dos medicamentos para deixar de fumar?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(12 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão recolhe dados ([1]) sobre causas de morte a nível da UE de acordo com a Classificação Internacional de Doenças relativamente a diferentes doenças do aparelho respiratório.

Em 2010, a taxa de mortalidade-padrão devido a doenças respiratórias, por 100 000 habitantes, ascendeu a 57,1 em Portugal e a 41,1 na União Europeia. Em 2010, Portugal teve uma das taxas mais baixas entre os Estados-Membros da UE no que toca a altas hospitalares de doentes internados com doenças respiratórias, por 100 000 habitantes.

O relatório *Health at a Glance: Europe 2012* (Panorama da Saúde: Europa 2012) ([2]) fornece dados sobre a admissão evitável de pacientes com doenças respiratórias. Revela que Portugal tem as taxas mais baixas de hospitalização para a asma e a doença pulmonar obstrutiva crónica.

Em conformidade com o artigo 168.° do TFUE, é da responsabilidade dos Estados-Membros decidir sobre a atribuição de recursos aos serviços de saúde. O mesmo se aplica a eventuais decisões tomadas pelos Estados-Membros de atribuir recursos públicos para financiar (parcialmente) a utilização de medicamentos no apoio às terapias de abandono do tabagismo.

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/health/public_health/data_public_health/database
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/reports/european/health_glance_2012_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005615/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

The Portuguese Lung Foundation (FPP) estimates that around 800 000 Portuguese citizens suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a pathology strongly linked to smoking. COPD affects 14% of the Portuguese population aged over 45. It is one of the most common respiratory diseases and its main risk factor is smoking.

1. What figures does the Commission have on COPD at European level?

2. Since smoking is the main risk factor with respiratory diseases, what is the Commission's view of the possibility of sharing the cost of drugs to help with giving up smoking?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

The Commission collects data ([1]) on causes of death at EU level according to the International Classification of Diseases for different diseases of the respiratory system.

In 2010, the Standardised Death Rate per 100 000 inhabitants for respiratory was 57.1 in Portugal and 41.1 in the European Union. In 2010, Portugal had one of the lowest rates among EU Member States for hospital discharges of respiratory diseases in-patients per 100 000 inhabitants.

The EU-funded report 'Health at a Glance Europe 2012' ([2]) provides data on avoidable admission for respiratory diseases. It shows that Portugal has the lowest rates of hospital admission for asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

In accordance with Article 168 TFEU, deciding on the allocation of resources to health services is a Member State responsibility. This also applies to possible decisions made by Member States to dedicate public resources to (partially) fund the use of medicinal products in support of smoking cessation therapies.

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/health/public_health/data_public_health/database
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/reports/european/health_glance_2012_en.htm

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005616/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Concentração de CO_2

Considerando o seguinte:

— Um observatório situado no vulcão de Mauna Loa, no Havai, registou uma concentração de CO_2 de 400,03 ppm, informou a Agência Oceânica e Atmosférica Americana (NOAA).

— De acordo com a ONU, «com 400 ppm de CO2 na atmosfera, superámos o limite histórico e encontramo-nos numa zona de perigo».

— Segundo os especialistas, este é um valor simbólico, mas que marca uma tendência muito preocupante do planeta rumo ao aquecimento, sendo que, com uma média anual de 400 ppm de concentração de CO_2, o aquecimento global previsto será de pelo menos 2,4 °C, segundo o último relatório do Painel Intergovernamental da ONU sobre Mudanças Climáticas (IPCC).

Assim, pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Que avaliação faz destes números?

2. Quais as respostas complementares que a UE poderá apresentar no âmbito das políticas climáticas que têm vindo a ser seguidas?

Resposta dada por Connie Hedegaard em nome da Comissão
(3 de julho de 2013)

As medições da concentração de dióxido de carbono registadas no observatório de Mauna Loa mostram que os níveis excederam temporariamente 400 partes por milhão (ppm) em maio de 2013. As concentrações de dióxido de carbono variam sazonalmente em conformidade com o ciclo natural do carbono e este nível foi registado no seu pico anual. No entanto, é evidente que, de acordo com as medições em Mauna Loa e noutros observatórios, a média anual de concentração de dióxido de carbono a nível mundial está a aumentar em consequência das emissões provocadas pelo homem. A taxa média anual de aumento a nível mundial da concentração de dióxido de carbono durante a última década foi de cerca de 2 ppm e a média anual de 2012 foi de cerca de 393 ppm ([1]).

Porém, é evidente que os aumentos anuais das concentrações de gases com efeito de estufa não são compatíveis com a manutenção do aumento da temperatura média global abaixo de 2 °C.

Para limitar aumento da temperatura média global a menos de 2 °C, é necessário adotar medidas rigorosas e urgentes a nível mundial para reduzir as emissões de dióxido de carbono, bem como de outros gases com efeito de estufa. As emissões a nível mundial terão de atingir um valor máximo antes de 2020 e ser reduzidas para metade, até 2050, em relação aos níveis de 1990. Consequentemente, a UE está a trabalhar no sentido de obter, em 2015, um acordo juridicamente vinculativo a nível mundial para lutar contra as alterações climáticas no âmbito da CQNUAC, e de fixar objetivos mais ambiciosos para os compromissos assumidos pelos países em termos de redução das emissões de gases com efeito de estufa até 2020. A UE está a envidar esforços no sentido de reforçar a ação no domínio das alterações climáticas, através de iniciativas internacionais sobre o clima, como as ações para reduzir gradualmente os hidrofluorocarbonetos.

([1]) ftp://ftp.cmdl.noaa.gov/ccg/co2/trends/co2_annmean_gl.txt

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005616/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: CO_2 concentration

In view of the following:

— the fact that the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is reporting that an observatory on the volcano of Mauna Loa, Hawaii, has recorded a CO_2 concentration of 400.03 ppm;

— the fact that according to the UN, 'with 400 ppm CO2 in the atmosphere, we have crossed an historic threshold and entered a new danger zone';

— the fact that specialists consider this a symbolic figure, but one that marks a very worrying trend of a planet that is warming up: with an annual average CO_2 concentration of 400 ppm, global warming is forecast to be at least 2.4 °C, according to the latest report by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Can the Commission state:

1. What is the Commission's assessment of these figures?

2. In what ways could the EU respond, apart from the climate change policies that we have been pursuing?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(3 July 2013)

Measurements of carbon dioxide concentration taken at the Mauna Loa observatory show that levels temporarily exceeded 400 parts per million (ppm) in May 2013. Carbon dioxide concentrations fluctuate seasonally in line with the natural carbon cycle and this level was registered at their annual peak. However, it is clear from measurements at Mauna Loa, and other observatories, that annual average global CO_2 concentration is rising as a result of human emissions. The average rate of increase in global annual CO_2 concentration over the past decade is approximately 2 ppm per year and the 2012 annual average is approximately 393 ppm ([1]).

But it is clear that annual increases in greenhouse gas concentrations are not consistent with keeping the increase in global average temperature below 2°C.

To limit global average temperature rise to below 2°C, strong and urgent global action to reduce emissions of CO_2, as well as other greenhouse gases, is needed. Global emissions will need to peak before 2020 and be halved by 2050 compared to 1990 levels. The EU is therefore working to secure a legally-binding global agreement to tackle climate change in 2015 under the UNFCCC and to increase the ambition of existing country pledges for greenhouse gas emission reductions before 2020. The EU is also seeking to further enhance action on climate change through international climate initiatives, such as actions to phase down hydrofluorocarbons.

([1]) ftp://ftp.cmdl.noaa.gov/ccg/co2/trends/co2_annmean_gl.txt

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005618/13
to the Commission
Fiona Hall (ALDE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Global Distribution Systems (GDS) surcharges for travel agents

The costs of using Global Distribution Systems (GDS) to book airline tickets are charged to travel agents and travel management companies in the UK and Ireland by British Airways, but the airline does not apply the same GDS surcharges to travel companies in other Member States.

British Airways has confirmed that its distribution costs and charges vary, reflecting different market and regulatory conditions across Europe.

Is the Commission aware of the difference in costs transferred from airlines to travel companies in different Member States?

With regard to single market rules, are airlines permitted to transfer GDS surcharges to travel agents in some Member States and not others?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(19 July 2013)

The market for the provision of services of Global Distribution Systems is regulated by Regulation (EC) No 80/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 January 2009 on a Code of Conduct for computerised reservation systems (OJ L35, 4.2.2009). However, based on the information available, none of the rules in the Code of Conduct governs the type of conduct of British Airways described in the question from the EP.

How airlines recoup their costs, whether related to the use of GDSs or other, is in principle a matter of their pricing policy and their business decision. These are however subject to competition rules and may therefore be assessed by the competent authority (national or European) where relevant.

From an EU internal market perspective, it has to be borne in mind that Article 20(2) of the applicable Directive 2006/123/EC (Services Directive) obliges Member States to ensure that the general conditions of access to a service do not contain discriminatory provision relating to the place of residence of the recipient. This provision also covers B2B relationships. Different treatment can, however, be justified by objective criteria such as different market conditions (see Recital 95 of the Services Directive). As the provision has been correctly enacted in all Member States, it is up to national enforcement authorities to check whether a justified reason can be invoked or not.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005619/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Resultados eleitorais na Malásia

A Frente Nacional Barisanl, a coligação no poder na Malásia, venceu as eleições legislativas que se realizaram neste domingo. De acordo com os dados oficiais divulgados, houve uma adesão de 80 % dos eleitores, e a Frente Nacional obteve uma maioria simples e garantiu dois terços dos deputados, prolongando assim os seus 56 anos de poder. O maior partido da oposição denunciou que houve fraude ainda antes do fecho das urnas e avançou que irá contestar os resultados.

De que dados dispõe a Comissão relativamente à atual situação política na Malásia?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(9 de julho de 2013)

A Frente Nacional Barisan ganhou as 13as eleições gerais realizadas em 5 de maio conquistando 133 dos 222 lugares no Parlamento, ficando um pouco aquém da maioria de dois terços necessária para alterar a Constituição. O Primeiro-Ministro Najib tomou posse para um segundo mandato em 6 de maio e, em 15 de maio, formou o novo governo. O novo Parlamento reunirá em 24 de junho.

O líder da oposição, Anwar Ibrahim, continua a contestar os resultados das eleições legislativas. Prometeu manter a pressão sobre o governo, e, em especial, sobre a Comissão Eleitoral, para que examinem as alegadas fraudes eleitorais e irregularidades. Como expresso pela AR/VP na sua declaração sobre as eleições, a UE aguarda com interesse as conclusões da Comissão Eleitoral e das outras autoridades competentes, que investigarão e darão o devido tratamento às denúncias, conforme necessário.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005619/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Malaysian election results

Malaysia's ruling *Barisan Nasional* coalition has won the parliamentary elections held on Sunday. The official figures show that turnout was 80% and that *Barisan Nasional* won an overall majority, securing two thirds of the seats in the national parliament, thereby prolonging its 56 years in power. Even before polls closed, the largest opposition party announced that fraud had taken place and that it would contest the results.

What information does the Commission have about the current political situation in Malaysia?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

The Barisan National won the 13th general elections held on 5 May with 133 parliamental seats out of 222 falling a bit short of two thirds majority which is needed to change the Constitution. Prime Minister Najib was sworn in as prime minister for a second term on 6 May and he formed his new government on 15 May. The new Parliament will convene on 24 June.

Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim continues to contest the results of the general election. He has vowed to maintain pressure on the government, and notably on the Election Commission, to examine alleged electoral fraud and irregularities. As expressed by the HRVP in her statement on the elections, the EU is looking forward to the findings of the Election Commission and the other competent authorities, who will investigate and address the complaints as appropriate.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005620/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Desemprego de longa duração em Portugal

O Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (IEFP) está a organizar os desempregados consoante a exposição ao risco de desemprego de longa duração. Cerca de um quinto dos desempregados em Portugal são de «elevado risco», ou seja, com grande potencial de se tornarem desempregados de longa duração.

1. Tem a Comissão conhecimento desta situação?

2. Que estratégias tem a Comissão desenvolvido para combater o chamado desemprego de longa duração?

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(17 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão está consciente dos elevados níveis de desemprego de longa duração em Portugal.

A situação do mercado de trabalho não deverá melhorar até 2014, devido às positivas mas modestas perspetivas de crescimento ([1]) e aos esperados novos cortes no emprego no setor público.

As reformas do mercado de trabalho implementadas em Portugal deverão ajudar a melhorar o funcionamento do mercado de trabalho a médio prazo. No que respeita o combate do desemprego a curto prazo, a Comissão sugeriu uma série de medidas suscetíveis de estimular a criação de emprego, incluindo subvenções específicas para os recém-contratados, redução da carga fiscal, em especial sobre os salários mais baixos, prestações sociais associadas ao trabalho e a promoção do emprego por conta própria e da criação de empresas ([2]). Muitas destas medidas podem ser cofinanciadas pelo Fundo Social Europeu. Através do Pacote de Emprego dos Jovens ([3]), foram lançadas medidas específicas em matéria de emprego dos jovens, incluindo a Garantia para a Juventude e uma Iniciativa para Emprego dos jovens aprovada pelo Conselho Europeu no valor de 6 mil milhões de euros.

A Comunicação «Repensar a Educação» ([4]) apelou aos Estados-Membros que procedam a reformas educativas que estimulem o crescimento e a competitividade. Para combater o desemprego entre os jovens, a tónica é colocada nas competências profissionais, na aprendizagem em contexto laboral, nas parcerias entre os setores público e privado e na mobilidade.

Foi aprovada pela Comissão em dezembro de 2012 e que está agora a ser executada a reprogramação global do quadro estratégico nacional apresentado por Portugal, com vista à reafetação de recursos dos fundos estruturais, em especial para aumentar o emprego dos jovens, reforçar as oportunidades de empreendedorismo e facilitar o acesso das PME ao financiamento.

([1]) Comissão Europeia, Previsões Económicas Europeias (Primavera 2013), em: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/eu/forecasts/2013_spring/pt_en.pdf
([2]) COM(2012) 173 de 18.4.2012.
([3]) COM(2012) 727-728-729 de 5 de dezembro de 2012.
([4]) COM(2012) 669 final de 20.11.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005620/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Long-term unemployment in Portugal

The Portuguese Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP) is organising the unemployed according to their risk of long-term unemployment. Around a fifth of Portugal's unemployed are 'high-risk'; that is, there is a major risk of their becoming long-term unemployed.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation?

2. What strategies has the Commission been implementing to combat long-term unemployment?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(17 July 2013)

The Commission is aware of the high long-term unemployment in Portugal. The labour market situation is not expected to ameliorate until 2014 owing to the positive but weak growth outlook ([1]) and expected further cuts in public sector employment.

The labour market reforms implemented in Portugal will help improving the labour market functioning over the medium term. To tackle unemployment in the short-run, the Commission has suggested a number of measures that could stimulate job creation, including targeted subsidies to newly hired, reduction of the tax wedge especially on low-wage earners, well-designed in-work benefits, and promotion of self-employment and business start-ups ([2]). Many of these measures can be co-financed from the European Social Fund. Specific measures for young employment were launched with the Youth Employment Package ([3]), including the Youth Guarantee and a EUR 6 billion worth Youth Employment Initiative approved by the European Council.

The Rethinking Education communication ([4]) called on Member States to make educational reforms to boost growth and competitiveness. To combat youth unemployment, it focused on vocational skills, work-based learning, public-private partnerships and mobility.

The overall reprogramming of the National Strategic Framework submitted by Portugal with a view to reallocating Structural Fund resources, in particular to increase youth employment, entrepreneurship opportunities and SMEs' access to finance was approved by the Commission in December 2012 and is now being implemented.

([1]) European Commission, European Economic Forecast (Spring 2013), at: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/eu/forecasts/2013_spring/pt_en.pdf
([2]) COM(2012) 173 of 18 April 2012.
([3]) COM(2012) 727-728-729 of 5 December 2012.
([4]) COM(2012) 669 final of 20.11.2012.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005621/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Escassez de água até 2030

A ONU estima que cerca de metade da população mundial venha a ter falta de água em 2030. São necessários elevados investimento no setor, quer para a manutenção da rede de fornecimento, quer para o desenvolvimento de infraestruturas.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Como avalia esta situação?

2. Prevê que a UE poderá vir a ter falta de água em 2030?

3. O que tem sido feito pela Comissão para ajudar os países que previsivelmente serão mais afetados a combater esta situação?

Resposta dada por Janez Potočnik em nome da Comissão
(30 de julho de 2013)

Ao longo da última década, as preocupações com a escassez de água e as secas aumentaram a nível mundial e também na UE. Na sequência de uma das secas mais generalizadas, verificada em 2003, que afetou um terço do território da UE, o Conselho de Ministros da UE instou a Comissão a debruçar-se sobre os problemas da escassez de água e das secas na UE. A Comissão respondeu a este pedido na sua Comunicação sobre a escassez de água e as secas, onde identificou sete opções políticas principais para responder a estes dois desafios. Em relatórios anuais de acompanhamento publicados em 2008, 2009 e 2010, a Comissão avaliou os progressos na aplicação destas opções políticas e, em 2012, reviu a política da UE para combater a escassez de água e as secas.

Esta revisão realçou uma série de lacunas na atual política da água. O seguimento da Comunicação da Comissão intitulada «Uma matriz destinada a preservar os recursos hídricos da Europa», também adotada em 2012, visará colmatar essas lacunas através da melhoria da utilização dos solos, da resolução do problema da poluição das águas, do aumento da eficiência e da resiliência das águas e da melhoria da gestão dos recursos hídricos. Além disso, propõe o estabelecimento de normas à escala da UE para a reutilização da água. Acresce que a Parceria para a Inovação deverá facilitar a descoberta de soluções para responder a estes desafios.

Perante as previsões de que o número de bacias hidrográficas afetadas pela escassez de água na Europa irá aumentar cerca de 50 % até 2030, estas medidas políticas serão essenciais para vencer o desafio.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005621/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Water shortages by 2030

The UN estimates that around half the world's population will be suffering water shortages by 2030. A high level of investment in the sector is necessary, both to maintain the supply network and to develop infrastructure.

Can the Commission state:

1. What is its view of this situation?

2. Does it expect the EU to be suffering water shortages by 2030?

3. What has the Commission been doing to help those countries expected to be hardest hit in combating this situation?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(30 July 2013)

Over the past decade, concerns about water shortages, water scarcity and droughts have grown worldwide and also within the EU. Following one of the most widespread droughts in 2003 affecting, a third of the EU territory, the EU Council of Ministers asked the Commission to address the challenges of water scarcity and droughts (WS&D) in the EU. The Commission responded to this call in its communication on Water Scarcity & Droughts. The communication identified 7 main policy options to address the WS&D challenges. The Commission has assessed progress in implementing these policy options in follow-up annual reports in 2008, 2009 and 2010 and reviewed the EU's WS&D Policy in 2012.

This review highlighted a number of gaps in the current water policy. The follow-up to the Commission's Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources also adopted in 2012 will address these gaps by improving land use, addressing water pollution, increasing water efficiency and resilience, and improving the management of water resources. Furthermore, it proposes setting EU-wide standards for water re-use. . In addition, the Innovation Partnership should facilitate finding solutions to meet these challenges.

Faced with predictions that the number of river basins in Europe affected by water scarcity will increase by up to 50% by 2030, these policy measures will be essential in meeting the challenge.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005622/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Possível crise da dívida na China

A dívida pública e privada na China supera os 210 % do PIB, tendo subido mais de 50 pontos percentuais desde 2008. A Fitch e a UBS receiam uma correção súbita do crédito.

O risco de desaceleração do crescimento económico na China é algo que preocupa os investidores globais há vários anos. Junta-se agora outro risco: o endividamento. A Fitch cortou há um mês o «rating» Chinês.

Assim, pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Como avalia esta situação?

2. De que forma uma crise da dívida chinesa poderia afetar a UE, ainda para mais no cenário de crise que atravessamos?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(16 de julho de 2013)

Em 2009, a China lançou um conjunto de medidas de incentivo às grandes infraestruturas, em resposta à crise financeira mundial. Esta situação conduziu a um aumento significativo da dívida total em relação ao PIB, num curto período, especialmente no que diz respeito à dívida «quase-pública» (das autoridades locais, bancos públicos e alguns ministérios). Mais recentemente, a China registou igualmente um rápido aumento da dívida das empresas e das famílias, bem como um crescimento rápido de certas formas atípicas de crédito (o «sistema bancário paralelo»). Esta recente expansão acelerada do crédito tem lugar no contexto de uma recuperação relativamente débil da economia real.

Na China, o rácio do investimento em relação ao PIB, nos últimos anos, tem sido extremamente elevado, atingindo cerca de 50 %. Na última análise da economia chinesa nos termos do artigo IV, de julho de 2012, o FMI indicava que a grande dependência das medidas de incentivo relativamente ao investimento, em 2009-2010, havia conduzido a «um aumento das capacidades excedentárias, a um risco acrescido de futuros empréstimos de má qualidade, bem como a apreensões relativamente à solidez financeira dos veículos de financiamento das administrações locais». A recente expansão acelerada do crédito na China é também realçada como constituindo um fator de risco no mais recente «World Economic Outlook» do FMI.

Por conseguinte, a Comissão continua a encorajar a China a avançar com as reformas de grande alcance necessárias para «reequilibrar» o seu modelo de crescimento e desviar a procura do investimento em favor de um maior consumo, de modo a evitar um agravamento destes desequilíbrios estruturais. A própria China reconheceu claramente a necessidade de redefinir o seu modelo de crescimento, nomeadamente através da implementação do 12.° plano quinquenal. O principal desafio económico com que se defrontam os novos dirigentes chineses consistirá em realizar reformas substanciais com vista a melhorar a qualidade e a sustentabilidade do crescimento chinês. A Comissão continuará a acompanhar de perto a evolução da economia chinesa.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005622/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Possible debt crisis in China

Public and private debt in China is now more than 210% of GDP, having increased by over 50% since 2008. Fitch and UBS fear a sudden credit correction.

The risk of a slowdown in China's economic growth is something that has been concerning global investors for several years. Another risk is now added to that: debt. A month ago, Fitch cut China's credit rating.

Can the Commission state:

1. What is its assessment of this situation?

2. How could a Chinese debt crisis affect the EU, even more so given the crisis we are experiencing?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(16 July 2013)

In 2009 China initiated a large infrastructure stimulus package as a response to the global financial crisis. This led to a significant rise in total debt relative to GDP in a short period, particularly in 'quasi-government' debt (that of local authorities, policy banks and some ministries). More recently, China has also seen a rapid rise in corporate and household debt, and rapid growth in non-standard forms of lending (shadow banking). This recent rapid growth in credit takes place against a background of a relatively subdued recovery in the real economy.

In China the ratio of investment to GDP in recent years has been extremely high, close to 50% of GDP. In the last Article IV review of the Chinese economy in July 2012 the IMF stated that the heavy reliance of stimulus measures on investment in 2009-2010 had led to 'an increase in excess capacity, a heightened risk of future non-performing loans, and concerns about the financial health of local government financing vehicles'. China's recent rapid credit growth is also highlighted as a risk factor in the IMF's latest 'World Economic Outlook'.

The Commission therefore continues to encourage China to press forward with the wide-scale reforms needed to 'rebalance' its growth model and rotate demand away from investment and towards higher consumption, so as to prevent any worsening of these structural imbalances. China itself has clearly recognised the need to reshape their growth model, in particular through the implementation of the 12th 5-year plan. The main economic challenge for the new Chinese leadership will be to make substantive reforms to improve the quality and sustainability of China's growth. The Commission will continue to monitor developments in the Chinese economy very closely.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005623/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Desempregados em Portugal com mais de 45 anos

O desemprego de longa duração continua a aumentar e penaliza especialmente os mais velhos. Quase metade dos desempregados com mais de 45 anos procura trabalho há mais de dois anos e 70 % dos desempregados com mais de 45 anos procuram trabalho há mais de 12 meses.

1. Como avalia a Comissão esta situação?

2. Pode a Comissão indicar se estão previstas medidas, em colaboração com o governo português, para combater o desemprego que atinge as faixas etárias mais velhas da população?

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(16 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão está consciente de que o desemprego que afeta as pessoas com mais de 45 anos é um problema importante que contribui para as más condições sociais e do mercado de trabalho em Portugal. A situação do emprego não deverá melhorar até 2014, devido às fracas perspetivas de crescimento.

Para combater a curto prazo o desemprego dos grupos desfavorecidos, tais como as pessoas com mais de 45 anos de idade, a Comissão sugeriu uma série de medidas suscetíveis de estimular a criação de emprego, incluindo subvenções específicas para recém-contratados, redução da carga fiscal, em especial sobre os salários mais baixos, prestações sociais associadas ao trabalho e a promoção do emprego por conta própria e da criação de empresas ([1]). Muitas destas medidas, bem como programas de aprendizagem ao longo da vida, podem ser cofinanciadas pelo Fundo Social Europeu.

Portugal fez um esforço considerável no que diz respeito à ativação dos desempregados, visando especificamente os desempregados com idade superior a 45 anos e os desempregados há mais de 6 meses. Uma das medidas recentemente adotadas é o incentivo à contratação de trabalhadores com mais de 45 anos, através de reembolsos das contribuições para a segurança social a pagar pelos empregadores.

([1]) COM(2012) 173, de 18.4.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005623/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Unemployed people in Portugal aged over 45

Long-term unemployment is still increasing and older people are being hit particularly hard. Almost half of unemployed people aged over 45 have been seeking work for more than two years and 70% of unemployed people aged over 45 have been seeking work for more than 12 months.

1. What is the Commission's view of this situation?

2. Can the Commission indicate whether it is planning joint measures with the Portuguese Government in order to combat the unemployment affecting older age groups within the population?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(16 July 2013)

The Commission is aware that unemployment affecting people over 45 years old is an important feature of the grim labour market and social conditions in Portugal. The employment situation is not expected to ameliorate until 2014 owing to the weak growth outlook.

To tackle unemployment of disadvantaged groups such as people aged over 45 years old in the short-run, the Commission has suggested a number of measures that could stimulate job creation, including targeted subsidies to newly hired, reduction of the tax wedge especially on low-wage earners, well-designed in-work benefits, and promotion of self-employment and business start-ups. ([1])Many of these measures, as well as lifelong learning programmes, can be co-financed from the European Social Fund.

Portugal has made considerable effort in relation to the activation of unemployed people, specifically targeting unemployed above 45 years old and those unemployed for over 6 months. One of the most recently adopted measures is the incentive to hiring of employees aged over 45 via reimbursement of employer's social security contributions.

([1]) COM(2012) 173 of 18 April 2012.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005624/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Venda do Banco Efisa

À semelhança do que aconteceu com a venda do BPN ao BIC, também o Banco Efisa precisará que a Direção da Concorrência da Comissão (DG COMP) aceite linhas de liquidez que o Estado terá de disponibilizar ao banco no âmbito da venda a privados.

Pergunto à Comissão:

1. Que tipo de linhas de crédito será disponibilizado pelo Estado português aos compradores do Banco Efisa?

2. Quando estará finalizada, por parte da DG COMP, a análise à venda do Banco Efisa a privados?

Resposta dada por Joaquín Almunia em nome da Comissão
(17 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão não recebeu qualquer notificação de Portugal no que se refere à concessão de apoio estatal ao Banco Efisa. A Comissão até ao momento não foi informada de qualquer aspeto relativo ao apoio estatal relacionado com o processo de venda desse banco.

Em qualquer caso, a Comissão espera que, no contexto do processo de venda, Portugal informe, em conformidade com as regras em matéria de apoios estatais, acerca de qualquer medida suscetível de envolver apoios estatais, quer ao Banco Efisa, quer ao(s) comprador(es), antes da aplicação de qualquer medida de apoio.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005624/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Sale of Banco Efisa

As with the sale of *Banco Português de Negócios* to *Banco BIC*, *Banco Efisa* will require the Commission's Directorate-General for Competition to agree to credit lines that the state will have to make available to the bank as part of its sale to private owners.

1. What type of credit lines will the Portuguese state be making available to the buyers of *Banco Efisa*?

2. When will the Directorate-General for Competition complete its analysis of the sale of *Banco Efisa* to private owners?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(17 July 2013)

The Commission has not received any notification by Portugal as concerns the granting of state aid to Banco Efisa. The Commission has so far not been informed of any state aid aspect relating to the sales process of that bank.

In any case, the Commission trusts that in the context of the sales procedure Portugal will notify, in line with state aid rules, any measure which might involve state aid to either Banco Efisa or to the buyer(s) before any aid measure is implemented.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005625/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Bloqueio de transmissão de malária nos mosquitos

Cerca de 300 milhões de pessoas são afetadas no mundo anualmente por transmissão de malária, e em países africanos o número de mortes ronda os 1,5 milhões. Segundo um estudo publicado na revista *Science*, um grupo de cientistas norte-americanos descobriu uma nova técnica que permite bloquear a transmissão de malária nos mosquitos. De acordo com esta técnica, os embriões de mosquitos são injetados e infetados pela bactéria Wolbachia, quebrando assim a cadeia de transmissão da malária. Esta infeção bacteriana é hereditária e pode ser transmitida até 34 gerações de mosquitos.

1. Tem a Comissão conhecimento desta descoberta?

2. Pondera a Comissão a sua utilização como uma estratégia complementar no combate à malária?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(9 de julho de 2013)

1. A Comissão tem conhecimento do estudo publicado pelo Dr. Bian e respetivos colaboradores na revista *Science* ([1]). O resultado deste estudo é um primeiro passo importante para uma abordagem inovadora no combate à malária na Ásia. Além disso, o Sétimo Programa-Quadro da UE em matéria de investigação e desenvolvimento tecnológico (7.° PQ) financiou um projeto de investigação com vista a compreender melhor o modo como algumas estirpes da bactéria *Wolbachia* podem impedir a transmissão da malária por mosquitos ([2]).

2. A utilização da bactéria *Wolbachia* para impedir os mosquitos de transmitirem a malária pode ser considerada uma abordagem complementar a utilizar em paralelo com os métodos de controlo de vetores já disponíveis.

([1]) Bian G, Joshi D, Dong Y, Lu P, Zhou G, Pan X et al. «Wolbachia invades Anopheles stephensi populations and induces refractoriness to Plasmodium infection». Science, 10 de maio de 2013, 340, 748-751.

([2]) Anopopage 2009-2012
http://www.zoo.ox.ac.uk/group/anopopage/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005625/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Preventing mosquitoes from transmitting malaria

Around 300 million people worldwide are affected every year by malaria transmission; in African countries, there are around 1.5 million deaths. According to a study published in the journal *Science*, a group of US scientists has discovered a new technique that stops mosquitoes from transmitting malaria. With this technique, mosquito embryos are injected and infected with Wolbachia bacteria, thereby breaking the malaria transmission chain. This bacterial infection is hereditary and can be transmitted by up to 34 generations of mosquito.

1. Is the Commission aware of this discovery?

2. Is the Commission considering its use as a complementary strategy in combating malaria?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

1. The Commission is aware of the study published by Doctor Bian and collaborators in the journal *Science* ([1]). The result of this study is a first important step towards a novel approach to fight against malaria in Asia. In addition, the EU Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7) has financed a research project to better understand how some strains of the bacteria 'Wolbachia' can inhibit the transmission of malaria by mosquitos ([2]).

2. The use of bacteria 'Wolbachia' to prevent mosquitoes from transmitting malaria can be considered as a complementary approach to be used alongside the already available vector control methods.

([1]) Bian G, Joshi D, Dong Y, Lu P, Zhou G, Pan X et al. Wolbachia invades Anopheles stephensi populations and induces refractoriness to Plasmodium infection. *Science* 2013 10 May, 340, 748-751.

([2]) ANOPOPAGE 2009-2012 (http://www.zoo.ox.ac.uk/group/anopopage/).

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005626/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Mecanismo celular limita desenvolvimento de tumores

Uma equipa de investigadores do Instituto Gulbenkian de Ciência (IGC) identificou um novo mecanismo que permite às células saudáveis limitarem o desenvolvimento de tumores. Este mecanismo atua limitando a ação do Src, uma classe de genes que codificam proteínas cuja atividade favorece o desenvolvimento de tumores. Esta descoberta pode abrir portas a novas terapêuticas contra o cancro.

Tem a Comissão conhecimento desta nova descoberta?

Resposta dada por Máire Geoghegan-Quinn em nome da Comissão
(4 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão tem conhecimento da publicação referida pelo Senhor Deputado. Realizada no Instituto Gulbenkian de Ciência em Portugal, identificou um novo mecanismo mediante o qual o citosqueleto inibe a ação da SRC, uma proteína considerada preponderante na tumorigénese ([1]), ([2]) e implicada num grande número de cancros humanos.

Os resultados foram obtidos através do uso da mosca da fruta, a *Drosophila melanogaster*, como modelo. É necessário continuar a investigação de modo a avaliar a importância desta via em modelos de animais mamíferos e humanos, bem como o seu potencial terapêutico.

([1]) Fernandez et al. (2013) Oncogene May 6. doi: 10.1038/onc.2013.155.
([2]) http://www.igc.gulbenkian.pt/pages/article.php/A=277___collection=pressReleases___year=2013

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005626/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Cellular mechanism limits tumour development

A team of researchers at Portugal's Gulbenkian Science Institute (IGC) has identified a new mechanism that enables healthy cells to limit tumour development. This mechanism limits the action of the SRC gene. These genes encode proteins whose activity encourages tumour development. This discovery could pave the way for new cancer treatments.

Is the Commission aware of this discovery?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(4 July 2013)

The Commission is aware of the publication mentioned by the Honourable Member, conducted at the Instituto Gulbenkian de Ciência in Portugal, identifying a novel mechanism whereby the cytoskeleton inhibits the activity of SRC, a protein known to be instrumental in tumorigenesis ([1]) ([2]) and implicated in a large number of human cancers.

The results were obtained using the fruit fly, Drosophila melanogaster, as a model. Further research is required to assess the importance of this pathway in mammalian animal models and humans as well as its therapeutic potential.

([1]) Fernandez et al. (2013) Oncogene May 6. doi: 10.1038/onc.2013.155
([2]) http://www.igc.gulbenkian.pt/pages/article.php/A=277___collection=pressReleases___year=2013

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005627/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Lei europeia das sementes

Considerando o seguinte:

— Foi recentemente discutida pelos comissários europeus uma proposta de regulamento que prevê a obrigação de registo de toda e qualquer variedade de semente que possa trocar de mãos, mesmo que cedida a título gratuito;

— Tal proposta trará custos e processos administrativos impeditivos para a maioria dos agricultores que usam sementes próprias, horticultores, associações de preservação de sementes tradicionais e pequenas empresas de produção de sementes;

— A maioria dos agricultores dizem que o referido regulamento discrimina «severamente as sementes e material de propagação de plantas de polinização aberta, regionais e tradicionais, a favor das sementes industriais e dos operadores corporativos», pelo que há um risco de inviabilizar os sistemas informais de troca e venda de sementes, que são a base da segurança alimentar, nomeadamente em países em desenvolvimento;

— Várias associações do setor referem que esta proposta representa um ataque aos agricultores e à «herança biocultural comum», pondo em causa «a maioria das dezenas de milhares de variedades locais de plantas de cultivo, selecionadas e adaptadas por agricultores durante milénios»;

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

Em que ponto se encontra a referida situação?

Não considera que, no caso de a proposta de regulamento ser aprovada, iremos incorrer num claro retrocesso em termos de agro-biodiversidade, segurança alimentar e auto-suficiência dos países da UE?

Faz sentido um regulamento que beneficiará apenas algumas empresas multinacionais do setor?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(4 de julho de 2013)

A proposta foi adotada em 6 de maio de 2013 e encontra-se atualmente a ser debatida pelos colegisladores. A Comissão está convicta de que a presente proposta de regulamento garante a diversidade e a utilização sustentável das plantas cultivadas. Este objetivo é atingido graças a opções pouco onerosas de registo das variedades tradicionais, que consistem em isentar as microempresas das taxas de registo de variedades, e dando ainda a possibilidade a não profissionais de comercializar material destinado a nichos de mercado sem registo.

O intercâmbio em espécie entre outras pessoas além dos operadores profissionais está fora do âmbito de aplicação do regulamento proposto e os agricultores e horticultores são livres de utilizar qualquer material que entenderem. O regulamento proposto apenas diz respeito à comercialização e produção com vista à comercialização. O mercado da UE de material de propagação vegetal inclui um grande número de microempresas e de pequenas e médias empresas. Outro objetivo central do regulamento proposto é manter e reforçar esta diversidade de operadores e, desta forma, oferecer uma grande escolha (variedades novas, testadas, tradicionais e material para nichos de mercado) ao comprador.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005627/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: European seed law

In view of the fact that:

— the Commission has recently discussed a proposal for a regulation making it mandatory to register any and all seed varieties that may change hands, even if given away for free;

— this proposal will entail administrative costs and processes that are prohibitive for farmers who use their own seeds, as well as gardeners, associations for preserving traditional seeds and small seed-production companies;

— the majority of farmers say that the aforementioned regulation discriminates severely against the seeds and propagating material of regional and traditional open-pollinated plants in favour of industrial seeds and corporate operators, and that this risks rendering unviable informal systems for exchanging and selling seeds, which are the basis of food security, particularly in developing countries;

— several farmers' organisations say that this proposal represents an attack on farmers and shared biological heritage, jeopardising the majority of the tens of thousands of local crop varieties, selected and adapted by farmers over millennia.

Can the Commission state:

What stage has this situation reached?

Does it not take the view that, if this proposal for a regulation is adopted, we will take a clear step backwards in terms of the Member States' agrobiodiversity, food security and self-sufficiency?

Does a regulation that will only benefit a few agricultural multinationals make sense?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(4 July 2013)

The proposal was adopted on 6 May 2013 and now is being discussed by the co-legislators. The Commission is convinced that this proposal for a regulation ensures diversity and sustainable use of cultivated plants. This objective is achieved by offering low-burden options for registering traditional varieties, by exempting micro-enterprises from variety registration fees, and by giving the possibility, also to non-professionals, to market niche-market material without registration.

Exchange in kind between persons other than professional operators is outside the proposed Regulation's scope and farmers and gardeners are free to use any material they like. The proposed Regulation only concerns marketing, and production with a view to marketing. The EU market for plant propagating material comprises a large number of micro-enterprises and small and medium operators. Another central objective of the proposed Regulation is to maintain and strengthen this diversity of operators and in this way to offer a broad choice (new, tested varieties; traditional varieties; niche-market material) to the buyer.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005628/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Reino Unido — novas regras para imigrantes

O governo conservador de David Cameron pretende endurecer as regras para imigrantes no seu território, para que o Reino Unido possa «atrair pessoas que contribuam para o país e desincentivar quem o não faça».

Alguns dos pontos principais do novo pacote legislativo sobre imigração são já conhecidos e incluem os cidadãos da União europeia.

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

Que avaliação faz do mencionado pacote de medidas?

Resposta dada por Cecilia Malmström em nome da Comissão
(24 de julho de 2013)

É prática da Comissão não se pronunciar sobre legislação nacional que ainda não tenha sido adotada.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005628/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: UK — New immigration rules

David Cameron's Conservative government intends to introduce tougher rules for immigrants into the UK, in order to 'attract people who contribute to the country' and discourage those who do not.

Some of the main points of the new legislative package on immigration are already known and cover EU citizens.

Can the Commission state:

What is its view of the aforementioned package of measures?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(24 July 2013)

It is Commission policy not to comment on national legislation that has not been adopted.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005629/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: UE pode ficar sem orçamento disponível ainda este ano

O eurodeputado conservador italiano Giovanni La Via, relator para o orçamento de 2013, prevê que a falta de dinheiro vai começar a ser constatada «a partir de julho».

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

Confirma um quadro que ponha em causa as verbas necessárias ao orçamento da UE para 2013?

Resposta dada por Janusz Lewandowski em nome da Comissão
(27 de junho de 2013)

É na realidade o que acontece; certas rubricas do orçamento registarão uma escassez de pagamentos no futuro próximo. A curto prazo, a Comissão procurará resolver este problema através de transferências. Todavia, é igualmente importante que o aumento das dotações de pagamento proposto, no valor de 11,2 mil milhões de EUR, seja aprovado o mais rapidamente possível, a fim de garantir a existência de fundos suficientes para o resto do exercício orçamental. À data da elaboração da presente resposta, existe um acordo político a nível da Ecofin sobre uma primeira fração de 7,3 mil milhões de EUR. Contudo, tanto o Conselho como o Parlamento Europeu têm ainda de proceder a uma votação formal.

A Comissão continuará a acompanhar atentamente a situação em relação à execução orçamental, apresentando as propostas adequadas, se necessário.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005629/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: The EU could run out of money this year

The Italian Member Giovanni La Via, of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats), is rapporteur for the 2013 budget and predicts that we will start to notice the lack of money 'as early as July'.

Can the Commission confirm that the framework may mean there is not enough money for the 2013 EU budget?

Answer given by Mr Lewandowski on behalf of the Commission
(27 June 2013)

In is indeed the case, that some budget lines will experience a shortage of payments in the near future. In the short term, the Commission will seek to address this problem via transfers. However, it is also important that the proposed increase of payment appropriations of EUR 11.2 billion is approved as soon as possible, to ensure that there will be sufficient funds for the rest of the budget year. At time of writing, there is a political agreement at the level of Ecofin on a first tranche of EUR 7.3 billion. However, both Council and European Parliament have yet to take a formal vote.

The Commission will continue to carefully monitor the situation for budget implementation, and will make the appropriate proposals as necessary.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005630/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Fraude alimentar na China

Mais de 900 produtores de carne de cordeiro, na China, estão sob suspeita de fraude alimentar. A carne de cordeiro era misturada com a de outros animais, como raposa e rato, para aumentar o lucro das vendas. A venda de produtos ilegais gerou lucros superiores a 1 milhão e 200 mil euros.

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Qual a dimensão da exportação de carne chinesa para a UE?

2. Nesse caso, quais os mecanismos de controle da qualidade destes produtos?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(5 de julho de 2013)

1. Por motivos de saúde pública e animal, é proibida na UE a importação de carne de ovino proveniente da China.

2. Deste modo, e uma vez que não se realizam importações, não foram consideradas necessárias ações suplementares ao nível da UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005630/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Food fraud in China

Over 900 mutton producers in China are suspected of food fraud. Mutton has been mixed with the meat of other animals, such as fox and rat, to increase profits. The sale of illegal products has generated profits of over EUR 1.2 million.

Can the Commission state:

1. What is the scale of Chinese meat exports to the EU?

2. In this case, what mechanisms are there for checking the quality of these products?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(5 July 2013)

1. The imports of mutton meat from China into the EU are prohibited for animal and public health reasons.

2. In this case, as no imports take place, no further action was deemed necessary at EU level.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005632/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Crianças em idade escolar com problemas de visão

Cerca de 20 por cento das crianças em idade escolar têm problemas de visão e muitas nunca mais verão a 100 por cento. As crianças desenvolvem o chamado «olho preguiçoso», que pode ser evitado quando detetado ainda em bebé.

Só em Portugal, nascem três a cinco mil crianças com ambliopia, ou seja, com visão reduzida num dos olhos. Se não for detetada a tempo, preferencialmente antes dos dois anos, aquele olho poderá nunca mais recuperar a visão total, mesmo com óculos, lentes de contacto ou cirurgias.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

O que é que pode ser feito ao nível da UE para diminuir os problemas de visão em idade infantil?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(26 de junho de 2013)

O fenómeno «olho preguiçoso» mencionado pelo Senhor Deputado, como muitas outras doenças evitáveis ou condições específicas, beneficiaria de uma maior consciência dos sintomas e opções de tratamento entre os pais e os profissionais de saúde.

Cada Estado-Membro é responsável pela organização e pela prestação de cuidados de saúde aos seus cidadãos. Consequentemente, a prestação de diagnóstico precoce, juntamente com a prevenção eficaz do fenómeno «olho preguiçoso» entre as crianças, é da responsabilidade dos Estados-Membros.

O Programa de Saúde da UE ([1]) pode oferecer possibilidades de apresentar projetos que possam contribuir para a redução de problemas de visão evitáveis ou tratáveis. O programa é executado através de planos de trabalho anuais que definem as prioridades e as ações a empreender.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/health/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005632/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: School-age children with vision problems

Some 20% of school-age children have vision problems and many will never have 100% vision again. Children develop so-called 'lazy eye', which can be prevented if detected when the child is still a baby.

In Portugal alone, 3 000 to 5 000 children per year are born with amblyopia, meaning reduced vision in one eye. If not caught early, preferably before the age of two, this eye may never recover full vision, even with glasses, contact lenses or surgery.

What can be done at EU level to reduce vision problems during early childhood?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(26 June 2013)

The 'lazy-eye' phenomenon referred to by the Honourable Member would, as many other preventable diseases or conditions, benefit from a broader awareness of symptoms and treatment options among parents and health professionals.

Each Member State is responsible for organising and providing healthcare to their citizens. As such, the provision of early diagnosis coupled with effective prevention of the 'lazy-eye' phenomenon in children falls under the responsibility of Member States.

The EU Health Programme ([1]) could offer possibilities to present projects that may contribute to reducing preventable or treatable sight problems. The Programme is implemented by means of annual work plans which set out priorities and actions to be undertaken.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/health/.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005634/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Crise alimentar na Nigéria

Considerando que:

— A Nigéria é um dos países mais pobres do mundo e tem crises alimentares crónicas que se agravam no período compreendido entre o término do consumo das colheitas do ano anterior e o período das novas colheitas, que se realizam no mês de setembro;

— Atualmente, e de acordo com a ONU, cerca de 800 mil pessoas estão em situação de «insegurança alimentar» na Nigéria e, destas, 84 mil precisam de ajuda imediata.

Pergunto à Comissão:

Já existem ou prevê vir a adotar medidas de apoio alimentar ao referido país?

Resposta dada por Kristalina Georgieva em nome da Comissão
(6 de agosto de 2013)

Em 2013, a situação no Níger é agravada por preços anormalmente elevados dos produtos alimentares e pela escassez das colheitas na Nigéria, de onde os cereais são tradicionalmente importados. As taxas de subnutrição aguda já ultrapassam os limiares de emergência em várias regiões, e mais de 1 milhão de crianças necessita de tratamento para a subnutrição.

A Comissão intensificou o seu apoio aos parceiros no Níger desde a crise alimentar de 2005. Em 2012, a Comissão autorizou um montante de 58 milhões de EUR para aumentar os cuidados nos domínios da nutrição e da assistência alimentar. Este apoio permitiu fornecer: cuidados adequados a 370 000 crianças que sofrem de subnutrição aguda, através do fornecimento de alimentos terapêuticos prontos a consumir; alimentação suplementar a 960 000 crianças vulneráveis, mulheres grávidas e mulheres que aleitam; transferências em dinheiro a 320 000 pessoas, permitindo-lhes comprar alimentos e ao mesmo tempo apoiar a economia local; donativos alimentares a 465 000 pessoas, sobretudo em locais onde os alimentos escasseavam no mercado.

Foram afetados 42,5 milhões de EUR de fundos do FED ([1]) para apoio à segurança alimentar através do apoio orçamental setorial. Além disso, foi fornecido o montante de 3,5 milhões de EUR de financiamento do ICD ([2]), no âmbito do programa temático de segurança alimentar, como apoio à iniciativa «Renewed Effort Against Child Hunger» (Renovar os esforços contra a fome infantil).

Em 2013, a Comissão está mais uma vez a concentrar esforços para ajudar os mais vulneráveis à fome e à subnutrição e, no âmbito da iniciativa nacional dos 3N («Les nigériens nourrissent les nigériens» — Os nigerinos alimentam os nigerinos), pretende reforçar progressivamente a capacidade de resistência aos choques por parte das populações vulneráveis. Os parceiros receberão apoio para fornecer serviços integrados de saúde e nutrição a centenas de milhares de crianças, bem como às mulheres grávidas e lactantes. A Comissão continua também a preconizar a criação de redes de segurança social para os grupos mais vulneráveis.

([1]) Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento.
([2]) Instrumento de Cooperação para o Desenvolvimento.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005634/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Food crisis in Niger

In view of the fact that:

— Niger is one of the world's poorest countries and experiences chronic food crises that are worst during the period between the previous year's crops running out and the new harvest, which takes place in September;

— according to the UN, 800 000 people are currently experiencing 'food insecurity' in Niger, 84 000 of whom need immediate help.

Can the Commission state:

Are there already food aid measures in place for the country, or does the Commission plan to adopt any?

Answer given by Ms Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(6 August 2013)

In 2013, the situation in Niger is exacerbated by abnormally high food prices and by poor harvests in Nigeria, where cereals are traditionally imported from. Severe malnutrition rates already surpass emergency thresholds in several regions, and more than 1 million children require malnutrition treatment.

The Commission has stepped up its support to partners in Niger since the nutritional crisis of 2005. In 2012, the Commission committed EUR 58 million to significantly scale up nutrition care and food assistance. This helped: 370 000 children suffering from acute malnutrition with appropriate care through ready-to-use therapeutic foods; 960 000 vulnerable children, pregnant and lactating women with blanket supplementary feeding; 320 000 people with cash transfers enabling them to buy food while supporting the local economy; 465 000 people with food donations, mostly in places where food was scarce on the markets.

EUR 42.5 million of EDF ([1]) funds were committed to support food security through sectorial budget support. In addition, a EUR 3.5 million DCI ([2]) financing under the Food Security Thematic Programme was provided to support the UN's 'Renewed Effort Against Child Hunger' initiative.

In 2013, the Commission is targeting once again those most vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition and, within the framework of the national 3N ('les Nigériens nourrissent les Nigériens') initiative, aims to progressively enhance the resilience to shocks of the vulnerable population. Partners receive support to provide integrated health and nutrition services to hundreds of thousands of children as well as pregnant and lactating women. The Commission also continues to advocate for the creation of social safety nets for the most vulnerable.

([1]) European Development Fund.
([2]) Development Cooperation Instrument.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005635/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Mutações genéticas ligadas ao cancro da mama e ovários

Considerando o seguinte:

— Um grupo de especialistas de um instituto de investigação biomédica da Catalunha identificou três mutações genéticas responsáveis pelo cancro da mama e do ovário.

— Os especialistas relacionam o desenvolvimento destes tumores com três mutações no gene BRCA1, que representam um alto risco de desenvolvimento de cancro da mama ou do ovário. Uma mulher com uma mutação naquele gene tem um risco entre 40 % a 90 % de contrair cancro da mama e entre 20 % e 70 % de contrair cancro do ovário.

Assim, pergunta-se à Comissão:

Tem conhecimento desta descoberta?

Como a avalia?

Resposta dada por Máire Geoghegan-Quinn em nome da Comissão
(4 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão tem conhecimento da publicação do estudo por um grupo de investigadores do Instituto de Investigação Biomédica de Bellvitge (Idibell) e do Instituto de Oncologia da Catalunha (ICO), que identifica três variantes patogénicas do gene BRCA1 ([1]), ([2]), a que o Senhor Deputado faz referência.

No caso de algumas das mutações do gene BRCA1, *existe um* risco elevado de contrair cancro da mama ou do ovário ao longo da vida. No entanto, desconhece-se a importância dessas variantes. A investigação a que faz referência utilizou análises funcionais e estruturais *in vitro* para concluir que três dessas variantes influenciam a função da proteína BRCA1 e são potencialmente patogénicas. A confirmarem-se, os resultados desta investigação poderão conduzir a uma melhor avaliação dos riscos para as pessoas portadoras de mutações e a um melhor aconselhamento genético.

([1]) Quiles F., Fernández-Rodríguez J., Mosca R, Feliubadaló L., Tornero E, Brunet J., Blanco I., Capella G., Pujana M.A., Aloy P., Monteiro A., e Lázaro C., (2013) Functional and structural analysis of C-terminal BRCA1 missense variants. PLoS ONE 8(4): e61302. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0061302.

([2]) http://www.idibell.cat/modul/news/en/544/identified-as-responsible-for-breast-and-ovarian-hereditary-cancer-three-brca1-mutations

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005635/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Genetic mutations linked to breast and ovarian cancer

In view of the fact that:

— a group of specialists at a biomedical research institute in Catalonia, Spain, has identified three genetic mutations responsible for breast and ovarian cancer;

— these specialists report the development of these tumours when there are three mutations in the BRCA1 gene, which represent a high risk of breast or ovarian cancer. A woman with a mutation in that gene has a 40-90% risk of contracting breast cancer and 20-70% of contracting ovarian cancer.

Can the Commission state:

Is it aware of this discovery?

What is its assessment thereof?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(4 July 2013)

The Commission is aware of the publication mentioned by the Honourable Member, by the research group in Bellvitge Biomedical Research Institute (IDIBELL) and the Catalan Institute of Oncology (ICO), identifying three pathogenic genetic variants of the BRCA1 gene ([1]) ([2]).

Some mutations in BRCA1 genes confer high lifetime risks of breast and ovarian cancer. Nevertheless, the significance of some variants is unknown. The research cited used *in vitro* functional and structural analyses to conclude that three of such variants influence the function of BRCA1 protein and are likely pathogenic variants. This research, if confirmed, may lead to a better assessment of personal risks of mutations carriers and to better genetic counselling.

([1]) Quiles F., Fernández-Rodríguez J., Mosca R, Feliubadaló L., Tornero E, Brunet J., Blanco I., Capella G., Pujana M.A., Aloy P., Monteiro A., and Lázaro C.. (2013) Functional and structural analysis of C-terminal BRCA1 missense variants. PLoS ONE 8(4): e61302. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0061302

([2]) http://www.idibell.cat/modul/news/en/544/identified-as-responsible-for-breast-and-ovarian-hereditary-cancer-three-brca1-mutations

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005636/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Caça ilegal em Malta II

O Deputado signatário apresentou à Comissão a pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-2377/2010.

Na resposta dada por Janez Potočnik em nome da Comissão foi dito o seguinte: «Em 9 de abril de 2010, o Governo maltês adotou legislação que permite a caça na primavera de cerca de 7 500 aves, durante uma semana, em finais de Abril de 2010. A legislação impõe algumas restrições em relação à caça na primavera e apresenta medidas específicas para a supervisão da caça nesta época do ano. A Comissão considera que, em princípio, a nova legislação que permite a caça na primavera em 2010 parece cumprir os requisitos do acórdão do Tribunal de Justiça Europeu. Não obstante, é essencial uma aplicação eficaz de todas as condições previstas na nova legislação (duração da época de caça, número de licenças de caça e número de aves a abater). Esta aplicação será supervisionada pela Comissão.»

Recentemente, e de acordo com a BBC (*British Broadcasting Corporation*), foi noticiado que milhares de pássaros protegidos, como aberalhucos, tartaranhãos e cucos continuam a ser mortos ilegalmente durante a temporada de caça, ao migrarem de Malta, no Mediterrâneo, em direção ao continente europeu.

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Que avaliação faz da aplicação da legislação relativa à caça que se encontra em vigor no arquipélago maltês?

2. De que dados dispõe a Comissão relativamente ao número de aves que são abatidas ilegalmente?

Resposta dada por Janez Potočnik em nome da Comissão
(8 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão contactou as autoridades maltesas, que lhe prestaram informações sobre a reforma planeada das estruturas de fiscalização e repressão competentes, designadamente a criação de uma unidade especializada de combate ao crime contra a fauna selvagem, exclusivamente dedicada à fiscalização e imposição do cumprimento das normas aplicáveis, incluindo as que regulam a caça. A Comissão mantém contactos regulares com as autoridades nacionais, no intuito de melhorar com medidas concretas a fiscalização e repressão, e acredita que se conseguirá assim reduzir o desnível considerável entre os números noticiados e os números oficiais e factos estabelecidos. Por último, a Comissão remete o Senhor Deputado para a resposta dada às perguntas escritas E-347/2013, do Deputado Ashley Fox, e E-4289/2013, do Deputado Andrea Zanoni.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005636/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Illegal hunting in Malta II

This Member submitted question for written answer E-2377/2010 to the Commission.

Commissioner Potočnik's answer included the following: 'On 9 April 2010, the Maltese Government adopted legislation permitting spring hunting of some 7 500 birds in Malta for one week at the end of April 2010. The legislation imposes a number of restrictions in relation to spring hunting and provides detailed measures for controlling spring hunting. The Commission considers that, in principle, the new legislation permitting spring hunting in 2010 appears to comply with the requirements of the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union. It is nevertheless essential to effectively enforce all the conditions set out in the new legislation (duration of the hunting season, the number of hunting licences and the number of birds to be hunted). This will be monitored by the Commission'.

The BBC recently reported that thousands of protected birds, such as bee-eaters, harriers and cuckoos, are still being illegally killed during the hunting season as they migrate from Malta, in the Mediterranean, to mainland Europe.

Can the Commission state:

1. What is its view of the implementation of the hunting legislation in force in the Maltese archipelago?

2. Does the Commission have figures for the number of birds illegally killed?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

The Commission is in contact with the Maltese authorities who have provided information on the planned reform of the relevant enforcement structures, including the setting up of a specialised Wildlife Crime Unit, which will be fully and exclusively dedicated to enforcement of wildlife regulations, including regulations related to hunting. The Commission has been in regular contact with national authorities with a view to improve enforcement through concrete action. The Commission believes this should also reduce the considerable gaps between the alleged figures and the official figures facts established. Finally, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to written questions E-347/2013 by Mr Ashley Fox and E-4289/2013 by Mr Andrea Zanoni.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005637/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Propagação do vírus H7N9

Considerando o seguinte:

— Segundo o último balanço oficial das autoridades, o novo vírus da gripe aviária H7N9 já afetou um total de 129 pessoas e causou 31 mortes na China;

— O Governo japonês decidiu ampliar as medidas preventivas contra o vírus H7N9, que passou a ser considerado uma «doença infecciosa» perante a legislação;

— O Instituto de Doenças Infecciosas do Japão não descarta a possibilidade de uma pandemia e adverte para que se trata de um vírus de rápida adaptabilidade aos humanos;

— A Organização Mundial de Saúde alertou para a necessidade de tomar medidas contra o H7N9, considerado um dos vírus mais mortais.

Assim, pergunta-se à Comissão:

Como avalia estas novas medidas tomadas pelo Governo japonês?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(5 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão troca regularmente informações sobre ameaças para a saúde de relevância internacional com o Japão. Desde novembro de 2001, a Comissão Europeia, enquanto membro da Iniciativa para a Segurança Mundial da Saúde (GHSI), tem vindo a trabalhar estreitamente com o Japão e com os outros países parceiros, num esforço de criar uma estratégia global eficaz e bem organizada de prevenção e resposta a potenciais ameaças para a saúde.

Durante a reunião de altos funcionários da Iniciativa para a Segurança Mundial da Saúde realizada em Otava em 13 e 14 de junho trocaram-se informações relativas a recentes epidemias, incluindo a gripe A (H7N9) na China. Serão comunicados eventuais novos desenvolvimentos durante a reunião ministerial a realizar em Itália em dezembro de 2013.

A Comissão considera que as medidas de saúde pública tomadas pelo Japão no que respeita à gripe A (H7N9) destinam-se a reforçar a sua capacidade de prevenção e resposta perante a eventual propagação do surto, e que tais medidas estão alinhadas com medidas previstas e aplicadas a nível internacional. Tais medidas de saúde pública são, em última instância, da responsabilidade dos Estados-Membros.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005637/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Spread of the H7N9 virus

In view of the fact that:

— the Chinese authorities' latest official figures show that the new H7N9 bird flu virus has already affected a total of 129 people in the country, resulting in 31 deaths;

— the Japanese Government has decided to step up its prevention measures in connection with H7N9, which is now considered an 'infectious disease' in law;

— the Japanese National Institute of Infectious Diseases is not ruling out the possibility of a pandemic and is warning that this virus could quickly adapt to humans;

— the World Health Organisation has warned that steps need to be taken against H7N9, which is considered one of the world's deadliest viruses.

Can the Commission state:

What is its view of the Japanese Government's new measures?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(5 July 2013)

The Commission regularly exchanges information on health threats of international relevance with Japan. Since November 2001, the European Commission, as a member of the Global Health Security Initiative (GHSI), has been working closely with Japan and the other partner countries in an effort to create an effective and well-organised global strategy for preparedness and responses to potential health threats.

Information related to recent epidemics, including influenza A(H7N9) in China, has been exchanged during the Senior Official meeting of the Global Health Security Initiative in Ottawa on 13-14 June; possible new developments will be communicated during the Ministerial meeting to be hosted by Italy in December 2013.

The Commission considers that the public health measures undertaken by Japan as regards Influenza A (H7N9) are intended to strengthen its preparedness and response to the possible spread of the outbreak, and that such measures are aligned with measures planned and undertaken at international level. Such public health measures are ultimately the responsibility of Member States.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005638/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Produtos químicos no ar do interior das casas

Um estudo europeu revelou a presença de pesticidas e de produtos industriais no ar que circula no interior das casas, indicando ainda que os níveis verificados ultrapassaram, por vezes, os valores registados no exterior.

Os autores do estudo destacaram que a qualidade de vida conseguida pela população mundial durante o último século foi possível através de novos produtos químicos, cujas consequências, a médio e a longo prazo, não foram estudadas durante a sua fabricação.

Assim, pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento do referido estudo europeu, bem como da tipologia dos produtos que afetam a saúde?

2. Que dados possui sobre esta matéria?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(9 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão Europeia não tem conhecimento de qualquer estudo realizado ao nível da UE que diga especificamente respeito aos pesticidas e produtos industriais no ar que circula no interior das casas. A nível nacional, alguns Estados-Membros incluíram os pesticidas nas suas campanhas de monitorização do ambiente em recintos fechados (casas, escolas). No atinente aos produtos químicos industriais, o regulamento REACH ([1]) atribui uma maior responsabilidade à indústria na gestão dos riscos decorrentes dos produtos químicos e no fornecimento de informações de segurança sobre as substâncias em causa.

Têm vindo a realizar-se vastas investigações que demonstram a importância para a saúde da qualidade do ar em recintos fechados. O projeto ENVIE ([2]), por exemplo, revelou que se podem realizar ganhos importantes em termos de saúde pública com a aplicação de medidas relacionadas especificamente com a qualidade do ar em recintos fechados. Além disso, através do Programa de Saúde da UE para 2006-2013, o projeto Ephect ([3]) centrou os seus esforços na melhor compreensão das exposições múltiplas aos poluentes atmosféricos primários e secundários emitidos tipicamente no decurso da utilização nas residências europeias de produtos de consumo relevantes e dos padrões de utilização desses produtos.

([1]) (Regulamento (CE) n.° 1907/2006).
([2]) ENVIE, financiado ao abrigo do Sexto Programa-Quadro de Investigação (6PQ): http://www.envie-iaq.eu/
([3]) Projeto Ephect — 2009 — 20091206 cofinanciado pela União Europeia (Agência de Execução para a Saúde e os Consumidores — EAHC) no quadro do Programa de Saúde 2006-2013: http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/projects/database.html?prjno=20091206

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005638/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Chemicals in the air inside homes

A European study has revealed the presence of pesticides and industrial products in the air circulating inside homes, while also indicating that the levels recorded are sometimes higher than those recorded outside.

The study's authors highlighted the fact that the quality of life achieved by the world's population during the previous century was possible because of new chemical products, the medium- and long-term consequences of which were not studied while they were being manufactured.

1. Is the Commission aware of the aforementioned European study and the types of product that affect health?

2. What figures does it have on this subject?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

The European Commission is not aware of any study performed at EU level specifically concerning pesticides and industrial products in indoor air of homes. At national level, some Member States have included pesticides in their monitoring campaigns in indoor environments (homes, schools). Concerning industrial chemicals, on the basis of the REACH regulation ([1]) greater responsibility is placed on the industry to manage the risks from chemicals and to provide safety information on the substances concerned.

A wide range of research demonstrating the importance of indoor air quality for health has been conducted, for example, the ENVIE ([2]) project showed that important public health gains can be achieved by implementing specific indoor air quality related policies. In addition through the EU health programme 2006-2013, the EPHECT ([3]) project focused its efforts on better understanding multiple exposures to primary and secondary air pollutants, emitted during typical European household usage and use patterns of relevant consumer products.

([1]) (EC 1907/2006).
([2]) ENVIE, financed under the Sixth Framework Programme for Research (FP6): http://www.envie-iaq.eu/.
([3]) EPHECT Project — 2009 — 20091206 co-funded by European Union (Executive Agency for Health and Consumers- EAHC) framework of the Health Programmes 2006-2013 http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/projects/database.html?prjno=20091206.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005639/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Terapia genética contra insuficiência cardíaca

Considerando que:

— A insuficiência cardíaca é uma doença incapacitante e potencialmente mortal, que, segundo estimativas da Sociedade Europeia de Cardiologia, afeta cerca de 2 % a 3 % da população adulta, aumentando marcadamente na terceira idade.

— Só em Portugal, estimava-se, em 2010, que afetasse mais de 250 mil pessoas;

— Um grupo de cientistas pretende testar a eficácia de uma terapia genética contra a insuficiência cardíaca, que consiste em injetar na circulação sanguínea, a bordo de um vírus da constipação tornado inócuo, um gene que comanda o fabrico da proteína SERCA2a, e que permita reforçar os batimentos do coração, restabelecendo a sua função normal.

Assim, pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento desta nova terapia?

2. Possui algum estudo que comprove a sua eficácia?

Resposta dada por Máire Geoghegan-Quinn em nome da Comissão
(4 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão tem conhecimento dos trabalhos de investigação a que o Senhor Deputado faz referência, realizados nos Estados Unidos e na Europa, com o objetivo de desenvolver uma terapia genética para a insuficiência cardíaca. De acordo com as estimativas, a insuficiência cardíaca afeta mais de 20 milhões de pessoas na Europa e nos Estados Unidos e é uma das principais causas de morte a nível mundial.

Tendo em conta os bons resultados da longa investigação levada a cabo, a Celladon Corporation — empresa norte-americana do ramo da biotecnologia — registou uma terapia de substituição enzimática geneticamente orientada para a insuficiência cardíaca avançada, a chamada Mydicar®. O sucesso da fase I/II do ensaio patrocinado pela Celladon (CUPID) demonstrou segurança e apontou os benefícios desse agente num pequeno grupo de pacientes ([1]). Todavia, a eficácia do tratamento tem de ser confirmada com ensaios de maior amplitude. A empresa deu recentemente início a um segundo ensaio de maior dimensão com pacientes (CUPID2b) ([2]), cujos resultados deverão ser publicados posteriormente.

Embora não apoie especificamente qualquer investigação relacionada com a terapia genética orientada para a proteína SERCA2a em caso de insuficiência cardíaca, o Sétimo Programa-quadro de Investigação, Desenvolvimento Tecnológico e Demonstração (7.° PQ, 2007-2013) consagrou 173 milhões de euros a 57 projetos de investigação neste domínio. Os projetos abrangem áreas como os mecanismos moleculares, a patofisiologia da insuficiência cardíaca, as novas metas em matéria de tratamento com terapia regenerativa e outras abordagens, a prevenção através do exercício, tecnologias de telemonitorização e informação na gestão de pacientes com insuficiência cardíaca.

([1]) Jessup M et al. Calcium Upregulation by Percutaneous Administration of Gene Therapy in Cardiac Disease (CUPID): a phase 2 trial of intracoronary gene therapy of sarcoplasmic reticulum Ca2+-ATPase in patients with advanced heart failureCirculation. 19.7. 2011; 124(3):304-13. doi: 10.1161/Circulationaha.111.022889. Epub, 27.6.2011.

([2]) Identificador ClinicalTrials.gov: NCT01643330 (http://clinicaltrials.gov/show/NCT01643330)

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005639/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Gene therapy for heart failure

In view of the fact that:

— heart failure is an incapacitating and potentially fatal disease which, according to the European Society of Cardiology, affects around 2-3% of the adult population, becoming markedly more common amongst older people;

— it was estimated in 2010 that it affected over 250 000 people in Portugal alone;

— a group of scientists is aiming to test how effective gene therapy is against heart failure. It consists of injecting a gene that controls production of the SERCA2a protein into the bloodstream inside a common cold virus that has been rendered harmless. This strengthens the heart structure and enables it to work normally again.

Can the Commission state:

1. Is it aware of this new treatment?

2. Does it have any research that proves its effectiveness?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(4 July 2013)

The Commission is aware of research efforts undertaken in the United States and in Europe to develop a gene therapy for heart failure, as mentioned by the Honourable Member. Heart failure, which is estimated to affect more than 20 million people throughout Europe and the United States, is one of the leading causes of death worldwide.

As a result of longstanding successful research, the US biotech company Celladon Corporation has registered a genetically-targeted enzyme replacement therapy for advanced heart failure called MYDICAR®. Celladon sponsored a successful Phase I/II trial (CUPID), which demonstrated safety and suggested benefit of this agent in a small group of patients ([1]). However, the efficacy of this treatment needs to be confirmed in larger trials. The company has just started a second larger trial in patients (CUPID2b) ([2]) and results need to be awaited.

Although no specific research related to gene therapy targeting SERCA2a protein for heart failure is being supported by the Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7, 2007- 2013), EUR 173 million have been devoted to 57 projects related to heart failure research. The projects target areas such as molecular mechanisms, pathophysiology of heart failure, novel treatment targets through regenerative therapy and other approaches, prevention through exercise training and tele-monitoring and information technologies in the management of patients with heart failure.

([1]) Jessup M et al. Calcium Upregulation by Percutaneous Administration of Gene Therapy in Cardiac Disease (CUPID): a phase 2 trial of intracoronary gene therapy of sarcoplasmic reticulum Ca2+-ATPase in patients with advanced heart failureCirculation. 2011 Jul 19;124(3):304-13. doi: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.111.022889. Epub 2011 Jun 27.

([2]) ClinicalTrials.gov identifier: NCT01643330 (http://clinicaltrials.gov/show/NCT01643330).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005640/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: Syrien-Konflikt

Jüngste Medienberichte machen den Konflikt deutlich, in dem sich US-Präsident Obama befindet. Einerseits ist es nur zu verständlich, dass er sein Land nicht in eine neue Kriegsmission führen will, und andererseits scheint die Welt eine amerikanische Intervention in Syrien beinahe zu erwarten. Mehr als 80 000 Menschen sind schon gestorben, die Zahl der Flüchtlinge ist enorm.

1. Sieht die Kommission die Notwendigkeit eines Einsatzes seitens der EU in Syrien und, wenn ja, in welcher Form?

2. Wie kann sich die Europäische Union im Fall einer Friedensmission im Detail in Syrien einbringen, sowohl militärisch als auch in humanitärer Hinsicht?

3. In dem Entschließungsantrag B7-0425/2012 hat das Parlament Maßnahmen gefordert, um den Entwicklungen, unter anderem Menschenrechtsverletzungen, Einhalt zu gebieten. Welche politische Vorgehensweise zieht die Kommission denn nun hinsichtlich Syrien in den kommenden Monaten grundsätzlich in Betracht?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(8. Juli 2013)

Die Kommission leistet im Zusammenhang mit der Krise in Syrien bereits aktiv Unterstützung, insbesondere durch humanitäre Hilfe. Das künftige Engagement der EU ist von der Situation vor Ort, vor allem von der Sicherheitslage für das EU-Personal abhängig. Folgende Schwerpunktbereiche wurden ermittelt, in denen die EU eine wichtige Rolle spielen könnte: Unterstützung bei politischen und sicherheitspolitischen Fragen, wirtschaftliche Wiederbelebung und Wiederaufbau sowie humanitäre Hilfe. Für diese Bereiche wurden in Verbindung mit einer umsichtigen Planung auch konkretere Maßnahmen festgelegt.

Die EU will zur Unterstützung der Vorbereitung einer internationalen Konferenz beitragen, die nach den Plänen der USA und Russlands die syrische Regierung und die syrische Opposition an einen Tisch bringen soll. Die EU sieht in dieser Konferenz einen ersten Schritt zur Einleitung eines nachhaltigen Prozesses und nicht nur eine einmalige Aktion. Sie ist bereit, bei diesen Bestrebungen mit allen Partnern und Parteien zusammenzuarbeiten.

Die EU unterstützt weiterhin die unabhängige internationale Untersuchungskommission und begrüßt die von ihr vorgelegten Ergebnisse.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005640/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Syria conflict

Recent media reports have clearly exposed the conflict facing US President Obama. On the one hand, it is perfectly understandable that he does not want to take his country into another war and, on the other, the world almost appears to be expecting US intervention in Syria. Over 80 000 people have already died and the number of refugees is huge.

1. Does the Commission feel that an EU mission in Syria is needed and, if so, in what form?

2. Exactly what part could the European Union play in a peace mission in Syria, from both a military and a humanitarian perspective?

3. In its motion for a resolution B7-0425/2012, the European Parliament called for a halt to developments, including human rights violations. What political approach is the Commission now considering in respect of Syria over the coming months?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

The Commission is already active in providing assistance in the context of the Syrian crisis, especially in the field of the humanitarian aid. Future EU engagement will depend on the situation, in particular the security situation for EU personnel. Four main areas have been identified where the EU could play a role: political, security, recovery and reconstruction and humanitarian. Within these areas more specific activities have also been identified and prudent planning is being conducted.

The EU supports and intends to facilitate the preparation of an international conference with the participation of the Syrian government and the Syrian opposition, as envisaged by the US and Russia. The EU foresees the conference as a step leading to a sustainable process rather than a one-off event. In this effort the EU is prepared to work with all partners and parties.

The EU continues to support the international independent Commission of Inquiry and has welcomed its findings.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005641/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: Konfrontation im Südchinesischen Meer

Im südostasiatischen Raum zeichnet sich ein großer Konflikt um Seegebiete ab. Aufgrund reicher Fisch- und Rohstoffvorkommen dringt China auf See immer weiter Richtung Süden vor, die ASEAN-Staaten werden dadurch zunehmend bedrängt.

1. Hat die Kommission Kenntnis davon, ob das Südchinesische Meer und seine Rohstoffe von allen Anrainerstaaten genutzt werden darf oder ob es geregelte Besitzverteilungen gibt?

2. Falls es keine Besitzverteilungen gibt: Kann die Kommission beurteilen, ob und inwiefern internationale Vereinbarungen über die Nutzung der betreffenden Gebiete bestehen und ob sie den Konflikt regeln könnten?

3. Sieht die Kommission eine Möglichkeit, die ASEAN-Staaten bei der Wahrung ihrer Interessen im Südchinesischen Meer zu unterstützen?

Antwort von Frau Damanaki im Namen der Kommission
(16. Juli 2013)

1. Der Kommission ist keine Besitzverteilungsregelung zwischen den betreffenden Staaten bekannt. Die Küstenstaaten können daher die Rohstoffe in den Gebieten, die unter ihre Hoheit oder Gerichtsbarkeit fallen, gemäß den im Seerechtsübereinkommen der Vereinten Nationen (Unclos) von 1982 festgelegten Rechten und Pflichten nutzen.

2. Unclos und das zugehörige Durchführungsabkommen, das Abkommen von 1994 über die Anwendung von Teil XI des Seerechtsübereinkommens der Vereinten Nationen vom 10. Dezember 1982, sind die wesentlichen international gültigen Rechtsinstrumente zur Regelung der Nutzung von Rohstoffen aus dem Meer. Diese Regeln gelten auch für das Südchinesische Meer.

3. Die Zusammenarbeit bei der Nutzung von Rohstoffen und die damit verbundenen Umweltschutzaspekte fallen in den Bereich der gemeinsamen Maßnahmen der ASEAN-Staaten. Die EU unterstützt die gemeinsamen Bemühungen sowie jede friedliche Beilegung von Streitfällen gemäß den Unclos-Bestimmungen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005641/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Conflict in the South China Sea

A major conflict is raging in the waters of south-east Asia. China is pushing further and further south in the South China Sea in pursuit of its rich stocks of fish and raw materials and this is putting the ASEAN countries under increasing pressure.

1. Does the Commission know if the South China Sea and its raw materials can be exploited by all the coastal states or have allocation regulations been adopted?

2. If no allocation regulations have been adopted, can the Commission say if, and to what extent, international agreements have been signed governing exploitation of the areas in question and if they could be used to settle the conflict?

3. Does the Commission believe that the ASEAN countries could be supported in safeguarding their interests in the South China Sea?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(16 July 2013)

1. The European Commission is not aware of any allocation regulation adopted amongst the States concerned. Thus coastal states can exploit raw materials in the areas under their sovereignty or jurisdiction according to the rights and obligations establish in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos).

2. Unclos and its implementing agreement, the 1994 United Nations Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 are the main international legal instruments governing marine exploitation of raw materials. Their rules apply also to the South China Sea.

3. Cooperation in the exploitation of raw materials and environmental protection linked to it, are issues under the cooperative action of the ASEAN. The EU supports the cooperative efforts and any peaceful settlement of disputes following Unclos provisions in this regard.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005642/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: Preisabsprachen zwischen Ölkonzernen?

Jüngsten Medienberichten zufolge haben europäische Behörden auf Geheiß der EU-Kommission Razzien bei mehreren Ölkonzernen durchgeführt.

1. Kann die Kommission zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt eine erste Einschätzung dazu abgeben, wann Ergebnisse darüber vorliegen werden und ob der Verdacht der Preismanipulation gerechtfertigt ist?

2. Die Kommission wird um eine Einschätzung darüber gebeten, über welchen Zeitraum sich die Preisabsprachen im schlimmsten Fall erstrecken können.

3. Es ist von Konsequenzen die Rede, die auch die Verbraucher betreffen. In welchem Bereich bewegt sich der durchschnittliche Schaden, der den Verbrauchern in der EU durch Preismanipulationen entstanden sein könnte?

Antwort von Herrn Almunia im Namen der Kommission
(4. Juli 2013)

Die Kommission kann bestätigen, dass sie im Mai 2013 Nachprüfungen in den Geschäftsräumen mehrerer Unternehmen vorgenommen hat, die in den Branchen Rohöl, Raffinerieprodukte und Biokraftstoffe tätig sind bzw. für Unternehmen dieser Branchen Dienstleistungen erbringen. Nach Ansicht der Kommission besteht Anlass zu der Vermutung, dass die betreffenden Unternehmen nach gemeinsamer Absprache bei einer Preisberichtsstelle verzerrte Preise gemeldet haben, um so die veröffentlichten Preise für eine Reihe von Öl- und Biokraftstoffprodukten zu manipulieren. Des Weiteren könnten diese Unternehmen in der Absicht, die öffentlichen Preise zu verzerren, andere daran gehindert haben, sich am Preisbewertungsprozess zu beteiligen.

Die von der Kommission eingeholten Informationen müssen jetzt geprüft werden. Es wäre somit verfrüht, Aussagen zu den möglichen Ergebnissen der Untersuchung zu machen. Die Dauer einer solchen Untersuchung hängt von einer Reihe von Faktoren ab, unter anderem von der Komplexität des Falls, der Bereitschaft der betroffenen Unternehmen, mit der Kommission zusammenzuarbeiten, und davon, inwieweit diese ihre Verteidigungsrechte geltend machen. Die Kommission wird versuchen, die Untersuchung so schnell wie möglich abzuschließen. In diesem Stadium wäre eine Aussage zu der Frage, ob und wie lange Verbraucher durch die mutmaßliche Zuwiderhandlung geschädigt wurden, verfrüht.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005642/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Price fixing by oil companies?

According to recent media reports, European authorities have cracked down on several oil companies at the behest of the EU Commission.

1. Is the Commission presently in a position to say when the results of this are expected to be available and if the suspicion of price fixing was justified?

2. Can the Commission provide an estimate as to how long price fixing may have been going on in the worst case scenario?

3. These are consequences which also affect consumers. What sort of average losses may consumers in the EU have sustained as a result of price fixing?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(4 July 2013)

The Commission can confirm that, in May 2013, it carried out inspections at the premises of several companies active in and providing services to the crude oil, refined oil products and biofuels sectors. The Commission has concerns that the companies may have colluded in reporting distorted prices to a Price Reporting Agency to manipulate the published prices for a number of oil and biofuel products. Furthermore, the Commission has concerns that the companies may have prevented others from participating in the price assessment process, with a view to distorting published prices.

The information obtained by the Commission will now need to be analysed and it is too early to draw conclusions about the findings of the investigation. The duration of an investigation depends on a number of factors, including the complexity of the case, the extent to which the companies concerned cooperate with the Commission and their exercise of the rights of defence. The Commission will seek to finalise the investigation as quickly as possible. It is at this stage too early to assess whether and for how long consumers may have been affected by the alleged infringement.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005643/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: Anstieg der Arbeitslosenzahl Spaniens im April auf über 6 Millionen

Spaniens Arbeitslosenzahl stieg im April dieses Jahres auf 6 Millionen — dies ist ein absoluter Höchststand in der Geschichte Spaniens.

Auch wenn die spanische Regierung verschiedene Schritte gegangen ist, wie zum Beispiel die Förderung der Gründung von KMU und die Steuererleichterung für Selbstständige, scheinen diese nicht auszureichen, um die Situation hinreichend zu verbessern.

1. Ist der Kommission dieser Umstand bekannt und, wenn ja, welche weiteren Schritte/Initiativen wird sie Spanien empfehlen wollen, um eine deutliche Verbesserung dieses Zustands herbeizuführen?

2. Kann die Kommission angeben, wie viele der 6 Millionen Arbeitslosen der Generation 50+ und wie viele der Generation zwischen 20 und 30 Jahre angehören?

3. Welchen Anteil haben die Frauen an den Arbeitslosenzahlen bei der 20 bis 30 Jahre alten Personengruppe und welchen in der Generation 50+?

Antwort von László Andor im Namen der Kommission
(18. Juli 2013)

Die Entwicklung auf dem spanischen Arbeitsmarkt und die von den nationalen Behörden beschlossenen und umgesetzten Maßnahmen werden von der Kommission genau verfolgt. Die Gesamteinschätzung der Kommission wird eingehend in den am 29. Mai 2013 angenommenen länderspezifischen Empfehlungen dargestellt.

Die im Juli 2012 vom spanischen Gesetzgeber verabschiedete Arbeitsmarktreform beinhaltet entscheidende Schritte zur Veränderung der Arbeitsbeziehungen. Auch die Strategie für Jugendbeschäftigung und Unternehmertum 2013-2016, die im März 2013 vorgestellt wurde, ist ein Schritt in die richtige Richtung, da sie eine umfassende Maßnahmenpalette beinhaltet.

Die Kommission hat Spanien empfohlen, die angestrebte engere Zusammenarbeit zwischen öffentlichen Arbeitsvermittlungsstellen auf nationaler und regionaler Ebene sowie zwischen staatlichen und privaten Arbeitsvermittlungsstellen uneingeschränkt umzusetzen, eine umfassende Reform der aktiven Arbeitsmarktpolitik vorzunehmen und zusätzliche Maßnahmen zur Modernisierung und Stärkung der öffentlichen Arbeitsvermittlung selbst zu ergreifen. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit sollte ferner jungen Menschen, die weder eine Arbeit haben noch eine Ausbildung absolvieren, Geringqualifizierten, älteren Arbeitnehmern und Langzeitarbeitslosen gelten. Die Kommission hat Spanien auch empfohlen, dringend Schwächen bei den Rahmenbedingungen für Unternehmen zu beheben, die die Schaffung von Arbeitsplätzen bremsen, wie beispielsweise die Fragmentation des Inlandsmarktes oder Markteintrittsschranken für Dienstleister.

Nach den aktuellsten verfügbaren Daten aus der nationalen Arbeitskräfteerhebung (2013 Q1) ([1]) belief sich die Zahl der Arbeitslosen zwischen 20 und 30 Jahren in Spanien auf 1 802 400, die der Arbeitslosen im Alter von 50 Jahren und darüber auf 1 123 000.

Der Anteil der Frauen in diesen Gruppen betrug 46,3 % bzw. 43,9 %.

([1]) http://www.ine.es/jaxi/menu.do?L=0&type=pcaxis&path=/t22/e308_mnu&file=inebase

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005643/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Increase in the number of people out of work in Spain to over 6 million in April

The number of people out of work in Spain rose to 6 million in April of this year, breaking all previous Spanish records.

Even though the Spanish Government has introduced various measures, such as SME start-up subsidies and tax relief for self-employed persons, they do not appear to be doing enough to improve the situation.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation and, if so, what further steps/initiatives will it recommend to Spain, in order to bring about a net improvement in this situation?

2. Can the Commission say how many of the 6 million people out of work are over 50 years of age and how many are 20-30 years old?

3. What proportion of the 20-30 year old age group and what proportion of the 50+ age group are women?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(18 July 2013)

The Commission is monitoring closely the developments in the Spanish labour market and the measures adopted and implemented by the national authorities. The Commission's overall assessment is detailed in the 2013 country-specific recommendations adopted on 29 May 2013.

The labour market reform passed by Law in July 2012 takes decisive steps to modify the labour relations. In addition, the adopted national Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Strategy 2013-2016, presented in March 2013, is a step in the right direction as it integrates a comprehensive set of measures.

The Commission has recommended to Spain to make fully operational the closer cooperation between national and regional public employment services and between public employment services and private placement agencies; to implement a comprehensive reform of active labour market policies (ALMPs) and to take additional actions to modernise and reinforce the Public Employment Service itself. Specific attention should be also paid to young people not in employment, education or training, the low-skilled, older workers and the long-term unemployed. Moreover, the Commission recommended Spain to address urgently weaknesses in the business environment, such as segmentation of the domestic market or entry barriers in services' industries, which hold back job creation.

According to the latest figures available from the national Labour Force Survey (2013 Q1) ([1]), there were 1.802.400 unemployed persons aged 20 to 30 in Spain and 1.123.000 unemployed aged 50 and over.

The share of women in those groups was 46.3% and 43.9% respectively.

([1]) http://www.ine.es/jaxi/menu.do?L=0&type=pcaxis&path=/t22/e308_mnu&file=inebase.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005644/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: Illegale Kinderarbeit in Europa und weltweit

Ende des vergangenen Jahres schreibt der britische Guardian, dass es trotz aller Bemühungen bisher in der Weltgemeinschaft nicht gelungen ist, Kinderarbeit effektiv zu unterbinden. Im Gegenteil, offenbar wird heute das Leben von mehr Kindern als je zuvor durch illegale Kinderarbeit, härteste Bedingungen und auch gefährliche Beschäftigungen zerstört.

1. Liegen der Kommission aktuelle Zahlen darüber vor, wie viele Kinder weltweit von Kinderarbeit betroffen sind?

2. Kann die Kommission darlegen, ob und, wenn ja, wie viele Kinder auf dem Gebiet der Europäischen Union darunter zu zählen sind?

3. Inwieweit beteiligt sich die Europäische Union finanziell und im Rahmen von Bewusstseinsschaffung an Projekten gegen illegale Kinderarbeit?

4. Wie bewertet die Kommission das Verhältnis von steigendem Bevölkerungswachstum und Kinderarbeit gerade in den Ländern der sogenannten „Dritten Welt"?

Antwort von Herrn Andor im Namen der Kommission
(11. Juli 2013)

Nach Einschätzung der Internationalen Arbeitsorganisation (ILO) ([1]) geht die Kinderarbeit weltweit weiterhin zurück. Allerdings sind noch immer 215 Millionen Kinder davon betroffen, 115 Millionen von ihnen verrichten gefährliche Arbeiten. Der Bericht spricht die Besorgnis hinsichtlich der Auswirkungen von Migration, Menschenhandel und Wirtschaftskrise sowie sozialer Ausgrenzung von Roma und Sinti in Europa an. Der EU-Besitzstand ([2]) und die Rechtsvorschriften der Mitgliedstaaten untersagen die Beschäftigung von Kindern. Bisher liegen keine Daten für die EU vor.

Die Kommission setzt sich dafür ein, die Kinderarbeit weltweit auszumerzen, insbesondere die schlimmsten Formen der Kinderarbeit, und zwar durch ein ganzheitliches Vorgehen, das die Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, Handelsinstrumente und den politischen Dialog mit Drittländern umfasst.

In allen in jüngster Zeit von der EU geschlossenen Handelsabkommen wird in den Kapiteln über Handel und Entwicklung Kinderarbeit konkret angesprochen und die Ratifizierung und tatsächliche Umsetzung der ILO-Übereinkommen Nr. 138 über das Mindestalter für die Zulassung zur Beschäftigung und Nr. 182 über die schlimmsten Formen der Kinderarbeit gefordert.

Die neue EU-Strategie (2011-14) für die soziale Verantwortung der Unternehmen (CSR) ([3]) unterstützt die Sensibilisierungsmaßnahmen der internationalen Organisationen, die über CSR-Leitlinien verfügen: die OECD-Leitlinien für multinationale Unternehmen, die Erklärung der ILO über multinationale Unternehmen und Sozialpolitik, die Norm ISO 26000, den Globalen Pakt der Vereinten Nationen und die UN-Leitprinzipien für Wirtschaft und Menschenrechte. Die EU wird sich aktiv an der 3. Internationalen Konferenz zur Kinderarbeit beteiligen, die vom 8. bis 10. Oktober 2013 in Brasilia stattfindet. Anlässlich des Welttags der Kinderarbeit am 12. Juni 2013 äußerte die EU ihre Besorgnis hinsichtlich der Beschäftigung von Kindern als Hausangestellte und bekräftigte ihre Absicht, alle Formen der Kinderarbeit zu bekämpfen ([4]).

([1]) Bericht der ILO „Das Vorgehen gegen Kinderarbeit forcieren" (2010) http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_126752.pdf

([2]) Charta der Grundrechte der Europäischen Union; Richtlinie 94/33/EG des Rates vom 22. Juni 1994 über den Jugendarbeitsschutz.

([3]) Mitteilung der Kommission an das Europäische Parlament, den Rat, den Europäischen Wirtschafts- und Sozialausschuss und den Ausschuss der Regionen: „Eine neue EU-Strategie (2011-14) für die soziale Verantwortung der Unternehmen (CSR)" http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0681:FIN:DE:PDF

([4]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137443.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005644/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Illegal child labour in Europe and worldwide

The Guardian reported at the end of last year that, despite all efforts to date, it had been impossible to effectively stamp out child labour in the global community. On the contrary, more children than ever are clearly being ruined today by child labour, harsh conditions and dangerous work.

1. Does the Commission have up-to-date statistics on the number of children affected by child labour worldwide?

2. Can the Commission state if and how many children within the territory of the European Union are included in those figures?

3. To what extent is the European Union involved, financially and within the framework of awareness-raising campaigns, in projects to combat illegal child labour?

4. How does the Commission assess the ratio between increasing populations and child labour in so-called third world countries?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(11 July 2013)

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) ([1]) estimates child labour continues to decline at global level. However 215 million children are still affected, out of which 115 million are exposed to hazardous work. The report expressed concerns about the impact of migration, trafficking and the economic crisis and the social exclusion of Roma and Sinti people in Europe. The EU *acquis* ([2]) and the Member States' legislation prohibit the employment of children. There are no data available for the EU so far.

The Commission is committed to eradicating child labour at a global level and, in particular, the worst forms of child labour, through a holistic approach: development cooperation, trade instruments and policy dialogues with third countries.

The Trade and Development chapter in all trade agreements recently concluded by the EU specifically addresses child labour, stipulating the ratification and effective implementation of ILO Conventions 138 on the minimum age for labour and 182 on the worst forms of child labour.

The renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) ([3]) supports the awareness-raising undertaken by international organisations that have CSR guidelines: the OECD's Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the ILO's Declaration on Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, the ISO 26000 standard, the UN's Global Compact, and the UN Guiding Principles on business and human rights. The EU will be actively involved in the 3rd Global Child Labour Conference, to be held in Brasilia on 8-10 October 2013. On the occasion of the World Child Labour Day, 12 June 2013, the EU expressed its concern about child domestic work and reaffirmed its commitment to campaign against all forms of child labour ([4]).

([1]) ILO Report 'Accelerating action against child labour' (2010), http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_126752.pdf
([2]) The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights; Council Directive 94/33/EC of 22 June 1994 on the protection of young people at work.
([3]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic And Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: 'A renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility', http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0681:FIN:EN:PDF
([4]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137443.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005645/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: Fusionsreaktor ITER

Ende 2011 hat der EU-Rat beschlossen, „den experimentellen Fusionsreaktor ITER mit weiteren 1,3 Milliarden EUR zu unterstützen". Zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt liegt die Anlage noch immer brach, an Technik und Wissenschaft scheitere es angeblich nicht, sondern an der Einigung der beteiligten Staaten.

1. Wie viel europäisches Fördergeld ist insgesamt in dieses Projekt geflossen? (Bitte um detaillierte Auflistung unter Angabe der Budgetzeilen.)

2. Sieht die Kommission zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt die Gefahr, dass dieses Milliardenprojekt scheitern könnte, so wie die Medien es derzeit darstellen?

3. Was ist der aktuelle Stand der Verhandlungen, und wann ist mit einem „Ergebnis" zu rechnen?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(17. Juli 2013)

Bei dem ITER handelt es sich um ein komplexes wissenschaftliches Kernfusionsexperiment und um ein industrielles Großprojekt, welches das erste seiner Art ist. Das Projekt beruht auf einer internationalen Übereinkunft, an der Länder beteiligt sind, die mehr als die Hälfte der Weltbevölkerung repräsentieren. Die Projektplanung sieht mehrere Phasen bis 2042 vor (Bau, Betrieb, Außerbetriebnahme und Stilllegung), die jeweils mit spezifischen Sachzwängen und Erfordernissen im Hinblick auf die Ziele, die Ressourcen und die Termine verbunden sind.

Obwohl ein solches Projekt in der Tat zwangsläufig mit Risiken und Unwägbarkeiten verbunden ist, spielt es dennoch eine wichtige Rolle auf dem Weg zur Nutzung der Kernfusion als nachhaltige Energiequelle. Die Kommission ist zuversichtlich, dass der ITER die Voraussetzungen für das erste kommerzielle Fusionskraftwerk der Zukunft schaffen und dadurch umweltfreundlich erzeugte und unbeschränkt zur Verfügung stehende Energie für die Nutzung im Alltag erschließen wird.

Das Projekt befindet sich jetzt in der Bauphase, d. h. in der kritischsten Phase, die den Entwurf und die Herstellung der Komponenten sowie die Errichtung des ITER-Tokamak-Komplexes umfasst. Ende 2013 wird die Phase, in der die Hauptkomponenten entworfen werden, voraussichtlich abgeschlossen sein, und der jüngsten Prognose des Europäischen Gemeinsamen Unternehmens für den ITER (F4E) zufolge dürften dann rund 3,3 Mrd. EUR (in Preisen des Jahres 2008) des gekürzten europäischen Baubudgets (6,6 Mrd. EUR, in Preisen des Jahres 2008) gebunden sein. Der vom Verwaltungsrat des Gemeinsamen Unternehmens für den ITER (F4E) im Dezember 2012 angenommene Ressourcenvoranschlag enthält eine detaillierte Aufstellung der vorgesehenen Mittel für Verpflichtungen und für Zahlungen für die ITER-Bauphase und ist beigefügt.

Auf der Tagung des Europäischen Rates vom 8. Februar 2013 wurde in der Verordnung zur Festlegung des mehrjährigen Finanzrahmens für den Zeitraum 2014-2020 in Bezug auf die Euratom-Verpflichtungen für den ITER ein Höchstbetrag von 2,707 Mio. EUR (in Preisen des Jahres 2011) festgesetzt. Diese Verordnung wird derzeit von der Haushaltsbehörde erörtert. Mit einer endgültigen Entscheidung über den Inhalt der Verordnung, einschließlich der ITER- Finanzierung, ist in Kürze zu rechnen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005645/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: ITER fusion reactor

At the end of 2011, the Council decided to provide additional financing of EUR 1.3 billion for the experimental ITER fusion reactor. At present, the installation is still idle, apparently not because of the technology and science, but due to a lack of agreement between the states involved.

1. How much European aid has been channelled into this project in total to date? (Please provide a detailed statement with budget lines).

2. At this stage, does the Commission believe that this project costing billions could well fail, as is currently being reported in the media?

3. What is the current state of negotiations and when can a 'result' be expected?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(17 July 2013)

ITER is a complex fusion scientific experiment and an industrial 'first of a kind' large scale project. It is built on the basis of an international agreement, involving countries representing over half the world's population. It is planned in several phases until 2042 (construction, operation, deactivation and decommissioning) that have their specific constraints and needs in terms of objectives, resources and time.

Although such a project indeed carries risks and uncertainties by definition, it plays an essential role on the route to fusion as a sustainable energy source. The Commission is confident that ITER will be the gateway to get the first commercial fusion power plant in the future, bringing clean and limitless energy into everyday use.

The project stands now in the construction phase which is the most critical one, encompassing the design and manufacture of components and the assembly of the ITER Tokamak. At the end of 2013, the design phase of the major components should be completed and according to F4E's latest forecast, about EUR 3.3 billion (in 2008 value) of the European capped construction budget (EUR 6.6 billion, in 2008 value) should be committed. The F4E detailed Revenue in commitment and payment appropriations for the ITER construction phase contained in the Resource Estimates Plan as adopted by the Governing Board of Fusion for Energy in December 2012, is attached.

On 8 February 2013, the European Council set up the maximum level of the Euratom commitments for ITER in the multiannual financial framework Regulation for the period 2014-2020 at EUR 2.707 million (in 2011 value). This regulation is under discussion by the Budgetary Authority; a final decision on its content is expected soon, including on the ITER financing.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005646/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Comercialización de panga en grandes superficies europeas

El pez conocido como panga (*Pangasianodon hypophthalmus*), originario de los ríos del sudeste asiático se está comenzando a comercializar a gran escala en muchas grandes superficies de los Estados miembros. Esta comercialización a gran escala se debe al bajo coste que supone su carne, pero estos bajos costes son producidos por el intensivo, contaminante y ecológicamente insostenible sistema de producción con el que se cría esta especie.

Esta especie se cría principalmente en el río Mekong, en Vietnam, una cuenca fluvial con un elevado nivel de contaminación industrial. Esto provoca que, más allá del pernicioso efecto sobre el medio ambiente que produce su cría, su carne contenga productos tóxicos, como se ha afirmado en algunos estudios científicos independientes. Sin embargo, pese a la gravedad de los riesgos alimentarios que supone dicho pez, numerosas cadenas de distribución están incrementando su importación para el consumo masivo de los europeos.

En la cría de la panga no existe reglamentación alguna que pueda garantizar la seguridad alimentaria de dicho producto, ni tampoco se le exige ningún control riguroso que permita evitar el consumo humano de sustancias tóxicas asimiladas en la carne de dicho pez. No existen informes concluyentes sobre la toxicidad de los filetes importados pero hay una importante polémica sobre dicho producto y es importante que los consumidores conozcan cuáles son los controles reales a los que se somete a dicho producto alimentario antes de llegar a Europa.

1. ¿En qué forma se controla las condiciones ambientales y el sistema de producción con la que se cría a este tipo de pescado?

2. Dado que la piscicultura europea es una de las que recibe mayor número de controles de seguridad y calidad en la producción de pescado, ¿considera que se efectúa un nivel similar de control en la producción de dicho pescado?

3. Sin ninguna reglamentación en el sistema de producción de dicho pez, ¿se puede estar incurriendo en el dumping a la piscicultura europea?

Respuesta del Sr Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(17 de julio de 2013)

1) En consonancia con las normas del comercio mundial, la UE no puede controlar las condiciones ambientales de los ríos en los que se lleva a cabo la producción sin un acuerdo bilateral previo con el país de origen. La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a su respuesta a la pregunta escrita E-000412/2010 ([1]), al informe de la OMC sobre la seguridad alimentaria de la panga vietnamita ([2]) y a los resultados del proyecto de investigación financiado por la Comisión «Sustaining Ethical Aquaculture Trade» («Apoyo al comercio de la acuicultura ética»), publicado en la revista Marine Policy ([3]).

2) La Comisión sigue muy de cerca la cuestión de las importaciones de productos de origen animal procedentes de terceros países. El objetivo de las normas de importación de la UE es garantizar que todas las importaciones tengan el mismo elevado nivel de calidad que los productos de la Unión en lo que respecta a la higiene, la seguridad de los consumidores y la sanidad animal.

El sistema de controles de la importación de alimentos procedentes de terceros países garantiza que todas las remesas se sometan a controles antes de su comercialización. Cuando se detectan problemas, se rechazan y destruyen, si procede, las remesas en cuestión. Además, los problemas detectados en el mercado se notifican a los Estados miembros y a la Comisión. En semejantes situaciones, se exige al tercer país de origen que tome medidas correctivas y, si el seguimiento es insuficiente, la Comisión considera la adopción de otras medidas, que incluirían controles adicionales o prohibiciones totales. La Comisión también audita periódicamente los sistemas de producción de terceros países. Hasta ahora, en principio puede considerarse que el sistema oficial aplicado por las autoridades de Vietnam y los resultados de los controles de la UE cumplen adecuadamente los requisitos de la Unión.

3) La Comisión no tiene pruebas de que la panga vietnamita se venda en condiciones de dumping en el mercado de la UE y no ha recibido denuncias a este respecto.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/es/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Report on food hygiene and safety control in basa catfish industry in Viet Nam (Informe sobre el control de la seguridad y la higiene alimentaria en la industria de la panga en Vietnam). G/SPS/GEN/931, de 15 de junio de 2009.
([3]) Little DC y otros, 2012.Whitefish wars: Pangasius, politics and consumer confusion in Europe http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X11001564

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005646/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Sale of panga in large European supermarkets

The fish known as panga (*Pangasianodon hypophthalmus*), which comes from the rivers of south-east Asia, is starting to be sold on a large scale in many supermarkets in the Member States. This large-scale distribution is due to the low cost of its meat, but these low costs are the result of the intensive, polluting and environmentally unsustainable production system used to breed this species.

This species is mainly bred in the Mekong River in Vietnam, a river basin with a high level of industrial pollution. This means that, aside from the harmful effects of this breeding on the environment, the meat contains toxic products, as has been confirmed in various independent scientific studies. However, despite the seriousness of the food risks that this fish represents, many distribution channels are increasing their imports for mass consumption in Europe.

There is not a single regulation on panga breeding that can ensure the food safety of this product, nor are there any requirements for rigorous controls that would enable us to prevent human consumption of the toxic substances assimilated into the meat of this fish. There are no conclusive reports on the toxicity of the fillets imported, but there is a significant level of controversy over this product and it is important that consumers know what checks are really being carried out on this food product before it reaches Europe.

1. How are the environmental conditions and the production system for breeding this type of fish controlled?

2. Given that European fish farming is subject to some of the most stringent safety and quality controls in fish production, does the Commission believe that a similar level of control is being implemented in relation to the production of this fish?

3. Without any regulations on the production system for this fish, could this be leading to dumping in European fish farming?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(17 July 2013)

1. In line with global trade rules, the EU cannot control the environmental conditions in the rivers where production takes place without a prior bilateral agreement with the country of origin. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-000412/2010 ([1]), to the WTO report on food safety of Vietnamese catfish ([2]) and to the output of the Commission-funded research project 'Sustaining Ethical Aquaculture Trade', published in the journal Marine Policy ([3]).

2. The Commission is following very closely the issue of imports of food products from third countries. EU import rules aim at guaranteeing that all imports fulfil the same high standards as products from the Union, with respect to hygiene, consumer safety and animal health.

The system of import controls for food from third countries ensures that each consignment is subject to controls before it is released on the market. Where problems are found, the consignments in question are rejected and if necessary destroyed. Member States and the Commission are also notified of problems identified on the market place. In such cases, the third country of origin is requested to take corrective action and if there is insufficient follow-up, the Commission considers further measures, including additional checks or outright bans. The Commission also regularly audit production systems in third countries. So far, the official system developed by the Vietnam authorities and the result of EU controls can be in principle considered as adequate to meet the required Union requirements.

3. The Commission has no evidence that Vietnamese catfish is being sold under dumping conditions on the EU market and has not received any complaints in this regard.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Report on food hygiene and safety control in basa catfish industry in Viet Nam. G/SPS/GEN/931, 15 June 2009.
([3]) Little DC, et.al.. 2012.Whitefish wars: Pangasius, politics and consumer confusion in Europe. http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X11001564

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005647/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) e Charles Tannock (ECR)
(21 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — aiuto UE per la ricostruzione e il sostegno alla Somalia

A maggio 2013 i governi del Regno Unito e della Somalia hanno ospitato congiuntamente una conferenza per discutere la situazione in Somalia. Vi hanno partecipato il primo ministro britannico David Cameron e il presidente somalo Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. Il Regno Unito ha annunciato che stanzierà tra 10 e 35 milioni di sterline in aiuti bilaterali per la Somalia nei prossimi due anni per contribuire a costruire uno Stato federale e a stanare quel che resta del gruppo militante al-Shabaab. Il quotidiano britannico Times riferisce che il denaro sarà subordinato ai «progressi nelle questioni relative ai diritti umani e alla gestione finanziaria». Sono stati previsti fondi per la lotta contro la pirateria al largo della Somalia, la modernizzazione del sistema carcerario, che è diventato un luogo per il reclutamento di terroristi, per raddoppiare il numero di funzionari di polizia e creare tribunali mobili.

Il presidente Mohamud ha chiesto un pacchetto di misure del tipo piano Marshall: «In Somalia oggi abbiamo un livello di distruzione pari a quello dell'Europa nel 1945, lo stesso livello di dislocamento e lo stesso livello di economia a pezzi». In seguito alla riunione il leader di al-Shabaab, lo sceicco Mukhtar Abu Zubeyr, ha definito un complotto «il saccheggio» delle ricchezze minerarie della Somalia «con il pretesto delle relazioni commerciali internazionali e la lotta alla corruzione». Ha esortato i suoi seguaci a incrementare gli attacchi suicidi per «paralizzare in modo permanente» il governo di Mogadiscio.

Dal 2008 l'UE ha fornito 1,2 miliardi di euro per contribuire a soddisfare i bisogni urgenti della Somalia e migliorare la sicurezza. Quest'anno il Commissario per lo sviluppo dichiara che l'UE fornirà 44 milioni di euro per sostenere la governance del paese.

1. Quali nuove azioni intende l'Unione europea adottare l'anno prossimo per adattarsi alla nuova minaccia rappresentata da al-Shabaab che sta lavorando per minare gli sforzi del presidente Mohamud volti a creare uno Stato federale sicuro?

2. Quali strumenti sta utilizzando attualmente l'Unione europea per stabilire se i fondi destinati alla Somalia vengono utilizzati correttamente e in linea con i requisiti che affrontano «i problemi in materia di diritti umani e gestione finanziaria»?

Risposta dell'Alto Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(9 luglio 2013)

Il miglioramento generale della situazione politica e della sicurezza verificatosi in alcune zone della Somalia negli ultimi anni ha reso più agevole per i vari finanziatori mettere a punto iniziative a sostegno di tale paese, facendo sì che la missione PSDC (EUTM) riuscisse a intervenire il mese scorso a Mogadiscio, mentre in precedenza le basi operative si trovavano solo in Uganda. Al-Shabaab ha tuttavia cambiato il proprio approccio e le ripercussioni di tale cambiamento sono in fase di valutazione. L'UE ha messo a punto una gamma ampia e flessibile di interventi per tentare di affrontare al meglio le mutevoli condizioni di sicurezza. Durante la conferenza UE-Somalia che si terrà a Bruxelles il 16 settembre si definiranno gli obiettivi principali per i prossimi anni e si discuterà in merito alla modalità di intervento internazionale più adatta per il Paese in questione; si cercherà inoltre di aiutare l'UE ad adeguare alla situazione della Somalia la missione PSDC e le proprie attività di promozione dello sviluppo.

Accertare che i fondi dell'Unione siano utilizzati correttamente è un processo complicato e continuo. L'UE cerca di diversificare i canali dei propri interventi collaborando con partner competenti in ambiti diversi e che hanno accesso ad aree geografiche differenti. Gli aiuti dell'UE vanno di pari passo con il rafforzamento del dialogo politico ad alto livello con le autorità (anche in tema di diritti umani); ciò tende a ridurre i rischi di un'eventuale deviazione dei fondi. L'accordo (*Compact*) da approvare alla conferenza sulla Somalia che si terrà a Bruxelles si fonderà sul principio della responsabilità reciproca. Gli interventi previsti nell'ambito dei progetti dell'Unione comprendono anche un'analisi dei rischi nonché provvedimenti per ridurli. Sono previsti controlli e valutazioni regolari, ad esempio tramite visite in loco e valutazioni intermedie e finali. È tuttavia importante segnalare che il persistere di una situazione di conflitto e la mancanza di sicurezza che caratterizzano determinate aree della Somalia possono ostacolare l'intervento dei finanziatori in tali aree e il monitoraggio dei vari progetti.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005647/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) and Charles Tannock (ECR)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU aid for reconstruction and support for Somalia

In May 2013 the Governments of the UK and Somalia co-hosted a conference to discuss the situation in Somalia. It was attended by UK Prime Minister David Cameron and Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. The UK has announced that it will allocate GBP 10 million to GBP 35 million in bilateral aid to Somalia over the next two years to help construct a federal state and flush out the remnants of the al-Shabaab militant group. The UK's *Times* newspaper reports that the money will be conditional on 'progress in tackling human rights and financial management concerns'. Funds have been set aside to fight piracy off the Somali coast, modernise the prison system, which has become a recruiting ground for terrorists, double the number of police officers and set up mobile courts.

President Mohamud has called for a Marshall Plan-style package: 'In Somalia today we have the level of destruction of Europe in 1945 — the same level of displacement, the same level of shattered economy.' In response to the meeting, al-Shabaab leader Sheikh Mukhtar Abu Zubeyr called it a plot to 'plunder' Somalia's mineral wealth 'under the guise of international trade relations and fighting corruption'. He has urged his followers to increase suicide attacks to 'permanently cripple' the government in Mogadishu.

Since 2008 the EU has provided EUR 1.2 billion to help meet Somalia's urgent needs and improve security. This year the Commissioner for Development says the EU will provide EUR 44 million to support governance in the country.

1. What new steps is the EU preparing to take over the next year to adapt to the changing threat posed by al-Shabaab, who are working to undermine President Mohamud's efforts to create a secure federal state?

2. What tools is the EU currently using to determine whether funds destined for Somalia are being used correctly and in line with conditions that address 'human rights and financial management concerns'?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

General improvements to the political and security situation in some parts of Somalia over the last few years have facilitated donor support activities in Somalia, enabling, for example, the CSDP Mission (EUTM) to move last month into Mogadishu, whereas before it was previously based solely in Uganda. Nevertheless, Al-Shabaab has changed its approach, the impact of which is actively being evaluated. EU support is delivered through a flexible range of instruments that can be applied to the changing security environment as required. Top priorities for the next few years, alongside the international support required will be defined during the EU-Somalia Conference to be held in Brussels on 16 September also helping the EU further define how to adapt both its CSDP and development activities.

The monitoring to see if EU funds are used correctly is a continuous and multi-faceted process. The EU tries to diversify the channels of its aid by working with a variety of partners with various domains of expertise and geographical access. EU assistance is accompanied by a strengthened high-level political dialogue with the authorities (including on the subject of human rights issues) helping to reduce the risk of possible diversion of funds. The 'Compact' to be agreed at the Brussels Somalia Conference will build on the principal mutual accountability. Moreover, EU project procedures include risk analysis and risk mitigation measures for each project. Regular monitoring and evaluations are carried out through field visits and mid-term and end-term evaluations. It is, however, important to stress that ongoing conflict and insecurity in certain areas of Somalia can negatively influence donor capacity to access and monitor projects.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005648/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) e Charles Tannock (ECR)
(21 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR —Aiuto allo sviluppo dell'UE per lo Yemen per garantire la stabilità economia

Il 16 maggio 2013, la Reuters riferisce che il coordinatore umanitario delle NU per lo Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, ha detto che lo Yemen potrebbe avere un futuro rispettabile se la comunità internazionale sarà in grado di fornire assistenza sotto forma di aiuti alimentari e sanitari. Le forniture idriche sono scarse e almeno un milione di bambini soffrono di malnutrizione.

Dopo che il presidente Ali Abdullah Saleh ha lasciato il potere, si è insediato un governo di transizione che dovrebbe emanare una nuova costituzione a fine 2013. Le elezioni parlamentari sono previste nel 2014. Tuttavia, l'attuale amministrazione non ha il mandato richiesto per affrontare alcuni dei problemi più gravi dello Yemen come ad esempio l'accesso alle forniture di acqua, infatti 13 dei 24 milioni di abitanti non hanno accesso all'acqua potabile sicura e la popolazione adulta del paese è dedita all'uso dello stimolante qat.

Vi sono tuttavia motivi di ottimismo, infatti le autorità provvisorie sono riuscite a migliorare la sicurezza e a controllare al-Qaeda nella penisola araba (AQAP), respingendola al di fuori della regione Abyan nel sud del paese.

Ould Cheikh Ahmed dice che lo Yemen è in una situazione privilegiata per sfruttare gli investimenti privati, molti dei quali provengono da yemeniti che vivono in Arabia Saudita.

1. Alla luce delle minacce alla stabilità costituite dai vari rami di al-Qaeda in Nordafrica e in Medio Oriente, è disposto il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante ad adottare nuove misure per sostenere le autorità provvisorie in Yemen?

2. Quali misure intende adottare l'Unione europea per aiutare le autorità yemenite nella loro campagna attualmente in corso contro l'abuso di qat, che può avere anche un impatto sulla crescita economica?

3. Vi sono funzionari dell'Unione europea che assistono le autorità yemenite nel migliorare la gestione delle acque e le tecniche di irrigazione? In caso contrario, è disponibile a sostenere tali iniziative?

Risposta dell'Alto Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(12 luglio 2013)

L'UE ha rafforzato l'assistenza al governo ad interim dello Yemen grazie ad un aumento dei contributi finanziari ai programmi di cooperazione, nonché attraverso un sostegno politico che conferisce al governo il potere di avviare ed attuare il processo di riforma. E' inoltre previsto un sostegno specifico per il processo di dialogo nazionale.

La questione del qat è di primaria importanza per lo Yemen; esso è considerato un elemento identitario fondamentale da ampie fasce della popolazione e rappresenta inoltre la principale coltura commerciale, contribuendo notevolmente al depauperamento delle risorse idriche. In questo complesso contesto la campagna contro l'utilizzo di qat sta lentamente prendendo avvio, senza per il momento vedere un coinvolgimento attivo da parte dell'UE.

La riduzione della povertà rimarrà il secondo obiettivo strategico dell'UE nello Yemen, in linea con gli obiettivi di sviluppo del Millennio e le strategie del governo di transizione. L'UE ha già contribuito a migliorare l'accesso all'acqua e a renderne l'uso più efficiente e intende continuare a monitorare le risorse idriche, specialmente nelle zone rurali. L'UE mira in questo modo a promuovere sistemi di irrigazione efficienti dal punto di vista idrico ed una produzione agricola che sia sostenibile dal punto di vista ambientale e che tenga conto dei cambiamenti climatici. Data l'ampiezza del problema e le limitate risorse dell'UE, per compiere progressi in questo campo è di cruciale importanza predisporre uno stretto coordinamento con altri importanti donatori coinvolti nella questione della gestione delle risorse idriche e con il governo dello Yemen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005648/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) and Charles Tannock (ECR)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU developmental aid for Yemen to ensure economic stability

On 16 May 2013, Reuters reported that the UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, has said that Yemen could have a respectable future if the international community is able to provide assistance in the form of food and medical aid. Water supplies are scarce and at least one million children are suffering from malnutrition.

After the departure of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, a transitional government was installed. It is due to unveil a new constitution at the end of 2013. Parliamentary elections are expected to be held in 2014. However, the current administration does not have the required mandate to tackle some of Yemen's most serious issues, such as access to water supplies, with 13 out of 24 million people not having access to safe drinking water, and much of the country's adult population being addicted to the stimulant qat.

However, there are grounds for optimism as the interim authorities have succeeded in improving security and taking on al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), driving them out of the Abyan region in the south of the country.

Ould Cheikh Ahmed says that Yemen is also in prime position to take advantage of private investment, much of which comes from Yemenis based in Saudi Arabia.

1. In light of the threats to stability posed by the various branches of al-Qaeda across North Africa and the Middle East, is the Vice-President/High Representative prepared to adopt new measures to support the interim authorities in Yemen?

2. What steps is the EU currently taking to help the Yemeni authorities in their campaign to tackle qat abuse, which may even be having an impact on economic growth?

3. Are EU officials assisting the Yemeni authorities in improving water management and irrigation techniques? If not, are they prepared to support such initiatives?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

The EU has stepped up support to the interim government of Yemen through increased financial contributions to cooperation programmes as well as through political support empowering the government to start and implement the process of reform. In addition, specific support is given to support the National Dialogue process.

Qat is an issue of primary importance for Yemen and considered a central element of identity throughout large parts of the population. It is also the main cash crop while contributing considerably to depleting water resources. In this complex environment the campaign against use of qat is slowly getting off the ground, at this point without active involvement of the EU.

Poverty reduction will remain the second strategic objective of the EU in Yemen, in line with the Millennium Development Goals and with the Transitional Government's strategies. The EU has already contributed to increasing access to water and water use efficiency and intends to continue giving attention to water resources, particularly in rural areas. The EU thus aims to promote water-efficient irrigation systems and environmentally sustainable and climate change-sensitive agricultural production. Given the magnitude of the problem and the limited EU resources, close coordination with other major donors addressing the issue of water management and the Government of Yemen is key to progress in this area.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005649/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) e Charles Tannock (ECR)
(21 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Minacce jidaiste alla stabilità del governo tunisino

Il 13 maggio 2013, diverse agenzie di stampa hanno riferito che Abu Iyadh, capo del movimento salafita Ansar al-Sharia, che è anche un latitante, ha affermato che vuole lanciare una battaglia all'interno della Tunisia simile a quelle che hanno avuto luogo in Afghanistan, in Iraq e in Siria.

Il governo tunisino sta già cercando di sradicare le cellule di al-Qaeda che si trovano nella parte occidentale del paese al confine con l'Algeria. Un messaggio che minaccia il governo della Tunisia è stato pubblicato online da Abu Iyadh: «Per i tiranni che pensano di essere islamisti (…) sappiate che le cose stupide che state facendo vi stanno strascinando in guerra». Ha messo anche in guardia in modo allarmante affermando: «Se continuate con queste stupide politiche il supporto dell'America, dell'Occidente, dell'Algeria, della Turchia e del Qatar non vi salverà quando si farà sentire il suono delle spade». Alcuni commentatori hanno detto che questa è la minaccia più grave fatta finora dal leader salafita.

Abu Iyadh è ricercato dalla polizia tunisina per incitamento al massacro contro l'ambasciata degli USA lo scorso settembre 2012. All'epoca almeno quattro persone sono state uccise in seguito a manifestazioni contro un film sul profeta Maometto.

Il ministero dell'interno della Tunisia sta cercando di combattere la crescente sfida di gruppi salafiti come Ansar al-Sharia, che ha addirittura minacciato di appendere la nera bandiera salafita sull'edificio del ministero e prevede di tenere un congresso nella città di Kairoun. Il ministro dell'interno, Lofti Ben Jeddou, ha detto che avrebbe fatto processare «chiunque istighi all'omicidio o all'odio … o chi pianti tende per pregare» con chiaro riferimento ai salafiti.

1. Vista la crescente minaccia per la sicurezza costituita da gruppi come Ansar al-Sharia e il leader in fuga di quel gruppo, quale assistenza intende dare l'Unione europea al governo tunisino, specialmente per quanto riguarda il problema delle basi operative di al-Qaeda lungo il confine del paese con l'Algeria?

2. È il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante disposto a lavorare per il governo tunisino in vista della creazione di programmi e iniziative per combattere il radicalismo tra i giovani tunisini?

3. Qual è la valutazione fatta da funzionari dell'Unione europea presso la delegazione a Tunisi sul tipo di minaccia rappresentata da Ansar al-Sharia per il governo tunisino e gli Stati membri dell'UE?

Risposta dell'Alto Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(8 luglio 2013)

L'UE è ben consapevole delle minacce terroristiche nella regione, compresa la Tunisia, e segue da vicino gli sviluppi. L'UE attribuisce una grande importanza alla sicurezza delle frontiere e alle possibilità di rafforzamento delle capacità tunisine di gestione delle frontiere. In questo contesto è stato condotto di recente un riesame tra pari sull'emigrazione e sulla gestione delle frontiere in cooperazione con le autorità tunisine. Inoltre, la riforma del settore della sicurezza è una priorità del dialogo e della cooperazione dell'UE con la Tunisia e un riesame tra pari di tale settore è attualmente in corso con la piena cooperazione delle autorità tunisine nonché con gli Stati membri interessati e altri attori internazionali attivi in tale ambito.

Su base regionale, l'UE sostiene attivamente la creazione di un istituto per la giustizia e lo stato di diritto a Tunisi che dovrebbe promuovere la formazione e lo scambio di esperienze tra giudici, pubblici ministeri, funzionari di polizia e deputati, al fine di aiutare a combattere il terrorismo nel pieno rispetto dei diritti umani e dello stato di diritto.

Il problema della deradicalizzazione è sull'agenda del dialogo politico con le autorità tunisine a diversi livelli. Più in generale, si usano gli strumenti della cooperazione anche per sostenere gli sforzi della società civile per la promozione di una società democratica, aperta, tollerante e libera.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005649/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) and Charles Tannock (ECR)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Jihadist threats to the stability of the Tunisian Government

On 13 May 2013, various news agencies reported that Abu Iyadh, the head of Tunisia's Salafist movement Ansar al-Sharia, who is also a fugitive, has said that he wants to launch a battle inside Tunisia similar to those that have taken place in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

The Tunisian Government is already trying to root out al-Qaeda operatives based in the west of the country on the border with Algeria. A message threatening Tunisia's government was posted online by Abu Iyadh: 'To the tyrants who think they are Islamists (…) know that the stupid things you are doing are dragging you to war'. He also alarmingly warned: 'If you continue with these stupid policies, the support of America, the West, Algeria, Turkey and Qatar will not save you when the sound of swords makes itself heard'. Some commentators have said this is the most serious threat made to date by the Salafist leader.

Abu Iyadh is wanted by the Tunisian police for inciting an attack against the US embassy last September 2012. At that time at least four people were killed as a result of demonstrations against a film about the Prophet Mohammed.

Tunisia's Interior Ministry is trying to combat the growing defiance of Salafist groups such as Ansar al-Sharia, which has even threatened to hang the black Salafist flag over the ministry's building, and plans to hold a congress in the town of Kairoun. The Interior Minister, Lotfi Ben Jeddou, has said he would bring to justice 'anyone inciting to murder or hatred… or who pitches tents for preaching in' in a clear reference to the Salafists.

1. Given the growing threat to security posed by groups such as Ansar al-Sharia and that group's fugitive leader, what assistance is the EU prepared to offer to the Tunisian Government, especially with regard to the problem of al-Qaeda operatives based along the country's border with Algeria?

2. Is the Vice-President/High Representative prepared to work with the Tunisian Government with a view to setting up programmes and initiatives to tackle radicalism among Tunisian youth?

3. What is the assessment made by EU officials at the delegation in Tunis concerning the nature of the threat posed by Ansar al-Sharia to the Tunisian Government and to EU Member States?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

The EU is well aware of the terrorist threats in the region, including in Tunisia and is following the developments closely. The EU attaches great importance to the issue of border's security and potential reinforcement of Tunisian border management's capacities. In this framework, a peer review exercise on migration and border management has recently been led, in cooperation with Tunisian authorities. Furthermore, security sector reform is a priority of EU dialogue and cooperation with Tunisia, and a peer review of the sector is currently ongoing, in full cooperation with Tunisian authorities as well as with interested Member States and other international actors active in this field.

On a regional basis, the EU is actively supporting the setting up of a Justice and Rule of Law Institute in Tunis, which should foster training and sharing of expertise between judges, prosecutors, police officers and parliamentarians, with the objective of helping combating terrorism, in full respect of human rights and the rule of law.

The issue of de-radicalisation is on the agenda of political dialogue with the Tunisian authorities, at different levels. More generally, cooperation instruments are also used to support civil society efforts in the promotion of a democratic, open, tolerant and free society.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-005650/13
adresată Comisiei
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(21 mai 2013)

Subiect: Condiții de intrare și de ședere a resortisanților din țările terțe pentru ocuparea unor locuri de muncă înalt calificate

Odată cu Directiva 2009/50/CE prin care s-a introdus „cartea albastră", Uniunea Europeană a încercat să atragă și să păstreze lucrători cu înaltă calificare provenind din țări terțe, pentru a-și dezvolta competitivitatea internațională.

Pentru a se deplasa dintr-o țară a UE în alta, resortisanții din țările terțe cu înaltă calificare trebuie să înceapă din nou procesul de obținere a cărții albastre. Această situație poate fi considerată un obstacol de către posibilii lucrători și poate influența negativ crearea unui adevărat pol de atracție pentru lucrătorii cu înaltă calificare.

— Ce măsuri intenționează Comisia să ia pentru a facilita mobilitatea pe teritoriul Uniunii a lucrătorilor cu înaltă calificare provenind din țările terțe?

— Intenționează Comisia să ia măsuri în vederea introducerii în viitor a unei cărți albastre valabile pe tot teritoriul Uniunii?

Răspuns dat de dna Malmström în numele Comisiei
(22 iulie 2013)

Comisia evaluează, în acest moment, legislația de punere în aplicare din statele membre, iar statisticile privind numărul de cărți albastre eliberate nu sunt încă disponibile pentru majoritatea statelor membre. Prin urmare, este prea devreme să tragem concluzii privind impactul cărții albastre și obstacolele pe care le întâmpină posesorii de cărți albastre în ceea privește mobilitatea în interiorul UE. Vă rugăm să țineți cont de faptul că primul raport cu privire la punerea în aplicare a directivei privind cartea albastră este prevăzut pentru luna iunie 2014.

Comisia precizează, de asemenea, că Rețeaua europeană de migrație realizează, în acest moment, un studiu specific a cărui temă este mobilitatea în interiorul UE a resortisanților țărilor terțe, inclusiv a posesorilor de cărți albastre. Acest studiu își propune să înțeleagă mai bine principalele probleme și provocări legate de mobilitatea resortisanților țărilor terțe în diferite state membre ale UE.

Deși este adevărat că posesorii de cărți albastre trebuie să solicite o nouă carte albastră atunci când se mută în alt stat membru, aceștia beneficiază de o serie de drepturi și de proceduri simplificate atunci când își exercită dreptul la mobilitate. De exemplu, cererea de carte albastră pentru un al doilea stat membru se poate face întotdeauna de pe teritoriul statului respectiv. În cazul în care în primul stat membru s-a format o familie, membrii familiei sunt autorizați să îl însoțească pe posesorul cărții albastre a UE sau să se mute împreună cu acesta în cel de-al doilea stat membru. Posesorii de cărți albastre care își exercită dreptul la mobilitate au, de asemenea, dreptul de a acumula perioadele de rezidență din diferite state membre, în vederea îndeplinirii criteriilor necesare pentru obținerea statutului de rezident pe termen lung.

Pe baza evaluării punerii în aplicare a directivei de către statele membre și a studiului menționat mai sus, Comisia poate propune măsuri suplimentare în timp util.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005650/13
to the Commission
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment

With Directive 2009/50/EC introducing the 'Blue Card', the European Union made an attempt to attract and retain highly qualified third-country workers with a view to developing its international competitiveness.

In order to move from one EU country to another, highly skilled non-EU nationals have to restart the process of obtaining a Blue Card. This situation can be seen as an obstacle by future workers and can negatively influence the creation of a real pole of attraction for highly qualified workers.

— What measures does the Commission intend to take in order to facilitate the intra-European mobility of highly qualified workers from non-EU countries?

— Is the Commission envisaging taking any action for the creation in the future of an EU-wide Blue Card?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(22 July 2013)

The assessment by the Commission of the implementing legislation in Member States is ongoing and statistics on the number of Blue Cards delivered are not available yet for most Member States. Therefore, it is too early to draw conclusions on the impact of the Blue Card and the obstacles to intra-EU mobility of Blue Card holders. Please note that the first report on the application of the Blue Card Directive is due in June 2014.

The Commission also points out that intra-EU mobility of third-country nationals, including Blue Card holders, is the subject of an ongoing Focused Study of the European Migration Network. This study is intended as a scoping exercise to better understand the key issues and challenges in relation to the intra-EU mobility of third-country nationals in the different Member States.

While it is true that Blue Card holders have to apply for a new Blue Card when they move to a second Member State, Blue Card holders exercising their mobility do enjoy a number of facilitated processes and rights. For example, an application for a Blue Card in a second Member State can always be made from within the territory of the second Member State, and where a family has been constituted in the first Member State family members are authorised to accompany or join the EU Blue Card holder in the second Member State. Blue Card holders exercising mobility are also allowed to accumulate periods of residence in different Member States, which count towards fulfilment of the requirements for long term resident status.

Based on the assessment of the implementation by the Member States and the aforementioned study, the Commission may propose further measures in due time.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005651/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 mai 2013)

Objet: Directive SMA: volet publicitaire

Dans certains États membres, la limite imposée de 12 minutes de publicités par heure n'a pas été respectée d'après les récentes données européennes publiées; cette limitation est d'ailleurs régulièrement transgressée par les États.

1. Que compte faire la Commission pour que les États membres concernés mettent en œuvre pleinement, correctement et sans délai les dispositions de la directive SMA à cet égard?

2. La Commission pourrait-elle clarifier les problèmes qu'elle a identifiés dans le domaine des communications commerciales en ce qui concerne le parrainage, l'autopromotion et le placement de produits?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Kroes au nom de la Commission
(1^er^ juillet 2013)

La Commission mène régulièrement des activités de suivi de la bonne mise en œuvre des règles relatives aux communications commerciales audiovisuelles fixées dans la directive «Service de médias audiovisuels» (directive SMAV) ([1]). Ce suivi porte sur la mise en œuvre de toutes les dispositions sur les communications commerciales audiovisuelles et est organisé chaque année dans plusieurs États membres. Tous les États membres font l'objet d'un suivi sur une base de rotation. Après approbation par les services de la Commission, les rapports établis par un contractant indépendant sont adressés pour commentaires aux États membres concernés. Si la Commission estime qu'un État membre ne prend pas les mesures d'application qui s'imposent, elle peut engager une procédure d'infraction.

Les problèmes potentiels constatés en matière de communications commerciales audiovisuelles sont notamment les suivants: (1) en ce qui concerne les infractions aux dispositions en matière de parrainage, un certain nombre des messages qui sont présentés comme des annonces de parrainage semblent en fait constituer des spots de publicité *sui generis*, qui ne sont apparemment pas pris en compte dans la durée maximale de 12 minutes par heure d'horloge et ne sont pas recensés comme tels ([2]), (2) la distinction entre les activités d'autopromotion considérées comme des programmes et les activités d'autopromotion à caractère publicitaire, (3) dans les cas du placement de produits, la mise en avant d'un produit de manière indue, et (4) la non-indication qu'un programme comporte du placement de produit ([3]).

([1]) Directive 2010/13/UE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 10 mars 2010 visant à la coordination de certaines dispositions législatives, réglementaires et administratives des États membres relatives à la fourniture de services de médias audiovisuels (directive «Services de médias audiovisuels»).
([2]) Article 10, paragraphe 1, point b), article 23, paragraphe 1, et article 19.
([3]) Article 11, paragraphe 3, points c) et d).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005651/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Audiovisual Media Services Directive: advertising component

According to the latest European data released, the limit of 12 minutes of advertising per hour has not been observed in some Member States; indeed, it is regularly flouted by the States.

1. What will the Commission do to ensure that the Member States in question fully, correctly and swiftly implement the provisions of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive in this regard?

2. Could the Commission explain the problems it has identified in commercial communications with regard to sponsorship, self-promotion and product placement?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(1 July 2013)

The Commission carries out regular monitoring activities concerning the correct implementation of the rules on audiovisual commercial communications set in the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) ([1]). This exercise covers implementation of all rules on audiovisual commercial communications and is run every year in a number of Member States. All Member States are monitored on a rotating basis. After approval by the Commission services, the reports by the independent contractor are sent for comments to the Member States concerned. If the Commission deems that a Member State does not undertake adequate enforcement activities, it may start infringement proceedings.

The potential problems identified with audiovisual commercial communications include: (1) as regards infringements of the rules on sponsorship, a number of announcements that are presented as sponsorship announcements seem to constitute in practice *sui generis* advertising spots, apparently not counted in the maximum 12 minutes per hour and not identified as such ([2]); (2) the distinction between self-promotion that qualifies as a programme and self-promotion of an advertising character; (3) in cases of product placement, giving undue prominence to the product in question; and (4) failing to indicate that a programme contains product placement ([3]).

([1]) Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member states concerning provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media services Directive).

([2]) Article 10. 1 b, Article 23(1) and Article 19.

([3]) Article 11.3 c and d.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005652/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 mai 2013)

Objet: Droits des femmes dans les Balkans

1. La Commission compte-t-elle demander à élever au rang de priorité dans le processus d'adhésion des pays des Balkans occidentaux la mise en œuvre des droits des femmes, l'intégration de l'égalité des genres et le combat permanent contre les violences domestiques, en continuant à traiter ces questions, à contrôler leur mise en œuvre, à en rendre compte dans les rapports de suivi et à souligner leur importance lors des contacts avec les autorités, mais aussi en montrant l'exemple en veillant à ce que, parmi ses propres délégations, ses équipes de négociation et ses représentants aux réunions et dans les médias, figurent dans une mesure égale des hommes et de femmes?

2. La Commission planifie-t-elle d'inciter les pays des Balkans candidats à l'adhésion à améliorer sensiblement leurs statistiques en matière de poursuite et de sanction à la suite de faits de traite d'êtres humains et à soutenir les initiatives locales visant à s'attaquer aux causes profondes de la traite, comme les violences domestiques et le manque de débouchés économiques pour les femmes?

Réponse donnée par M. Füle au nom de la Commission
(17 juillet 2013)

La Commission continue de suivre les questions liées aux droits de la femme, à l'égalité des genres et à la violence domestique et d'en rendre compte de façon systématique, en demandant à ce que davantage d'attention leur soit portée. Ces questions sont également traitées dans le cadre des rapports annuels de suivi, des comités des accords de stabilisation et d'association (ASA) et de sous-comités. Pour les pays engagés dans des négociations d'adhésion, certains des chapitres de l'acquis contiennent des dispositions relatives aux droits des femmes, à leur protection ainsi qu'au droit pénal (par exemple en matière de traite des êtres humains). La Commission effectue un suivi de l'alignement de la législation nationale sur l'acquis et de sa mise en œuvre.

La plupart des pays des Balkans demeurent des pays d'origine, de transit et (de plus en plus) de destination pour les victimes de la traite des êtres humains. Dans ses relations avec les pays concernés par l'élargissement, la Commission encourage systématiquement une approche active de l'application de la loi. Elle promeut également l'adoption de stratégies nationales, reflétant une approche pluridisciplinaire, notamment la coopération avec les organisations de la société civile, conformément à la stratégie de l'UE en vue de l'éradication de la traite des êtres humains pour la période 2012-2016 et à la directive 2011/36/UE. Il reste urgent de s'attaquer aux causes profondes de ce phénomène par des efforts soutenus et durables, afin non seulement d'améliorer la situation économique et sociale, mais aussi d'éduquer, de former et de sensibiliser les citoyens.

La Commission a fourni (par l'intermédiaire de l'instrument d'aide de préadhésion) une assistance financière dans tous les domaines évoqués plus haut, au moyen soit de projets spécifiques soit d'une aide aux ONG.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005652/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Women's rights in the Balkans

1. Does the Commission intend to call for the implementation of women's rights, the mainstreaming of gender equality and the continuous fight against domestic violence to be made a priority in the accession process of Western Balkan countries, by continuing to address these issues and to monitor and report on their implementation in progress reports, and to emphasise their importance in contacts with authorities, and showing a good example by ensuring that its own delegations, negotiating teams and representation at meetings and in the media are gender-balanced?

2. Does the Commission intend to urge Balkan accession countries to significantly improve their records on prosecution and punishment following cases of human trafficking and to support local initiatives to address the root causes of trafficking, such as domestic violence and limited economic opportunities for women?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(17 July 2013)

The Commission continues to systematically monitor and report on issues related to women's rights, gender equality and domestic violence, calling for more attention to be paid to these issues, which are also addressed in the context of annual Progress Reports, SAA Committees and Sub-Committees. For those countries negotiating their accession, a number of *acquis* chapters contain provisions related to women's rights, protection as well as criminal law provisions (e.g. as regards trafficking in human beings). The Commission is monitoring the alignment of legislation by the countries and its implementation.

Most Balkan countries remain source, transit and increasingly destination countries for victims of human trafficking. In its contacts with enlargement countries, the Commission is systematically promoting a pro-active law enforcement approach as well as the adoption of domestic strategies, reflecting the multi-disciplinary approach, including cooperation with civil society organisation, in line with the EU strategy towards the radication of trafficking in human beings (2012-2016) and Directive 2011/36/EU. Addressing root causes remains a priority through long-term and sustained efforts to improve the economic and social environment but also to educate, train and raise awareness.

In all above areas, the Commission has provided — through IPA — financial assistance, either through dedicated projects or through assistance to NGOs.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005653/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 mai 2013)

Objet: Pluralité des médias dans l'Union européenne

1. La Commission estime-t-elle que les règles en matière de concurrence et de médias sont appliquées dans tous les États membres?

2. Estime-t-elle, de manière à éliminer et à empêcher les positions dominantes, que la concurrence est assurée dans tous les États membres?

3. Estime-t-elle utile, le cas échéant, de fixer des seuils de concurrence à des niveaux moins élevés dans les médias que dans d'autres marchés, de garantir l'accès des nouveaux arrivants sur le marché, d'intervenir en cas de concentration excessive des médias et de mise en péril du pluralisme dans les médias, de leur indépendance et de leur liberté, afin de garantir l'accès de tous les citoyens à des médias libres et diversifiés dans tous les États membres, et de recommander des améliorations là où elles sont nécessaires?

4. Partage-t-elle l'avis que l'existence de groupes de presse détenus par des entreprises en mesure d'attribuer des marchés publics représente une menace pour l'indépendance des médias?

5. Estime-t-elle que les règles de la concurrence en vigueur sont adaptées à la concentration croissante des médias commerciaux dans les États membres?

6. Envisage-t-elle une mise à jour de mesures concrètes pour sauvegarder le pluralisme dans les médias et prévenir une concentration excessive dans ce domaine?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Kroes au nom de la Commission
(9 juillet 2013)

La Commission européenne cherche à faire respecter la liberté et le pluralisme des médias ainsi que le droit de la concurrence au sein de l'Union européenne, conformément aux dispositions du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne.

Le rapport indépendant du groupe de haut niveau (GHN) sur la liberté et le pluralisme des médias publié en janvier 2013 porte également sur des questions ayant trait à la concurrence ([1]). La Commission a lancé des consultations publiques relatives aux recommandations du groupe et examine actuellement les nombreuses contributions reçues.

Les règles de concurrence de l'UE n'interdisent pas aux entreprises d'accéder à une position dominante sur un marché donné. En revanche, elles interdisent les abus de position dominante, une interdiction qui s'applique également aux sociétés de médias. Comme précisé par la Cour de justice de l'Union européenne dans l'arrêt Oscar Bronner (C-7/97), un tel abus se produirait par exemple si une société de médias dominante agissait de façon à éliminer toute concurrence. S'il est vrai que la protection d'une concurrence effective contribue grandement à d'autres intérêts légitimes, tels que la pluralité des médias, elle poursuit d'autres visées et elle ne s'avèrera pas toujours suffisante pour atteindre cet objectif d'intérêt public. C'est la raison pour laquelle, en vertu du règlement de l'UE sur les concentrations, qui n'interdit ces dernières que si elles sont susceptibles d'entraver de manière significative la concurrence effective sur un marché donné, les États membres sont autorisés à prendre des mesures supplémentaires au niveau national, en dehors du cadre de contrôle des concentrations, afin de protéger des intérêts légitimes tels que la pluralité des médias.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/HLG%20report_fr.pdf
Recommandation 7: Les autorités nationales de la concurrence doivent réaliser ou faire exécuter, de façon proactive, des évaluations régulières des marchés et de l'environnement des médias de leur pays, qui mettent en évidence les menaces potentielles pour le pluralisme. Au niveau de l'UE, il faudrait procéder à des évaluations proactives du marché, sous la forme d'enquêtes sectorielles, au titre de la politique de concurrence.
Recommandation 8: Les autorités européennes et nationales de la concurrence devraient tenir compte de la valeur spécifique du pluralisme des médias lorsqu'elles font appliquer les règles de concurrence. Pour la définition des marchés pertinents, elles devraient également prendre en considération la convergence de plus en plus prononcée de différents canaux de communication et d'accès aux médias. En outre, le GHN invite ces autorités européennes et nationales à suivre avec une attention particulière, au titre de la politique de concurrence, les nouvelles évolutions en matière d'accès en ligne aux informations. La position dominante dont bénéficient certains fournisseurs d'accès aux réseaux ou fournisseurs d'information sur Internet ne devrait pas pouvoir limiter la liberté et le pluralisme des médias. L'accès libre et non discriminatoire aux informations pour tous doit être protégé dans le monde en ligne, si nécessaire par le droit de la concurrence ou l'application d'un principe de neutralité des réseaux et d'Internet.

Sur la base des informations récoltées dans le cadre des consultations, une nouvelle phase de délibération au sujet des questions formulées par l'Honorable Parlementaire pourrait être envisagée.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005653/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Media pluralism in the European Union

1. Does the Commission believe that competition and media rules are applied in all Member States?

2. Does it believe that competition is guaranteed in all Member States, in order to address and prevent dominant positions?

3. Does it consider it appropriate to possibly set lower competition thresholds in the media industry than in other markets, to guarantee the access of new entrants on the market, to intervene where the media are excessively concentrated and where media pluralism, independence and freedom are in danger, in order to ensure that all EU citizens have access to free and diversified media in all Member States, and to recommend improvements where necessary?

4. Does it share the view that the existence of press groups owned by enterprises that have the power to award public procurement contracts represents a threat to media independence?

5. Does it believe that existing competition rules are appropriate given the increasing concentration of commercial media in the Member States?

6. Does it see a need to update concrete measures to safeguard media pluralism and prevent excessive media concentration?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

The European Commission seeks respect for media freedom and pluralism as well as competition law within the European Union in accordance to the provisions of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

The independent report of the High Level Group on Media Freedom and Pluralism published in January 2013 also addresses competition related questions ([1]). The Commission has launched public consultations on the recommendations of the group and is currently evaluating the numerous inputs given.

The EU competition rules do not prohibit companies from attaining a dominant position in a given relevant market. Rather, they prohibit abuses of such a dominant position, also by media companies. For example, as the Court of Justice of the European Union clarified in the Oscar Bronner judgment (C-7/97), such abuse would occur when a dominant media undertaking acts in a way such as to eliminate all competition. While the protection of effective competition strongly contributes to other legitimate interests, such as the plurality of media, it has other aims and will not always suffice to reach that public policy objective. For this reason, the EU Merger Regulation which prohibits concentrations only if they are susceptible of leading to a significant impediment to effective competition in a given relevant market, allows Member States to take additional measures at the national level outside the merger control framework in order to protect legitimate interests such as media plurality.

Based on the feedback to the consultations, a renewed deliberation phase regarding the questions mentioned by the Honourable Member could be envisaged.

([1]) https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/HLG%20Final%20Report.pdf .
Recommendation 7: National competition authorities need to make (or commission) pro-active regular assessments of individual countries' media environments and markets, highlighting potential threats to pluralism. At the EU level, there should be pro-active market assessment under competition policy in the form of a sectorial inquiry.
Recommendation 8: European and national competition authorities should take into account the specific value of media pluralism in the enforcement of competition rules. They should also take into account the increasing merging of different channels of communication and media access in the definition of the relevant markets. In addition, the High Level Group calls upon the European and national competition authorities to monitor with particular attention, under competition policy, new developments in the online access to information. The dominant position held by some network access providers or Internet information providers should not be allowed to restrict media freedom and pluralism. An open and non-discriminatory access to information by all citizens must be protected in the online sphere, if necessary by making use of competition law and/or enforcing a principle of network and net neutrality.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005654/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 mai 2013)

Objet: Éthique journalistique

1. La Commission compte-t-elle proposer, comme mentionné dans le rapport sur «la Charte de l'UE: ensemble de normes pour la liberté des médias à travers l'UE», un instrument législatif (par exemple, par la voie d'une recommandation, telle que la recommandation du 20 décembre 2006 sur la protection des mineurs et de la dignité humaine et sur le droit de réponse en liaison avec la compétitivité de l'industrie européenne des services audiovisuels et d'information en ligne) afin de faire en sorte que les États membres obligent le secteur des médias à élaborer des normes professionnelles et des codes d'éthique incluant l'obligation d'indiquer la différence entre les faits et les opinions dans les reportages, la nécessité d'exactitude, d'impartialité et d'objectivité, le respect de la vie privée des personnes, l'obligation de corriger les informations incorrectes et le droit de réponse?

2. La Commission estime-t-elle utile, comme l'écrit la rapporteure du texte A7-0117/2013, Renate Weber, que ce cadre juridique prévoie la création, par le secteur des médias, d'une autorité indépendante de régulation des médias, agissant indépendamment de toute influence extérieure, politique ou autre, habilitée à traiter les plaintes concernant la presse sur la base de normes professionnelles et de codes d'éthique, et dotée de l'autorité nécessaire pour prendre des sanctions adéquates?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Kroes au nom de la Commission
(9 juillet 2013)

Dans tous les domaines relevant de sa compétence, la Commission est tenue de veiller au respect des droits garantis par la Charte des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne, dont font partie la liberté et le pluralisme des médias.

À la suite de la présentation du rapport indépendant émis par le groupe de haut niveau sur la liberté et le pluralisme des médias, la Commission a récemment lancé deux consultations publiques: l'une porte sur les recommandations présentées par le groupe d'experts et l'autre aborde plus particulièrement la question de l'indépendance des instances nationales de régulation de l'audiovisuel. Dans la limite des compétences de l'Union européenne, la décision relative à d'éventuelles actions de suivi, notamment sur le plan législatif, concernant l'indépendance des autorités de l'audiovisuel tiendra compte des réponses aux consultations, actuellement en cours d'analyse.

Dans le même temps, la Commission étudie le rapport de la parlementaire européenne Renate Weber intitulé «Charte de l'UE: ensemble de normes pour la liberté des médias à travers l'UE» afin de déterminer si certaines recommandations y figurant pourraient être intégrées aux actions menées en réponse au rapport du groupe de haut niveau.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005654/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Ethical journalism

1. Does the Commission intend to propose, as mentioned in the report on the 'EU Charter: standard settings for media freedom across the EU', a legal instrument (for example, by means of a recommendation such as the recommendation of 20 December 2006 on the protection of minors and human dignity and on the right of reply in relation to the competitiveness of the European audiovisual and online information services industry) to ensure that the Member States invite the media sector to develop professional standards and ethical codes which include the obligation to indicate a difference between facts and opinions in reporting, the necessity of accuracy, impartiality and objectivity, respect for people's privacy, the duty to correct misinformation and the right of reply?

2. Does the Commission agree with the rapporteur of the report A7-0117/2013, Renate Weber, that this legal framework should foresee the establishment by the media sector of an independent media regulatory authority — operating independently from political or other external interference — that can handle complaints about the press based on professional standards and ethical codes, and that has the authority to take appropriate sanctions?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

In all areas within its competence, the Commission is bound to ensure that the rights enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, including the freedom and pluralism of the media, are respected.

Following the presentation of the independent report of the High Level Group on Media Freedom and Pluralism, the Commission has recently launched two public consultations, one on the recommendations of the group and one specifically on the independence of National Audiovisual Regulatory Authorities. The decision on any possible follow-up actions within the limits of the competences of the European Union, including a possible legislative action in the field of independence of audiovisual authorities will take account of the responses to those consultations, which are currently being evaluated.

The Commission is currently analysing the report of MEP Renate Weber 'EU Charter: standard settings for media freedom across the EU' to assess whether certain recommendations from this report may be included in the actions undertaken in the follow up to the report of the High Level Group.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005655/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 mai 2013)

Objet: Médias internet

L'importance des agrégateurs d'informations d'actualité va croissant, via des moteurs de recherche et d'autres intermédiaires dans la diffusion et dans l'accès à l'information et aux actualités sur l'internet.

1. Dès lors, la Commission compte-t-elle, comme le suggère le rapport Weber, inclure ces acteurs de l'internet dans le cadre réglementaire de l'Union lors de la révision de la directive sur les services de médias audiovisuels afin de lutter contre le problème de la discrimination du contenu et de la distorsion du choix des sources?

2. Dans l'affirmative, comment compte-t-elle s'y prendre?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Kroes au nom de la Commission
(10 juillet 2013)

La Commission européenne est consciente de l'importance des intermédiaires de l'internet. La consultation publique lancée par le livre vert «Se préparer à un monde audiovisuel totalement convergent: croissance, création et valeurs» vise à obtenir un retour d'informations sur les questions suivantes: est-il nécessaire d'adapter la définition de fournisseurs de SMA, et/ou le champ d'application de la directive SMA, afin de soumettre à certaines ou à toutes les obligations de ladite directive ceux qui en sont actuellement dispensés, ou y a-t-il d'autres moyens de préserver les valeurs? Dans quels domaines la priorité pourrait être accordée à l'autorégulation ou la corégulation? La Commission soulève notamment la question de savoir si la possibilité de prédéfinir un choix par des mécanismes de filtrage, y compris par des fonctions de recherche, devrait ou non faire l'objet d'une action publique au niveau de l'UE. La Commission n'a pas d'idée préconçue quant aux suites qui pourraient être données à la consultation lancée par le livre vert et n'en décidera qu'après avoir procédé à une analyse approfondie des réponses.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005655/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Internet media

News aggregators are growing in importance, via search engines and other intermediaries used to disseminate and access information and news content on the Internet.

1. Will the Commission therefore do as the Weber report suggests and include these Internet actors in the EU regulatory framework when revising the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, in order to tackle the problems of discrimination of content and distortion of source selection?

2. If so, how?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(10 July 2013)

The European Commission is aware of the importance of Internet intermediaries. In the public consultation launched by the Green Paper 'Preparing for a Fully Converged World: Growth, Creation and Values' it seeks feedback on the question whether there is a need to adapt the definition of AVMS providers and / or the scope of the AVMSD, in order to make those currently outside subject to part or all of the obligations of the AVMSD or whether there are other ways to protect values and in which areas emphasis could be given to self/co-regulation. Amongst other points it also specifically raises the question whether the possibility of pre-defining choice through filtering mechanisms, including in search facilities, should be subject to public intervention at EU level. The Commission has no pre-conceived approach regarding the possible follow up to the Green Paper consultation and will only decide on possible next steps after making an in-depth analysis of the responses.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005656/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 mai 2013)

Objet: Directive SMA: accessibilité

1. Pourquoi le rapport d'application de la Commission ne traite pas de manière substantielle la question de l'accessibilité, ainsi que le prévoit l'article 7 de la directive SMA?

2. Dès lors, la Commission n'a pas abordé la question de l'efficacité des dispositions d'exécution des États membres à cet égard. Estimait-elle cela inutile?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Kroes au nom de la Commission
(5 juillet 2013)

Depuis l'entrée en vigueur, en décembre 2009, de la directive sur les services de médias audiovisuels (SMA), les services de la Commission ont systématiquement vérifié que les États membres avaient bien transposé l'article 7 de ladite directive. Avant de présenter, en mai 2011, le premier rapport d'application, les services de la Commission ont envoyé à tous les États membres un questionnaire dans lequel étaient demandées des informations détaillées sur les modalités de transposition de l'article 7 de la directive SMA. Les réponses au questionnaire ont été jointes au rapport, lequel livre également une vue d'ensemble de la situation dans les États membres. Toutefois, nombre de ceux-ci ayant transposé la directive SMA de façon assez tardive, peu de mesures concrètes avaient été prises au moment de la rédaction du rapport et il n'a donc pas été possible de tirer de conclusions sur l'effectivité de la disposition en question. De plus, comme l'auteur de la question le sait probablement, l'article 7 prévoit que les États membres encouragent les fournisseurs de services de médias à rendre ceux-ci progressivement accessibles, ce qui laisse une grande latitude aux États membres dans le choix des mesures de transposition.

Les services de la Commission devraient pouvoir juger des effets de la disposition susmentionnée dans le deuxième rapport d'application, prévu pour 2014, puisque, d'ici là, les États membres auront pu se rendre compte non seulement des mesures de transposition, mais des modalités d'application pratiques de cette disposition dans leurs pays respectifs.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005656/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Audiovisual Media Services Directive: accessibility

1. Why does the Commission's application report fail to address substantively the issue of accessibility, as referred to in Article 7 of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive?

2. The Commission has therefore failed to address the effectiveness of the Member States' implementing rules in this regard. Did it consider this unnecessary?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(5 July 2013)

Since entry into force of the AVMS Directive in December 2009, the Commission services systematically verified transposition by Member States of Article 7 AVMSD. Before submitting its 1st Application Report, in May 2011, the Commission services sent a questionnaire to all Member States requesting detailed information on the modalities of transposition of Article 7 AVMSD. The replies to the questionnaire were annexed to the report. The report also contains a general overview of the state of play in the Member States. However, as many of the Member States transposed the AVMS Directive quite late, at the moment of drafting the report it was not yet much practice in place and therefore it was not possible to draw any conclusions as to the effectiveness of the rule in question. Moreover, as the Honourable Member is probably aware of, Article 7 requires Member States to encourage media service provides to introduce accessibility services gradually which leaves a lot of freedom to Member States with regard to the transposition measures.

The Commission services should be able to address the effectiveness of the said provision in the 2nd Application Report due in 2014 as by that time Member States will have been able to report not just on transposition but also on practical implementation of this provision in their respective countries.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005657/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 mai 2013)

Objet: Stratégie pour des retraites adéquates

1. La Commission compte-t-elle, comme l'y exhorte le Parlement, faire un point précis sur les effets cumulatifs des textes législatifs relatifs aux marchés financiers — tels que le règlement sur l'infrastructure du marché européen (EMIR), la directive concernant les marchés d'instruments financiers (MiFID) et la directive sur les exigences de fonds propres (CRD IV) — sur les fonds de pension du deuxième pilier et leur capacité à investir dans l'économie réelle?

2. La Commission pourra-t-elle alors en rendre compte dans le livre vert qu'elle prépare sur les investissements à long terme?

3. La Commission va-t-elle accéder à la demande du Parlement de publier un résumé intégré, concis et non technique, à l'usage des citoyens, qui leur permette d'apprécier, par une comparaison à l'échelle de l'Union, les défis auxquels se trouve confronté leur régime national de retraite?

4. La Commission pourrait-elle réaliser une synthèse exhaustive des régimes et des mesures de protection au niveau national et, si des insuffisances sont relevées lors de cette évaluation, présenter de meilleures propositions au niveau européen pour assurer la mise en place dans l'ensemble de l'Union de mécanismes totalement fiables pour une protection simple, peu onéreuse et proportionnée des droits à pension professionnelle?

Réponse donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(11 juillet 2013)

1. La Commission convient qu'il est utile et important d'examiner les effets cumulatifs des différents textes législatifs relatifs aux marchés financiers. Cette analyse représente une tâche ardue car certaines propositions sont encore en cours de négociation et elles pourraient être considérablement modifiées. D'autres textes législatifs ne sont pas encore en vigueur ou n'ont pas encore été transposés par les États membres. Les services de la Commission étudient les différents moyens de procéder à cet examen de manière exhaustive et scientifiquement correcte.

2. La Commission a adopté, le 20 mars 2013, un livre vert sur le financement à long terme de l'économie européenne, dont la publication marque le lancement d'une consultation publique. En se fondant sur les réponses à cette consultation, la Commission approfondira son examen des obstacles au financement à long terme et s'efforcera de déterminer d'éventuelles mesures stratégiques permettant de surmonter ces obstacles, qui peuvent être de nature aussi bien réglementaire que financière.

3. Les services de la Commission ont publié, sur le site web d'Europe 2020, un certain nombre de résumés thématiques, dont un consacré aux retraites ([1]). Il contient des données essentielles pour tous les États membres en ce qui concerne l'adéquation, la viabilité financière et les principaux paramètres à prendre en compte pour s'attaquer aux problèmes d'adéquation et de viabilité.

4. Les régimes de garantie en cas d'insolvabilité dans les États membres sont décrits dans une étude commandée en 2010 par les services de la Commission ([2]). L'étude donne un aperçu des dispositions légales dans l'UE et dans les pays de l'EEE/AELE où il existe des régimes à prestations définies ou fondés sur des provisions au bilan. À de rares exceptions près, aucun manquement grave aux exigences minimales fixées par la législation de l'Union européenne, et en particulier la directive 2008/94/CE ([3]), n'a été constaté.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/04_pensions.pdf

([2]) Étude sur la protection des retraites complémentaires en cas d'insolvabilité de l'employeur dans les régimes à prestations définies ou avec constitution de provisions au bilan: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=706&langId=en&intPageId=198 (en anglais).

([3]) Directive 2008/94/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 22 octobre 2008 relative à la protection des travailleurs salariés en cas d'insolvabilité de l'employeur, JO L 283 du 28.10.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005657/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Agenda for adequate pensions

1. Does the Commission intend to take stock, as Parliament is requesting, of the cumulative effects of financial market legislation — for example, the European Market Infrastructure Regulation (EMIR), the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID) and the revised Capital Requirements Directive (CRD IV) — on second-pillar pension funds and their ability to invest in the real economy?

2. Will the Commission therefore be able to report on this in its forthcoming Green Paper on long-term investments?

3. Will the Commission grant Parliament's request for it to publish an integrated, concise and non-technical citizens' summary that allows EU citizens to assess the challenges facing their national pension system in an EU comparison?

4. Could the Commission carry out a comprehensive assessment of national guarantee schemes and measures and, if major inadequacies are identified in that assessment, table enhanced EU proposals in order to ensure that fully reliable mechanisms for simple, cost-effective and proportionate protection of occupational pension rights are put in place throughout the EU?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(11 July 2013)

1. The Commission agrees that it is useful and important to examine the cumulative impact of the different strands of financial services legislation. Such analysis is challenging, given that some proposals are still under negotiation and may change considerably. Some other pieces of legislation are not yet in force or still need to be transposed by Member States. The Commission services are looking into different ways of carrying out such an assessment in an all encompassing and scientifically correct way.

2. The Commission adopted a Green Paper on the long-term financing of the European economy on 20 March 2013, launching a public consultation. Responses to consultation will contribute to further assessment by the Commission of the barriers to long-term financing, with a view to identifying possible policy actions to overcome such barriers which can be of a regulatory as well as administrative nature.

3. The Commission services have published on the Europe 2020 website a number of thematic summaries, one of which concerns pensions ([1]). It presents key data for all Member States on adequacy, financial sustainability and on the main parameters for addressing adequacy and sustainability challenges.

4. Insolvency protection arrangements in the Member States are described in a study commissioned in 2010 by the Commission services ([2]). It provides an overview of legal provisions in EU and EEA/EFTA Countries, where defined benefits or book reserve schemes exist. With limited exceptions, no major inadequacies were identified with the minimum requirements set by European Union legislation, in particular Directive 2008/94 ([3]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/04_pensions.pdf

([2]) Study on the protection of supplementary pensions in case of insolvency of the employer for defined benefit and book reserve schemes: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=706&langId=en&intPageId=198

([3]) Directive 2008/94/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2008 on the protection of employees in the event of the insolvency of their employer, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 28.10.2008.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005658/13
au Conseil
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 mai 2013)

Objet: Stratégie pour des retraites adéquates

Le Conseil va-t-il accéder à la demande du Parlement de publier un résumé intégré, concis et non technique, à l'usage des citoyens, qui leur permette d'apprécier, par une comparaison à l'échelle de l'Union, les défis auxquels se trouve confronté leur régime national de retraite?

Réponse
(16 septembre 2013)

Le Conseil ne produit ni ne publie de documents d'information à l'intention des citoyens de l'UE du type décrit par l'Honorable Parlementaire.

L'Honorable Parlementaire est invité à prendre note des documents publiés qui sont déjà disponibles, par exemple, dans le contexte du semestre européen.

Ainsi, un résumé non technique des défis auxquels sont confrontés les régimes de retraite dans les pays de la zone euro figure dans l'évaluation ([1]) des programmes nationaux de réforme et des programmes de stabilité 2013 pour la zone euro qui accompagne la recommandation du Conseil concernant la mise en œuvre des grandes orientations des politiques économiques des États membres dont la monnaie est l'euro (voir la section intitulée «Viabilité budgétaire à long terme»). Une évaluation similaire existe également pour chaque État membre ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/swd2013_euroarea_fr.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_fr.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005658/13
to the Council
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Agenda for adequate pensions

Will the Council grant Parliament's request for it to publish an integrated, concise and non-technical citizens' summary that allows EU citizens to assess the challenges facing their national pension system in an EU comparison?

Reply
(16 September 2013)

The Council does not produce or publish documents for the information of EU citizens such as the one the Honourable Member refers to.

The Honourable Member is kindly invited to take note of published documents that are already available, i.e. in the context of the European Semester.

In particular, a non-technical summary of challenges facing the pension systems in the euro area members is provided in the assessment ([1]) of the 2013 national reform programmes and stability programmes for the euro area, which accompanied the Council Recommendation on the implementation of the broad guidelines for the economic policies of the Member States whose currency is the euro (see section on long-term fiscal sustainability). A similar assessment is also provided for each individual Member State ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/swd2013_euroarea_en.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005659/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 mai 2013)

Objet: Stratégie régionale pour les zones industrielles

1. Comment la Commission tire-t-elle parti des synergies entre les politiques de cohésion et les politiques industrielles afin de favoriser la compétitivité et la croissance, ainsi que d'aider les États membres, les régions et les villes à mettre en place des stratégies de développement industriel axées sur l'échelon régional?

2. Dans quelle mesure la Commission appuie-t-elle les recherches économiques régionales, dans le contexte de l'initiative «Horizon 2020», qui permettent de mettre au point des stratégies adaptées sur le plan régional en vue de les appliquer à d'autres anciennes régions industrialisées?

3. La Commission estime-t-elle judicieux d'établir une base de données qui référence les parcs industriels et les zones d'activité régionaux existants, afin d'identifier les meilleurs modèles pouvant être également appliqués dans les autres régions et de relier ceux-ci aux stratégies locales et régionales de développement à long terme, et de donner des informations sur la façon d'utiliser ces fonds pour faciliter le processus de reconversion?

Réponse donnée par M. Hahn au nom de la Commission
(12 juillet 2013)

1. La notion de «spécialisation intelligente» a été mise en place en tant qu'instrument et condition préalable de l'utilisation des Fonds structurels et d'investissement européens («Fonds ESI») pour la période 2014-2020. La spécialisation intelligente constitue une approche à plusieurs niveaux qui impose explicitement d'exploiter des synergies dans la mise en œuvre de stratégies de recherche et d'innovation, ainsi que dans la préparation connexe des programmes liés aux Fonds ESI, en mobilisant les acteurs concernés des secteurs public et privé. Le potentiel de coordination que présente la spécialisation intelligente peut être mis à profit pour stimuler les processus d'alignement et d'articulation des feuilles de route en matière d'innovation, sur le plan régional, national et européen, dans des domaines spécifiques liés aux défis de société et de réindustrialisation qui se posent aux économies européennes. Afin de relever ces défis, la Commission a récemment mis à jour sa politique industrielle intégrée ([1]).

2. La proposition de décision du Conseil établissant le programme spécifique d'exécution du programme «Horizon 2020» ([2]) propose d'intensifier les travaux de recherche sur le développement de groupements régionaux d'innovation et de nouvelles formes de collaboration et de co-création pour l'avenir.

3. Dans le cadre de la coopération territoriale européenne, ainsi que d'autres programmes et actions, la Commission finance plusieurs initiatives visant à fournir des outils d'analyse, des conseils et une assistance technique aux régions et à les aider à partager bonnes pratiques et savoir-faire dans le domaine du développement régional comme des politiques et stratégies de l'innovation ([3]). La Commission fournit également des conseils sur la manière d'utiliser les fonds pour la reconversion industrielle et la transformation économique dans sa série de guides RIS3 accessibles sur le site web de la plateforme de spécialisation intelligente.

([1]) «Une industrie européenne plus forte au service de la croissance et de la relance économique». Document COM(2012) 582 final du 10 octobre 2012, consultable à l'adresse: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0582:FIN:FR:PDF

([2]) Programme-cadre pour la recherche et l'innovation (2014-2020).

([3]) Il s'agit par exemple des prix RegioStars, du «Regional Innovation Monitor», de la plateforme de spécialisation intelligente et de l'European Cluster Observatory and Alliance.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005659/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Regional strategy for industrial areas

1. How does the Commission capitalise on synergies between cohesion and industrial policies in order to support competitiveness and growth and assist Member States, regions and cities to find a basis for regional-led industrial development strategies?

2. To what extent does the Commission support regional economic research, in the context of the Horizon 2020 initiative, which allows for the development of regionally adjusted strategies so that they can be applied to other old industrialised regions?

3. Does the Commission consider it appropriate to create a database of existing industry parks and regional activity areas, with a view to identifying the best models that could also be used in other regions and tailoring them to local and regional long-term development strategies, and to provide guidance on how to use funds for assisting in the reconversion process?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

1. The concept of 'smart specialisation' has been introduced as an instrument and as conditionality for the use of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) for the 2014-2020 period. Smart specialisation is a multi-level policy approach that explicitly asks for exploitation of synergies in the implementation of research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation and in the related preparation of ESIF programmes, mobilising relevant stakeholders from the public and private sector. Its coordination potential can be harnessed to stimulate processes of aligning and combining regional, national and European innovation roadmaps in specific areas related to the societal and reindustrialisation challenges of Europe's economies. In order to tackle such challenges, the Commission has recently updated its integrated industrial policy ([1]).

2. The proposal for a Council decision establishing the Specific Programme implementing Horizon 2020 ([2]) suggests more research on the development of regional innovation clusters and new forms of collaboration and co-creation in the future.

3. Through European Territorial Cooperation as well as other programmes and initatives, the Commission funds several initiatives that provide analytical tools, advice and technical assistance to regions and help them share good practice and know-how on regional development and innovation policies and strategies ([3]). The Commission also provides guidance on how to use funding for industrial reconversion and economic transformation, through the family of RIS3-related guides available from the website of the smart specialisation platform.

([1]) 'A Stronger European Industry for Growth and Economic Recovery' (COM(2012) 582 final of 10 October 2012), at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0582:FIN:EN:PDF

([2]) The framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020).

([3]) E.g. the Regiostars awards, the Regional Innovation Monitor, the Smart Specialisation Platform and the European Cluster Observatory and Alliance.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005660/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 mai 2013)

Objet: Rapport annuel sur la fiscalité

1. Comment la Commission se positionne-t-elle sur l'avis selon lequel, pour faire du budget de l'Union un instrument utile pour favoriser la croissance, il est nécessaire que des ressources propres soient disponibles afin que la Commission puisse faire preuve d'une plus grande autonomie dans ses propositions?

2. La Commission compte-t-elle prendre des mesures immédiates pour le renforcement de la transparence et de la réglementation des registres de commerce et de l'enregistrement des fonds fiduciaires et des fondations, comme l'y enjoint le Parlement?

Réponse donnée par M. Lewandowski au nom de la Commission
(4 juillet 2013)

1. Bien que les ressources fondées sur le revenu national brut (RNB) et celles fondées sur la taxe sur la valeur ajoutée (TVA) soient des ressources propres de l'Union européenne, telles que définies par la décision «Ressources propres», elles sont souvent perçues comme des contributions nationales des États membres au budget de l'Union. Dans la plupart de ces derniers, la contribution fondée sur le RNB, en particulier, apparaît dans le budget national à la rubrique des dépenses, ce qui explique la tendance naturelle des États à réduire ce poste le plus possible afin de maximiser leur position nette vis-à-vis du budget de l'Union. Pour pallier cette lacune, la Commission a proposé en 2011 une réforme globale du système des ressources propres prenant en considération tous les aspects des recettes et incluant la création de nouvelles ressources propres. L'introduction de nouvelles sources de financement, plus autonomes, qui constitueraient de «véritables» ressources propres et reposeraient, par exemple, sur une taxe harmonisée sur les transactions financières, pourrait servir cet objectif tout en allégeant la pression sur les budgets nationaux.

2. Le 5 février 2013, la Commission a adopté une proposition visant à renforcer la réglementation de l'Union contre le blanchiment de capitaux ([1]). Le chapitre 3 de cette proposition contient des règles spécifiques concernant les informations sur le bénéficiaire effectif. Il prévoit notamment que les sociétés ou les entités juridiques doivent détenir des informations adéquates, exactes et actuelles sur leurs bénéficiaires effectifs et veiller à ce que celles-ci soient rendues accessibles en temps opportun aux autorités compétentes. En outre, la directive 2012/17/UE ([2]) concernant l'interconnexion des registres des sociétés, qui a été adoptée l'année dernière, améliore l'interopérabilité des registres des entreprises dans l'Union. Une fois pleinement appliquée, elle garantira un meilleur accès à l'information sur les entreprises à l'échelle de l'Union européenne.

([1]) COM(2013) 045 final.
([2]) JO L 156 du 16.6.2012, p. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005660/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Annual tax report

1. What is the Commission's position on the theory that, in order to make the EU budget a useful instrument to enhance growth, own resources must be made available so that the Commission has more autonomy in its proposals?

2. Does the Commission intend to take immediate action with regard to strengthening transparency and regulation in respect of company registries and registers of trusts and foundations, as Parliament is urging it to do?

Answer given by Mr Lewandowski on behalf of the Commission
(4 July 2013)

1. Although the current GNI- and VAT-based resources are own resources of the EU as defined in the Own Resources decision, they are often perceived as national contributions from the Member States to the EU budget. In most Member States, in particular, the GNI contribution appear in the expenditure side of the national budget which explains why there is a natural tendency to reduce such expenditure as much as possible in order to maximise the net position of the Member State concerned vis-à-vis the EU budget. In order to remedy this weakness, the Commission has proposed a comprehensive reform of the own resources system in 2011, encompassing all aspects of revenue and including the creation of new own resources. The introduction of new, more autonomous or 'genuine' own resources such as an own resource based on a harmonised Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) for example, could help to relieve pressure on national budgets and contribute to this approach.

2. The Commission adopted on 5 February 2013 a proposal to reinforce the EU's existing rules on anti-money laundering ([1]). Chapter 3 of this proposal contains specific rules concerning information on beneficial ownership. In particular, corporate or legal entities must hold adequate, accurate and current information on their beneficial ownership and give timely access to this information to competent authorities. In addition, Directive 2012/17/EU ([2]) on the interconnection of business registers that was adopted last year improves interoperability of EU business registers. Once fully implemented, the directive will ensure better access to information regarding companies at EU level.

([1]) COM(2013) 045 final.
([2]) OJ 2012, L 156/1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005663/13
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive

The Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive (AIFMD) makes depositories directly liable to the alternative investment fund or its investors for losses incurred by the failure of sub-custodians, unless the depository has agreement in writing from the alternative investment fund that it may transfer liability for lost assets to the sub-custodian, or if the depository can prove that the loss resulted from an external event beyond its reasonable control. (Fraud perpetrated by an unaffiliated sub-custodian would be considered an internal event, as would acts and omissions by a sub-custodian whether affiliated or unaffiliated.) However, most sub-custodians do not accept direct liability to the underlying clients of a depository, and in any case it is doubtful whether such arrangements would be commercially feasible or legally enforceable in certain jurisdictions.

The legislation risks conferring upon depositories a responsibility to supervise an asset manager, as depositories will be made liable for the return of lost assets. This may potentially create a conflict of interest for a depository, whose role is to act as a safe-keeper and custodian of assets, rather than involving itself in the investment decisions of fund managers.

Additional costs incurred by all parties as a result of this legislation will in all likelihood be passed onto investors in the price of services, while some custodians could leave the market altogether if they view the new compliance and liability regime as commercially prohibitive.

Another unintended consequence of this legislation may be that alternative investment funds are discouraged from investing in overseas securities.

— Has the Commission considered these issues in its formulation of the Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive, given that they risk creating a situation where businesses find the capital markets infrastructure in Europe substantially less attractive than that in other parts of the world?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(11 July 2013)

When formulating the proposal for the Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive (AIFMD) the Commission has carefully analysed the interaction between depositaries, sub-custodians and fund managers. The AIFMD sought to address various scandals and several important risks for investors by introducing a harmonised European legal framework for depositaries. In order to address problematic situations as revealed by the Madoff case, the AIFMD introduced a strong role for the depositary. The AIFMD takes the market infrastructure for depositaries into account by allowing the delegation of certain depositary functions to sub-custodians, provided that the legal pre-conditions concerning the delegation are met. Despite the risks involved for the investors, the AIFMD also permits the depositary to agree on a contractual discharge with its sub-custodians. In this case, it will be the sub-custodian that will be liable for the loss of a financial instrument. All these provisions and their implications have been duly considered by the Commission, as well as by Parliament and Council during the legislative process.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita P-005664/13
à Comissão
José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Project Bonds

Relativamente aos Project Bonds pergunto:

1. Quais são os projetos que estão aprovados e qual o respetivo montante e beneficiários?

2. Qual é o montante que o orçamento da UE fornece para cada um desses projetos e que tipo de participação tem o Banco Europeu de Investimento?

3. Quais são os projetos que não foram selecionados e com que fundamentação?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(18 de junho de 2013)

Como comunicado em 16 de maio de 2013 à Comissão dos Orçamentos do Parlamento Europeu, até à data, o Conselho de Administração do Banco Europeu de Investimento aprovou em princípio seis projetos para financiamento através da melhoria do risco de crédito das obrigações para financiamento de projetos. Dois destes projetos situam-se no Reino Unido, um outro na Bélgica, outro na Alemanha, outro em Espanha e ainda em Itália.

As facilidades globais de financiamento da melhoria do risco de crédito das obrigações para financiamento de projetos aprovadas para estes projetos excedem 1 mil milhões de EUR, cobrindo o orçamento da UE uma parte. No entanto, as condições comerciais destes projetos ainda estão em fase de finalização, e alguns podem, eventualmente, decidir não utilizar a melhoria do risco de crédito das obrigações para financiamento de projetos. Só no encerramento do exercício se poderá conhecer o valor das ações, da dívida subordinada (através da melhoria do risco de crédito), da dívida preferencial (através da emissão de obrigações preferenciais) e por conseguinte da utilização do orçamento da UE. As primeiras assinaturas estão previstas par o segundo semestre de 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-005664/13
to the Commission
José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Project bonds

Can the Commission provide the following information in relation to project bonds:

1. What projects have been approved, what sums are involved and who are the beneficiaries?

2. What sums is the EU budget providing for each of these projects, and in what way is the European Investment Bank involved?

3. Which projects were not selected and for what reason?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(18 June 2013)

As reported to the Committee on Budgets of the European Parliament on 16 May 2013, six projects have, to date, been approved in principle by the Board of Directors of the European Investment Bank for financing through Project Bond Credit Enhancement. Two of these projects are located in the United Kingdom, with one in each of Belgium, Germany, Spain, and Italy.

The aggregate Project Bond Credit Enhancement facilities approved for these projects exceed EUR 1 billion of which the EU budget covers a share. However, the commercial terms of these projects are still to be finalised and not all may, in the event, decide to utilise the Project Bond Credit Enhancement. Only at financial close will the value of equity, subordinated debt (via Project Bond Credit Enhancement), and senior debt (through the issue of senior bonds) and therefore the use of EU budget be known. First signatures are expected in the second half of 2013.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005665/13
à Comissão
José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento

Relativamente aos projetos que podem ser apoiados pelo Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento pergunto:

1. Quais são os montantes e beneficiários dos projetos aprovados desde 2007?

2. Quais são as prioridades que a Comissão defende para os projetos a financiar no período 2014-2020?

Resposta dada por Andris Piebalgs em nome da Comissão
(10 de julho de 2013)

1. Desde 2007, a Comissão já aprovou um montante total bruto de 22,56 milhões de EUR de autorizações (decisões de financiamento) ([1]) no âmbito do 9.º e 10.º Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento ([2]) a favor dos Estados de África, das Caraíbas e do Pacífico (ACP), dos países e territórios ultramarinos (PTU) e das respetivas populações.

2. O atual exercício de programação do 11.º FED é regido pelo Acordo de Cotonu e pela Agenda para a Mudança ([3]). Neste contexto, os serviços da Comissão e o SEAE (ou a Comissão e a Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente) chegam a acordo com os países e regiões parceiros em matéria de programação, sendo as propostas baseadas, na medida do possível, na estratégia nacional de desenvolvimento do país parceiro, na evolução das necessidades de desenvolvimento da região, bem como nas prioridades descritas na recente Agenda para a Mudança:

— Direitos humanos, democracia, o Estado de direito e outros elementos essenciais da boa governação, incluindo os seguintes setores prioritários: igualdade de género e empoderamento das mulheres; gestão do setor público; política e administração fiscais; corrupção; sociedade civil e autoridades locais; recursos naturais; e correlação entre desenvolvimento e segurança.

— Crescimento inclusivo e sustentável ao serviço do desenvolvimento humano, incluindo os seguintes setores prioritários: proteção social; saúde; educação; ambiente empresarial; integração regional; mercados mundiais; agricultura; e energia.

([1]) Autorizações positivas sem ter em conta as anulações de autorizações.
([2]) JO L 247 de 9.9.2006, p. 32.
([3]) COM(2011) 637 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005665/13
to the Commission
José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: European Development Fund

As regards projects that the European Development Fund can support:

1. What sums for and beneficiaries of projects have been approved since 2007?

2. What priorities does the Commission advocate for projects to fund in the 2014-2020 period?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(10 July 2013)

1. Since 2007 the Commission has approved a total amount of EUR 22.56 billion gross commitments (financing decisions) ([1]) under the 9th and the 10th European Development Fund ([2]) in favour of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP), Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) and their populations.

2. The ongoing programming exercise for the 11th EDF is governed by the Cotonou Agreement and the Agenda for Change ([3]). In this framework, the Commission departments and the EEAS (or the Commission and the HR/VP) agree with the partner countries and regions on programming proposals based as far as possible on the partner country's national development strategy, the changing development needs in the region, as well as priorities reflected in the Commission's recent Agenda for Change:

— Human rights, democracy, the rule of law and other key elements of good governance which include the following priority sectors: gender equality and the empowerment of women; public-sector management; tax policy and administration; corruption; civil society and local authorities; natural resources; and the development-security nexus;

— Inclusive and sustainable growth for human development including the following priority sectors: social protection; health; education; business environment; regional integration; world markets; agriculture; and energy.

([1]) Positive commitments without considering de-commitments.
([2]) L 247/32 of 9.9.2006.
([3]) COM(2011) 637 final.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005668/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Redução de austeridade na Europa

O ministro das Finanças alemão disse que o seu país apoia a redução das políticas de austeridade na Europa. Esta afirmação contradiz a forte pressão feita por Bruxelas e pelo FMI para forçar países como Portugal a adotar programas pesados de cortes na despesa pública.

Concorda a Comissão que está na hora de reduzir as políticas de austeridade na Europa?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(9 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão considera que a consolidação orçamental não constitui um fim em si mesmo, antes um meio que permite às autoridades públicas recuperarem a soberania fiscal e investirem no crescimento sustentável. Perante défices públicos elevados e níveis de dívida crescentes, a Comissão tem defendido a necessidade de consolidação orçamental, que deve ser prosseguida de maneira diferenciada e favorável ao crescimento, específica para cada país.

As propostas mais recentes da Comissão a este respeito constam do pacote apresentado em 29 de maio, em que se incluíam recomendações ao Conselho no sentido da dilatação dos prazos para a correção da situação de défice excessivo em seis países, a saber, Espanha, França, Países Baixos, Polónia, Portugal e Eslovénia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005668/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Watering down austerity in Europe

The German Finance Minister has said that his country supports watering down austerity policies in Europe. This statement runs counter to the strong pressure from Brussels and the IMF to force countries like Portugal to adopt onerous programmes of public spending cuts.

Does the Commission agree that it is time to water down austerity policies in Europe?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

The Commission considers that fiscal consolidation is not an end in itself but a means for public authorities to regain their fiscal sovereignty and to be able to invest in sustainable growth. Against the background of high public deficits and rising debt levels, the Commission has been advocating the need for fiscal consolidation, which should take place in a differentiated and growth-friendly manner, specific to each country.

Most recent Commission proposals in this regard can be found in the package presented on the 29th of May, which notably included Commission Recommendations to the Council with a view to extend the deadlines for correcting the excessive deficit in six countries: Spain, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005669/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Bolha imobiliária na Holanda

A Holanda apresenta sérios problemas com que a UE terá de lidar.

A bolha imobiliária revelou-se na Holanda, o país está em recessão, o desemprego sobe e a dívida dos consumidores é 250 % do rendimento disponível. Em fevereiro, a Fitch rebaixou a qualificação estável da dívida holandesa, que continua com o seu triplo A, ainda que só por um fio. A agência culpou a queda dos preços da moradia, o aumento da dívida estatal e a estabilidade do sistema bancário (a mesma mistura tóxica de outros países da eurozona afetados pela crise).

O FMI prevê que a economia vai retrair 0,5 % em 2013. No entanto, estas previsões têm-se revelado bastante otimistas. O governo não cumpre os seus défices orçamentais, apesar de ter imposto medidas severas de austeridade em outubro. Como outros países da eurozona, a Holanda parece encerrada num círculo vicioso de desemprego em aumento e rendimentos fiscais em queda, o que conduz a ainda mais austeridade e a mais cortes e perda de emprego.

1. Como avalia a Comissão a situação da Holanda?

2. Prevê a Comissão que a Holanda venha a entrar num longo período de recessão, e que o excesso de dívida leve a um futuro pedido de resgate?

3. Prevê a Comissão qualquer impacto, ou antecipa problemas, no setor bancário holandês?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(11 de julho de 2013)

1. Os pontos de vista e previsões macroeconómicas da Comissão são explicados em pormenor em vários documentos essenciais publicados recentemente, em especial as previsões da primavera de 2013 dos serviços da Comissão e os documentos relativos aos Países Baixos no contexto da Estratégia Europa 2020 publicados em 29 de maio, em especial o documento de trabalho dos serviços da Comissão.

2. Não. As previsões da primavera de 2013 dos serviços da Comissão anteveem uma recuperação gradual, ainda que modesta, a partir do segundo semestre deste ano, que se deverá manter em 2014.

3. Não, a Comissão não prevê problemas com o setor bancário dos Países Baixos.

Os bancos dos Países Baixos parecem sólidos, bem capitalizados e rentáveis. Os rácios de capital são suficientemente altos para fazer face a eventuais choques e os bancos apresentam uma boa rendibilidade. Os três principais intervenientes obtêm a classificação A+ e superior junto das principais agências de notação de risco. Ao contrário dos seus pares periféricos que se depararam com sérios problemas de financiamento e saída de capitais, os bancos neerlandeses são vistos como um porto seguro e têm acesso fácil à liquidez.

Embora os preços da habitação tenham baixado substancialmente, o nível de incumprimento no reembolso do crédito imobiliário é dos mais baixos na UE e as execuções de hipotecas representam apenas 0,07 % do total do parque habitacional. Além disso, 60 % do crédito imobiliário está concedido ao quinto da população com rendimentos mais elevados e só 3 % ao quinto com os rendimentos mais baixos.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005669/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Property bubble in the Netherlands

There are serious problems in the Netherlands and the EU needs to tackle them.

The Netherlands is experiencing a property bubble, the country is in recession, unemployment is rising and consumer debt is 250% of available income. In February, Fitch downgraded its classification of Dutch debt as stable, which is hanging on to its AAA rating, albeit by a thread. The agency blamed the drop in house prices, increased public debt and the stability of the banking system (the same toxic combination as in other crisis-hit euro-area countries).

The IMF forecasts that the economy will retract 0.5% in 2013. However, these forecasts have proven somewhat optimistic. The government is missing its budget-deficit targets, despite imposing harsh austerity measures in October. Like other euro-area countries, the Netherlands seems trapped in a vicious circle of rising unemployment and falling tax revenues, leading to even more austerity, more cuts and more job losses.

1. What is the Commission's view of the Netherlands situation?

2. Does the Commission expect that the Netherlands will enter a long period of recession and that excessive debt will lead to the country requesting a bailout in future?

3. Does the Commission expect any impact on or anticipate problems with the Netherlands banking sector?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(11 July 2013)

1. The Commission's views and macroeconomic forecasts are spelled out in detail in several key documents published recently, in particular the Commission Services' Spring 2013 forecast and the documents on the Netherlands in the context of EU2020, published on 29 may, in particular the Staff Working Document.

2. No. The Commission Services' Spring 2013 forecast foresees a gradual, though modest recovery as of the second half of this year taking hold in 2014.

3. No, the Commission does not anticipate problems with the Dutch banking Sector.

Banks in the Netherlands appear sound, well capitalised and profitable. Capital ratios are sufficiently high to cope with major shocks and banks display sound profitability. The three major players are rated A+ and above by the major credit rating agencies. Unlike their peripheral peers who encountered serious funding difficulties and capital outflows, Dutch banks benefited from a perceived safe haven status and have easy access to liquidity.

Even though housing prices have been falling substantially, arrears in servicing mortgages were amongst the lowest in the EU, and foreclosures account for only 0.07% of the total housing stock. Moreover, 60% of mortgage debt is held by the highest earning fifth and only 3% by the lowest earning fifth.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005670/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Posição de François Hollande

O Presidente de França considera que deve ser criado um governo económico na zona comunitária, com orçamento próprio, direito à emissão de dívida, um sistema fiscal harmonizado e um presidente a tempo inteiro. A propósito do seu primeiro ano de mandato como Presidente de França, François Hollande defendeu a criação de um governo económico permanente para a Zona Euro, proposta que o socialista francês gostaria de ver concretizada no prazo de dois anos.

1. Como avalia a Comissão esta pretensão do Presidente francês?

2. Concorda a Comissão com esta posição?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(9 de julho de 2013)

Os pontos de vista da Comissão sobre as medidas necessárias a curto, médio e longo prazos para estabilizar a área do euro constam do seu Plano pormenorizado para uma União Económica e Monetária efetiva e aprofundada, publicado em 30 de novembro de 2012. No entender da Comissão, numa UEM efetiva e aprofundada, as principais decisões em matéria económica e orçamental dos Estados-Membros devem estar sujeitas a maior coordenação, aprovação e supervisão ao nível europeu.

As políticas económica e orçamental devem abranger a tributação e o emprego, assim como outros domínios de intervenção determinantes para o funcionamento da UEM. Uma União Económica e Monetária nestes termos deve assentar numa capacidade orçamental autónoma e suficiente, que permita um apoio efetivo às opões políticas resultantes do processo de coordenação. Deve, além disso, ser sujeita a um processo decisório e de aplicação conjunto ao nível da UEM uma parte adequada das decisões relativas a receitas, despesas e emissão da dívida.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005670/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: François Hollande's position

The French President believes that an EU economic government should be set up, with its own budget, the right to issue debt, a harmonised tax system and a full-time president. While talking about his first year in office as President of France, François Hollande has advocated creating a permanent economic government for the euro area. The French socialist would like to see this proposal realised within two years.

1. What is the Commission's view of the French President's idea?

2. Does the Commission share this view?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

The Commission's views on the short, medium and long term measures necessary to move towards a stable eurozone are laid down in its Blueprint for a Deep and Genuine EMU published on the 30th of November 2012. In the Commission's view, in a deep and genuine EMU all major economic and fiscal policy choices of its Member States should be subject to deeper coordination, endorsement and surveillance at the European level.

These policies should cover also taxation and employment, as well as other policy areas crucial for the functioning of EMU. Such an EMU should also be underpinned by an autonomous and sufficient fiscal capacity that allows the policy choices resulting from the coordination process to be effectively supported. A commensurate share of decisions with regard to revenue, expenditure and debt issuance should be subject to joint decision-making and implementation at the level of EMU.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005671/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Posição da Comissão no tocante à participação dos depositantes nos resgates dos bancos e à «união bancária»

A Alemanha, a Holanda e a Áustria defendem que os depósitos acima dos 100 mil euros devem ser chamados a participar nos resgates dos bancos. O BCE tem uma perspetiva diferente, defendendo que a participação dos depositantes deverá verificar-se em último recurso.

Joerg Asmussen, membro da comissão executiva do Banco Central Europeu (BCE), defende uma rápida constituição da união bancária e, ao mesmo tempo, que os depositantes sejam os últimos a ser chamados a participar num resgate de um banco. Esta perspetiva colide com a da Alemanha, que defende que a união bancária deve ser implementada com calma e os depósitos não garantidos, ou seja, acima de 100 mil euros, devem ser equiparados às obrigações no que respeita a responsabilidades.

Também o Ministro das Finanças Francês, Pierre Moscovici, afirmou que os depositantes sem seguro deveriam ser excluídos da partilha de prejuízos como regra geral, com a criação de uma autoridade com competência para analisar cada caso concreto.

Verifica-se assim a existência de dois entendimentos opostos e porventura conflituosos:

— de um lado, os que defendem o recurso aos depósitos dos clientes como forma de recapitalização dos bancos em dificuldade;

— do outro, aqueles que consideram deverem ser os bancos — principais beneficiários da respetiva atividade — a suportar os custos dos mecanismos de recapitalização daqueles que deles necessitarem.

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

Por que razão não insiste nas vantagens de um fundo comum suportado primordialmente pelos bancos, no sentido do defendido no BCE por Joerg Asmussen?

Resposta dada por Michel Barnier em nome da Comissão
(18 de julho de 2013)

A diretiva relativa à recuperação e resolução de instituições bancárias, proposta pela Comissão em junho de 2012, será em breve finalizada. Após a sua entrada em vigor, os Estados-Membros passarão a dispor dos instrumentos necessários para intervir numa crise bancária, nomeadamente o instrumento de resgate interno. Para reduzir ao mínimo a participação dos contribuintes na crise bancária, o instrumento de resgate interno previsto nesse enquadramento jurídico permite que um banco seja recapitalizado através da anulação ou da diluição das participações acionistas e da redução ou conversão em ações dos créditos dos credores. Os depósitos inferiores a 100 000 euros serão explicitamente excluídos deste instrumento.

Quanto à união bancária, a Comissão publicou, em 10 de julho de 2013, uma proposta de Mecanismo Único de Resolução (MUR). Nas suas comunicações publicadas em setembro de 2012 («Roteiro para uma união bancária») e em novembro de 2012 («Plano pormenorizado para uma União Económica e Monetária efetiva e aprofundada»), a Comissão salientou as vantagens do MUR, indicando que este mecanismo seria mais eficaz do que uma rede de autoridades nacionais de resolução, sobretudo em caso de falências transfronteiras, dada a necessidade de rapidez e credibilidade na gestão das crises bancárias. O MUR permitiria também obter economias de escala significativas. De acordo com as conclusões do Conselho Europeu de dezembro de 2012 e março de 2013, o MUR deverá ser financiado por contribuições dos bancos.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005671/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Commission position on depositor participation in bank bailouts and 'banking union'

Germany, the Netherlands and Austria are arguing that deposits of over EUR 100 000 should be called on to participate in bank bailouts. The European Central Bank (ECB) has a different stance, arguing that depositor participation should be a last resort.

Jörg Asmussen, a member of the ECB executive board, has advocated quickly setting up banking union, at the same time arguing that depositors should be the last people called on to participate in a bank bailout. This stance is at odds with that of Germany, which argues that banking union should be implemented slowly and deposits not guaranteed; that is, that obligations should be brought into line with responsibilities for deposits over EUR 100 000.

The French Finance Minister, Pierre Moscovici, has also stated that uninsured depositors should generally be shielded from apportionment of losses, with the creation of an authority with the power to analyse each specific case.

As such, there are two opposing and, perhaps, conflicting points of view.

— on the one hand, advocates of using customer deposits as a way of recapitalising banks in difficulty;

— on the other, those who believe that it should be the banks — the main beneficiaries of this activity — that bear the cost of mechanisms for recapitalising those that need it.

Why is the Commission not stressing the benefits of a common fund mainly supported by the banks, as Jörg Asmussen at the ECB is advocating?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(18 July 2013)

The directive on Bank Recovery and Resolution, proposed by the Commission in June 2012, is to be finalised soon. Once the directive is in place, Member States will have the necessary tools to intervene in banking crisis, including bail-in. To minimise taxpayer involvement in bank crisis, the bail-in tool enshrined in that framework will allow a bank to be recapitalized by wiping out or diluting shareholders and by reducing or converting the claims of creditors into shares. Deposits below EUR 100 000 will be explicitly excluded from the bail-in tool.

As to the Banking Union, the Commission published a proposal on the Single Resolution Mechanism (SRM) on 10 July 2013. In its communications published in September 2012 (A Roadmap towards a Banking Union) and in November 2012 (A blueprint for a deep and genuine economic and monetary union), the Commission stressed the benefits of the SRM by indicating that this mechanism would be more efficient than a network of national resolution authorities, in particular in the case of cross-border failures, given the need for speed and credibility in addressing banking crises; it would also entail significant economies of scale. According to the European Council conclusions of December 2012 and March 2013, the SRM is to be financed by contributions from banks.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005672/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Ensino profissional em Portugal

O desemprego em Portugal tem vindo a crescer devido à crise que o país atravessa. O ensino profissional poderia ser uma boa ajuda para o combate ao desemprego.

A experiência dos países da OCDE no ensino profissional poderia ajudar Portugal a superar alguns dos principais desafios na construção de um sistema de formação profissional mais eficaz. Os casos da Dinamarca e da Suíça, em que pelo menos 75 % dos alunos matriculados em programas de ensino profissional passam no mínimo metade do programa no local de trabalho, são um bom exemplo.

Pergunto à Comissão:

1. Estão previstos e/ou em estudo programas de incentivo ao ensino profissional em Portugal?

2. Não concorda que a dinamização do ensino profissional em Portugal, nos moldes do que se já faz na Dinamarca e na Suíça, poderia contribuir para o combate ao desemprego?

Resposta dada por Androulla Vassiliou em nome da Comissão
(19 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão acredita firmemente que a eficácia do ensino e formação profissionais (EFP) facilita uma boa transição dos jovens do ensino para o mundo do trabalho. Países com sistemas de ensino e formação profissionais atraentes e especialmente os que dispõem de sistemas de aprendizado bem estabelecidos tendem a apresentar um melhor desempenho em termos de emprego dos jovens.

Por conseguinte, a Comissão apoia os sistemas de formação profissional com uma forte componente de aprendizagem no meio laboral, não apenas em Portugal mas também noutros Estados-Membros, através da criação de uma Aliança Europeia da Aprendizagem.

A Aliança da Aprendizagem é uma iniciativa multilateral que visa melhorar a qualidade e a oferta dos aprendizados na UE e mudar mentalidades no sentido do tipo de aprendizado. A iniciativa apoia a criação, renovação ou modernização dos atuais programas de aprendizado, com base na experiência de modelos de sucesso. Promove parcerias nacionais e transnacionais com o objetivo de desenvolver e promover a aprendizagem profissional em empresas. Promove igualmente os benefícios dos sistemas de aprendizado para as empresas, os prestadores de EFP, os alunos e os pais.

A Comissão apoia financeiramente o aprendizado através do Fundo Social Europeu (e, neste contexto, a Iniciativa para o Emprego dos Jovens) e do Programa de Aprendizagem ao Longo da Vida, que serão substituídos pelo novo programa Erasmus + em 2014. Este apoio varia entre o desenvolvimento a nível de sistema, de conteúdos de aprendizagem e de mobilidade dos funcionários e alunos.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005672/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Vocational training in Portugal

Unemployment has been increasing in Portugal, due to the crisis the country is experiencing. Vocational training could be a great help in combating unemployment.

The vocational training experience of Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development countries could help Portugal to overcome some of the main challenges in creating a more effective vocational training system. The cases of Denmark and Switzerland, where at least 75% of students registered on vocational training courses spend at least half of the programme in the workplace, are a good example.

1. Is the Commission planning and/or researching programmes to encourage vocational training in Portugal?

2. Does the Commission agree that fostering vocational training in Portugal, similarly to what is already being done in Denmark and Switzerland, could contribute to combating unemployment?

Answer given by Mme Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(19 July 2013)

The Commission firmly believes that effective vocational education and training (VET) systems facilitate a smooth transition of young people from education to work. Countries with attractive VET systems, and especially those with well-established apprenticeship systems, tend to perform better in terms of youth employment.

Therefore, the Commission supports vocational training systems with a significant work-based learning component not only in Portugal, but also in other Member States by establishing an European Alliance for Apprenticeships.

The Alliance for Apprenticeships is a multi-stakeholder initiative which aims to improve the quality and supply of apprenticeships across the EU and change mind-sets towards apprenticeship-type learning. The initiative supports the creation, revival or modernisation of existing apprenticeship schemes, drawing on lessons from successful models. It promotes national and transnational partnerships with an aim to develop and foster work-based learning in companies. It also promotes the benefits of apprenticeship systems to companies, VET providers, students and parents.

The Commission supports apprenticeships financially through the European Social Fund (and in that context the Youth Employment Initiative) and the Lifelong Learning programme which will be replaced by the new Erasmus + programme in 2014. This support ranges from system-level development, to learning content and mobility of staff and learners.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005673/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Previsões da OCDE para Portugal

Segundo a OCDE, as reformas empreendidas por Portugal nestes cinco últimos anos para tornar mais competitivos os mercados de produtos e mais dinâmico o mercado de trabalho são suscetíveis de elevar o PIB potencial de Portugal em cerca de 3,5 % em 2020.

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento destas previsões?

2. Que previsões tem para o crescimento potencial do PIB de Portugal em 2020?

3. Não reconhece que é necessário fazer mais no que respeita ao crescimento económico para que se verifique uma retoma da economia de Portugal bastante antes de 2020?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(10 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão tem conhecimento do relatório da OCDE e da sua avaliação do impacto das reformas estruturais recentemente adotadas em Portugal. Os serviços da Comissão estimam que o crescimento potencial de Portugal será de cerca de 2½ % em 2020. Esta estimativa resulta da amplamente aceite metodologia da função de produção que, para além do horizonte de previsão, se baseia-se em pressupostos técnicos.

No entender da Comissão, o Governo português realizou reformas estruturais ambiciosas para restabelecer a sustentabilidade das finanças públicas, reduzir os desequilíbrios externos e colocar a economia numa trajetória de crescimento forte e criador de emprego. No entanto, sabe-se que as reformas estruturais levam tempo a produzir os resultados esperados e que a fase de ajustamento pode ser difícil. É crucial que as autoridades portuguesas prossigam os seus esforços, em particular nos domínios do mercado de trabalho, educação, indústrias de rede como os transportes ou a energia, justiça, serviços e profissões regulamentadas e redução dos encargos administrativos e dos procedimentos de licenciamento, de modo a colher plenamente os benefícios do programa de reformas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005673/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: OECD forecasts for Portugal

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development has stated that Portugal's reforms over the last five years to make the market for goods more competitive and the labour market more dynamic could potentially cause a 3.5% increase in Portugal's GDP by 2020.

1. Is the Commission aware of these forecasts?

2. What are the Commission's forecasts for potential growth in Portugal's GDP by 2020?

3. Does the Commission agree that more needs to be done as regards economic growth in order for the Portuguese economy to recover somewhat before 2020?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(10 July 2013)

The Commission is aware of the OECD report and its assessment of the impact of recently adopted structural reforms in Portugal. The Commission services estimate potential growth in Portugal to be around 2½ percent in 2020. This estimate is derived from the commonly agreed production function methodology which, beyond the forecast horizon, is based on technical assumptions.

In the view of the Commission the Portuguese Government has implemented ambitious structural reforms to restore the sustainability of public finances, reduce external imbalances and put the economy back on a path of strong, job-rich growth. However, it is known that structural reforms take time to deliver the expected results and that the adjustment phase can be difficult. It is paramount that the Portuguese authorities persevere in their efforts in particular in the fields of labour market, education, networking industries such as transport or energy, justice, services and regulated professions and reduction of administrative burden and licensing procedures so as to reap the full benefits of the reform programme.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005675/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Financiamento às empresas em Portugal

Dos 4,28 mil milhões de euros emprestados pelos bancos portugueses no mês de março, a maior «fatia» voltou a ter como destino as empresas. As instituições financeiras emprestaram um total de 3,75 mil milhões de euros, mais 18,9 % do que em fevereiro, tendo o crédito às grandes empresas registado um aumento duas vezes superior ao observado nos empréstimos às pequenas e médias empresas (PME).

Os empréstimos com um valor acima de um milhão de euros ascenderam a 2,2 mil milhões de euros, ou seja, mais 23,6 % do que em fevereiro, de acordo com os dados provisórios divulgados pelo Banco de Portugal.

Sendo, como todos sabemos, as PME as principais responsáveis pela criação de emprego e pelo crescimento económico, pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento destes dados revelados pelo Banco de Portugal?

2. Que medidas têm sido tomadas a fim de canalizar para as microempresas e as PME a maior «fatia» do crédito concedido pelas instituições financeiras?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(4 de julho de 2013)

No âmbito do Programa de Ajustamento Económico para Portugal, a Comissão acompanha de perto a situação no que respeita ao financiamento da economia, nomeadamente a concessão de crédito ao setor empresarial e, em especial, às PME. O financiamento do setor empresarial em Portugal foi objeto de uma análise detalhada por ocasião da sexta revisão do Programa de Ajustamento ([1]).

A Comissão trabalha em estreita cooperação com o BEI e o FEI no incentivo ao financiamento das PME. Estes organismos, em especial o FEI, gerem um vasto leque de instrumentos financeiros que permitem a canalização dos recursos financeiros da União — fundos estruturais — para as PME. Um exemplo recente de tais instrumentos é o «Instrumento de partilha de riscos para as PME e para as pequenas empresas de média capitalização orientadas para a investigação e a inovação» financiado pelo Sétimo Programa-Quadro de Investigação, criado com o objetivo de conceder crédito para a investigação e inovação a PME e empresas de média capitalização. Em abril, o FEI e um banco português chegaram a acordo no âmbito deste mecanismo. Recentemente, foram celebrados outros acordos com bancos portugueses, por exemplo, no domínio do micro financiamento, através do Instrumento de Micro financiamento «Progress», gerido pelo BEI. Os fundos estruturais atribuídos a Portugal também são utilizados para apoiar as linhas de crédito garantidas pelo Estado destinadas às PME e às microempresas.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp124_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005675/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Finance for companies in Portugal

Of the EUR 4.28 billion lent by Portuguese banks in March, the largest 'slice' was once again to companies. Financial institutions lent a total of EUR 3.75 billion, 18.9% more than in February. Credit granted to large companies has increased by twice as much as loans to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Provisional figures published by the Bank of Portugal show that loans of over EUR 1 million were up to EUR 2.2 billion, 23.6% more than in February.

Given that, as we all know, it is mainly SMEs that account for job creation and economic growth:

1. Is the Commission aware of these figures released by the Bank of Portugal?

2. What measures has the Commission taken to channel a larger 'slice' of the credit granted by financial institutions to SMEs?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(4 July 2013)

In the context of the Economic Adjustment Programme for Portugal the Commission closely monitors the situation regarding the financing of the economy, including credit supply to the corporate sector by the financial system and to SMEs in particular. The financing of the corporate sector in Portugal was subject to a detailed analysis on the occasion of the sixth review of the Adjustment Programme ([1]).

The Commission works in close cooperation with the EIB and the EIF to promote the financing of SMEs. These bodies, in particular the EIF, manage a wide range of financial instruments which allow channelling Union financial resources -structural funds — to SMEs. One recent example of such instruments is the 'Risk Sharing Instrument for Innovative and Research oriented SMEs and small Mid-Caps (RSI)' financed by the EU's 7th Framework Programme for Research (FP7), set up with the aim of providing loans for research and innovation for SMEs and mid-caps. In April an agreement under this facility was reached between the EIF and one Portuguese bank. Other agreements were concluded recently with Portuguese banks, for example in the domain of micro finance, through the EIB-run Progress Microfinance Facility. The structural funds allocated to Portugal are also used to support government guaranteed credit lines directed at SMEs and microenterprises.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp124_en.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005676/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Desemprego em Portugal no primeiro trimestre de 2013

O número de desempregados em Portugal continuou a subir a um ritmo elevado durante os primeiros três meses do ano. De acordo com os dados publicados ontem pelo Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE), a taxa de desemprego passou de 16,9 % no final de 2012 para 17,7 % no final do primeiro trimestre de 2013, um novo máximo histórico para Portugal.

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

Não considera que as novas medidas de austeridade anunciadas para Portugal vão significar novos aumentos dos níveis de desemprego?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(3 de julho de 2013)

De acordo com as previsões da primavera da Comissão, o desemprego em Portugal deverá aumentar, passando de uma média de 15,9 % da população ativa em 2012 para 18,2 % em 2013 e para 18,5 % em 2014. Prevê-se um declínio gradual da taxa de desemprego a partir dessa data.

É importante salientar que o agravamento do desemprego em Portugal não constitui um fenómeno recente associado ao programa de ajustamento. O desemprego em Portugal situava-se em 4,5 % da população ativa em 2000 e aumentou para 8,9 % em 2007, enquanto, no mesmo período, a taxa de desemprego na área do euro diminuiu de 8,7 % para 7.6 %. Em 2011, a taxa de desemprego em Portugal tinha atingido quase 13 %, o que quer dizer que já se havia verificado um aumento muito importante bem antes do programa de ajustamento. O aumento do desemprego em Portugal constitui, pois, um fenómeno de longo prazo, que o programa de ajustamento visa combater através de políticas estruturais adequadas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005676/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Unemployment in Portugal in the first quarter of 2013

The number of unemployed in Portugal continued rising fast during the first three months of the year. According to data published yesterday by Statistics Portugal, the unemployment rate went from 16.9% at the end of 2012 to 17.7% at the end of the first quarter of 2013, a new record for Portugal.

Does the Commission agree that the new austerity measures announced for Portugal will mean further increases in the unemployment level?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(3 July 2013)

According to the Commission's spring forecast unemployment in Portugal is expected to rise from an average of 15.9% of the labour force in 2012 to 18.2% in 2013 and to 18.5% in 2014. A gradual decline in the unemployment rate can be expected thereafter.

It is important to note that the rise in unemployment in Portugal is not a recent phenomenon linked to the adjustment programme. Unemployment in Portugal stood at 4.5% of the labour force in 2000 and rose to 8.9% in 2007 while over the same period unemployment in the euro area fell from 8.7% to 7.6%. In 2011, the unemployment rate in Portugal had reached almost 13%, i.e. a very substantial increase occurred already well before the adjustment programme. The rise in unemployment in Portugal is thus a long-term phenomenon which the adjustment programme aims at tackling by appropriate structural policies.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005677/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Taxa de IRC em Portugal

Considerando que:

Segundo uma recolha de vários «benchmarks» efetuada pela Ernst & Young, Portugal tem a terceira maior taxa efetiva de IRC da União Europeia (até 31,5 %), logo a seguir à França e Bélgica, e acima da média dos 27 Estados-Membros que se cifra nos 24,6 %.

Portugal atravessa uma grave crise económica, com valores recordes do desemprego.

Pergunta-se:

1. Não considera que um IRC deste valor dificulta o investimento em Portugal?

2. Equaciona a Comissão, no âmbito das medidas de crescimento económico defendidas para Portugal, a redução do IRC para as empresas portuguesas, como forma de incentivo ao investimento?

Resposta dada por Algirdas Šemeta em nome da Comissão
(16 de julho de 2013)

1. A taxa legal do imposto sobre o rendimento das pessoas coletivas em Portugal (que pode chegar a 31,5 %) é superior à média europeia. As taxas de imposto efetivas prestam melhor informação sobre o impacto da tributação nas decisões de investimento. No seu estudo de 2012 para a Comissão Europeia «Effective Tax Levels Using the Devereux-Griffith Methodology» ([1]) (Níveis de tributação efetiva utilizando a metodologia Devereux-Griffith), o instituto de investigação alemão ZEW considerou que Portugal ocupa o sexto lugar, com uma taxa efetiva marginal do imposto sobre o rendimento das pessoas coletivas de 20,8 %. A literatura económica mostra que existe um efeito desta taxa sobre o nível de investimento, com uma semi-elasticidade média estimada em cerca de 3. Contudo, esta literatura também considera que a tributação constitui apenas um fator entre outros para decidir onde fazer os investimentos e onde posicionar a atividade comercial.

2. A redução da taxa de imposto sobre o rendimento das pessoas coletivas é uma opção para atrair investimentos. Um quadro jurídico e político estável, finanças públicas sólidas, uma mão-de-obra qualificada, infraestruturas públicas, etc., são também importantes fatores determinantes de investimento. Em Portugal, está em curso uma reforma global do imposto sobre o rendimento das pessoas coletivas (IRC) tendo em vista a promoção do investimento e o melhoramento da competitividade internacional. Para atingir estes objetivos, a Comissão apoia a simplificação da complexa estrutura do IRC, a fim de reduzir custos administrativos e de conformidade e para reduzir gradualmente as taxas marginais juntamente com a redefinição da matéria coletável.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/common/publications/studies/effective_levels_company_taxation_final_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005677/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Corporation tax rate in Portugal

According to a survey of several benchmarks by Ernst & Young, Portugal has the third-highest effective rate of corporation tax in the EU (up to 31.5%), just behind France and Belgium, and above the average for the 27 Member States, which is 24.6%.

Portugal is experiencing a serious economic crisis, with record unemployment.

1. Does the Commission agree that corporate tax at this level discourages investment in Portugal?

2. In the context of the economic growth measures advocated for Portugal, does the Commission consider reduced corporation tax for Portuguese companies an incentive for investment?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(16 July 2013)

1. The statutory corporate tax rate in Portugal (that can go up to 31.5 percent) is higher than the European average. The effective tax rates provide better information on the impact of taxation on investment decisions. In its 2012 study for the European Commission 'Effective Tax Levels Using the Devereux-Griffith Methodology' ([1]), the German research institute ZEW found that Portugal ranks 6th with a mean Effective Marginal Corporate Tax Rate (EMTR) of 20.8%. The economic literature shows that there is an effect of the EMTR on the level of investment with a mean semi-elasticity estimated at around 3. This literature however also finds that taxation is only one determinant among others for investment and business location.

2. The reduction of the corporate tax rate is one option to attract investment. A stable legal and policy environment, sound public finance, a qualified workforce, public infrastructure, etc. are also important determinants of investment. A comprehensive reform of the corporate income tax (CIT) is underway in Portugal, aimed at promoting investment and improving international competitiveness. To attain these objectives, the Commission supports the simplification of the complex CIT structure, in order to reduce compliance and administrative costs, the gradual reduction of marginal rates alongside the redefinition of the tax base.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/common/publications/studies/effective_levels_company_taxation_final_en.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005678/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Incumprimento em Portugal por parte dos reformados

Considerando que:

Um em cada dez portugueses que pede ajuda por não conseguir pagar as suas dívidas tem mais de 60 anos e, habitualmente, é reformado.

Pergunta-se:

1. Como avalia esta situação?

2. Uma vez que as medidas de austeridade que têm vindo a ser aplicadas agravaram esta situação, que mecanismos pode a Comissão disponibilizar para combater esta situação?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(9 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão entende que a manutenção e a aplicação determinada do programa de ajustamento macroeconómico é a melhor maneira de restaurar um crescimento económico sustentável e de aumentar as oportunidades de emprego em Portugal. A Comissão continuará a trabalhar de forma construtiva com as autoridades portuguesas, dentro dos parâmetros acordados para atenuar as consequências sociais da crise.

Além disso, o recente acordo de princípio sobre a prorrogação dos prazos de vencimento dos empréstimos concedidos ao país melhorará as perspetivas do seu regresso aos mercados e reforçará a credibilidade do programa de ajustamento, apoiando, assim, os esforços notáveis envidados por Portugal nos últimos tempos, dos quais os menores não são os sacrifícios feitos pelo povo português.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005678/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Retired Portuguese people unable to pay their debts

One in 10 Portuguese people who request help with paying their debts are aged over 60 and are generally retired.

1. What is the Commission's view of this situation?

2. Since the austerity measures that the government has been applying have exacerbated this situation, what mechanisms can the Commission make available to combat this situation?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

The Commission considers that continued and determined implementation of the macro economic adjustment programme offers the best way to restore sustainable economic growth and to improve employment opportunities in Portugal. The Commission will continue to work constructively with the Portuguese authorities within the parameters agreed to alleviate the social consequences of the crisis.

Furthermore, the recent agreement in principle on extending the maturities of the loans granted to Portugal will improve Portugal's prospects of a return to the markets and enhance the credibility of the adjustment programme, thereby lending support to the remarkable efforts undertaken by Portugal in recent times, not least of which are the sacrifices made by the Portuguese people.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005679/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Sistema bancário na Eslovénia

Considerando que:

Os problemas no sistema bancário esloveno continuam no centro das preocupações europeias, por poderem exigir mais um resgate num país da Zona Euro;

O risco tem aumentado devido à resistência das autoridades em atuar de forma decisiva na reestruturação do seu sistema bancário;

A Eslovénia tem resistido à reforma do seu sistema financeiro, o que é explicado em parte pela «obstrução» do banco central do país aos esforços do novo Governo,

Pergunta-se:

1. Como avalia a situação do sistema bancário na Eslovénia?

2. Que prevê a Comissão fazer no que respeita à reforma do sistema financeiro, para evitar mais um resgate num país da zona euro?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(26 de junho de 2013)

A avaliação da Comissão sobre os desafios com que o sistema bancário esloveno se confronta, bem como as propostas de medidas que devem ser tomadas para os resolver, podem ser consultadas no seguinte endereço:
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_pt.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005679/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Banking system in Slovenia

The problems in Slovenia's banking sector remain central to Europe's concerns, since they could require another bailout of a euro-area country.

The risk has been increasing because of the Slovenian authorities' resistance to acting decisively to restructure their banking system.

Slovenia has been resisting reform of its financial system, which is partly explained by the country's central bank 'blocking' the new government's efforts.

1. What is the Commission's view of Slovenia's banking system?

2. What does the Commission plan to do to reform the financial system, to avoid bailing out another euro-area country?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(26 June 2013)

The Commission's assessment of the challenges facing the Slovenian banking system , as well as proposed course of action to address them can be found at:
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005680/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Projeto luso-moçambicano no âmbito da intervenção e formação na área da saúde materno-infantil

Considerando que:

— O «Health 4 Mozambican Kids and Mothers» é um projeto luso-moçambicano no âmbito da intervenção e formação na área da saúde materno-infantil;

— Este projeto pretende promover o intercâmbio científico e clínico entre instituições portuguesas e moçambicanas, privilegiando a partilha de experiências;

— O referido projeto prevê a implementação de programas de vigilância no âmbito da saúde materno-infantil, visando a prevenção precoce e consequente melhoria transgeracional da saúde das populações;

— É importante formar profissionais no terreno — na vertente médica e de enfermagem —, visando a melhoria da prestação de cuidados às populações;

— É fundamental a avaliação do estado de saúde em geral e da nutrição da população pediátrica e suas progenitoras

— É necessário formar equipas no terreno que permitam a sustentabilidade do projeto;

— Existe a necessidade de um intercâmbio regular nas diferentes áreas médicas no âmbito da saúde materno-infantil.

Pergunto à Comissão:

Tem conhecimento do referido projeto?

Dada a importância do projeto, poderia o mesmo ser de alguma forma financiado pela UE?

Resposta dada por Andris Piebalgs em nome da Comissão
(15 de julho de 2013)

O projeto a que o Senhor Deputado se refere não foi apresentado à Delegação da UE em Moçambique, nem ao grupo de parceiros para a saúde, nem sequer ao grupo de trabalho sob a alçada deste último que se debruça sobre os recursos humanos no setor da saúde. Estes grupos são parte integrante do mecanismo de abordagem setorial, que coordena todos os intervenientes no setor da saúde, nomeadamente, a UE, a USAID, a Unicef e o UNFPA. Seria aconselhável que o gestor do projeto em causa se pusesse em contacto com estes grupos tendo em vista uma coordenação do setor da saúde mais eficaz.

A UE concede atualmente um apoio orçamental ao setor da saúde no valor de 30 milhões de euros. Este programa presta especial atenção, entre outros, a dois importantes objetivos da saúde maternoinfantil: melhorar o número de nascimentos em instalações de saúde assistidos por profissionais de saúde especializados e melhorar a capacidade dos centros de luta contra o VIH/SIDA. Além disso, o décimo primeiro programa FED para Moçambique consagrará uma atenção especial à segurança alimentar e à nutrição no âmbito do setor prioritário do Desenvolvimento Rural.

No caso de projetos apresentados por organizações e intervenientes não estatais, o tema da saúde maternoinfantil pode ser financiado, em princípio, através de convites à apresentação de propostas efetuados ao abrigo de rubricas orçamentais temáticas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005680/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Portuguese-Mozambican project concerning intervention and training in the area of mother-child health

— Health 4 Mozambican Kids and Mothers is a Portuguese-Mozambican project concerning intervention and training in the area of mother-child health.

— This project aims to promote scientific and clinical exchange between Portuguese and Mozambican institutions, encouraging experience sharing.

— The aforementioned project implements programmes to monitor mother-child health, aimed at early prevention and the resulting cross-generational public-health improvement.

— It is important to train medical and nursing professionals on the ground, with a view to improving provision of care to the public.

— It is essential to assess the state of healthcare in general and of nutrition for children and their parents.

— There is a need to train teams on the ground to make the project sustainable.

— There need to be regular exchanges between various areas of medicine in the area of mother-child health.

Is the Commission aware of this project?

Given the project's importance, could the EU fund it in some way?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

The project the Honourable Member refers to has not been presented to the EU Delegation to Mozambique or to the Health Partners Group and the related 'Human Resources in Health Working Group', part of the Sector Wide Approach mechanism, that coordinates actors in the health sector, notably the EU, USAID, Unicef and UNFPA. It would be advisable that the project manager relates with these groups for a better coordination of the health sector.

The EU is currently funding a Health Sector Budget Support (EUR 30 million). This programme pays particular attention, among other things, to two important aspects of mother-child health: improving the number of birth on health facilities attended by skilled health professionals, and improving the capacity of HIV/AIDs centres. Moreover, the 11th EDF programme for Mozambique will pay particular attention to food security and nutrition under the Rural Development focal sector.

The topic of maternal-child health can be funded, in principle, through calls for proposals under thematic budget lines for projects submitted by Non-State Actors organisations.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005681/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Consideração dos descontos de quantidade para efeitos de determinação do valor aduaneiro

Como é do conhecimento da Comissão, em determinados contratos de fornecimento, celebrados entre empresas da União Europeia e empresas de países terceiros, existe uma determinada redução percentual no preço dos bens conforme sejam atingidos determinados volumes de compras.

Nos referidos contratos, apesar da percentagem de redução ser já conhecida no momento em que é colocada a ordem de encomenda, a sua materialização apenas ocorre em momento posterior, via emissão de notas de débito pelas empresas da UE, através do que se ajusta o preço das aquisições realizadas no período a que a mesma se refere.

Consequentemente, esta redução do preço não é considerada no montante das declarações de importação feitas até à data, uma vez que estas são elaboradas com base nos elementos que constam das faturas, o que leva à cobrança excessiva de direitos aduaneiros.

Em face destes dados e nos termos da legislação europeia, gostaríamos de ver esclarecidas as seguintes questões:

— Tem a Comissão conhecimento de que estas situações estão a afetar empresas europeias?

— Podem os descontos de quantidade ser considerados para efeitos de determinação do valor aduaneiro (base para liquidação de direitos aduaneiros)?

— Caso esses descontos possam ser considerados, de que forma podem as empresas da UE apresentar esses pedidos de reembolso junto das respetivas autoridades tributárias e aduaneiras?

Resposta dada por Algirdas Šemeta em nome da Comissão
(16 de julho de 2013)

As reduções de preços, incluindo as reduções baseadas nas quantidades adquiridas, fazem parte das práticas comerciais.

O valor aduaneiro das mercadorias importadas na União Europeia baseia-se no método do valor de transação (Artigo 29.° do Código Aduaneiro). Este é o método principal para a fixação do valor aduaneiro. Prevê que o valor aduaneiro seja baseado no preço pago ou a pagar pelas mercadorias. Além disso, está previsto que, ao fixar-se, por aplicação do disposto no artigo 29.° do código, o valor aduaneiro de mercadorias cujo preço não tenha sido efetivamente pago no momento a considerar para fixação do valor aduaneiro, o preço a pagar para liquidação das contas no momento considerado será, regra geral, tomado como base para fixação do valor aduaneiro (Artigo 144.° das disposições de aplicação do Código Aduaneiro Comunitário).

Por conseguinte, uma redução que não tenha sido oferecida ou que não esteja disponível no momento da introdução em livre prática, porque, por exemplo, foi concedida pelo vendedor retroativamente após a importação, não pode ser tomada em consideração aquando da determinação do valor aduaneiro nos termos do artigo 29.° do Código Aduaneiro).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005681/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Taking into account bulk discounts when determining customs valuation

As the Commission is aware, some supply contracts concluded between EU and third-country companies included a certain percentage discount in the price of the goods if certain purchase volumes are reached.

With such contracts, although the percentage discount is already known at the time that the order is placed, it only materialises later via EU companies issuing debit notes, which adjust the price of acquisitions made in the period to which the order refers.

As a result, this discount is not taken into account in the total of import statements made up to that point, since these are drawn up on the basis of these invoices' constituent parts, leading to the levying of excessive customs duties.

In view of these figures and in accordance of European legislation, we would like clarification of the following issues:

— Is the Commission aware that these situations are affecting European companies?

— Can bulk discounts be taken into account for the purposes of determining customs valuation (the basis on which customs duties are paid)?

— If these discounts can be taken into account, how can EU companies submit these reimbursement requests from the relevant tax and customs authorities?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(16 July 2013)

Price discounts, including discounts based on quantities purchased, are part of commercial practice.

The customs value of goods imported into the EU is based on the transaction value method (Article 29 of the Customs Code). This is the primary method for the determination of the customs value. This provides for customs value to be based on the price paid or payable for the goods. Furthermore, it is specified that for the purposes of determining customs value of goods under Article 29 of the Code, where the price has not actually been paid at the material time for valuation for customs purposes, the price payable for settlement at the said time shall as a general rule be taken as the basis for customs value (Article 144 of the Implementing Provisions to the Customs Code).

Consequently, a discount which has not been offered or is not available at the time of release for free circulation, for example because it has been granted retrospectively after importation by the seller, cannot be taken into account when determining the customs value under Article 29 of the Customs Code.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005682/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Fraude e evasão fiscal na Europa

Considerando que:

A União Europeia deve assumir um papel de liderança na luta contra a fraude e a evasão fiscal e que o sucesso no combate à fraude e à evasão pode contribuir para reduzir as políticas de austeridade,

Pergunta-se:

1. O que tem sido feito pela Comissão para o sucesso no combate à fraude e à evasão fiscal?

2. Que medidas contribuem para o sucesso no combate à fraude e à evasão fiscal?

Resposta dada por Algirdas Šemeta em nome da Comissão
(18 de julho de 2013)

1. Em 6 de dezembro de 2012, a Comissão adotou um Plano de Ação para reforçar a luta contra a fraude e a evasão fiscais [COM(2012) 722 final], juntamente com duas recomendações sobre o planeamento fiscal agressivo e a boa governação fiscal. Esse plano de ação identifica uma série de medidas específicas que podem ser aplicadas agora e nos próximos anos. A Comissão acredita que a combinação destas ações pode proporcionar uma resposta global e eficaz aos vários desafios colocados pela fraude e a evasão fiscais, podendo, por conseguinte, contribuir para aumentar a equidade dos sistemas fiscais dos Estados-Membros, para garantir as receitas fiscais necessárias e, em última análise, para melhorar o funcionamento do mercado interno.

2. A Comissão está convicta de que a troca automática de informações constitui o instrumento mais eficaz para evitar e combater a fraude fiscal: aumenta a transparência e tem um efeito dissuasor sobre os autores das fraudes. Assim, a Comissão apresentou, em 12 de junho de 2013, uma proposta ([1]) com vista a alargar o domínio de aplicação da troca automática de informações no âmbito da Diretiva relativa à cooperação administrativa. A Comissão irá promover ativamente a troca automática de informações como a futura norma europeia e internacional de transparência e troca de informações em matéria fiscal.

([1]) Proposta de Diretiva do Conselho que altera a Diretiva 2011/16/UE no que respeita à troca automática de informações obrigatória no domínio da fiscalidade, COM(2013) 348 final, de 12.6.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005682/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Tax fraud and evasion in Europe

The EU should adopt a leadership role in combating tax fraud and evasion. Successfully combating tax fraud and evasion could contribute to reducing austerity policies.

1. What has the Commission been doing towards successfully combating tax fraud and evasion?

2. What measures contribute to successfully combating tax fraud and evasion?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(18 July 2013)

1. On 6 December 2012 the Commission adopted an Action Plan to strengthen the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion (COM(2012)722 final) together with two recommendations on aggressive tax planning and tax good governance. It identifies a series of specific measures which can be developed now and in years to come. The Commission believes that the combination of these actions can provide a comprehensive and effective response to the various challenges posed by tax fraud and evasion and can thus contribute to increasing the fairness of Member States' tax systems, to securing much needed tax revenues and ultimately to improving the functioning of the internal market.

2. The Commission believes that automatic exchange of information is the most efficient instrument to prevent and combat tax fraud: it increases transparency and has a deterrent effect on fraudsters. Therefore, the Commission presented on 12 June 2013 a proposal [1] with a view to expanding the scope of automatic exchange of information under the directive on Administrative Cooperation. The Commission will strongly promote automatic exchange of information as the future European and international standard of transparency and exchange of information in tax matters.

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[1] Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2011/16/EU as regards mandatory automatic exchange of information in the field of taxation, COM(2013)348 final of 12.6.2013.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005683/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Riesgo para las praderas de posidonia en Ibiza y Formentera

En la *Comunidad Autónoma de las Islas Baleares, en España, se encuentra el Parque Natural Ses Salines d'Eivissa i Formentera, una reserva de biodiversidad marina que goza de los más altos niveles de protección ambiental del país, que, sin embargo, se sufre diferentes riesgos.*

Como indiqué en mi *anterior pregunta parlamentaria E-010382/2011 existe un grave riesgo para las praderas de posidonia debido a los fondeos de embarcaciones de recreo en la zona. Estos fondeos son muy agresivos para esta especie, y el incremento del turismo náutico en la zona ha podido producir importantes efectos negativos en la conservación de este ecosistema protegido. En la respuesta a la pregunta la Comisión Europea afirmó que existía una carencia de información sobre el estado de conservación de dichas praderas submarinas entre 2001 y 2011.*

El pasado 22 de abril, *el Tribunal Supremo de España rechazaba un recurso contra unas prospecciones petrolíferas que se tiene previsto realizar en el Golfo de Valencia para explotar un depósito de dicho recurso por la empresa Cairn Energy. Dichas prospecciones podrían desarrollar un impacto ambiental desfavorable sobre el citado parque natural debido a la proximidad al mismo. Este proyecto conlleva elevados riesgos para otras reservas naturales de la zona.*

¿Ha solicitado la Comisión nueva información sobre el estado de conservación de las praderas de posidonia citadas? *¿Considera que el Gobierno autonómico de las Islas Baleares cumple las obligaciones de información de la Directiva de hábitats? ¿Considera que está protegiendo suficientemente este importante ecosistema?*

Con respecto a las prospecciones petrolíferas en el Golfo de Valenc*ia, ¿dispone de un informe de impacto ambiental con arreglo a la Directiva 2011/92/UE?*

¿Se ha considerado el impacto que dichas prospecciones pueden acarrear en zonas protegidas como el Parque Natural Ses Salines d'Eivissa y Formentera?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(5 de julio de 2013)

En 2012, la Comisión solicitó información a las autoridades regionales de las Islas Baleares sobre el estado de conservación de los hábitats de Posidonia y sobre las medidas adoptadas para evitar el deterioro de esos hábitats. En su respuesta, dichas autoridades informaron sobre las actividades de seguimiento realizadas por la red de vigilancia de las praderas de Posidonia en las Islas Baleares y sus resultados. Las autoridades competentes informaron también sobre las medidas adoptadas para evitar el deterioro de tales hábitats, incluida la reglamentación sobre el fondeo en zonas sensibles, las actividades de información y sensibilización, las medidas de vigilancia y control, así como la aplicación de sanciones en caso necesario. A la luz de la información facilitada, la Comisión no observó incumplimiento alguno de las disposiciones de la Directiva de hábitats ([1]) en relación con este asunto. La Comisión seguirá prestando atención a la evolución del estado de conservación de esas praderas submarinas a fin de garantizar el pleno cumplimiento de la citada Directiva.

Por lo que respecta a las actividades de prospección petrolífera en el Golfo de Valencia, la Comisión solicitó información a las autoridades españolas, en mayor de 2013, sobre las medidas adoptadas para garantizar que las prospecciones petrolíferas autorizadas en el Golfo de Valencia cumplieran el acervo ambiental de la UE, incluidas, entre otras, las disposiciones de la Directiva de hábitats. La respuesta de las autoridades españolas, prevista en agosto de 2013, será evaluada para garantizar el pleno cumplimiento de la legislación ambiental de la UE.

([1]) Directiva 92/43/CEE del Consejo, de 21 de mayo de 1992, relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y flora silvestres (DO L 206 de 22.7.1992).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005683/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Risk to the Posidonia beds around Ibiza and Formentera

The Autonomous Community of the Balearic Islands, in Spain, is home to the Ses Salines d'Eivissa i Formentera natural park, a marine nature reserve which, despite enjoying the highest levels of environmental protection in the country, faces a number of threats.

As I mentioned in my previous Parliamentary Question E-010382/2011, the Posidonia beds are at serious risk from pleasure boats dropping anchor in this area. Anchoring is extremely harmful to this species and the rise in nautical tourism has had profoundly adverse effects on the conservation of this protected ecosystem. In its reply to the question, the Commission said there was a lack of information regarding the state of conservation of these seagrass meadows between 2001 and 2011.

On 22 April 2013, the Supreme Court of Spain rejected an appeal against Cairn Energy's proposed oil exploration in the Gulf of Valencia and subsequent drilling plans. These exploration activities could have an adverse environmental impact on the Ses Salines d'Eivissa i Formentera Natural Park, given their proximity to the site. The project also poses a substantial risk to other nature reserves in the area.

Has the Commission requested further information regarding the state of conservation of these seagrass meadows? Does it consider that the Autonomous Government of the Balearic Islands is complying with the information requirements of the Habitats Directive? Does it believe it is doing enough to protect this important ecosystem?

As regards the oil exploration activities in the Gulf of Valencia, does it have an environmental impact report as required under Directive 2011/92/EU?

Has it considered the possible impact of these exploration activities on protected areas such as the Ses Salines d'Eivissa i Formentera Natural Park?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(5 July 2013)

In 2012 the Commission requested information from the regional authorities of the Balearic Islands on the conservation status of the Posidonia habitats and the measures adopted to avoid deterioration of such habitats. In their reply, the regional authorities informed about the monitoring activities developed by the Balearic network for the surveillance of Posidonia beds and their results. The regional authorities also informed about the measures adopted to avoid deterioration of such habitats, including the regulation of anchoring in sensitive areas, information and awareness raising activities, surveillance and control measures, as well as the application of sanctions when needed. In light of the information provided, the Commission did not identify any breach of the provisions of the Habitats Directive ([1]) concerning this case. The Commission will continue to keep a close watch on the trends on the conservation status of these seagrass meadows in order to ensure full compliance with the Habitats Directive.

As regards oil exploration activities in the Gulf of Valencia, the Commission requested information from Spain on May 2013 on the measures to ensure compliance of the oil exploration activities authorised in the Gulf Valencia with the applicable EU environmental *acquis*, including the provisions of the Habitats Directive among others. The reply from the Spanish authorities, which is expected by August 2013, will be assessed in order to ensure full compliance with the EU environmental legislation.

([1]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC, of 21 May 1992, on the protection of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-005684/13
aan de Commissie
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(21 mei 2013)

Betreft: EU gaat truckers op afstand volgen

De Europese rij- en rusttijdenwetgeving moet twee belangrijke doelen dienen, namelijk de veiligheid op de weg en het voorkomen van uitbuiting van medewerkers (waardoor tegelijkertijd een level playing field ontstaat). In de praktijk worden deze doelen met die wetgeving echter niet gediend, sterker nog de wetgeving is zijn doel volledig voorbijgeslagen. Lidstaten kennen bijvoorbeeld onevenredig grote verschillen in handhavingspraktijken, bijvoorbeeld op het gebied van stapeling van boetes en de enorme hoogteverschillen van boetes. Principes als redelijkheid en billijkheid worden lang niet overal toegepast, ook al vraagt de situatie daar soms om (bijvoorbeeld chauffeurs die de rijtijd noodgedwongen overtreden om op een veilige locatie te kunnen overnachten of te maken hadden met extreme file-overmacht). De EU wil nu de volgende stap zetten in wetgeving via het op afstand uitlezen van een digitale tachograaf. Dat betekent dat truckers op afstand worden gevolgd. Daarnaast wil de Commissie de vervoersondernemers verantwoordelijk maken geknoei met de tachograaf.

1. Is de Commissie bekend met het bericht „EU gaat truckers op afstand volgen" ([1])?

2. Op welke manier denkt de Commissie dat het op afstand uitlezen van de tachograaf de huidige problematiek zoals hierboven geschetst inzake onevenredigheid in onder meer boetes en handhaving weg gaat nemen?

3. Is de Commissie het met de PVV eens dat dit weer een vorm is van regeldrift van de Commissie waar die niet op zijn plaats is? Zo nee, waarom niet?

4. Wat vindt de Commissie van het principe dat eerst en vooral degene die voor een misstand verantwoordelijk is gestraft moet worden? Op welke wijze verhoudt zich het principe van de verantwoordelijke straffen tot het idee van de Commissie om per definitie het transportbedrijf aansprakelijk te stellen voor geknoei met de tachograaf?

5. Op welke manier denkt de Commissie dat bij digitale uitlezing van de tachograaf op afstand rekening kan worden gehouden met situaties als overmacht en omstandigheden die het begaan van overtredingen soms onvermijdelijk — maar nog wel binnen een acceptabele marge- maken zoals een lange file net voor een veilige parkeerplaats of een politiecontrole waardoor de chauffeur vertraging oploopt?

6. Is de Commissie het met de PVV eens dat de veiligheid van chauffeurs en het verkeer niet is gediend met deze wederom doorgeslagen Brusselse regels? Zo nee, waarom niet?

7. Is de Commissie het met de PVV eens dat de digitale tachograaf een verdere inperking is van de privacy van de chauffeur? Zo nee, waarom niet?

8. Is de Commissie bereid dit plan onmiddellijk naast zich neer te leggen?

Antwoord van de heer Kallas namens de Commissie
(9 juli 2013)

1. De Commissie dankt het geachte Parlementslid voor het vermelden van dit bericht.

2. Krachtens artikel 5 van de nieuwe tachograafverordening ([2]) zullen de komende generaties digitale tachografen overeenkomstig het akkoord dat is bereikt tijdens de in mei 2013 afgesloten triloogonderhandelingen, in staat zijn om op afstand met de controleautoriteiten te communiceren terwijl het voertuig aan het rijden is. Deze communicatie moet gerichte controles vergemakkelijken en heeft niets te maken met boetes.

3 & 8. De belanghebbende partijen hebben aangedrongen op een herziening van de tachograafverordening. De wetgever is nu op dat verzoek ingegaan. Het voorstel heeft tot doel de betrouwbaarheid van het tachograafsysteem te verbeteren en de administratieve rompslomp te reduceren.

([1]) http://www.volkskrant.nl/vk/nl/2680/Economie/article/detail/3441708/2013/05/15/EU-gaat-truckers-op-afstand-volgen.dhtml.
([2]) COM(2011) 451.

4. De vervoersbedrijven zijn verantwoordelijk voor de organisatie van het werk van hun bestuurders en moeten daarbij de sociale wetgeving en de tachograafvoorschriften in acht nemen. Het beginsel van medeverantwoordelijkheid treedt niet automatisch in werking: het vervoersbedrijf krijgt de kans tegenbewijs aan te dragen bij een vermoedelijke overtreding van deze voorschriften door zijn bestuurders.

5. Via communicatie op afstand zullen enkel gegevens over mogelijke manipulatie van de tachograaf worden doorgegeven, niet over rij- en rusttijden. De naleving van Verordening (EG) nr. 561/2006 ([3]) wordt dus niet op afstand gecontroleerd, maar enkel na een regelmatige controle (waarbij het voertuig moet stoppen).

6. De voorschriften in verband met rij- en rusttijden en de desbetreffende regels in verband met de tachograaf zijn precies ingevoerd om vermoeidheid bij bestuurders tegen te gaan en de verkeersveiligheid te verbeteren.

7. De voorgestelde wetgeving over de tachograaf is in overleg met de Europese Toezichthouder voor gegevensbescherming opgesteld met inachtneming van bezorgdheden over gegevensbescherming.

([3]) Verordening (EG) nr. 561/2006 van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 15 maart 2006 tot harmonisatie van bepaalde voorschriften van sociale aard voor het wegvervoer, tot wijziging van Verordeningen (EEG) nr. 3821/85 en (EG) nr. 2135/98 van de Raad en tot intrekking van Verordening (EEG) nr. 3820/85 van de Raad (Voor de EER relevante tekst) — Verklaring, PB L 102 van 11.04.2006. .

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005684/13
to the Commission
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: EU to remotely monitor lorry drivers

The European legislation on driving and rest periods has to serve two important purposes, namely road safety and the prevention of exploitation of drivers (thus, simultaneously creating a level playing field). However, in practice, these purposes are not served with this legislation; in fact, it has completely ignored them. There are disproportionately large differences in the enforcement practices of Member States, for example, when it comes to the accumulation of fines and the enormous differences in the levels of fines. Principles such as fairness and reasonableness have not been applied everywhere for a long time, even though the situation sometimes demands this (for example, drivers who are forced to exceed the driving period in order to spend the night in a safe location or those who have to deal with extreme congestion). The EU now wants to take the next legislative step via the remote reading of digital tachographs. This means that lorry drivers will be remotely monitored. In addition, the Commission wants make transport operators responsible for any tampering with the tachograph.

1. Is the Commission aware of the article 'EU to remotely monitor lorry drivers'? ()

2. How does the Commission believe the remote reading of tachographs will resolve the current issue of disproportion in fines and enforcement, among other things, as outlined above?

3. Does the Commission agree with the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) that this is another example of the Commission's overzealous and misplaced regulation? If not, why not?

4. What does the Commission think about the principle that, above all, those who are responsible for malpractice should be punished? How does the principle of responsible penalties square with the Commission's idea of making transport operators accountable, by definition, for tampering with tachographs?

5. How does the Commission believe remote digital reading of tachographs will take into account situations such as *force majeure* and circumstances that sometimes render breaches unavoidable — albeit within an acceptable margin — such as severe congestion just before a safe parking place or police checks that cause drivers delays?

6. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that the safety of drivers and traffic is not served by these rules from Brussels, which are, as stated earlier, over the top? If not, why not?

7. Does the Commission agree with PVV that digital tachographs constitute a further restriction of drivers' privacy? If not, why not?

8. Is the Commission prepared to abandon this plan immediately?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

1. The Commission would like to thank the Honourable Member for drawing its attention to this article.

2. Article 5 of the new tachograph Regulation ([1]), as agreed during the trilogue negotiations (concluded in May 2013), foresees that the future generation of digital tachographs shall be able to communicate remotely with control officers while the vehicle is in motion. The purpose of this communication is to facilitate targeted checks and not to deal with the issue of fines.

3 & 8. Stakeholders have been asking for the revision of the tachograph Regulation and the legislator has now agreed to it. The proposal aims at increasing the trustworthiness of the tachograph system and reduce administrative burden.

4. Transport companies are responsible for organising the work of their drivers while complying with the social legislation and tachograph rules. The principle of co-liability is not triggered automatically, as transport undertakings are allowed to produce any counter evidence for a presumed infringement of these rules by their drivers.

([1]) COM(2011) 451.

5. The remote communication capability will not communicate data on driving time and rest periods but only data on possible manipulations of the tachograph. Therefore, compliance with Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 ([2]) will not be controlled remotely but only after a regular check (requiring the stopping of the vehicle).

6. The rules on driving time and rest periods and the corresponding ones on tachograph have been introduced precisely in order to fight driver fatigue and improve road safety.

7. The proposed digital tachograph legislation has been elaborated with due consideration to data protection concerns, in consultation with the European Data Protection Supervisor.

([2]) Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006 on the harmonisation of certain social legislation relating to road transport and amending Council Regulations (EEC) No 3821/85 and (EC) No 2135/98 and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 3820/85 (Text with EEA relevance) — Declaration, OJ L 102, 11.4.2006.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-005685/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(21 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Pozycja UE w Radzie Arktycznej

Podczas niedawnego forum Rady Arktycznej w Kirunie (14-15 maja 2013 r.) funkcję stałych obserwatorów otrzymały: Chiny, Indie, Włochy, Japonia, Korea Południowa oraz Singapur. Odroczono natomiast kwestię mandatu dla Unii Europejskiej, głównie z uwagi na nieprzychylność Moskwy, argumentującej w mediach swoje stanowisko względami geopolitycznymi. Jednocześnie Rosjanie wyrażają dążenie do przekształcenia tej struktury w organizację międzypaństwową, która przyjmowałaby prawnie wiążące rezolucje międzynarodowe.

Proszę o ustosunkowanie się do poniższych kwestii:

1. Jakie jest stanowisko UE w sprawie Arktyki? W szczególności, czy dążeniem europejskiej dyplomacji jest przekształcenie tego obszaru na podobieństwo Antarktydy – wykorzystywanej jedynie do celów pokojowych, oraz objętej zakazem przeprowadzania prób jądrowych?

2. Czy planowane jest podjęcie szczegółowych rozmów ze stroną rosyjską, celem wypracowania korzystnych rozwiązań w zakresie statusu UE w Radzie Arktycznej?

3. Czy dotychczasowe zaangażowanie krajów członkowskich (Szwecji, Finlandii i Danii) w sposób wystarczający realizuje unijne cele w Arktyce, czy też wymaga szerszego wsparcia?

4. Czy i jakie działania podejmowane zostały w ostatnim czasie przez unijną dyplomację na forum ONZ lub jej agend w kwestii zwiększenia obecności UE w Arktyce?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(30 lipca 2013 r.)

Zgodnie ze wspólnym komunikatem Wysokiej Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącej i Komisji (JOIN (2012)19) Arktyka jest obszarem o rosnącym znaczeniu strategicznym dla UE, a także stanowi przykład skutecznej współpracy międzynarodowej, która przyczynia się do zachowania pokoju i bezpieczeństwa w regionie. Służby Komisji i ESDZ są zdania, iż współpraca na tym obszarze powinna opierać się na istniejących międzynarodowych ramach prawnych, w szczególności Konwencji Narodów Zjednoczonych o prawie morza.

Należy wyjaśnić, że wniosek UE o przyznanie statusu obserwatora został przyjęty do rozpatrzenia. Biorąc pod uwagę wynik spotkania ministerialnego Rady Arktycznej w Kirunie, Komisja i ESDZ będzie nadal prowadzić sprawną współpracę z władzami kanadyjskimi mającą na celu rozstrzygnięcie kwestii stanowiącej źródło obaw, mianowicie wyłączenia spod zakazu stosowanego wobec obrotu wyrobami otrzymywanymi z fok w UE.

UE zwiększa swoje zaangażowanie we współpracę z partnerami w regionie Arktyki, tak by wspólnie podjąć wyzwanie, jakim jest ochrona środowiska naturalnego przy jednoczesnym zagwarantowaniu zrównoważonego rozwoju tego regionu. Rada Arktyczna jest głównym forum współpracy międzynarodowej w regionie. Zaangażowanie Danii, Szwecji i Finlandii, jako państw członkowskich Rady Arktycznej, oraz kolejnych siedmiu państw członkowskich UE, uczestniczących w charakterze obserwatorów, dodatkowo wspomaga realizację tych celów.

Komisja prowadzi dialog z państwami nadbrzeżnymi regionu arktycznego za pośrednictwem kontaktów na wysokim szczeblu, w tym na forum Zgromadzenia Ogólnego Organizacji Narodów Zjednoczonych w związku z zagadnieniami dotyczącymi prawa morza. Ponadto UE pozostaje zaangażowana w kwestie dotyczące regionu Arktyki w ramach odpowiednich gremiów wewnątrz ONZ i na arenie międzynarodowej skupiających się na kwestiach związanych z różnorodnością biologiczną, trwałymi zanieczyszczeniami organicznymi, morskimi obszarami chronionymi, rybołówstwem, żeglugą międzynarodową, normami ochrony środowiska oraz bezpieczeństwa morskiego.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005685/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — The EU's status within the Arctic Council

During the recent Arctic Council meeting held in Kiruna (14-15 May 2013), permanent observer status was granted to China, India, Italy, Japan, South Korea and Singapore. However the proposed mandate for the European Union was rejected, mainly due to reluctance on the part of Moscow, which has used geopolitical arguments to justify its position in the media. At the same time, the Russians have made clear that they wish to transform this structure into an inter-state organisation able to adopt legally binding international resolutions.

I should like to ask the Commission to comment on the following issues:

1. What is the EU's position on Arctic issues? In particular, do EU diplomats wish to transform this area into something similar to Antarctica, used only for peaceful means and covered by a ban on nuclear testing?

2. Are there any plans to hold in-depth talks with the Russian side in order to find positive solutions to the problem of the EU's status within the Arctic Council?

3. Is the current level of involvement by Member States (Sweden, Finland and Denmark) sufficient to implement the EU's goals in relation to the Arctic, or is broader support required?

4. Have EU diplomats recently taken any steps within the UN or its agencies with a view to boosting the EU's presence in the Arctic, and if so which?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(30 July 2013)

As set out in the Commission/HR Communication (JOIN (2012)19), the Arctic is an area of growing strategic importance for the EU and an example of successful international cooperation contributing to peace and security in the region. The Commission services and the EEAS are of the view that cooperation in this area should be based on existing international legal frameworks, notably the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas.

It should be clarified that the EU application for observer status was affirmatively received. Following the outcome of the Kiruna Arctic Council ministerial, the Commission and EEAS will continue to work expeditiously with the Canadian authorities on the outstanding issue of their concern, namely the exemption to the ban on trade in seal products in the EU.

The EU is stepping up its engagement with its Arctic partners to jointly meet the challenge of safeguarding the environment while ensuring the sustainable development of the Arctic region. The Arctic Council is the primary forum for international cooperation in the region.The contributions of Denmark, Sweden and Finland as member states of the Arctic Council and that of the other seven EU Member States, who are acting as observers, are complementary to achieving these goals.

The Commission has reached out in high level contacts to Arctic coastal states, including in the United Nations General Assembly in the areas of the Law of the Sea. Furthermore, the EU continues to be involved on Arctic issues within relevant UN and other international frameworks dealing with biodiversity, persistent organic pollutants, marine protected areas, fisheries, international navigation, environmental and maritime safety standards.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-005686/13
do Rady
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(21 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Propozycje zaostrzenia zasad swobodnego przepływu osób w UE

Z inicjatywy irlandzkiego przewodnictwa, podczas czerwcowego posiedzenia, unijni ministrowie spraw wewnętrznych rozpatrywać mają postulaty Niemiec, Wielkiej Brytanii, Holandii i Austrii, domagających się wprowadzenia ograniczeń swobodnego przemieszczania się i podejmowania pracy w krajach Wspólnoty. Z informacji medialnych wynika, że „Irlandia nadała sprawie wysoką rangę polityczną". Działania te oceniam jako sprzeczne z interesem europejskich obywateli.

W związku z powyższym proszę o ustosunkowanie się do następujących problemów:

1. Na podstawie jakich przesłanek wymienione kraje oficjalnie wnioskują o zaostrzenie zasad swobodnego przepływu obywateli w Unii Europejskiej?

2. Czy celem rządów ww. państw jest przywrócenie granic wewnętrznych we Wspólnocie?

3. Jak zainteresowanie kraje zamierzają (w obliczu postulowanego zaostrzenia przepisów) rozwiązać sytuację, w jakiej znaleźliby się obywatele pozostałych państw członkowskich, którzy podjęli pracę na ich terytorium, na podstawie dotychczasowych regulacji?

Odpowiedź
(11 września 2013 r.)

Swobodny przepływ osób to jedna z czterech podstawowych wolności UE, a zarazem jedno z najbardziej konkretnych praw przysługujących obywatelom UE ([1]). Ze względu na fakt, że rok 2013 to Europejski Rok Obywateli, swobodny przepływ i mobilność obywateli UE zasługują na szczególną uwagę.

Rada chciałaby na początku wyjaśnić, że do dnia 13 czerwca 2013 r. nie złożono żadnych formalnych wniosków w sprawie zaostrzenia przepisów regulujących swobodny przepływ osób w obrębie Unii Europejskiej.

Chodzi tu o dziedzinę, w której obowiązują już przepisy prawa wtórnego ([2]) i w odniesieniu do której prawo inicjatywy ustawodawczej ma jedynie Komisja. W związku z tym prezydencja nie może – czy to sama czy na wniosek państw członkowskich – podjąć żadnej inicjatywy w tym zakresie.

Rada potwierdza, że w dniu 23 kwietnia 2013 r. wymienione przez Pana Posła cztery państwa członkowskie skierowały do Komisji, prezydencji i państw członkowskich pismo, w którym pojawiły się kwestie związane ze swobodnym przepływem osób. Na wniosek wspomnianych czterech państw ministrowie zajęli się tym pismem w ramach dyskusji podczas obiadu w dniu 7 czerwca 2013 r. Rada ds. Wymiaru Sprawiedliwości i Spraw Wewnętrznych została poinformowana przez prezydencję o wynikach przeprowadzonej dyskusji.

Wszystkie państwa członkowskie zgodziły się, że swoboda przepływu osób to jedna z fundamentalnych wartości Unii Europejskiej. Nie poruszono kwestii dotyczących zaostrzenia przepisów czy przywrócenia kontroli granicznych.

Jak już wspomniano powyżej, mówimy tu o dziedzinie, w której już obowiązują przepisy prawa wtórnego i ugruntowane orzecznictwo, a przestrzeganie i wdrażanie przepisów kontrolowane jest przez Komisję. Przepisy unijne wyraźnie dopuszczają możliwość wprowadzania do prawa krajowego sankcji w przypadku nadużyć lub oszustw; każdy taki przypadek należy rozpatrywać odrębnie w ramach obowiązujących przepisów.

([1]) Artykuł 21 ust. 1 TFUE: „Każdy obywatel Unii ma prawo do swobodnego przemieszczania się i przebywania na terytorium państw członkowskich, z zastrzeżeniem ograniczeń i warunków ustanowionych w Traktatach i w środkach przyjętych w celu ich wykonania".

([2]) Dyrektywa 2004/38 w sprawie prawa obywateli Unii i członków ich rodzin do swobodnego przemieszczania się i pobytu na terytorium państw członkowskich, rozporządzenie 883/2004 w sprawie koordynacji systemów zabezpieczenia społecznego oraz rozporządzenie 492/2011 w sprawie swobodnego przepływu pracowników wewnątrz Unii.

Komisja została poproszona o przeanalizowanie – wraz z ekspertami z państw członkowskich –stanu wdrożenia przepisów dotyczących swobodnego przepływu osób oraz o przedstawienie na posiedzeniu Rady ds. Wymiaru Sprawiedliwości i Spraw Wewnętrznych w październiku 2013 r. sprawozdania okresowego, a następnie, w grudniu 2013 r., sprawozdania końcowego. W tym czasie Rada przeanalizuje przygotowane przez Komisję sprawozdanie na temat obywatelstwa, w którym poruszono niektóre z przedmiotowych kwestii.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005686/13
to the Council
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Proposals for tighter rules on the free movement of persons within the EU

On the Irish Presidency's initiative, restrictions on freedom of movement and freedom of labour movement within the Member States as proposed by Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Austria will be examined by the EU foreign affairs ministers at their June summit. It has been reported in the media that Ireland regards this issue as a top political priority. I believe that these measures are incompatible with the interests of European citizens.

I should therefore like to ask the Council to comment on the following issues:

1. On what grounds will the above Member States submit their official request for tighter rules on the free movement of citizens within the European Union?

2. Do the governments of these countries wish to reinstate internal borders within the EU?

3. If tighter rules were introduced as proposed, how would the countries in question deal with the problems that would arise in relation to citizens of other Member States already working within their borders under the present regulations?

Reply
(11 September 2013)

The free movement of people is one of the four basic freedoms of the EU, and one of the most tangible rights that EU citizens enjoy ([1]). Given that 2013 is the European Year of Citizens, free movement and mobility of EU citizens deserve special attention.

The Council would like to clarify from the outset that as of 13 June 2013 there have been no formal proposals for tighter rules on the free movement of persons within the European Union.

This concerns an area where there is already secondary legislation ([2]) in place and the Commission has the sole right of initiative. Accordingly, the Presidency cannot take any initiative, either on its own or upon request from the Member States.

The Council acknowledges that on 23 April 2013 the four Member States quoted by the Honourable Member of the Parliament sent a letter to the Commission, the Presidency and fellow Member States raising issues related to the free movement of persons. This letter was, at the request of these Member States, examined by the Ministers at their lunch discussions on 7 June 2013. The JHA Council was briefed by the Presidency about the outcome of the Ministers' lunch.

All Member States agreed that the free movement of persons was a core value of the European Union. There was no discussion about tighter rules or about reinstating border controls.

As already mentioned above, this concerns an area where there is already secondary EU legislation and solid case law in place, with the Commission monitoring compliance and implementation. EU legislation explicitly allows national law to provide for sanctions in case of abuse or fraud and all such cases should be tackled in that context on a case by case basis and within the existing legal framework.

The Commission was asked to look at the implementation of free movement rules together with Member States' experts and to present an interim report to the Justice and Home Affairs Council in October 2013 and a final report in December 2013. In parallel, the Citizenship Report presented by the Commission, which deals with some of these issues, will be examined in the Council.

([1]) Article 21(1) TFEU 'Every citizen of the Union shall have the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States, subject to the limitations and conditions laid down in the Treaties and by the measures adopted to give them effect.'.

([2]) Directive 2004/38 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States, Regulation 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems and Regulation 492/2011 on freedom of movement of workers within the Union.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-005687/13
do Komisji
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(21 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Propozycje zaostrzenia zasad swobodnego przepływu osób w UE

Z inicjatywy irlandzkiego przewodnictwa, podczas czerwcowego posiedzenia, unijni ministrowie spraw wewnętrznych rozpatrywać mają postulaty Niemiec, Wielkiej Brytanii, Holandii i Austrii, domagających się wprowadzenia ograniczeń swobodnego przemieszczania się i podejmowania pracy w krajach Wspólnoty. Rządy powyższych krajów swoje posunięcie tłumaczą problemami związanymi z wyłudzeniami świadczeń socjalnych oraz fikcyjnymi małżeństwami. W mojej opinii jest to jednak działanie zmierzające do przywrócenia granic pomiędzy państwami członkowskimi. Stanowi zatem całkowite zaprzeczenie jednej z naczelnych i zarazem najbardziej kluczowych dla obywateli reguł, w oparciu o które funkcjonuje Unia Europejska.

Proszę o udzielenie odpowiedzi na następujące pytania:

1. Czy Komisja podziela stanowisko wyżej wymienionych krajów w przedmiotowej sprawie? Jeżeli nie, czy Komisja przedstawi własny pogląd na sprawę i podejmie działania celem zablokowania tak niekorzystniej dla UE inicjatywy części państw członkowskich?

2. Czy w obecnej chwili (w instytucjach podległych Komisji) prowadzone są jakiekolwiek czynności zmierzające do opracowania regulacji, których efektem byłyby zmiany zasad swobodnego przepływu obywateli w UE? Jeżeli tak, proszę o informacje na temat stopnia ich zaawansowania.

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Viviane Reding w imieniu Komisji
(11 lipca 2013 r.)

Prawo do swobodnego przepływu jest jednym z najważniejszych i najcenniejszych praw w Unii ustanowionych Traktatami oraz dyrektywą UE dotyczącą swobodnego przepływu z 2004 r. Komisja realizuje zatem politykę ścisłego egzekwowania praw obywateli i stale wzywa państwa członkowskie do przestrzegania odnośnych przepisów UE.

Komisja jest zdania, że przepisy prawa unijnego zapewniają już dostateczne zabezpieczenia gwarantujące, że obywatele UE nie będą stanowili nieuzasadnionego obciążenia finansowego dla przyjmujących państw członkowskich, a więc zmiany w tym zakresie nie są potrzebne.

W odpowiedzi na obawy niektórych ministrów spraw wewnętrznych, wyrażone podczas posiedzenia Rady ds. Wymiaru Sprawiedliwości i Spraw Wewnętrznych (WSiSW) w czerwcu 2013 r., w kwestii wdrażania w terenie przepisów prawa UE dotyczących swobodnego przepływu Komisja wyraźnie stwierdziła, że za najważniejszą kwestię uważa pełne i prawidłowe wdrożenie przepisów o swobodnym przepływie przez wszystkie państwa członkowskie. Przypominając, że obowiązujące przepisy UE pozwalają zapobiegać nadużyciom, Komisja podkreśliła, że potrzebne są fakty i liczby dotyczące domniemanego zjawiska turystyki zasiłkowej, i zaproponowała, że zorganizuje spotkanie ekspertów z tej dziedziny z poszczególnych państw członkowskich, podczas którego będą oni mogli wyjaśnić poruszone problemy.

Utworzona pod przewodnictwem Komisji grupa ekspertów ds. swobodnego przepływu osób otrzymała za zadanie monitorowanie tych kwestii, a wyniki jej prac zostaną przedstawione Radzie ds. WSiSW w październiku br.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005687/13
to the Commission
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Proposals for tighter rules on the free movement of persons within the EU

On the Irish Presidency's initiative, restrictions on freedom of movement and freedom of labour movement within the Member States as proposed by Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Austria will be examined by the EU foreign affairs ministers at their June summit. The governments of these countries explain this move by reference to problems relating to benefit fraud and sham marriages. In my opinion, however, the real aim is to reinstate the borders between the Member States. This runs completely counter to one of the chief principles underlying the functioning of the European Union, and one which is at the same time of overriding significance for citizens.

1. Does the Commission subscribe to the position of the above countries on this matter? If not, can the Commission outline its own views on the matter and take steps to block an initiative by a small number of Member States which would be extremely detrimental to the EU as a whole?

2. Are the Commission institutions taking any steps at present to draft regulations which would ultimately change the rules governing the free movement of citizens within the EU? If so, can the Commission please state what progress has been made in this area?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(11 July 2013)

Free movement is one of the most important and most cherished EU rights laid down in the Treaties and in the EU's 2004 Free Movement Directive. The Commission therefore pursues a rigorous policy of enforcement of citizen's rights and continues to call on Member States to ensure compliance with the relevant EU rules.

The Commission considers that EC law already provides for sufficient safeguards to avoid that EU citizens become unreasonable financial burdens for host Member States and therefore does not need to be changed.

In response to concerns expressed by some Interior Ministers at the June 2013 Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council relating to the implementation of EC law on free movement on the ground, the Commission made clear that its primary concern is that free movement rules are fully and correctly implemented by all Member States. Recalling that existing EU rules allow for the prevention of abuses it stressed that facts and figures about alleged phenomena of 'benefit tourism' are needed and proposed to bring together the relevant experts from the Member States for them to clarify the issues raised.

The Commission led expert group on Free Movement of persons was tasked to ensure follow-up and the Commission will report to the JHA Council in October this year accordingly.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-005688/13
Komisi
Pavel Poc (S&D)
(21. května 2013)

Předmět: Invazní cizí druhy v Evropské unii – bolševník velkolepý

Bolševník velkolepý, *Heracleum mantegazzianum*, byl v Komisí financovaném projektu DAISIE označen jako jeden ze 100 nejhorších invazních cizích druhů v Evropě. Bolševník velkolepý vytváří mízu, která může zvyšovat citlivost lidské pokožky na ultrafialové záření a vést k těžkým kožním reakcím s velmi bolestivými puchýři. Tato rostlina je rovněž silný konkurent, který vytváří porosty zastoupené téměř výhradně touto rostlinou, a brání tak výskytu původní vegetace a překáží rekreačnímu využití krajiny. V České republice se bolševník velkolepý šíří rychle. Nyní se rozšiřuje přes české hranice do sousedních krajů Německa a vyskytuje se rovněž v Belgii a dalších členských státech. Prozatím však neexistuje žádný jednotný nebo společný postup, který by umožnil vyhubit tuto nebezpečnou a jedovatou rostlinu, která může být lidskému zdraví velmi škodlivá.

Může prosím Komise potvrdit, že její legislativní návrhy týkající se invazních cizích druhů stanoví obecné pokyny pro celou EU k vypořádání se s invazními cizími druhy rostlin, mezi něž se řadí i bolševník velkolepý, a informovat o tom, kdy budou tyto návrhy zveřejněny?

Odpověď pana Potočnika jménem Komise
(25. června 2013)

Jak je nastíněno ve sdělení o strategii EU v oblasti biologické rozmanitosti do roku 2020 ([1]), připravuje Komise legislativní návrh, který se týká prevence a řízení zanesení a rozšiřování nepůvodních invazních druhů, jako je bolševník velkolepý. V rámci této přípravy patří mezi posuzované aspekty mimo jiné včasné varování a rychlá reakce, jakož i výměna informací mezi členskými státy pro zajištění pohotové a koordinované činnosti.

([1]) KOM(2011) 244 v konečném znění.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005688/13
to the Commission
Pavel Poc (S&D)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Invasive alien species in the European Union — Giant hogweed

Giant hogweed, *Heracleum mantegazzianum*, has been identified as one of the 100 worst invasive alien species in Europe by the Commission-funded DAISIE project. Giant hogweed produces a sap which can sensitise human skin to ultraviolet light, leading to severe and extremely painful blisters. The plant is also a vigorous competitor, producing almost pure stands which exclude native vegetation and hindering recreational use of the landscape. In the Czech Republic, Giant hogweed has been spreading rapidly. It has now spread across the Czech border into neighbouring regions of Germany, and is also present in Belgium and other Member States. Nevertheless, there is no coordinated or common approach to eradicating this dangerous and poisonous plant, which can be very harmful to human health.

Can the Commission please confirm that its legislative proposals on invasive alien species will establish common EU-wide guidelines for tackling invasive alien plant species such as Giant hogweed, and advise when these proposals will be published?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(25 June 2013)

As outlined in the communication on an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 ([1]), the Commission is developing a legislative proposal for the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species, such as giant hogweed. Issues considered in the preparation include, among others, early warning and rapid response, as well as exchange of information between Member States to ensure swift and coordinated action.

([1]) COM(2011)244 final.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-005689/13
do Komisji
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(21 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Nasilające się represje wobec Alesia Bialackiego

Nasilają się więzienne represje wobec Alesia Bialackiego, dyrektora Centrum Obrony Praw Człowieka „Wiosna". Ostatnio został pozbawiony możliwości otrzymywania paczek żywnościowych na pół roku.

W zeszłym roku karano uwięzionego Alesia Bialackiego co najmniej cztery razy, w tym za wyniesienie kawałka chleba ze stołówki.

Czy Komisja może podjąć jakieś działania motywujące władze Białorusi do zaniechania kolejnych represji wobec Alesia Bialackiego, jak i innych białoruskich więźniów politycznych?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(11 lipca 2013 r.)

Natychmiastowe i bezwarunkowe uwolnienie oraz rehabilitacja wszystkich więźniów politycznych w tym Alesia Bialackiego jest priorytetem politycznym Unii. We wszystkich swoich działaniach, oświadczeniach i kontaktach dyplomatycznych dotyczących tych zagadnień UE nieustannie podnosi kwestię więźniów politycznych, w tym warunków ich przetrzymywania i stanu ich zdrowia.

Od czasu wyborów prezydenckich w 2010 r. we wszystkich konkluzjach Rada wzywała władze białoruskie do natychmiastowego uwolnienia i oczyszczenia z zarzutów wszystkich więźniów politycznych.

Delegatura UE w Mińsku nieustannie zwraca uwagę władz białoruskich na kwestię tych więźniów i wielokrotnie składała wnioski w sprawie odwiedzania ich w więzieniu. Więźniowie polityczni oraz ogólnie rzecz biorąc ofiary represji zawsze były i są wspierane przez Unię.

W celu podtrzymania presji politycznej, wobec niektórych osób i podmiotów pozostają w mocy unijne środki ograniczające.

UE nie zmieni obecnej polityki wobec Białorusi zanim wszyscy więźniowie polityczni nie zostaną uwolnieni, a ich prawa obywatelskie i polityczne przywrócone.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005689/13
to the Commission
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Increasing repression against Ales Bialiatski

Ales Bialiatski, head of the Viasna Human Rights Centre, is being subjected to increased repression during his prison sentence. He was recently banned from receiving food parcels for six months.

He was punished in prison at least four times last year, on one occasion for taking a slice of bread out of the dining room.

Can the Commission do anything to encourage the Belarusian authorities to refrain from their repeated attempts to repress Ales Bialiatski and the other Belarusian political prisoners?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(11 July 2013)

The immediate and unconditional release and rehabilitation of all political prisoners, including Ales Bialiatski, is a political priority for the EU. The EU consistently raises the issue of the political prisoners, including the conditions under which they are imprisoned and their state of health, in all relevant actions, statements and diplomatic contacts.

All Council Conclusions since the 2010 presidential elections, have urged the Belarusian authorities to immediately release and rehabilitate all political prisoners.

The EU Delegation in Minsk keeps engaging the Belarusian authorities on the issue of political prisoners and has repeatedly submitted requests to visit them in prison. Political prisoners, and in general victims of repression, have been and continue to be supported by the EU.

In order to maintain political pressure, EU restrictive measures against a number of persons and entities remain in place.

The EU will not reconsider its current policies towards Belarus before all political prisoners are released and their civil and political rights reinstated.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005690/13
à la Commission
Marie-Christine Vergiat (GUE/NGL)
(21 mai 2013)

Objet: Marketing via les appareils mobiles

Il a récemment été rapporté que la société Heineken, ainsi que d'autres producteurs d'alcool, ont de plus en plus recours à des médias sociaux (Google, Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, Vine, etc.) pour développer en temps réel des outils de marketing sophistiqués visant à cibler les consommateurs sur les appareils mobiles, les tablettes, etc.

Par exemple, un aspect de cette nouvelle stratégie de la société consiste à mettre au point des expériences en temps réel dites de «second écran», ce qui pourrait être un moyen pour Heineken de viser les consommateurs regardant un «événement parrainé», tel qu'un match de la Ligue des champions ou l'Ultra Music Festival. En outre, la société se servira des applications Facebook sur les appareils mobiles pour des marques comme le cidre Strongbow.

1. La Commission ne craint-elle pas que de telles techniques de marketing intrusives et omniprésentes puissent atteindre le jeune public?

2. Quelles sont les garanties et les initiatives efficaces que la Commission peut prévoir afin de s'assurer que les jeunes ne soient pas ciblés par le marketing de l'alcool?

Réponse donnée par M. Mimica au nom de la Commission
(23 juillet 2013)

La protection des enfants et des adolescents est l'une des priorités de la «stratégie de l'Union européenne pour aider les États membres à réduire les dommages liés à l'alcool» ([1]). Le Forum européen «Alcool et santé ([2])» comporte plusieurs engagements pour l'autorégulation de la commercialisation, notamment via de nouveaux médias sociaux.

La société Heineken est membre de ce forum et s'est engagée à réduire l'exposition des jeunes aux techniques de marketing concernant l'alcool. Heineken est également partie prenante du pacte ([3]) pour une commercialisation responsable, engagement pris par les principaux producteurs et annonceurs d'alcool de ne pas viser les jeunes par le biais des médias et de ne pas faire de la publicité pour de l'alcool lorsque les mineurs représentent plus de 30 % du taux d'audience. Un rapport sur l'application de cet engagement sera bientôt terminé et mis à la disposition du public.

La Commission a estimé que les nouvelles méthodes de commercialisation via les médias sociaux, notamment ceux destinés aux enfants et aux mineurs, constituent l'un des défis qui nécessitent un examen plus approfondi dans le cadre de ses actions visant à remédier aux nouvelles vulnérabilités des consommateurs ([4]). Cet été, la Commission lancera une étude sur les pratiques de commercialisation spécifiques ciblant les enfants et les jeunes adolescents. Cette étude s'efforcera de déterminer si des mesures supplémentaires sont nécessaires pour assurer une protection adéquate des jeunes consommateurs, comme une mise à jour des orientations pour la mise en œuvre et l'application de la directive 2005/29/CE relative aux pratiques commerciales déloyales ([5]). Les résultats de cette étude sont attendus pour la fin de l'année 2014.

([1]) COM(2006) 625 final du 24.10.2006.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/forum/index_fr.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/eahf/detailsForm.html?submissionNumber=1334570650538-1514.
([4]) Document de travail interne sur «les aspects de l'amélioration des connaissances liés à l'autonomisation du consommateur 2012-2014», SWD(2012) 235 final du 19.7.2012.
([5]) Document de travail interne SEC(2009) 1666 du 3.12.2009 (en anglais uniquement).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005690/13
to the Commission
Marie-Christine Vergiat (GUE/NGL)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Marketing using mobile devices

According to recent reports, Heineken and other drinks manufacturers are increasingly making use of social media (Google, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Vine, etc.) to develop sophisticated, real-time marketing tools that target consumers via their mobile devices and tablets.

One aspect of Heineken's new strategy is to create real-time 'second-screen' experiences, which could be a way to target consumers while they are watching a 'sponsored event', such as a Champions League match or the Ultra Music Festival. In addition, the company will use Facebook applications on mobile devices to promote brands such as Strongbow cider.

1. Is the Commission not concerned that intrusive and pervasive marketing techniques such as these might influence young people?

2. What effective safeguards and measures can the Commission introduce to ensure that young people are not targeted by drinks marketing campaigns?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(23 July 2013)

The protection of children and adolescents is one of the priorities of the 'Strategy of the EU to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related damage' ([1]). The 'EU Alcohol and Health Forum ([2])' includes several commitments for self-regulation of marketing, including through new social media.

The Heineken company is a member of this Forum, and has engaged itself to reduce the exposure of young people to alcohol marketing. Heineken is also part of the Pact ([3]) for responsible marketing, a commitment by the main alcohol producers and advertisers not to target young people through the media and not to advertise alcoholic products when minors constitute more than 30% of the audience. A report monitoring this commitment will shortly be completed and publicly available.

The Commission has identified new marketing methods through social media, and in particular those targeting children and minors, as one of the challenges requiring further research within the framework of its actions that aim to respond to emerging consumer vulnerabilities ([4]). This summer, the Commission will launch a study about such specific marketing practices targeting children and young adolescents. This study will try to determine if additional measures are necessary to ensure adequate protection of young consumers, such as an update of the 'Guidance on the implementation/application of Directive 2005/29 on unfair commercial practices' ([5]). The results of this study are expected by the end of 2014.

([1]) COM(2006) 625 final of 24.10.2006.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/forum/index_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/eahf/detailsForm.html?submissionNumber=1334570650538-1514
([4]) Staff Working Document 'Knowledge Enhancing Aspect of Consumer Empowerment 2012-2014', SWD (2012) 235 final of 19.7.2012.
([5]) Staff Working Document SEC(2009) 1666 of 3.12.2009.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005691/13
to the Commission
David Campbell Bannerman (ECR)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: EU staff arrests

In its answer to my question 'Can the Commission state the number of occasions on which EU staff have been arrested for each year since 2000, indicating the country of arrest and the charges brought?', the Commission responded by saying that 'The Commission does not have centralised data regarding EU staff on this issue. The Commission would point out that the definition of arrest varies from one Member State to another.'

1. Can the Commission indicate on how many occasions a Commission official has been held in a cell?

2. Can the Commission indicate on how many occasions a Commission official has been charged?

3. Can the Commission indicate on how many occasions a Commission official has been read his rights?

4. Can the Commission indicate on how many occasions a Commission official has been prosecuted?

5. Can the Commission indicate on how many occasions a Commission official has been required to meet with a defence lawyer?

6. Can the Commission indicate on how many occasions a Commission official has been subject to a request by a foreign judiciary for the suspension of their diplomatic immunity?

7. Can the Commission indicate on how many occasions a Commission official has been convicted?

8. Can the Commission indicate on how many occasions a Commission official has been subpoena'd?

9. Can the Commission indicate on how many occasions a Commission official has been sued, and what damages the Commission has paid out annually?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

The Commission will attempt to answer the questions tabled by the Honourable Member as follows, while emphasising the differences which exist in criminal procedure between the Member States with respect to the concepts referred to in those questions:

1. Since 2010, the Commission has been informed of two members of its staff having been held in police custody.

2. Since 2010, the Commission has been informed of three members of its staff having been charged with criminal offences.

3. The Commission is not aware of any instances of a member of its staff having had their rights read to them as part of a police or judicial investigation.

4. Since 2010, the Commission has been informed of three members of its staff having been prosecuted for criminal offences.

5. The Commission is not aware of any instances of a member of its staff having been asked to choose a defence lawyer as part of a judicial investigation.

6. Since 2010, the Commission has received six requests for suspension of the immunity from legal process from which its staff benefit under Protocol No 7 on the Privileges and Immunities of the European Union.

7. Since 2010, one member of the Commission's staff has been convicted of a criminal offence.

8. The Commission is unable to disclose the number of members of its staff who have been subpoenaed.

9. Since 2010, the Commission has not had to pay any damages as part of court proceedings involving a member of its staff.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-005692/13
do Komisji
Bogdan Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz (PPE) oraz Artur Zasada (PPE)
(21 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Zmiana przepisów dotyczących dostępu do rynku transportu drogowego

Od dnia 4 grudnia 2011 r. w UE obowiązują trzy prawnie wiążące rozporządzenia w dziedzinie rynku transportu drogowego: (WE) nr 1071/2009, (WE) nr 1072/2009 i (WE) nr 1073/2009. Te trzy rozporządzenia tworzą tzw. „pakiet drogowy", który konsoliduje przepisy w dziedzinie transportu drogowego.

W programie prac na rok 2013 r. Komisja zapowiedziała, że opublikuje wniosek ustawodawczy („Wewnętrzny ruch drogowy – dostęp do rynku przewozów drogowych i dostęp do zawodu przewoźnika drogowego"), aby zwiększyć efektywność gospodarczą i środowiskową w drogowym transporcie towarowym poprzez dalsze znoszenie ograniczeń w zakresie kabotażu.

W trakcie wymiany poglądów w komisji TRAN na posiedzeniu w dniu 23 kwietnia 2013 r. posłowie wyrazili szczególne zaniepokojenie ujednoliceniem w UE różnych przepisów socjalnych poszczególnych państw członkowskich.

W związku z tym prosimy Komisję, aby wyjaśniła sformułowanie „ujednolicenie przepisów socjalnych", pamiętając o tym, że dyrektywa 96/71/WE dotycząca delegowania pracowników w ramach świadczenia usług jest prawnie wiążąca.

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Siima Kallasa w imieniu Komisji
(9 lipca 2013 r.)

Komisja przeprowadza obecnie ocenę sytuacji rynku UE przewozów drogowych, w tym warunków socjalnych w sektorze. Podejmowane są wysiłki na rzecz osiągnięcia zrównoważonego poziomu ochrony socjalnej. Dyrektywa 96/71/WE ([1]) jest jednym z instrumentów służących osiągnięciu tego celu. Jak stwierdzono w motywie 17 rozporządzenia (WE) nr 1072/2009 dotyczącego dostępu do rynku przewozów drogowych przepisy wspomnianej dyrektywy mają zastosowanie do przewoźników wykonujących przewozy kabotażowe w rozumieniu wspomnianego rozporządzenia. W konsekwencji pewna liczba kierowców wykonujących przewozy kabotażowe może nie być objęta zakresem dyrektywy. Obecnie prowadzone są dyskusje nad wnioskiem dotyczącym dyrektywy w sprawie egzekwowania dyrektywy 96/71/WE ([2]).

W tym kontekście Komisja rozważa możliwe rozwiązania mające na celu zapewnienie uproszczenia i lepszego egzekwowania istniejących przepisów.

([1]) Dyrektywa 96/71/WE Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady z dnia 16 grudnia 1996 r. dotycząca delegowania pracowników w ramach świadczenia usług, Dz.U. L 18 z 21.1.1997.

([2]) Wniosek w sprawie dyrektywy dotyczącej egzekwowania przepisów mających zastosowanie do delegowania pracowników w ramach świadczenia usług: COM(2012) 131.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005692/13
to the Commission
Bogdan Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz (PPE) and Artur Zasada (PPE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Review of rules on access to the road haulage market

Since 4 December 2011 three regulations in the field of road transport — (EC) No 1071/2009, (EC) No 1072/2009 and (EC) No 1073/2009 — have been legally binding in the EU. These three regulations make up the so-called 'road package', which consolidates the rules on road transport.

In its Work Programme for 2013, the Commission announced the publication of a legislative proposal ('Internal Road Market — Access to the road haulage market and access to occupation of road transport operator') to improve the economic and environmental efficiency of road freight transport by further lifting the restrictions on cabotage.

In an exchange of views at a TRAN Committee meeting on 23 April 2013, Members expressed particular concern over the EU harmonisation of the different social rules of Member States.

This being case, we would like to ask the Commission to explain the wording 'the harmonisation of social rules', bearing in mind that directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services is legally binding.

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

The Commission is currently assessing the situation of the EU road haulage market, including the social conditions in the sector. Efforts are ongoing to achieve a balanced level of social protection. Directive 96/71/EC ([1]) is one of the instruments relevant to achieving this aim. As stated in Recital 17 of Regulation (EC) No 1072/2009 on access to the road haulage market, this directive applies to transport undertakings performing a cabotage operation within the meaning of the regulation.. It follows that a certain number of drivers carrying out cabotage may fall outside the directive's scope. Discussions on the proposal for a directive on the Enforcement of Directive 96/71/EC ([2]) are also ongoing.

Against this background, the Commission is considering possible options to ensure the simplification and improved enforcement of the existing rules.

([1]) Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1996 concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services, OJ L 018, 21.1.1997.

([2]) Proposal for Directive concerning the enforcement of the provision applicable to the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services — COM(2012) 131.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005694/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(21 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Commemorazione del centenario della Grande Guerra sul Monte Grappa

Il Monte Grappa, cima più alta dell'omonimo massiccio delle Prealpi Venete situato al confine tra le province di Vicenza, Treviso e Belluno, è ben noto nella memoria collettiva di tutto il mondo per essere stato il teatro di scontri decisivi legati alla Prima e alla Seconda guerra mondiale.

A testimonianza di questi fatti il Monte Grappa ospita uno dei principali ossari della Prima guerra mondiale, il Sacrario militare di Cima Grappa, che contiene i resti di 22.910 soldati italiani, austriaci, slovacchi, croati, boemi e di altre nazionalità: esso è dunque il luogo simbolo delle atrocità sofferte da tanti popoli europei a causa della Grande Guerra.

Il progetto d'integrazione europea è stato avviato per assicurare pace e stabilità e evitare il ripetersi degli orrori legati ai conflitti mondiali e questo suo mandato è stato ribadito e rafforzato con l'attribuzione all'Unione europea del Premio Nobel per la pace lo scorso dicembre 2012.

La necessità di continuare a preservare la memoria storica della Prima e della Seconda guerra mondiale per mantenere vivo e presente nelle generazioni future il ricordo di avvenimenti lontani nel tempo ed evitare che possano ripetersi giustifica l'organizzazione da parte di numerosi enti locali veneti di diverse iniziative di commemorazione previste tra il 2015 e il 2018.

Posto che per itinerario culturale europeo si intende generalmente un percorso che si organizza intorno a temi di interesse storico, artistico o sociale europeo sia in ragione del tracciato geografico dell'itinerario sia in funzione del suo contenuto e del suo significato, può la Commissione, in occasione del centenario della Grande Guerra far sapere se:

1. ritiene di procedere, insieme con il Consiglio d'Europa, alla creazione di un itinerario culturale europeo dedicato ai luoghi della Grande Guerra;

2. ha valutato la possibilità di attivarsi per sostenere gli enti locali e coinvolgere tutti gli Stati membri nelle iniziative di commemorazione che si svolgeranno sul Monte Grappa?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(12 luglio 2013)

1. La Commissione non prevede di istituire, congiuntamente al Consiglio d'Europa, un itinerario culturale europeo dedicato ai luoghi della Grande guerra.

2. Per quanto attiene al finanziamento di progetti commemorativi della prima e della seconda guerra mondiale, la Commissione riconosce l'importanza di mantenere viva la memoria nella proposta di regolamento che istituisce il programma «L'Europa per i cittadini» per il periodo 2014-2020. La proposta sta attualmente seguendo l'iter legislativo di adozione. La sua portata sarà ampliata ai momenti decisivi della storia europea moderna, compresa la prima guerra mondiale, aumentando dal 4 % al 20 % la quota del bilancio complessivo del programma, destinata alle iniziative di commemorazione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005694/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Commemoration on Monte Grappa of the centenary of the Great War

Monte Grappa, the highest peak of the Grappa massif in the Venetian Prealps, located at the point where the provinces of Vicenza, Treviso and Belluno meet, is famous around the world as being the battleground of decisive encounters in the First and Second World Wars.

To mark these events, Monte Grappa is home to one of the most important ossuaries of the First World War, the Cima Grappa war memorial, which holds the remains of 22 910 Italian, Austrian, Slovak, Croatian and Bohemian soldiers, among others. It is therefore a symbol of the atrocities inflicted on so many European peoples as a result of the Great War.

The project of European integration was started to bring about peace and stability and to prevent a repetition of the horrors of global conflicts, and its mandate was reaffirmed and reinforced when the European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in December 2012.

The need to continue to preserve the historic memory of the First and Second World Wars, to keep the memory of events that happened long ago alive in the mind of future generations and to stop them happening again, has led a number of local authorities in the Veneto region to plan several commemorative events to be held between 2015 and 2018.

A European cultural itinerary generally means a route arranged around issues of European historic, artistic or social interest, in terms of both the itinerary's geographic route and its content and meaning. On the occasion of the centenary of the Great War:

1. Is the Commission planning to set up, together with the Council of Europe, a European cultural itinerary dedicated to Great War sites?

2. Has it considered the possibility of supporting local authorities and involving all Member States in the commemorations to be held on Monte Grappa?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

1. The Commission is not planning to set up, together with the Council of Europe, a European cultural itinerary dedicated to Great War sites.

2. With regards to funding projects commemorating the First and Second World Wars, the Commission acknowledges the importance of remembrance in the proposal for a regulation establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020. The proposal is currently in the legislative process of adoption. It will broaden the focus of remembrance to defining moments in modern European history, including the First World War, and increase the share of remembrance actions from 4% to 20% of the total programme budget.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005695/13
to the Commission
Phil Bennion (ALDE)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Animal welfare in Serbia

Allegations of cruelty at animal shelters in Serbia have been brought to my attention. I have been informed of cruelty at shelters throughout the country, such as in Požega, where it has been alleged that dogs are kept indoors, starved, beaten and injected with T61 with no proper sedatives or preparation.

Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union requires Member States to pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals. In light of Serbia's candidate status, are such allegations known to the Commission? If so, has the Commission taken any action to verify them?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

In line with Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the European Commission attaches great importance to animal welfare. A considerable body of Union legislation has already been adopted for the protection of animal welfare, which however does not concern the protection of stray animals.

In relation to Serbia, the management of animal shelters and populations of stray animals by the national competent authorities, remain under the remit of the Serbian government and is as such not covered by the accession process.

Nevertheless, the Serbian government has informed the Commission that, following several complaints regarding the situation in dog shelters in Pozega, the Serbian Veterinary Directorate carried out an official control on 9 May 2013. Following this control it was concluded that the shelter satisfied all general and specific conditions according to the Serbian legislation on animal welfare.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005696/13
an den Rat
Cornelia Ernst (GUE/NGL)
(21. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: Einhaltung des Visa-Kodex durch die Mitgliedstaaten

1. Inwieweit berücksichtigen nach Kenntnis des Rates die Mitgliedstaaten das Visa-Handbuch (vgl. auch Beschluss der Europäischen Kommission vom 19. März 2010 über ein Visa-Handbuch) als verbindliche bzw. als nur unverbindliche Vorgabe und wie ist die Position des Rates hierzu?

2. Wie bewertet der Rat die Schengen-Zusammenarbeit in der Visaprüfung und -erteilung vor Ort? In welchem Umfang gibt es z. B. gemeinsame Antragsstellen, gemeinsame Listen über vorzulegende Dokumente, anerkannte Versicherungspolicen usw.?

3. Inwieweit gibt es Probleme infolge einer unterschiedlichen Visapraxis, die auf unterschiedlicher Auslegung und Anwendung der Vorgaben des Visa-Kodex durch die einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten beruht?

4. Welchen Rechtsänderungsbedarf sieht der Rat bezüglich des Visa-Kodex?

5. Ist es nach Auffassung des Rates mit dem Visa-Kodex bzw. dem Visa-Handbuch vereinbar, wenn nationale Gerichte in einem Rechtsstreitverfahren den Anspruch auf Erteilung eines Visas mit der Begründung ablehnen, es habe zum Zeitpunkt der gerichtlichen Entscheidung keine gültige Reisekrankenversicherung vorgelegen, obwohl diese Bedingung nach einer ansonsten positiven gerichtlichen Entscheidung leicht hätte erfüllt werden können?

6. Welche Kenntnisse hat der Rat bezüglich der Anwendung des „Handbuchs für die Organisation der Visumstellen und die Schengen-Zusammenarbeit vor Ort“ (Beschluss vom 11.6.2010)?

Antwort
(11. September 2013)

Die Punkte, auf die die Frau Abgeordnete verweist, betreffen die Umsetzung des Visakodex durch die Mitgliedstaaten. Der Rat hat keinen Überblick darüber, wie die Mitgliedstaaten die Rechtsvorschriften der Union im Einzelnen umsetzen, und es ist auch nicht Aufgabe des Rates, Rechtsvorschriften des EU-Rechts auszulegen.

Es ist Aufgabe der Kommission als Hüterin der Verträge, die Anwendung des Unionsrechts durch die Mitgliedstaaten zu überwachen. Daher wird die Frau Abgeordnete gebeten, ihre Anfrage an die Kommission zu richten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005696/13
to the Council
Cornelia Ernst (GUE/NGL)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Member States' compliance with the Visa Code

1. As far as the Council is aware, to what extent do the Member States comply with the Visa Handbook (see also the Commission's Decision of 19 March 2010 establishing the visa handbook) as a binding or non-binding requirement and what is the Council's position on this?

2. How does the Council assess Schengen cooperation when it comes to the vetting and issuing of visas at local level? For example, to what extent are there common application centres, joint lists of documents to be submitted, approved insurance policies etc.?

3. What problems have been encountered in connection with different visa practices as a result of the different interpretation and application of the requirements of the Visa Code by the individual Member States?

4. Does the Council believe that any legislative changes are needed in relation to the Visa Code?

5. Does the Council regard it as compatible with the Visa Code or the Visa Handbook if national courts reject a visa application in a legal dispute on the grounds that the applicant did not have valid travel medical insurance at the time of the judicial decision, even though this requirement could easily have been met following an otherwise positive court ruling?

6. What information does the Council have concerning the application of the Handbook for the organisation of visa sections and local Schengen cooperation (Decision of 11 June 2010)?

Reply
(11 September 2013)

The issues to which the Honourable Member refers concern the implementation of the Visa Code by the Member States. The Council is not informed on the detailed implementation of Union legislation by Member States and it is not for the Council to interpret legal provisions of EC law.

The Commission, as guardian of the Treaties, is responsible for overseeing Member States' application of Union law. Consequently, the Honourable Member is invited to put this question to the Commission.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005697/13
an die Kommission
Cornelia Ernst (GUE/NGL)
(21. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: Einhaltung des Visa-Kodex durch die Mitgliedstaaten

1. In welcher Weise überprüft die Kommission die Einhaltung des EU-Visa-Kodex durch die Mitgliedstaaten, und welche Informationen oder Hinweise hat sie dazu, in welchen Ländern gegen welche Bestimmungen des Visa-Kodex verstoßen wird?

2. Wie steht es insbesondere um die Einhaltung der 14- bzw. 15-tägigen Warte- bzw. Bearbeitungsfrist im Visumverfahren (Art. 9 Abs. 2 und Art. 23 Abs. 1), um den Einsatz externer Dienstleister nur als letztes Mittel (Art. 40 Abs. 3) und bei Gewährleistung des Verfahrens direkt in den Visastellen (Art. 17 Abs. 5) und um die Gewährleistungspflicht in Bezug auf geeignete Kräfte in ausreichender Zahl für ein gutes Dienstleistungsangebot (Art. 38 Abs. 1) in der Praxis der Mitgliedstaaten?

3. Was hat die Kommission bislang unternommen, um festgestellte Defizite bei der Umsetzung des Visa-Kodex zu beseitigen bzw. was ist in dieser Hinsicht in Planung?

4. Inwieweit berücksichtigen die Mitgliedstaaten das Visa-Handbuch (vgl. auch Beschluss der Europäischen Kommission vom 19. März 2010 über ein Visa-Handbuch) als verbindliche bzw. als nur unverbindliche Vorgabe, und wie ist die Position der Kommission hierzu?

5. Wie bewertet die Kommission die Schengen-Zusammenarbeit in der Visaprüfung und -erteilung vor Ort? In welchem Umfang gibt es z. B. gemeinsame Antragsstellen, gemeinsame Listen über vorzulegende Dokumente, anerkannte Versicherungspolicen usw.?

6. Inwieweit gibt es Probleme infolge einer unterschiedlichen Visapraxis, die auf unterschiedlicher Auslegung und Anwendung der Vorgaben des Visa-Kodex durch die einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten beruht? Welchen Rechtsänderungsbedarf sieht die Kommission bezüglich des Visa-Kodex?

7. Ist es nach Auffassung der Kommission mit dem Visa-Kodex bzw. dem Visa-Handbuch vereinbar, wenn nationale Gerichte in einem Rechtsstreitverfahren den Anspruch auf Erteilung eines Visums mit der Begründung ablehnen, es habe zum Zeitpunkt der gerichtlichen Entscheidung keine gültige Reisekrankenversicherung vorgelegen, obwohl diese Bedingung nach einer ansonsten positiven gerichtlichen Entscheidung leicht hätte erfüllt werden können?

8. Welche Kenntnisse hat die Kommission bezüglich der Anwendung des „Handbuchs für die Organisation der Visumstellen und die Schengen-Zusammenarbeit vor Ort“ (Beschluss vom 11.6.2010)?

Antwort von Frau Malmström im Namen der Kommission
(9. Juli 2013)

Die Kommission überwacht kontinuierlich die Anwendung des Visa-Kodex. Sie hat in diesem Zusammenhang sechs förmliche Vertragsverletzungsverfahren eingeleitet. Einige der Fälle betreffen die systematische Nichteinhaltung der Fristen für die Terminerteilung zur Einreichung eines Antrags. Beschwerden über die Dauer der Beschlussfassung sind selten. Der Kommission liegt kein Hinweis darauf vor, dass Mitgliedstaaten den Leitlinien aus den beiden Handbüchern zum Visa-Kodex nicht Folge leisten.

Im November 2012 ([1]) hat die Kommission eine Mitteilung zur „Belebung des Wachstums in der EU durch Umsetzung und Weiterentwicklung der gemeinsamen Visumpolitik“ angenommen. Dem Vorschlag der Kommission zufolge bietet die Anwendung des Kodex „… Gelegenheit, weitere Möglichkeiten einer Verbesserung und Vereinfachung der Verfahren für Bona-fide-Reisende auszuloten, ohne die Problematik der irregulären Migration oder die von bestimmten Reisenden ausgehende Gefahr für die Sicherheit zu vernachlässigen“.

([1]) KOM(2012)649 endg.

Gegenwärtig erstellt die Kommission einen Evaluierungsbericht zur allgemeinen Anwendung des Visa-Kodex (wie in Artikel 57 Absatz 1 des Visa-Kodex vorgesehen), der den Mitgesetzgebern gemeinsam mit einem Vorschlag für die Überarbeitung des Visa-Kodex bis Dezember 2013 vorgelegt werden soll. In der Evaluierung wird auf alle Aspekte eingegangen, die die Frau Abgeordnete angesprochen hat. Die Kommission beabsichtigt, Änderungsvorschläge einzubringen, die mögliche Probleme angehen sowie die Verpflichtungen aus der vorgenannten Mitteilung berücksichtigen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005697/13
to the Commission
Cornelia Ernst (GUE/NGL)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Member States' compliance with the Visa Code

1. How is the Commission monitoring Member States' compliance with the EU Visa Code, and what information or evidence does it have as regards breaches of the Visa Code by individual Member States?

2. What are the Member States' practices as regards, in particular, compliance with the 14 or 15-day waiting period — that is, the processing time for visa applications — (Articles 9(2) and 23(1)), the use, as a last resort, of external service providers (Article 40(3)), the putting in place of procedures directly in visa offices (consulates) (Article 17(5)) and the necessary guarantees with respect to the deployment of appropriate staff in sufficient numbers in order to ensure reasonable quality of service to the public (Article 38(1))?

3. What has the Commission done so far in order to remedy deficiencies identified in the implementation of the Visa Code and what is being planned in this respect?

4. To what extent do the Member States comply with the Visa Handbook (see also the Commission's Decision of 19 March 2010 establishing the visa handbook) as a binding or non-binding requirement and what is the Commission's position on this?

5. How does the Commission assess Schengen cooperation when it comes to the vetting and issuing of visas at local level? For example, to what extent are there common application centres, joint lists of documents to be submitted, approved insurance policies etc.?

6. What problems have been encountered in connection with different visa practices as a result of the different interpretation and application of the requirements of the Visa Code by the individual Member States? Does the Council believe that any legislative changes are needed in relation to the Visa Code?

7. Does the Commission regard it as compatible with the Visa Code or the Visa Handbook if national courts reject a visa application in a legal dispute on the grounds that the applicant did not have valid travel medical insurance at the time of the judicial decision, even though this requirement could easily have been met following an otherwise positive court ruling?

8. What information does the Commission have concerning the application of the Handbook for the organisation of visa sections and local Schengen cooperation (Decision of 11 June 2010)?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

The Commission is constantly monitoring Member States' implementation of the Visa Code and has launched several formal infringement cases. Certain Member States have been addressed concerning the systematic violation of the deadlines for giving appointments for lodging an application. Complaints regarding the decision making time are rare. The Commission is not in possession of any evidence that would suggest that Member States omit to follow the operational guidelines set out in the two 'Visa Code Handbooks'.

In November 2012 ([1]), the Commission adopted a communication on 'Implementation and development of the common visa policy to spur growth in the EU'. The communication suggested that the evaluation of the implementation of the Code would 'offer an additional opportunity to further explore ways to improve and facilitate procedures for bona fide travellers while continuing to allow addressing the risks posed for irregular migration or security by some travellers.'

([1]) COM(2012) 649 final.

The Commission is currently preparing an evaluation report of the implementation of the Visa Code in general (as required under Article 57 (1) of the Visa Code) to be submitted together with a proposal for revising the Visa Code to the co-legislators by December 2013. The evaluation addresses all the aspects raised by the Honourable Member and the Commission envisages to propose amendments that would address the possible problems as well as respecting the commitments made in the before mentioned Communication.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005698/13
to the Commission
Brian Simpson (S&D)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Invasive alien species

In my constituency the invasive alien Harlequin ladybird, *Harmonia axyridis*, is causing rapid declines in native ladybird species. The Harlequin ladybird is also responsible for damaging orchard crops such as apples and pears. The species was initially introduced as a biocontrol agent, but is now spreading out of control across Europe, threatening our native insect biodiversity with annihilation.

— Could the Commission please advise as to when we can expect to see effective legislation to prevent the introduction of non-native biocontrol species, including a full risk assessment of the negative impacts on native species?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(24 June 2013)

As outlined in the communication on an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 ([1]), the Commission is developing a legislative proposal for the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species, such as the harlequin ladybird. Issues considered in the preparation include, among others, the development of risk assessments, early warning and rapid response, as well as exchange of information between Member States to ensure swift and coordinated action.

([1]) COM(2011)244 final.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005699/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(21. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: Datenschutzbedenken bei Google-Brillen

Google plant eine Brille zu entwickeln, mit der zahlreiche Informationen ins Sichtfeld eingeblendet werden. Diese Google-Brille betrifft nicht nur diejenigen, die sie benutzen, denn durch die Kamera und das Mikrofon können „Livestreams" direkt übers Internet ins Google-Netzwerk hochgeladen werden, wo ja Ort, Taten und Gespräche nicht nur dem filmenden Brillenträger zugeordnet werden, sondern über automatische Gesichtserkennung auch allen anderen anwesenden Personen. Während der Brillenträger selbst also freiwillig einen weiteren Schritt hin zum gläsernen Menschen tut, trifft dies nicht automatisch auf alle Anwesenden zu. Ein zufällig gefilmter Bürger kann sich dagegen kaum wehren.

Bedenklich ist auch — angesichts der immer besseren Entwicklung von „Text to speech" —, dass gesprochene Worte gleich in Text umgewandelt und indexiert werden können. Somit kann über eine Stichwortsuche abgefragt werden, ob sich jemand irgendwann einmal zu einem bestimmten Thema geäußert hat.

1. Wären „Google-Brillen" angesichts der genannten Datenschutzbedenken in der EU überhaupt zulässig?

2. Wie steht die Kommission angesichts der Datenschutzbedenken zu der Entwicklung dieser Technologien?

3. Ist angesichts einer potenziellen Kombination von automatischer Gesichtserkennung und „Text to speech" eine Überarbeitung der EU-Datenschutzbestimmungen geplant?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(31. Juli 2013)

Bei Google Glass handelt es sich um ein Produkt, das sich in der Testphase befindet und noch nicht im Handel erhältlich ist; Google Glass besteht aus einer integrierten Kamera, einem Mikrofon und einem GPS und besitzt Internetanbindung. Als Betriebssystem wird Android verwendet, und zurzeit werden Drittanwendungen für Google Glass entwickelt. Für die Benutzung von Google Glass wird ein Google-Konto benötigt.

Die Kommission stimmt mit dem Herrn Abgeordneten darin überein, dass Google Glass erhebliche datenschutzrechtliche Bedenken aufwerfen könnte; dies gilt u. a. für die Verarbeitung personenbezogener Daten von Personen, die mit der integrierten Kamera fotografiert bzw. gefilmt und identifiziert werden. Um in der Europäischen Union vertrieben werden zu können, müssen Google Glass und damit einhergehende Anwendungen unter anderem die Richtlinie über Datenschutz (95/46/EG) und die Datenschutzrichtlinie für elektronische Kommunikation (2009/136/EG) einhalten. In einem gemeinsamen Schreiben mit Behörden aus Drittländern haben die Datenschutzbehörden der EU gegenüber Google ihre diesbezügliche Besorgnis zum Ausdruck gebracht ([1]).

In dem Vorschlag der Kommission für eine Datenschutz-Grundverordnung ([2]) (der derzeit von den Mitgesetzgebern geprüft wird) werden ausdrücklich sowohl der Grundsatz der Datenminimierung als auch die Pflicht der für die Verarbeitung Verantwortlichen, den Anforderungen des Datenschutzes durch Technik und datenschutzfreundliche Voreinstellungen nachzukommen, ausdrücklich festgelegt. Die Datenschutz-Grundverordnung wird für Google-Glass und damit einhergehende Anwendungen unmittelbar nach ihrer Annahme durch die Mitgesetzgeber gelten.

Der Kommission ist nicht bekannt, welche Anwendungen über Google Glass verfügbar sind und ob eine Identifizierung von Personen dadurch im Wege der Gesichts- oder Spracherkennung möglich ist.

([1]) http://www.priv.gc.ca/media/nr-c/2013/nr-c_130618_e.asp
([2]) KOM(2012)11.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005699/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Privacy concerns relating to Google Glass

Google is planning to develop glasses that will make it possible to project different kinds of information into the user's field of vision. Google Glass will be an issue not only for its users, because it will be possible to use the camera and the microphone to upload live streams directly via the Internet to the Google network, where places, actions and conversations will be searchable not only in connection with the user filming them, but also in connection with anyone else present as a result of automatic facial recognition. Although users of this technology have voluntarily decided to make themselves 'transparent', all of the people they meet may not automatically agree to their privacy being eroded in this way. It will be very difficult for citizens who are randomly filmed to defend themselves against such intrusion.

Given the steady improvements in text-to-speech technology, immediate conversion of speech into text and its indexation is another concern. This would mean that you could use a keyword search to fnd out whether or not anyone has ever said anything about a particular topic.

1. In the light of these privacy concerns, would Google Glass be permissible at all in the EU?

2. What is the Commission's position on the privacy concerns surrounding the development of these technologies?

3. Considering the potential combination of automatic facial recognition and text-to-speech, are there any plans to revise EU data protection rules?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(31 July 2013)

Google Glass is a product in testing not yet available to the general public which includes an embedded camera, microphone and GPS, with access to the Internet. The Android Operating System powers Google Glass, and third-party applications are currently being built for Glass. To access Glass, a user needs a Google account.

The Commission agrees with the Honourable Member that Google Glass could raise significant data protection questions, amongst others related to the processing of personal data related to individuals captured and identified through the embedded camera. In order to be commercialised in the European Union, Glass and related applications needs to be compliant *inter alia* with the Data protection Directive (95/46/EC) and the ePrivacy Directive (2009/136/EC). EU data protection authorities expressed their concerns in a joint letter with authorities from third countries to Google ([1]).

The Commission's proposal for a General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ([2]), under examination of co-legislators, explicitly spells out the principle of data minimisation, and an obligation for controllers to implement the principles of data protection by design and by default. The GDPR will be applicable to Glass and related applications, once adopted by the co-legislators.

The Commission is not aware of the applications available on Glass and on whether identification of individuals either through facial recognition or voice recognition would be possible though those applications.

([1]) http://www.priv.gc.ca/media/nr-c/2013/nr-c_130618_e.asp.
([2]) COM(2012)11.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005700/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(21. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: Datenschutz bei intelligenten Stromzählern

Hinsichtlich intelligenter Stromzähler gilt Italien als Vorreiter. Bis Ende des Jahrzehnts soll, Regierungsplänen zufolge, in 80 % der deutschen Haushalte ein intelligenter Stromzähler installiert sein. Mit diesem intelligenten Stromzähler wird gemessen, wie viel Strom im Haushalt verbraucht wird, und die Zähler sollen damit angesichts des (unter dem Einfluss der erneuerbaren Energiequellen) schwankenden Stromangebots die Nachfrage ausbalancieren. Beispielsweise sollen die Waschmaschine oder der Trockner dann gestartet werden, wenn entweder Windräder, Solaranlagen usw. gerade viel Strom erzeugen oder der Verbrauch gerade niedrig ist. Wegen des enormen Potenzials zur Steigerung der Energieeffizienz gilt seit 2010 eine Installationsverpflichtung für Neubauten.

Bei den Aufzeichnungen der intelligenten Stromzähler werden viele persönliche Daten erhoben. Etwa kann gemessen werden, wie lange und wann jemand duscht. Eine Forschungseinrichtung konnte in einem Test über den Stromverbrauch sogar ermitteln, was im Fernsehen (auf einem LCD-Fernseher) gesehen wurde und ob möglicherweise ein geklauter Film auf einem DVD-Rekorder abgespielt wurde. Überwacht werden können aber auch die Heimkehrzeiten des Nutzers. Auch entsteht über den Internetzugang der dahinterliegenden Computer die potenzielle Gefahr von Hackerangriffen. Deutschland will nun ein entsprechendes Schutzprofil nachreichen, welches auch von der EU abgesegnet werden soll.

1. In welchen anderen EU-Staaten ist der Einsatz von intelligenten Stromzählern geplant?

2. Wurden dabei Schutzbestimmungen ausgearbeitet oder ist eine derartige Ausarbeitung mit EU-weiter Geltung geplant?

3. Liegen schon Erkenntnisse über tatsächliche Energieeinsparungen vor?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(18. Juli 2013)

1. Bislang haben sich vierzehn Mitgliedstaaten dafür entschieden, bis zum Jahr 2020 intelligente Stromzähler einzuführen, wovon rund 72 % der Verbraucher in der EU betroffen wären. Im Gassektor haben bislang fünf Mitgliedstaaten die Einführung intelligenter Zähler beschlossen, d. h. diese Maßnahme würde 30 % der Erdgasnutzer in der EU betreffen. Es wird damit gerechnet, dass in naher Zukunft in zwei weiteren Mitgliedstaaten positive Einführungsentscheidungen sowohl für den Strom- als auch für den Gassektor ergehen.

2. Da die von intelligenten Strom- oder Gaszählern erhobenen Daten hauptsächlich personenbezogene Daten umfassen, gilt der einschlägige EU-Rechtsrahmen für den Datenschutz ([1]). Darüber hinaus enthalten die Leitlinien der Kommission für die Einführung intelligenter Verbrauchsmesssysteme ([2]) besondere Bestimmungen für den Datenschutz, die Wahrung der Privatsphäre und die Datensicherheit. Die Kommission arbeitet außerdem an einem Muster für die Folgenabschätzung hinsichtlich des Datenschutzes bei intelligenten Netzen und an einem Rahmen zur Bewertung der Cybersicherheit; überdies werden von den europäischen Normungsorganisationen Sicherheitsstandards entwickelt.

3. Nach den Ergebnissen der jüngsten Pilotprojekte in mehreren Mitgliedstaaten führt der Einbau intelligenter Zähler in Privathaushalten in der Regel zu Energieeinsparungen von 4-8 %. Weitere Einsparungen lassen sich erzielen, wenn die intelligenten Zähler mit preislichen Anreizen oder intelligenten Haushaltsgeräten verknüpft werden.

([1]) Richtlinie 95/46/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 24. Oktober 1995 zum Schutz natürlicher Personen bei der Verarbeitung personenbezogener Daten und zum freien Datenverkehr (ABl. L 281 vom 23.11.1995), Richtlinie 2002/58/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 12. Juli 2002 über die Verarbeitung personenbezogener Daten und den Schutz der Privatsphäre in der elektronischen Kommunikation (ABl. L 201 vom 31.7.2002), Richtlinie 2006/24/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 15. März 2006 über die Vorratsspeicherung von Daten, die bei der Bereitstellung öffentlich zugänglicher elektronischer Kommunikationsdienste oder öffentlicher Kommunikationsnetze erzeugt oder verarbeitet werden (ABl. L 105 vom 13.4.2006).

([2]) Empfehlung der Kommission vom 9. März 2012 zu Vorbereitungen für die Einführung intelligenter Messsysteme (2012/148/EU).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005700/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(21 May 2013)

Subject: Data protection and smart meters

When it comes to smart meters, Italy is regarded as leading the way. According to German Government plans, a smart meter is to be installed in 80% of German households by the end of the decade. This smart meter measures how much electricity a household consumes and, given the fluctuations of power supply (due to renewable energy sources), meters should balance out demand. For example, the washing machine or the dryer would be switched on if wind turbines, solar panels etc. were generating a lot of electricity or if consumption was very low. In view of the enormous potential for increasing energy efficiency, an installation requirement for new buildings has been in place since 2010.

The smart meter's reading device collects a lot of personal data. For example, it can measure when and how long somebody takes a shower. In a power consumption test, a research institution was even able to detect what was watched on an LCD television and whether a pirated film had been viewed on the DVD recorder. The smart meter can also monitor when a user returns home. There is also the potential threat of hacker attacks linked to the Internet connection of the relevant computer. Germany now wants to submit follow-up plans for a corresponding protection profile, which should also be approved by the EU.

1. In which other EU Member States is the use of smart meters being planned?

2. Have any data protection rules been drafted in this connection, or are they being planned for the whole of the EU?

3. Do we already have any information about the actual energy savings?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(18 July 2013)

1. So far, fourteen Member States have decided to roll out electricity smart meters by 2020, representing about 72% of EU consumers. For gas, five Member States have so far decided positively, representing 30% of EU gas users. Two more Member States are expected to adopt positive decisions soon for both electricity and gas.

2. As data collected by electricity or gas smart meters mainly include personal data, the relevant EU legal framework for data protection ([1]) applies. Furthermore, the Commission guidance on smart metering rollout ([2]) contains specific provisions on data protection, privacy and security. The Commission is also working on a Data Protection Impact Assessment template for smart grids and a cyber-security assessment framework, and security standards are being developed by European Standardisation Organisations.

3. According to the results of recent pilot projects in several Member States, the installation of smart meters usually leads to energy savings of 4-8% for households. Further savings are achieved when linking smart meters with price incentives or smart appliances.

([1]) Directive 95/46/EC 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, OJ L 281, 23.11.1995; Directive 2002/58/EC of 12 July 2012 concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector, OJ L 201, 31.7.2002; Directive 2006/24/EC of 15 March 2006 on the retention of data generated or processed in connection with the provision of publicly available electronic communications services or of public communications networks.

([2]) Commission Recommendation of 9 March 2012 on preparations for the roll-out of smart metering systems (2012/148/EU).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-005701/13
a la Comisión
Pilar Ayuso (PPE)
(22 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Descriptores genéricos

El artículo 1 apartado 4 del Reglamento (CE) n° 1924/2006 relativo a las declaraciones nutricionales y de propiedades saludables en los alimentos, establece por lo que respecta a los descriptores genéricos, que la Comisión adoptará y publicará las normas que los explotadores de empresas alimentarias deberán seguir a la hora de presentar sus solicitudes.

Dado que la Comisión Europea está trabajando actualmente en la elaboración de estas normas, ¿puede decirnos la Comisión para cuándo considera que estas directrices puedan estar disponibles?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(24 de junio de 2013)

La Comisión está trabajando en el establecimiento de normas con arreglo a las cuales se harán las solicitudes de descriptores genéricos, tal como se establece en el artículo 1, apartado 4, del Reglamento (CE) n° 1924/2006 ([1]).

Se están manteniendo en la Comisión conversaciones sobre las normas para las solicitudes relativas a la utilización de los descriptores genéricos. El establecimiento de dichas normas es una cuestión importante, de modo que se están llevando a cabo amplias consultas con los Estados miembros.

La Comisión hace cuanto está en su mano para hacer avanzar los debates a fin de alcanzar un amplio acuerdo sobre estas normas y de adoptarlas lo antes posible.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:404:0009:0025:Es:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer P-005701/13
to the Commission
Pilar Ayuso (PPE)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Generic descriptors

It is stated in Article 1.4 of Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods that, in relation to generic descriptors (denominations), the Commission shall adopt and make public the rules to be followed by food business operators when presenting their applications.

Given that the Commission is at present involved in drafting these rules, could it say when it expects these guidelines to be made available?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(24 June 2013)

The Commission is currently working to establish the rules according to which applications for generic descriptors shall be made, as provided by Article 1(4) of Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 ([1]).

Discussions on the rules for applications concerning the use of generic descriptors are taking place within the Commission. The setting of such rules is an important issue and therefore extensive consultations with Member States have been taking place.

The Commission is making every effort to advance the discussions with the aim of reaching a broad agreement on these rules and adopting them in the shortest possible time frame.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:404:0009:0025:EN:PDF

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-005704/13
do Komisji
Artur Zasada (PPE) oraz Małgorzata Handzlik (PPE)
(22 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Zmiana we Wspólnotowym Kodeksie Celnym, Procedura TIR

Kontekst pytania: międzynarodowi przewoźnicy drogowi w celu ułatwienia procesu transportu ładunków celnych w relacji międzynarodowej powszechnie korzystają z systemu TIR. Używany w tej procedurze Karnet TIR, zgodnie z zapisami konwencji celnej dotyczącej międzynarodowego przewozu towarów z zastosowaniem Karnetów TIR, jest z jednej strony dokumentem celnym, z drugiej zaś potwierdzającym, że sam przewoźnik posiada gwarancję finansową należności celno-podatkowych. Jednak ze względu na obowiązującą interpretację Konwencji TIR, w przypadku transportu ładunków niewspólnotowych w ramach obszaru celnego UE, przewoźnik ma możliwość skorzystania jedynie z systemu „T" – czyli tranzytu wspólnotowego. Brak jest jakiejkolwiek alternatywy, co w praktyce oznacza dużą niedogodność i ograniczenie dla firm transportowych i wzrost kosztów transportu. Nie bez znaczenia jest również kwestia ochrony poufnych informacji związanych z działalnością handlową, do których mogą mieć dostęp konkurencyjne firmy transportowe.

Czy Komisja nie uważa, że korzystnym byłoby wprowadzenie zmian we Wspólnotowym Kodeksie Celnym, które umożliwiłyby przewoźnikowi dokonanie wyboru procedury i tym samym korzystanie z karnetu TIR, zamiast systemu „T" w przewozach wewnątrzwspólnotowych?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Algirdasa Šemetę w imieniu Komisji
(26 czerwca 2013 r.)

Jeśli chodzi o stosowanie systemu TIR w Unii Europejskiej, prosimy Szanownego Pana Posła i Szanowną Panią Poseł o zapoznanie się z odpowiedzią na pytanie E-005295/2012.

Jeśli chodzi o Państwa obawy dotyczące wykorzystania poufnych informacji związanych z działalnością handlową w ramach unijnego systemu tranzytowego, Komisja nie posiada informacji wskazujących, że dane podawane przez osobę zgłaszającą towary w organach celnych lub dane podlegające wymianie między organami celnymi miałyby nie być wystarczająco chronione. System nie wymaga przekazywania żadnych informacji innym podmiotom handlowym.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005704/13
to the Commission
Artur Zasada (PPE) and Małgorzata Handzlik (PPE)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Changes to the Community Customs Code, TIR procedure

International road transport operators commonly use the TIR system in order to simplify the international transport of freight subject to customs duties. According to the provisions of the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets, the TIR Carnet which is used during this process is both a customs document and confirmation that the transport operator has provided a financial guarantee for the payment of the suspended duties and taxes. However, the way that the TIR Convention is currently interpreted means that non-EU freight must currently be carried within the EU customs area using the 'T' system for Community transit. In practice, the lack of any viable alternative results in much inconvenience and many restrictions for transport companies, and an increase in transport costs. A further key issue involves the protection of confidential business information and the possibility of competing transport companies gaining access to such information.

Does the Commission not believe that it would be a good idea to change the Community Customs Code to allow transport operators to choose which procedure they wish to use, for example the TIR Carnet instead of the 'T' system for intra-Community transport?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(26 June 2013)

As regards the use of TIR in the EU, the Honourable Member is referred to the Commission's answer to Question E-005295/2012.

As regards the Honourable Member's concern about the use of confidential business information in the context of the Union transit system, the Commission has no information suggesting that this data would not be sufficiently protected when supplied by the person declaring the goods to customs administrations or in exchanges between customs administrations. The system does not require any information to be provided to other commercial operators.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005706/13
a la Comisión
Carmen Romero López (S&D)
(22 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Línea de Alta Velocidad Antequera-Granada

El Programa Operativo FEDER de Andalucía 2007-2013 en el Marco Estratégico Nacional de Referencia de España (2007-2013) incluyó, de acuerdo con el Reglamento (CE) n° 1083/2006 del Consejo, de 11 de julio de 2006, por el que se establecen las disposiciones generales relativas al FEDER, al FSE y al Fondo de Cohesión, como gran proyecto, el denominado «Línea de Alta Velocidad Antequera-Granada (plataforma, vía e instalaciones)» en el eje 4, con la categoría de gasto 17 Ferrocarril (RTE-E) con un coste total de 1 333 millones de euros y órgano ejecutor ADIF.

La cuantía acordada de la ayuda comunitaria fue de 600 millones de euros y su ejecución por parte de ADIF, adecuada en el ritmo de obra de la plataforma hasta principios de 2012 en el que se paró toda licitación nueva de los tramos con proyectos constructivos finalizados (Variante de Loja) y se ha empezado a debatir sobre un posible cambio en la integración del ferrocarril de alta velocidad para viajeros en la ciudad de Granada, que ya contaba con un Protocolo de acuerdo firmado por el Ministerio de Fomento, ADIF, Junta de Andalucía y Ayuntamiento de Granada en 2008.

La falta de ejecución del proyecto y las intenciones del Ministerio de Fomento de hacer modificaciones al mismo, sin haber iniciado aún ninguno de los trámites preceptivos para ello, está provocando un colapso del proyecto que sin duda puede llevar a la situación de que las obras no puedan finalizarse en los plazos previstos en el Marco Comunitario de Apoyo 2007-2013.

¿Han tramitado las autoridades españolas responsables de ejecutar el proyecto «Línea de Alta Velocidad Antequera-Granada (plataforma, vía e instalaciones)» algún cambio en las características propuestas en su día? ¿Se ha fiscalizado la actuación y el ritmo de contratación por parte de la Unión? ¿Qué efectos tendría el incumplimiento de los plazos previstos en el Reglamento para la terminación del proyecto?

Respuesta del Sr. Hahn en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de julio de 2013)

1. El gran proyecto «Antequera-Granada» forma parte del eje n° 4 «Transporte y Energía» del programa «Fondos de cohesión — Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional (FEDER) 2007-2013».

2. El tramo Antequera-Granada está compuesto de dos grandes proyectos: una fase I y una fase II. La fase I del gran proyecto del AVE Antequera-Granada fue aprobada el 24 de marzo de 2011 por la Comisión. El coste total subvencionable es de 406 millones de euros y la ayuda del FEDER asciende a 325 millones de euros. A 31 de diciembre de 2013 los gastos certificados ascendían a 389 millones de euros, lo que representa una ejecución del 96 %. Hasta la fecha, ADIF, el organismo responsable de la ejecución del proyecto, no ha introducido ninguna modificación.

3. La Comisión todavía no ha recibido la solicitud de ayuda para la fase II del gran proyecto Antequera-Granada. Sin embargo, se pueden certificar los costes antes de que el proyecto sea aprobado por la Comisión y, según la información de que dispone esta institución, ya se ha certificado el 42 % de los gastos totales. Si la Comisión determina que el proyecto no es subvencionable, habría que retirar la certificación a dichos gastos.

4. El Tribunal de Cuentas ha seleccionado la fase II del gran proyecto Antequera-Granada para efectuar una visita de control a finales de junio.

5. El período de programación finaliza el 31 de diciembre de 2013, pero la fecha de comienzo de la subvencionabilidad de los gastos es el 31 de diciembre de 2015. El proyecto tiene que haberse finalizado y estar en fase de realización cuando haya que presentar los documentos de cierre, es decir, el 31 de marzo de 1017. Los gastos generados entre el 31 de diciembre de 2015 y el 31 de marzo de 2017 no son subvencionables por el FEDER.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005706/13
to the Commission
Carmen Romero López (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Antequera-Granada High-Speed Line

In accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund, the 'Antequera-Granada High-Speed Line (Platform, track and facilities)' project was included as a major project under Objective 4 of the ERDF Operational Programme for Andalusia 2007-2013, within the Spanish National Strategic Reference Framework (2007-2013). The project, for which ADIF is the implementing agency, has a projected cost of EUR 1.333 billion and corresponds to expenditure Category c: Railways (TEN-T).

The project received EUR 600 million in Community aid. ADIF's implementation of the project was adjusted to the pace at which work was carried out on the platform until early 2012, when all tender procedures for the stretches of track ended with finalised construction projects (Loja subsection). Shortly after, discussions began on a possible change to the planned integration of high-speed rail for passengers in the city of Granada, which already had a memorandum of understanding signed in 2008 by the Spanish Ministry of Public Works, ADIF, the Regional Government of Andalusia and the Municipality of Granada.

Lack of progress in implementing the project and the Ministry of Public Works' plans to make changes to it — without having started any of the formalities to do so — is stalling the entire project, which could easily result in the work not being completed within the time limits set in the Community support framework 2007-2013.

Have the Spanish authorities responsible for the 'Antequera-Granada High-Speed Line (Platform, track and facilities)' project made any changes to the project characteristics initially proposed? Have the management and speed of the tendering procedure been overseen by the EU? What effect would failure to meet the deadlines set in the regulation have on the completion of the project?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par M. Hahn au nom de la Commission
(12 juillet 2013)

1. Le Grand projet «Antequera — Grenade» est inclus dans l'axe 4 Transport et Energie du programme «Fonds de cohésion — Fonds européen de développement régional (FEDER) 2007-2013».

2. Le tronçon Antequera — Grenade est composé de deux grands projets: phase I et phase II. Le grand projet TGV Antequera — Grenade phase I, a été approuvé le 24 mars 2011 par la Commission. Le coût total admissible est de 406 millions d'euros, et l'aide du FEDER s'élève à 325 millions d'euros. Au 31 décembre 2012, les dépenses certifiées atteignaient 389 millions d'euros, représentant une exécution de 96 %. L'ADIF, organisme responsable de l'exécution du projet n'a apporté aucune modification, à ce jour.

3. La Commission n'a pas encore reçu la demande d'aide pour le grand projet Antequera — Grenade phase II. Cependant, les coûts peuvent être certifiés avant que le projet ait été approuvé par la Commission et, selon les informations dont dispose la Commission, 42 % des dépenses totales ont été déjà certifiés jusqu'à présent. Si le projet est déclaré non admissible par la Commission, ces montants devraient être décertifiés.

4. La Cour des comptes a sélectionné le grand projet Antequera — Grenade phase II pour la visite de contrôle à effectuer fin juin.

5. La période de programmation se termine le 31 décembre 2013; mais la date d'éligibilité des dépenses est le 31 décembre 2015. Le projet doit être achevé et en cours de réalisation à la date de présentation des documents de clôture, c'est-à-dire, le 31 mars 2017. Les dépenses encourues entre le 31 décembre 2015 et le 31 mars 2017 ne sont pas admissibles pour le FEDER.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005707/13
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(22 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Intervento dell'UE sul traffico di migranti clandestini in Croazia

L'agenzia di stampa croata Hina riferisce che la polizia croata ha arrestato 25 persone sospettate di appartenere a un'organizzazione internazionale di trafficanti croati che trasferiva migranti illegali provenienti prevalentemente dal Kosovo e dalla Turchia verso l'Unione europea.

Tali organizzazioni dall'inizio dell'anno avrebbero organizzato il trasferimento illegale di almeno 133 migranti per un compenso tra i 1.000 e i 1.200 euro a persona. I migranti attraversavano il confine da soli, a piedi o su barche via mare. Nei giorni scorsi in Bosnia sono state arrestate altre 13 persone che farebbero parte della medesima organizzazione.

Come intende intervenire la Commissione per contrastare questo fenomeno?

Ritiene che dal 1° luglio, data dell'adesione della Croazia all'UE, ci si possa attendere che molti migranti saranno interessati a raggiungere il territorio croato per chiedervi asilo?

Risposta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(17 luglio 2013)

La Commissione europea è a conoscenza delle informazioni riferite nell'interrogazione e accoglie positivamente la notizia dello smantellamento della rete di trafficanti in Croazia. Tale evento costituisce un'ulteriore dimostrazione dell'alto grado di sensibilizzazione al problema delle autorità croate e dell'impegno sia delle autorità, sia delle forze dell'ordine croate, nel contrasto al traffico di esseri umani.

La più recente dichiarazione rilasciata dalla Commissione a proposito della Croazia, risalente a marzo 2013, conferma che il paese sta in linea di massima rispettando gli impegni assunti e si sta conformando su tutti i capitoli alle prescrizioni emerse nel corso del negoziato. La Commissione europea continuerà nella sua stretta collaborazione con la Croazia al fine di vederne migliorate le capacità di reazione nel campo del contrasto all'immigrazione clandestina. Grazie ad uno strumento finanziario temporaneo, istituito nel quadro dell'accordo di Schengen, la Croazia potrà perfezionare i propri controlli di frontiera sulla nuova frontiera esterna dell'UE. Saranno messe a disposizione della Croazia risorse aggiuntive in vista di una migliore implementazione della politica comune in materia di asilo, immigrazione e controllo delle frontiere esterne, anche mediante il programma quadro «Solidarietà e gestione dei flussi migratori» (SOLID), il futuro Fondo Asilo e migrazione e il Fondo Sicurezza interna.

La Commissione europea non cesserà di monitorare da vicino l'adempimento della Croazia agli obblighi in materia, assunti da questo Stato con l'adesione all'UE, anche in relazione all'*acquis* dell'Unione in fatto di traffico di esseri umani, così come dettato dalla direttiva 2002/90/CE del Consiglio, del 28 novembre 2002, volta a definire il favoreggiamento dell'ingresso, del transito e del soggiorno illegali, nonché dalla Decisione quadro del Consiglio relativa al rafforzamento del quadro penale per la repressione del favoreggiamento dell'ingresso, del transito e del soggiorno illegali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005707/13
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: EU intervention regarding the smuggling of illegal migrants into Croatia

According to the Croatian news agency Hina, the Croatian police have arrested 25 people suspected of belonging to the Croatian branch of an international smuggling ring that transported illegal migrants, mostly from Kosovo and Turkey, to the European Union.

Since the start of the year, these rings are alleged to have organised the illegal transfer of at least 133 migrants for a fee of between EUR 1 000 and EUR 1 200 per person. The migrants crossed the border alone, either on foot or by boat across the sea. In the last few days a further 13 people thought to be part of the same ring have been arrested in Bosnia.

How does the Commission intend to tackle this problem?

In its opinion, is it likely that when Croatia joins the EU on 1 July 2013, many migrants will want to reach Croatian territory in order to seek asylum there?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(17 July 2013)

The European Commission is aware of the information reported in the question and welcomes the dismantling of the smuggling ring by Croatia. This demonstrates the increased awareness and committment of Croatian authorities, specifically law enforcement bodies, to counter smuggling in human beings.

The latest Commission assessment on Croatia, issued in March 2013, confirms that the country is generally meeting the commitments and requirements arising from the accession negotiations, in all chapters. Solid reforms in the area of border control and migration have been developed in the previous years. The European Commission will continue closely cooperating with Croatia to improve its capacities in the field of irregular migration. Under a temporary Schengen Facility instrument, financial support will be provided to Croatia for the upgrading of border controls at the new EU external border. Additional resources will be made available to Croatia for the strengthening of the common migration, asylum and border policies under the Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows (SOLID) Programme and under the future Asylum and Migration Fund and the Internal Security Fund.

The European Commission will continue monitoring closely the duties of Croatia in this field, arising from the obligations undertaken with EU membership , including with respect to the EU *acquis* on smuggling in human beings composed of the Council Directive 2002/90/EU defining the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and residence, and the Council Framework Decision on the strenghtening of the penal framework to prevent the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and residence.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005708/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 mai 2013)

Objet: Refus d'indemnisation et gestion chaotique des bagages par les compagnies aériennes

À la suite d'arrêts de travail à l'aéroport de Bruxelles-National, des milliers de bagages se sont accumulés pendant 5 jours à l'aéroport de Bruxelles-National, causant parfois des désagréments graves et même des dépenses importantes.

Plusieurs compagnies aériennes refusent dès à présent toute indemnisation de leurs clients sous prétexte qu'elles ne sont pas responsables.

La Commission peut-elle faire savoir:

1. Quelle est la responsabilité des compagnies aériennes et quelles sont les indemnités que peuvent exiger les victimes dans le cadre des règlements EC 261/2004 et EC 2027/1997 concernant les responsabilités des compagnies aériennes et les indemnisations obligatoires en cas de non-respect du contrat de transport des passagers, aussi bien que de leurs bagages, même «dans le cas de circonstances exceptionnelles?».

2. Quels sont les recours des victimes pour faire valoir leurs droits dans les meilleurs délais en cas de refus des compagnies?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(28 juin 2013)

1. La convention de Montréal ([1]) définit les règles s'appliquant en cas d'erreur de manipulation des bagages, telles que mises en œuvre par le règlement (CE) n° 2027/1997 ([2]). Les compagnies aériennes sont considérées comme responsables de tout retard éventuel des bagages, à moins qu'elles ne puissent prouver qu'elles ont pris toutes les mesures raisonnablement envisageables pour éviter le dommage découlant de ce retard ou qu'il était impossible de prendre de telles mesures. Si une grève venait à avoir lieu, il faudrait évaluer au cas par cas l'opportunité d'exonérer les compagnies aériennes de cette responsabilité.

2. En cas de retard de bagage, les passagers peuvent, selon les conditions spécifiées dans la convention de Montréal, avoir droit à une indemnisation plafonnée à environ 1300 euros par personne, en réparation du préjudice subi. Dans tous les cas, il est recommandé aux passagers d'adresser une plainte écrite à la compagnie aérienne. En cas de de retard de bagage, les passagers disposent de 21 jours à compter de la réception du bagage pour déposer une plainte. S'ils ne sont pas satisfaits de la réponse fournie par la compagnie aérienne, ils ont la possibilité d'entamer des poursuites judiciaires: la procédure européenne de règlement des petits litiges ([3]), qui vise à simplifier l'évaluation et le règlement des petits litiges transfrontaliers et à réduire leur coût, est susceptible de leur être utile ([4]). Pour plus d'informations sur les voies de recours, les passagers peuvent contacter le CEC ([5]) de leur pays de résidence, ou une organisation nationale de consommateurs ([6]).

([1]) Convention pour l'unification de certaines règles relatives au transport aérien international (Montréal, 28 mai 1999).
([2]) Règlement (CE) n° 2027/97 du Conseil du 9 octobre 1997 relatif à la responsabilité des transporteurs aériens en ce qui concerne le transport aérien de passagers et de leurs bagages (JO L 285 du 17.10.1997, tel que modifié dans le JO L 140 du 30.5.2002).
([3]) Règlement (CE) n° 861/2007 du Parlement Européen et du Conseil du 11 juillet 2007 instituant une procédure européenne de règlement des petits litiges.
([4]) Pour plus d'informations:. http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/judicialatlascivil/html/sc_information_fr.htm
([5]) Les coordonnées des centres européens des consommateurs sont disponibles à l'adresse suivante:. http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/ecc/index_fr.htm
([6]) Une liste des organisations nationales de consommateurs est disponible à l'adresse suivante: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/empowerment/cons_networks_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005708/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Refusal to pay compensation and chaotic baggage handling by airline companies

Following work stoppages at Brussels National Airport, thousands of items of baggage have built up over five days at the airport, causing severe inconvenience, in some cases, and even significant expenditure.

Several airline companies are now refusing to pay any compensation to their customers, claiming that they are not responsible.

Can the Commission state:

1. What liability do the airline companies have and what compensation may those affected claim under Regulations EC 261/2004 and EC 2027/1997 on the liability of airline companies and mandatory compensation in the event of failure to comply with the contract of carriage of passengers and their baggage, even 'under exceptional circumstances'?

2. What remedies are available to those affected in order to enforce their rights as quickly as possible in the event of a refusal by the companies to accept liability?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(28 June 2013)

1. The rules applicable to mishandled baggage are defined under the Montreal convention ([1]) as implemented by Regulation (EC) No 2027/1997 ([2]). Regarding delayed baggage, airlines are liable unless they prove that they have taken all reasonable measures to avoid the damage resulting from the delay of the baggage or when it was impossible to take such measures. The question as to whether a strike would exonerate airlines from their liability in such case would need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

2. In case baggage is delayed, passengers may, under the conditions laid down in the Montreal Convention, be entitled to compensation for the damage suffered that is limited to approximately EUR 1 300 per passenger. In all cases, passengers should complain in writing to the airline. A time limit to complain of 21 days applies to passengers from the date of receiving their baggage in case their baggage is delayed. Passengers who are not satisfied with the answer of the airline can pursue their claim further through court procedures. If applicable, the European Small Claims Procedure ([3]) may be of assistance. The aim of this procedure is to simplify the evaluation and settlement of small cross-border disputes and to reduce the costs of such action ([4]). For further assistance regarding the means of redress, passengers can contact the ECC ([5]) in their country of residence or a national consumer organisation ([6]).

([1]) Convention for the Unification of Certain Rules for International Carriage by Air (Montreal, 28 May 1999).
([2]) Council Regulation (EC) No 2027/1997 of 9 October 1997 on air carrier liability in respect of the carriage of passengers and their baggage by air (OJ L 285, 17.10.1997, as modified OJ L140, 30.5.2002).
([3]) Regulation (EC) No 861/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 July 2007 establishing a European small claims procedure.
([4]) More information about this is available here: http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/judicialatlascivil/html/sc_information_en.htm
([5]) The contact details of the European Consumer Centres can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/redress/ecc_network/ecc_network_centers.pdf
([6]) A list of national consumer organisations can be found on the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/empowerment/cons_networks_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005709/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(22 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Persecución de opositores en Guinea Ecuatorial

El próximo domingo 26 de mayo se celebran nuevas elecciones en Guinea Ecuatorial. Se trata de las primeras elecciones celebradas bajo la nueva Constitución de febrero de 2012. Este proceso electoral, pese a estrenar texto constitucional, vuelve a repetir los numerosos casos de represión e intimidación de los rivales políticos del Presidente que más años lleva en el poder en África.

Las acusaciones de numerosas violaciones de los derechos humanos en Guinea Ecuatorial se deben al estricto gobierno que la familia Obiang lleva manteniendo en el país d*esde octubre de 1979. Desde el golpe de Estado que lo llevó al poder, tras derrocar al sanguinario Gobierno de Macías, Obiang ha gozado de un poder absoluto para él y su familia, hostigando y persiguiendo cualquier tipo de oposición política que ha surgido en el país africano.*

El papel de los Estados Unidos de América y de muchos países europeos, entre ellos España, ha sido el de claro cómplice del dictador, *mientras el petróleo fluyese de sus puertos. Las compañías petrolíferas europeas han podido explotar los recursos petrolíferos del territorio sin interferencia alguna, gracias a su buena relación con el dictador. Mientras se perseguía, asesinaba e intimidaba a todo opositor político de la familia Obiang, las empresas extranjeras han incrementado sus márgenes de beneficio casi tanto como la familia del propio Presidente, que se ha convertido en una de las familias más ricas del mundo. Para mantener su posición, pese a existir elecciones formales, se está hostigando a todos los opositores, persiguiéndolos, reteniéndolos ilegalmente, e incluso intimidándolos con las fuerzas de seguridad del Estado.*

1. ¿Reconocerá la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante los resultados de las elecciones de Guinea Ecuatorial como un resultado legítimo?

2. ¿Condena las acciones represivas e intimidatorias llevadas a cabo por el Gobierno de Guinea Ecuatorial contra sus opositores políticos? ¿Piensa reclamar al Gobierno de Guinea Ecuatorial el cese de los actos intimidatorios y de represión de los partidos opositores?

3. ¿Cuáles son las empresas europeas que participan de la extracción de los recursos energéticos de Guinea Ecuatorial? ¿Qué impacto cree que tienen las inversiones de las empresas petrolíferas en el respeto de los derechos humanos en Guinea Ecuatorial?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(24 de septiembre de 2013)

Aunque la UE no envió una misión de observación electoral a Guinea Ecuatorial, sí vigiló atentamente el proceso electoral que culminó con las elecciones municipales, legislativas y al senado el 26 de mayo de 2013. La UE se muestra muy preocupada por las acusaciones de arresto, represiones e intimidaciones durante la campaña electoral, así como por las medidas restrictivas aplicadas a la oposición. Asimismo, la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta ha tomado nota de la declaración preliminar de la misión de observación electoral de la Unión Africana y comparte ampliamente las recomendaciones que en ella se formulan.

La reforma de la Constitución en noviembre de 2011 suscitó grandes expectativas de democratización que, hasta el momento, no se han plasmado, y la situación general de los derechos humanos predominante en Guinea Ecuatorial debe mejorar. Asimismo existe una necesidad evidente de mejorar la gobernanza y la oferta de servicios sociales a la población. El «boom» del petróleo no se ha traducido todavía en desarrollo social, y gran parte de la población continúa viviendo por debajo del umbral de pobreza. La UE anima también a las autoridades a seguir las normas de la Iniciativa para la Transparencia de las Industrias Extractivas.

La UE continuará siguiendo muy de cerca la situación general del país y tiene previsto ponerse en contacto cuanto antes con la nueva Administración a fin de tratar estas cuestiones.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005709/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Persecution of opponents in Equatorial Guinea

On Sunday, 26 May, new elections are to be held in Equatorial Guinea. These are the first elections to be held under the new Constitution of February 2012 but, once again, the electoral process has seen many instances of repression and intimidation against political opponents to Africa's longest serving President.

The numerous allegations of human rights violations in Equatorial Guinea stem from the strict form of government in the country, run by the Obiang family since October 1979. Since the coup that brought him to power, after overthrowing the bloody government of Macías, Obiang and his family have wielded absolute power, harassing and persecuting any political opposition emerging in this African country.

The USA and many European countries, including Spain, have colluded with the dictator while the oil has flowed from the country's ports. European oil companies have been able to exploit the country's oil resources without any interference, thanks to their good relations with the dictator. While all political opponents of the Obiang family have been persecuted, murdered and intimidated, foreign companies have increased their profit margins almost as much as the President's family, which has become one of the richest in the world. In order to maintain this position, despite the formal elections, all opponents are being harassed, pursued, held illegally and even intimidated by the State security forces.

1. Will the Vice-President/High Representative recognise Equatorial Guinea's election results as legitimate?

2. Does she condemn the repressive, intimidating action taken by the Government of Equatorial Guinea against its political opponents? Does she intend to demand that the Government of Equatorial Guinea stop intimidating and repressing opposition parties?

3. Which European companies are involved in extracting energy resources in Equatorial Guinea? What impact does she think oil company investments are having on respect for human rights in Equatorial Guinea?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(24 September 2013)

The EU has not deployed an electoral observation mission to Equatorial Guinea. However, it followed with vigilance the electoral process that culminated with legislative, senatorial and municipal elections on 26 May 2013. The EU is very concerned with the allegations of arrests, repression and intimidation during the electoral campaign as well as with the restrictive mesures applied to the opposition. The HR/VP also took note of the African Union's electoral observation preliminary statement and widely shares the recommendations it formulated.

The reform of the Constitution in November 2011 raised wide hopes of democratisation that did not bear fruit so far and the overall human rights situation that prevails in Equatorial Guinea needs improvement. Also, there is a clear need for progress on governance and in providing social services for the benefit of the population. The oil boom has not yet been translated in social development and a large part of the population still lives below the poverty threshold. The EU also encourages authorities to abide by Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) rules.

The EU will continue to closely monitor the overall situation in the country and intends to engage with the new administration as soon as possible in order to address these concerns.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005711/13
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: The Clinical Trials Directive and the need to protect limited access to trial drugs

Pharmaceutical companies will suspend or terminate clinical trials if overall average results in terms of efficacy are insufficiently promising to justify continuation. In some cases this will be because only a minority of trial subjects have demonstrated beneficial therapeutic results — although for the patients themselves these benefits will be very real — as evaluation of response relies on averages, which by definition implies responders of varying degrees.

Last year the Commission published proposals for updating the Clinical Trials Directive. Does the Commission believe that it is appropriate to introduce a requirement whereby, when beneficial results are demonstrated for some of the trial patients, the relevant pharmaceutical company must continue to make the trial drug available to the affected trial subject for a limited period on a humanitarian basis?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(24 June 2013)

Specific rules on compassionate use of medicines are already contained in Article 83 of Regulation 726/2004 ([1]) laying down Community procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human and veterinary use and establishing a European Medicines Agency. Additionally, Article 5(1) of Directive 2001/83 contains a derogation making provision for the prescription of a medicinal product on a 'named-patient' basis. These provisions cover also medicinal products undergoing clinical trials.

The Commission thus did not consider it necessary to introduce rules on compassionate use of medicinal products also in the proposal on the revision of the clinical trials Directive ([2]).

([1]) OJ L 136, 30.4.2004, p. 1.
([2]) COM(2012) 369 final, 2012/0192 (COD).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005712/13
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Land purchases as a part-solution to the erosion of rainforests

The UK's BBC 2 channel has recently broadcast a series of programmes entitled 'Toughest Place To Be A…', in which a number of dedicated individuals are selected to attempt to do their jobs in different parts of the developing world. In one programme, a Sussex firefighter went to join a group of firefighters working tirelessly on the edge of the Amazon rainforest in the Mato Grosso region of Brazil. The firefighters work for an organisation called 'Alianca da Terra', set up by local ranchers who have dedicated themselves to encouraging sustainable development and the protection of virgin forest. As the programme progressed, it became clear that most of the fires were being started deliberately by arsonists and were not only progressively destroying the forest, but were also threatening the survivability of local indigenous tribes. The firefighters had no policing functions, and indeed law enforcement appeared to be a problem.

Does the Commission believe that a partial solution to the constant erosion of virgin rainforest would be for the EU and Member States to follow the example of Sting, a British celebrity, and purchase large tracts of rainforest, not only in Brazil but also, if it is legally possible, in threatened areas in other countries, such as Gabon, Rwanda, Malaysia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea?

Does the Commission also believe that the EU should offer the governments of these countries significant assistance in police training and alternative development costs, especially if this were to be accompanied by population education programmes?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(18 July 2013)

Forest fires are a major problem in many parts of the world, requiring different means for preventing, depending on conditions in the country as well as their causes. If the fires are deliberately started, purchasing tracts of rainforest may not be an effective way of preventing them as land still needs to be managed and fire risk mitigation measures still have to be implemented. Instead, capacity building for different stakeholders and authorities, including policing, could help to reduce fires. All elements of risk mitigation need to be considered and promoted: prevention, early detection and suppression of fires. Monitoring systems are an essential pre-requisite to enforce laws that forbid setting forests alight.

Positive incentives for local people to sustainably manage forests, as well as cooperation with governments to improve forest law enforcement and forest governance, are also good approaches to reduce the problem. The EU provides technical and financial support for many developing countries in these efforts, in the framework of the FLEGT Action Plan and , in some cases, through bilateral Voluntary Partnership Agreements. As an additional benefit, reducing illegal forest activities also helps avoid billions of euros of tax losses, resources which can be reinvested in development and in setting out forest fires risk mitigation measures.

The Commission has committed EUR 173 million over 7 years in support of FLEGT. REDD+ pilot programmes supported by the EU (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, promoting conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries), also contribute to reducing forest fires in developing countries as well.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005713/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(22 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Soluciones para el sector textil de Bangladesh

El sector textil es uno de los pilares de la economía de Bangladesh. Significa el 75 % de las exportaciones totales, representa más del diez por ciento del PIB y emplea a más de tres millones de personas ([1]).

Recientemente se ha dado a conocer en diferentes medios informativos el derrumbamiento del edificio Rana Plaza en Bangladesh, lo que ha provocado la muerte de al menos un millar de personas. El edificio albergaba varios talleres textiles gestionados por diferentes compañías. Alguna de las empresas involucradas aseguraba en su web el «compromiso a lograr altas condiciones laborales además de, contar con un complejo sistema de auditoría que les permitía supervisar y analizar las condiciones diarias en su empresa». Es evidente que tales auditorías internas resultan insuficientes para garantizar la seguridad y los derechos laborales de los empleados.

1. ¿Tiene prevista la Comisión medidas para garantizar un sistema de auditorías que resulte efectivo para la seguridad de los trabajadores de las fábricas textiles de Bangladesh?

2. Teniendo en cuenta que los intercambios entre la Comunidad Europea y la República Popular de Bangladesh se efectúan de conformidad con el Acuerdo constitutivo de la Organización Mundial del Comercio, y que ambos tienen un Acuerdo de cooperación y desarrollo ([2]), ¿cree la Comisión que se está cumpliendo el artículo 2, apartado 1, de dicho acuerdo, donde se manifiesta que el objetivo será apoyar el desarrollo económico y social sostenible de Bangladesh, en particular de las capas más pobres de su población, con especial atención a las mujeres, teniendo en cuenta su actual condición de país menos desarrollado?

3. ¿Va a adoptar la Comisión medidas para garantizar que las prendas de vestir provenientes de terceros países cumplan los objetivos del Acuerdo de cooperación y desarrollo entre Comunidad Europea y la República Popular de Bangladesh?

Respuesta del Sr. Piebalgs en nombre de la Comisión
(23 de julio de 2013)

La seguridad en las fábricas y los derechos laborales en Bangladés preocupan a la UE desde hace tiempo. Sin embargo, la mejora de las normas de salud y seguridad en todas las fábricas exige esfuerzos concertados por parte de todas las partes interesadas. La Comisión apoya el nuevo acuerdo sobre la seguridad de los edificios y contra los incendios que han suscrito más de 65 grandes marcas internacionales, principalmente europeas, con la finalidad de crear un programa de seguridad en esa materia en Bangladés por un período de cinco años. Se calcula que este programa podrá cubrir alrededor de 800 fábricas.

Toda la ayuda al desarrollo de la UE a Bangladés persigue apoyar el desarrollo económico y social sostenible. Varios programas tienen por objeto contribuir a reducir la pobreza extrema mediante el refuerzo de la capacidad adquisitiva de unos 500 000 hogares encabezados por mujeres extremadamente pobres. A través de la iniciativa «Todo menos armas», Bangladesh disfruta de un acceso libre de derechos de aduanas y de contingentes al mercado de la UE, lo que ha sido esencial para la creación de oportunidades de comercio y empleo en ese país.

El proyecto «Mejor trabajo y normas», que la UE ha financiado con 15 millones de euros, ha servido para mejorar la seguridad y las condiciones sociales en alrededor de 400 fábricas de Bangladés. La Comisión cree que la UE está desempeñando su papel a la hora de cumplir los objetivos fijados en el Acuerdo de cooperación y desarrollo.

Remitimos a Su Señoría a las respuestas a las preguntas E-004552/13, E-004788/13 y P-004922/13 ([3]) y a la declaración de la Comisión en el Parlamento Europeo de 23 de mayo ([4]).

([1]) http://www.wto.org/spanish/news_s/sppl_s/sppl223_s.htm
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:22001A0427(01):ES:HTML
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/fr/parliamentary-questions.html;jsessionid=BEC1882D33C37D01F8283AB529ACB15E.node1
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20130523+ITEM-007+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005713/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Solutions for the textile sector in Bangladesh

The textile sector is one of the pillars of Bangladesh's economy. It accounts for 75% of total exports, representing more than ten percent of GDP, and employs more than three million people ([1]).

Recently, the news media have reported on the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh, which resulted in the death of at least a thousand people. The building housed several textile workshops managed by different companies. One of the companies involved asserted on its website that it was 'committed to achieving good working conditions and has a complex auditing system to monitor and analyse the daily conditions in its business'. It is evident that such internal audits are insufficient to ensure employees' safety and labour rights.

1. Does the Commission plan to take measures to ensure that there is an effective audit system for the safety of workers in textile factories in Bangladesh?

2. Given that trade between the European Community and the People's Republic of Bangladesh is carried out pursuant to the Agreement establishing the World Trade Organisation, and that both are parties to a cooperation and development agreement ([2]), does the Commission believe that Article 2 paragraph 1 of this agreement — which states that the goal is to support sustainable economic and social development in Bangladesh, particularly in the poorest sections of the population, with particular attention to women, taking into account its current status of a least developed country — is being fulfilled?

3. Will the Commission take steps to ensure that garments made in third countries comply with the goals of the cooperation and development agreement concluded between the European Community and the People's Republic of Bangladesh?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(23 July 2013)

Factory safety and labour rights in Bangladesh have been longstanding concerns for the EU. However, improving health and safety standards in all factories requires concerted efforts by all parties concerned. The Commission supports the new Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh which over 65 mainly European leading international brands have signed up to. It aims to establish a fire and building safety programme in Bangladesh for a period of five years. It is estimated that around 800 factories may be covered by this framework.

All EU development assistance to Bangladesh aims to support sustainable economic and social development. Several programmes aim to contribute to reducing extreme poverty by enhancing the capacity of around 500 000 extremely poor female-headed households. Through the Everything But Arms initiative, Bangladesh has duty-free and quota-free access to the EU market, which has been essential in creating trade and employment opportunities in the country.

The EU-funded (EUR 15 million) Better Work and Standards project has been instrumental in improving factory safety and social conditions in around 400 factories in the country.

The Commission is of the view that the EU is indeed playing its role in meeting the objectives set out in the Cooperation and Development Agreement.

The Honourable Member may refer to the answers to Questions E- 004552/13, E-004788/13 and P-004922/13 ([3]) and to the Statement by the Commission at the EP on 23 May ([4]).

([1]) http://www.wto.org/spanish/news_s/sppl_s/sppl223_s.htm
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:22001A0427(01):ES:HTML.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/fr/parliamentary-questions.html;jsessionid=BEC1882D33C37D01F8283AB529ACB15E.node1
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20130523+ITEM-007+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005714/13
al Consejo
María Irigoyen Pérez (S&D)
(22 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Garantía juvenil

El presidente del Consejo Europeo, Van Rompuy, ha indicado en varias ocasiones que reducir la tasa de desempleo juvenil, que en algunos países como España alcanza el 55 %, es la mayor tarea para los países europeos en la actualidad.

El pasado mes de febrero, los Ministros de Empleo de los 27 países de la Unión Europea acordaron la creación de la «garantía juvenil» con el objetivo de lograr que todos los europeos menores de 26 años tengan acceso a un trabajo, formación o prácticas en un plazo máximo de cuatro meses tras terminar sus estudios o quedar desempleados desde 2014.

Lamentablemente, la financiación de esta medida provendría de los fondos sociales y de cohesión de la UE, así como de una nueva partida presupuestaria comunitaria de 6 000 millones de euros para el período 2014-2020. Una cantidad tachada de insuficiente por la propia Comisión.

¿No cree el Consejo que la nueva partida presupuestaria de 6 000 millones es insuficiente? ¿No sería más razonable que se aplicara el nuevo instrumento en un solo pago, puesto que es ahora cuando más necesaria es la ayuda?

La semana pasada se conoció que los Gobiernos de Alemania y Francia preparan un plan para combatir el paro juvenil en la EU. El plan, que se realizaría tomando el modelo de la garantía juvenil y los 6 000 millones de euros previstos, persigue que, mediante la participación del Banco Europeo de Inversiones, se obtenga en los mercados hasta 60 000 millones de euros que se prestarían a las empresas que participen en el programa.

¿Qué opinión le merece la nueva propuesta? ¿Cuáles son las bases para poder acceder a estas ayudas? ¿Cómo cree el Consejo que sería la forma más eficiente de reparto de esos 60 000 millones de euros?

Respuesta
(22 de julio de 2013)

Como el empleo es competencia de los Estados miembros, el Título IX del Tratado de Funcionamiento de la Unión Europea establece que la Unión Europea contribuirá a un alto nivel de empleo mediante el fomento de la cooperación entre los Estados miembros, así como apoyando y, en caso necesario, complementando sus respectivas actuaciones ([1]). En este contexto, el Consejo Europeo pidió a los Estados miembros que establecieran, dentro de sus programas nacionales de reforma, medidas concretas para que no se destruyan puestos de trabajo y se creen nuevos empleos («Planes nacionales de empleo»), con el fin, entre otras cosas, de ofrecer alternativas a los jóvenes desempleados ([2]). Dentro de estos planes nacionales de empleo, se anima a los Estados miembros a que haga uso, en su caso, de la Iniciativa sobre Empleo Juvenil, recientemente creada por el Consejo Europeo en su reunión de 7 y 8 febrero de 2013, y que se va a desarrollar en un futuro próximo, con el fin de apoyar los planes de Garantía Juvenil ([3]).

En cuanto a las iniciativas a que se refiere Su Señoría, el Consejo no está capacitado para pronunciarse sobre los planes o iniciativas adoptadas por los Estados miembros.

([1]) Artículo 147.1 del TFUE.
([2]) Declaración de los Miembros del Consejo Europeo, 30 de enero de 2012, SN 5/1/12.
([3]) EUCO 37/13, apartados 59 y 60.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005714/13
to the Council
María Irigoyen Pérez (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Youth guarantee

The President of the European Council, Mr Van Rompuy, has indicated on several occasions that reducing the youth unemployment rate, which in some countries, like Spain, is as high as 55%, is the biggest task for European countries today.

In February this year, the Employment Ministers of the 27 European Union countries agreed to create the 'youth guarantee'. Its goal is that, starting in 2014, all Europeans under 26 will have access to work, training or practical experience within four months of finishing their studies or of becoming unemployed.

Unfortunately, funding for this measure would come from the EU's social and cohesion funds, as well as a new Community budget item of EUR 6 000 million for the period 2014-2020. The Commission itself labelled this amount insufficient.

Does the Council not believe the new Community budget item of EUR 6 000 million to be insufficient? Would it not make more sense to apply the new instrument in one payment, since it is now that the help is most needed?

We learned last week that the German and French governments are preparing a plan to combat youth unemployment in the EU. The plan — which would be implemented using the youth guarantee model and the anticipated EUR 6 000 million — aims, with participation from the European Investment Bank, to obtain EUR 60 000 million from the markets. This would be lent to companies taking part in the programme.

What is the Council's opinion of the new proposal? What are the conditions for obtaining this aid? What does the Council think would be the most effective way of allocating this EUR 60 000 million?

Reply
(22 July 2013)

Employment being a Member State competence, Title IX of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that the European Union shall contribute to a high level of employment by encouraging cooperation between Member States and by supporting and, if necessary, complementing their action ([1]). In this context, the European Council called upon Member States to set out, within their National Reform Programmes, concrete measures to keep people in work and create jobs ('National Job Plans'), with a view to, *inter alia*, offering alternatives for unemployed youth ([2]). Within these National Job Plans, Member States are encouraged to make use, where relevant, of the Youth Employment Initiative, recently launched by the European Council at its meeting of 7-8 February 2013, and which is to be developed in the near future, in order to support youth guarantee schemes ([3]).

As regards the initiatives the Honourable Member refers to, the Council is not in a position to pronounce itself on plans or initiatives taken by Member States.

([1]) Article 147(1) TFEU.
([2]) Statement of the Members of the European Council, 30 January 2012, SN 5/1/12.
([3]) EUCO 37/13, paragraphs 59 and 60.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005715/13
a la Comisión
María Irigoyen Pérez (S&D)
(22 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Garantía juvenil

A principios de 2012, la Comisión se comprometió a apoyar los esfuerzos para aumentar el empleo y reducir el desempleo juvenil, que alcanza ya el 55 % en España, mediante la reasignación de los fondos aún no comprometidos. A esta acción, se unió la creación de una «garantía juvenil», adoptada el pasado febrero por los Ministros de Empleo de los 27 países de la Unión Europea, con el objetivo de lograr que todos los europeos menores de 26 años tengan acceso a un trabajo, formación o prácticas en un plazo máximo de cuatro meses tras terminar sus estudios o quedar desempleados desde 2014.

Lamentablemente, la financiación de esta medida provendría de los fondos sociales y de cohesión de la UE, así como de una nueva partida presupuestaria comunitaria de 6 000 millones de euros para el período 2014-2020. Una cantidad tachada de insuficiente por la propia Comisión.

¿No cree la Comisión que sería más razonable que se aplicara el nuevo instrumento en un solo pago y sin que se tenga que repartir en siete años puesto que es ahora cuando más necesaria es la ayuda? ¿Tiene constancia la Comisión de que los Estados miembros estén poniendo en práctica las medidas aprobadas? ¿Va a realizar la Comisión algún tipo de seguimiento y control de los programas nacionales con el objetivo de garantizar el uso adecuado de los fondos procedentes de la UE?

La semana pasada se conoció que los Gobiernos de Alemania y Francia preparan un plan para combatir el paro juvenil en la EU. El plan, que se realizaría tomando el modelo de la garantía juvenil y los 6 000 millones de euros previstos, persigue que mediante la participación del Banco Europeo de Inversiones se obtenga en los mercados hasta 60 000 millones de euros que se prestarían a las empresas que participen en el programa.

¿Qué opinión le merece la nueva propuesta?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(16 de julio de 2013)

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la Comunicación «Trabajar juntos por los jóvenes europeos» ([1]), así como al informe conjunto de la Comisión y el Banco Europeo de Inversiones (BEI) «Aumentar la concesión de préstamos a la economía», ambos adoptados el 19 de junio de 2013, con vistas al Consejo Europeo de 27 y 28 de junio de 2013.

En el ámbito del empleo de los jóvenes, la Comisión propone que los 6 000 millones de euros de la Iniciativa sobre Empleo Juvenil ([2]) (que se implementará a través del Fondo Social Europeo) se comprometan al principio (en 2014 y 2015) y no a lo largo de los siete años del próximo período de programación.

Paralelamente, la Comisión está dispuesta a proporcionar asistencia técnica a los Estados miembros para ayudar a introducir la Garantía Juvenil. La Comisión seguirá de cerca el modo en que las Recomendaciones específicas por países y las prioridades políticas de la Estrategia Europa 2020 sobre el empleo de los jóvenes se reflejan en los acuerdos de asociación y los programas operativos de los Estados miembros para el período 2014-2020.

La Comisión acoge con satisfacción las iniciativas de los Estados miembros destinadas a explorar otras vías para aumentar el apoyo a las medidas en favor de los jóvenes e implementar la Garantía Juvenil.

La Comisión desea señalar que los 6 000 millones de euros asignados a la Iniciativa sobre Empleo Juvenil en el presupuesto de la UE no forman parte del aumento de capital del BEI, sino que se implementarán a través de Fondo Social Europeo. La Comisión Europea y el BEI también cooperan estrechamente para desarrollar nuevos mecanismos que mitiguen las restricciones financieras que frenan actualmente el crecimiento y la creación de empleo. El informe «Aumentar la concesión de préstamos a la economía» mencionado anteriormente establece cómo se asignará el aumento de capital del BEI acordado recientemente y ofrece una serie de opciones para ayudar a las PYME a acceder a la financiación y contratar a gente joven en el futuro próximo.

([1]) COM(2013) 447 final. Todos los documentos están disponibles en: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/news/archives/2013/06/20130619_1_en.htm
([2]) COM(2013) 145 y 146.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005715/13
to the Commission
María Irigoyen Pérez (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Youth guarantee

At the beginning of 2012, the Commission undertook to support efforts to increase employment and reduce youth unemployment, which has now reached 55% in Spain, by reallocating funds not yet committed. In addition to this, a 'youth guarantee' was adopted last February by the Employment Ministers of the 27 European Union countries, the purpose of which is to ensure that, starting in 2014, all Europeans under 26 will have access to work, training or practical experience within four months of finishing their studies or of becoming unemployed.

Unfortunately, funding for this measure would come from the EU's social and cohesion funds, as well as a new Community budget item of EUR 6 000 million for the period 2014-2020. The Commission itself labelled this amount insufficient.

Does the Commission not think it would make more sense to apply the new instrument in one payment without having to distribute it over seven years, as it is now that the aid is most needed? Does the Commission have any evidence to show that Member States are implementing the measures approved? Is the Commission going to monitor and control national programmes in any way to ensure proper use of funds coming from the EU?

We learned last week that the German and French governments are preparing a plan to combat youth unemployment in the EU. The plan — which would be implemented using the youth guarantee model and the anticipated EUR 6 000 million — aims, with participation from the European Investment Bank, to obtain EUR 60 000 million from the markets. This would be lent to companies taking part in the programme.

What is the Commission's opinion of the new proposal?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(16 July 2013)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to the communication on 'Working together for Europe's young people' ([1]), as well as to the joint Commission-European Investment Bank (EIB) report on 'Increasing lending to the economy', all adopted on 19 June 2013 with a view to the European Council of 27/28 June 2013.

On youth employment, the Commission proposes that the EUR 6 billion of the Youth Employment Initiative ([2]) — to be implemented via the European Social Fund — is frontloaded so that money is committed in 2014 and 2015 rather than over the seven year period of the next programming period.

In parallel, the Commission is ready to provide the Member States with technical assistance to help introduce the Youth Guarantee. The Commission will closely monitor the way the Country-Specific Recommendations and Europe 2020 policy priorities on youth employment are reflected in the Member States' 2014-20 Partnership Agreements and operational programmes.

The Commission welcomes Member State initiatives to explore other channels for increasing support for youth measures and implementing the Youth Guarantee.

The Commission would point out that the EUR 6 billion earmarked for the YEI in the EU budget is not part of the increase in capital of the EIB, but will be implemented via the European Social Fund. The European Commission and the EIB are also closely cooperating to develop new mechanisms to alleviate the financial constraints currently hindering growth and job creation. The abovementioned joint report on 'Increasing lending to the economy' sets out how the recently agreed capital increase of the EIB will be allocated and puts forward a number of options to help SMEs get access to funding and hire young people in the near future.

([1]) COM(2013) 447 final. All documents available at: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/news/archives/2013/06/20130619_1_en.htm

([2]) COM(2013) 145 and 146.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005716/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(22 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: El gasto de la Armada española se dispara en momentos de crisis económica

Mientras España sigue las recomendaciones del Semestre Europeo y recorta sus presupuestos en educación, salud, administración local, transporte ferroviario, I+D y universidades, entre otros, invierte en la creación de un nuevo modelo de submarino militar. En 2008, la Armada española apostó por la creación de un nuevo modelo de submarino, el S-80 que ahora lleva a la misma a un aprieto al detectarse un fallo en el tonelaje. Dicho fallo conllevará más de 20 millones de euros en nuevas revisiones y reparaciones que deben sumarse a los 2 200 millones de euros ya gastados en todo el proyecto. Al mismo tiempo, la Armada busca financiación para renovar el S-74 Tramontana, con un coste de entre 30 y 35 millones de euros.

Pero esto no es anecdótico. En el informe de TNI ([1]) se explica que, entre 2000 y 2008, España aumentó en un 29 % su gasto militar, debido principalmente a las compras masivas de armas. España arrastra una deuda acumulada de 27 000 millones de euros en los Programas Especiales de Armamentos (PEAS) y tiene hoy enormes problemas para pagar esas deudas. Sin embargo, en 2012, el gasto militar anual por habitante en España fue de 368 euros, mientras que el farmacéutico fue de 259 euros ([2]).

El dato chocante es que, en plena austeridad, en 2010, el gasto militar total de la UE es de 194 000 millones de euros, lo que equivale a la suma del déficit anual de Grecia, Italia y España.

1. ¿Qué opina del gasto militar en el Submarino S-80 la Comisión? ¿Conocía las cifras expresadas por el informe de TNI sobre el peso relativo del gasto militar en España? ¿Cree que esto atenta contra las recomendaciones a España dentro del procedimiento de déficit excesivo? ¿Considera perverso exigir esfuerzos presupuestarios a la ciudadanía en ámbitos sociales y no controlar el gasto militar innecesario? ¿Recomendará a España suspender todos sus programas PEAS y no invertir nada más en infraestructura militar?

2. ¿Qué opinión tiene sobre el gasto militar en toda la UE? ¿Hará algo para reducir y redireccionarlo a gasto social y a inversión en la economía sostenible?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(26 de junio de 2013)

La Comisión ha pedido reiteradamente a los Estados miembros, entre ellos a España, que presten toda su atención a la composición y calidad de sus finanzas públicas en lo que respecta a su incremento e impacto social. A tal efecto, habría que revisar la totalidad de los gastos e ingresos y no limitarse a comparar de manera selectiva algunos de esos gastos e ingresos. En la propuesta de la Comisión sobre las recomendaciones específicas por país para España de 29 de mayo de 2013 se le invitaba a revisar sus gastos e ingresos. Dicho esto, los gastos de defensa nacional responden a objetivos de diversa índole que quedan fuera del ámbito de competencia de la UE en materia de supervisión económica .

([1]) http://www.tni.org/briefing/guns-debt-corruption
([2]) http://www.centredelas.org/images/stories/informes/An%C3%A1lisis%20gasto%20militar%202012_cas.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005716/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Spanish Navy expenditure soars in times of economic crisis

At the same time as it is following the European Semester recommendations and cutting its budgets for education, health, local government, rail transport, R&D and universities, among others, Spain is investing in creating a new class of military submarine. In 2008, the Spanish Navy committed to creating a new class of submarine, the S-80, which has now caused difficulties for the Navy because a defect has been detected in its tonnage. More than EUR 20 million will now have to be spent on inspections and repairs, added to the EUR 2 200 million already spent on the whole project. At the same time, the Navy is seeking funds to renovate the S-74 Tramontana, at a cost of between EUR 30 million and EUR 35 million.

This is not anecdotal. The TNI ([1]) report explains that, between 2000 and 2008, Spain increased its military expenditure by 29%, mainly due to massive arms purchases. Spain is burdened with an accumulated debt of EUR 27 000 million for Special Arms Programmes (PEAS) and now has huge problems settling these debts. In 2012, however, per capital annual military expenditure in Spain was EUR 368, compared to EUR 259 on pharmaceutics ([2]).

The shocking fact is that, in the midst of austerity, the EU's military expenditure in 2010 was EUR 194 000 million, equivalent to the annual deficits of Greece, Italy and Spain put together.

1. What is the Commission's opinion of the military expenditure on the S-80 Submarine? Was the Commission aware of the figures in the TNI report regarding the relative weight of military expenditure in Spain? Does it believe this runs counter to the recommendations made to Spain in the excessive deficit procedure? Does it consider it perverse to make budgetary demands on citizens in social contexts while failing to control military expenditure? Will it recommend that Spain suspend all its Special Arms Programmes and cease to make any further investments in military infrastructure?

2. What is the Commission's opinion of military expenditure in the EU as a whole? Will it do something to reduce it and to redirect it to social expenditure and investment in the sustainable economy?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(26 June 2013)

The Commission has repeatedly called on Member States, including Spain, to pay utmost attention to the composition and quality of their public finances in terms of their growth and social impact. This should be done by reviewing the whole of expenditures and revenues and not simply comparing selectively specific items. Recommendations for expenditure and revenue reviews are included in the Commission proposal for country-specific recommendations to Spain of 29 May 2013. That said, national defence expenditures respond to different objectives, which are outside the remit of EU economic surveillance.

([1]) http://www.tni.org/briefing/guns-debt-corruption.
([2]) http://www.centredelas.org/images/stories/informes/An%C3%A1lisis%20gasto%20militar%202012_cas.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer P-005718/13
to the Commission
Brian Simpson (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: EU olive oil rules

— Can the Commission confirm whether recent reports on its Implementing Regulation ([1]) amending Implementing Regulation (EU) No 29/2012 on marketing standards for olive oil are true in that it will in effect ban olive oil jugs and dipping bowls in restaurants across the EU from January 2014?

— If this is the case, could the Commission explain what evidence supported such an excessive reaction? Moreover, given that banning dipping bowls and table jugs in mostly small establishments seems to represent a completely disproportionate response to the problem of fraud in the marketing of olive oil, what does the Commission intend to do to rectify the situation in making sure ordinary restaurants are not affected by this regulation?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(18 June 2013)

The Commission confirms that a draft Implementing Regulation amending Implementing Regulation (EU) No 29/2012 on marketing standards for olive oil providing *inter alia* for the following measure: 'Oils made available to the final consumer in hotels, restaurants and pubs and bars shall be packed in containers equipped with an opening system which cannot be resealed after it has first been opened, together with a protection system preventing them from being reused once the contents indicated on the label have been finished. They shall also bear labels in line with Articles 3 to 6.' was voted on by the Management Committee for the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets on 14 May 2013. The measure did not mean small bowls of olive oil would disappear. The draft text failed to receive the support of a qualified majority of Member States.

The draft Regulation has been withdrawn. Over the next few months the Commission will look, with representatives of consumers, restaurateurs and producers, for the best way of achieving the objectives of enhancing the quality of olive oil and improving information on quality for consumers to guarantee clear and reliable labelling, as well as identifying other instruments for achieving this.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regcomitology/index.cfm?do=search.documentdetail&LU32BuyC7QaLfZzwSpTNJe5zeqktLk7LR4XMBqIWPsuBuE2177sL3dMBpRfefPrJ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005719/13
to the Commission
Andrew Henry William Brons (NI)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Renegotiation of EU membership by the UK

Writing in the UK's *The Times* newspaper on 7 May 2013, a previous Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Lawson, stated:

'The Prime Minister has embarked on a series of preliminary talks with our EU partners, hoping to be able to renegotiate improved terms for the UK within the Union, which he can then put to the people in a referendum in 2017.'

'I have no doubt that any changes that Mr Cameron (or Ed Miliband) is able to secure will be inconsequential. The theology of the *acquis communautaire*, the principle that any powers ceded by the member states to the EU are ceded irrevocably, is absolute. It is the rock on which the Union is built, and — through the so-called Passerelle Clause of the Lisbon Treaty — effectively an explicit part of the EU constitution. Moreover, to make exceptions for one member state would inevitably lead to similar demands from others and threaten a general unravelling.'

'The doctrine that "more Europe" must *ipso facto* be a good thing is sacrosanct. My friends among the eurocracy assure me, too, that a precondition for any renegotiation would be that we agree to give up the UK rebate secured with such difficulty by Margaret Thatcher some 30 years ago.'

Does the Commission agree with Lord Lawson's view that substantial renegotiation of the UK's relationship with the EU would not be possible?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(25 July 2013)

As laid down in Article 48 TEU, the government of any Member State may submit proposals for amending the Treaties in accordance with the ordinary revision procedure, or if the conditions are fulfilled in accordance with the simplified revision procedure. In the course of these procedures, the Commission is requested to give its opinion on the proposals for amendment; however, at this time, no such proposals have been submitted.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005720/13
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Permissible restrictions on welfare entitlements for newly arrived EU citizens

As the Commission is aware, the ending of transitional arrangements for Bulgarian and Romanian nationals and the implications of large migratory flows stemming from this is generating considerable concern throughout Europe. UK opinion polls suggest that uncontrolled immigration is now the primary concern of voters across the country and the UK is certainly not alone in this regard. In an article in *The Times* (Boundaries on Welfare, 5 March 2013) the German Interior Minister Hans-Peter Friedrich was quoted as saying 'whoever is only coming to cash in on state benefits, and is therefore abusing this freedom of movement, needs to be meaningfully prevented'.

In 1982 (D.M. Levin v Staatssecretaris van Justitie, case 53/81) the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled that the Treaties 'guarantee only the free movement of persons who pursue or are desirous of pursuing an economic activity', whilst the EU Residence Directive of 2004 allows freedom to reside within another Member State so long as the individual (who is entitled to bring in parents and/or children) is covered by health insurance and is in receipt of sufficient income to avoid becoming a burden on the welfare assistance programmes of the host state.

Can the Commission confirm whether this remains the position, and therefore on what grounds it has referred the UK to the ECJ for discrimination against nationals of other Member States?

Was the decision to refer the UK taken by the whole Commission?

Have any other Member States been referred to the ECJ on similar grounds?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(18 July 2013)

Since the Treaty of Maastricht on European Union entered into force on 1 November 1993, all EU citizens, and not only economically active EU citizens, enjoy the fundamental freedom to move and reside freely within the EU ([1]). That right is subject to the limitations and conditions laid down in Directive 2004/38/EC ([2]) which make sure that free movement is not abused. To enjoy the right to reside for more than three months in another Member State, EU citizens must be working in the latter or be able to show that they have comprehensive sickness insurance and sufficient resources not to be a burden on the host Member State's social assistance system.

Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 ([3]) on the coordination of social security schemes, however, provides for equal treatment of EU citizens who are working or habitually resident in another Member State. It is on those grounds that the Commission has referred the UK to the Court of Justice. Under UK law, certain social security benefits (namely Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit, State Pension Credit, Income-based Allowance for Jobseekers, and Income-based Employment and Support Allowance) are granted only to persons with a 'right to reside' in the UK. While UK nationals have the right to reside there on the sole basis of their UK citizenship, other EU nationals must meet additional conditions in order to pass the 'right to reside' test. This means that the UK indirectly discriminates against nationals from other Member States.

The Habitual Residence Test is the tool provided by the regulation to identify who is entitled to social security coverage.

Like all Commission decisions, the decision to refer the UK to the Court was taken by the Commission as a whole.

No other Member State has been referred to the Court on similar grounds thus far.

([1]) Article 21 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

([2]) Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States amending Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 and repealing Directives 64/221/EEC, 68/360/EEC, 72/194/EEC, 73/148/EEC, 75/34/EEC, 75/35/EEC, 90/364/EEC, 90/365/EEC and 93/96/EEC, OJ L 158, 30.4.2004.

([3]) Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the coordination of social security systems, OJ L 166, 30.4.2004.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005721/13
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: The legality of state-owned or partially state-owned banks offering higher interest rates to depositors

Before the late Baroness Thatcher — during her time as UK Prime Minister — and her first Chancellor, Geoffrey Howe, succeeded in controlling UK inflation, she deplored the impact of continuing high levels of inflation on people's savings, regarding it as a kind of governmental 'theft'. While commentators on the political left are currently focused almost exclusively on the difficulties of achieving growth in the Western economies, little attention has been paid to the silent transfer of wealth from savers to borrowers as a result of 'quantitative easing' policies and the resulting prevalence of negative real rates of interest on bank deposits.

That is not to say that such policies are irrational — in the UK the Governor of the Bank of England has tried hard to steer a course that will not generate excessive inflation on the one hand or, on the other hand, wantonly damage the chances of recovery in a way that would also have negative impacts on savers and borrowers alike. That said, the existence of negative real rates of interest has been the principal factor in allowing commercial banks to build up their balance sheets, as they take advantage of cheap sources of credit from the central bank without passing on the benefits to their customers, or in many cases without lending to businesses at all. Understandably, businesses and savers alike are increasingly critical and looking for a better deal. In the 2011 budget, the British Government relaxed the rules on National Savings and Investments (NS&I) Savings Certificates, bringing benefits both to savers (since returns were index-linked) and potentially to the government itself as a source of cheap borrowing (at a real rate of interest of 0%). However, following pressure from the banks, which feared even this limited degree of competition, Savings Certificates have not been available in the UK for about 18 months.

Is the Commission aware that the UK Government has withdrawn this limited opportunity for savers?

Does the Commission believe any unfair competition issues would be raised if the government of any Member State were to finance a significant part of its borrowing through index-linked savings certificates or their equivalent where this offers a better return than that offered by commercial retail banks?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

As part of the country surveillance the Commission monitors regularly the outstanding government debt of Member States. However, it is up to the Member States to decide what instruments they see best suited to finance their debt. Individual instruments such as the National Savings and Investments Savings Certificates or term structure of bonds and bills would come under closer scrutiny by the Commission only if they were deemed as excessively risky, which would be relevant from the point of view of the Commission's country surveillance.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005722/13
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: High-frequency trading in the banking sector

As Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, Andy Haldane spent a considerable time in 2011 and 2012 speaking at conferences to outline his concerns over high-frequency trading (HFT), a form of trading that is increasingly used by both banks and hedge funds at a time when the market for derivatives comfortably exceeds global GDP. Enormous quantities of trades are automatically conducted by computer under HFT in a fraction of a second on the basis of pre-determined algorithms. One concern is that simple mistakes can have dire consequences — for example the true story of a trading firm which became insolvent 16 seconds after an employee switched off an algorithm, although it took a full 47 minutes for the company to realise it had gone bust. The other is that in a sudden downswing, such automatic selling can cause unnecessary panic and even generate a crash.

Has the Commission had any correspondence with the Bank of England over this issue?

What is the Commission's current thinking in relation to high-frequency trading?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

One of the objectives of the Commission proposals amending the directive on Markets in Financial Instruments (the MiFID review) ([1]) is to address technological changes and to incorporate lessons learned from the financial crisis. High frequency trading is one of the main areas of focus for the MiFID review. As part of this process, the Commission has had extensive contacts with all stakeholders, including UK authorities.

One of the most significant market developments over the past few decades has been the increasing trend towards the use of automated electronic trading known as algorithmic trading which includes high frequency trading (HFT). The MiFID review therefore contains a number of provisions to address the risks associated with algorithmic trading. These provisions introduce a series of safeguards both on market participants who use algorithms as part of their trading strategies, as well as on trading venues where algorithmic and high-frequency trading takes place.

At the same time, the Commission adopted its proposals to review the Market Abuse Directive ([2]). These proposals clarify how the market abuse provisions apply to certain forms of algorithmic trading. All these proposals are currently under negotiation in the European Parliament and the Council under the ordinary legislative procedure.

([1]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Markets in financial instruments and amending Regulation [EMIR] on OTC derivatives, central counterparties and trade repositories (COM(2011) 652) and proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on markets in financial instruments repealing Directive 2004/39/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (COM(2011) 656), http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0656:FIN:EN:PDF

([2]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on insider dealing and market manipulation (market abuse) (COM(2011) 0651), http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0651:FIN:EN:HTML

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005723/13
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Updating of the Clinical Trials Directive and problem of 'reporting bias'

The problem of 'reporting bias' in clinical research has been a concern for some time within the academic community. In January 2013, the UK 'All Trials' group was established with the objective of ensuring that all clinical study reports (CSRs) are made available for drugs sold on the market.

On 22 April 2013, the UK House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee held hearings into the conduct of clinical trials and research, with panel witnesses including representatives of medical charities and pharmaceutical companies, along with academic representatives such as Dr Ben Goldacre, Wellcome Research Fellow in Epidemiology and co-founder of All Trials. The hearing took place in the context of proposed UK legislation in this area, as well as the proposals published last year by the Commission to update the 2004 Clinical Trials Directive. During his testimony, Dr Goldacre claimed that the publication of summary results in peer-reviewed journals was insufficient for the full implications of pharmaceutical intervention to be properly evaluated. He also pointed out that there had been cases where even the appropriate regulators had failed to spot problems with drug treatment which had subsequently been identified by physicians and the wider academic research community. He thus favoured much greater transparency and proposed the release of full CSRs so that clinical results could be inspected by academics as well as the regulators, in the interests of patient safety. Spokespeople for the two international drug companies indicated a willingness to embrace greater transparency, with the spokesperson for Hoffman-La Roche saying that 'if that is where society wants to go' then the industry was happy to follow.

— Can the Commission indicate its current thinking on 'reporting bias' and the full release of clinical study reports?

— Can it indicate whether pharmaceutical companies have made representations to the Commission opposing greater transparency in this area and whether All Trials and similar groups in other Member States have been invited to submit their opinions?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(24 June 2013)

The Commission is very committed to ensure better transparency on data from clinical trials. It is for this reason that it has included new provisions in its recent proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on clinical trials on medicinal products for human use and repealing Directive 2001/20/EC ([1]). The proposal foresees that the sponsor shall submit to the EU database a summary of the results of the clinical trial rather than the full trial report. The EU database shall be publically accessible unless confidentiality is justified for reasons of protecting personal data in accordance with Regulation (EC) 45/2001, commercially confidential information or ensuring the effective supervision of a clinical trial by a Member State.

These provisions build on the existing procedure foreseen in the 'guidance document on the request to the competent authorities for authorisation of a clinical trial on a medicinal product for human use, the notification of substantial amendments and the declaration of the end of the trial' (Section 4.3) ([2]).

The proposal from the Commission has been elaborated following 2 public consultations ([3]) where all interested stakeholders had the possibility to submit their comments. Such comments are available online.

([1]) COM(2012) 369 final, 2012/0192 (COD).
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/files/eudralex/vol-10/2010_c82_01/2010_c82_01_en.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/human-use/clinical-trials/index_en.htm#rlctd.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-005724/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(22 mei 2013)

Betreft: Vereenvoudiging van documenten

De Commissie heeft een voorstel aangenomen voor een verordening over het bevorderen van het vrije verkeer van burgers en ondernemingen middels het vereenvoudigen van de acceptatie van bepaalde openbare documenten in de EU. Het voorstel beoogt het reduceren van de praktische moeilijkheden die worden veroorzaakt door de vastgestelde administratieve formaliteiten door middel van het afschaffen van de eisen van legalisatie en apostilles, en door middel van het vereenvoudigen van het gebruik van kopieën en vertalingen. De Commissie vermeldt de artikelen 21 en 114 VWEU als rechtsgrond.

1. Kan de Commissie meedelen in welk stadium van de wetgevingsprocedure dit voorstel zich momenteel bevindt?

2. Kan de Commissie meedelen waarom zij gekozen heeft voor artikel 21 VWEU in combinatie met artikel 114 VWEU?

3. Hoe interpreteert de Commissie artikel 114, lid 2, VWEU, waarin duidelijk staat dat de onderlinge aanpassing van de wettelijke en bestuursrechtelijke bepalingen van de lidstaten niet van toepassing is op de bepalingen inzake het vrije verkeer van personen?

4. Is de Commissie het met mij eens dat het niet mogelijk artikel 114 VWEU als rechtsgrond te gebruiken aangezien het hoofddoel van deze verordening het bevorderen van het vrije verkeer van personen is?

5. Wat is de Commissie van plan te doen om te voorkomen dat een verordening wordt vastgesteld die stoelt op een verkeerde rechtsgrond?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(18 juli 2013)

Het voorstel voor een verordening ter bevordering van het vrije verkeer van burgers en bedrijven door vereenvoudigde aanvaarding van bepaalde openbare akten in de Europese Unie en tot wijziging van Verordening (EU) nr. 1024/2012 (COM(2013) 228) is op 6 juni 2013 door de Commissie ingediend bij de JBZ-Raad en op 19 juni 2013 bij de Commissie juridische zaken van het Europees Parlement. De besprekingen in de werkgroep van de Raad zijn op 24 juni 2013 van start gegaan.

De Commissie benadrukt dat het doel van het voorstel tweeledig is, d.w.z. het is gericht op een gemakkelijkere uitoefening van het recht op vrij verkeer van de burger wanneer hij in een andere lidstaat openbare akten moet overleggen (vandaar het gebruik van artikel 21, lid 2, VWEU) en op een eenvoudiger gebruik van openbare akten met betrekking tot bedrijven en andere ondernemingen die in meerdere lidstaten actief zijn (vandaar het gebruik van artikel 114, lid 1, VWEU).

Artikel 114, lid 2, VWEU sluit het gebruik van artikel 114, lid 1, VWEU in combinatie met artikel 21, lid 1, VWEU niet uit.

De Commissie is bijgevolg niet van mening dat het voorstel op een verkeerde rechtsgrond stoelt en moedigt de medewetgevers aan het voorstel spoedig aan te nemen in het belang van de burger en het bedrijfsleven

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005724/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Simplification of documents

The Commission adopted a proposal for a regulation on promoting the free movement of citizens and businesses by simplifying the acceptance of certain public documents in the EU. The proposal aims at reducing practical difficulties caused by the identified administrative formalities, by abolishing the requirements of legalisation and Apostilles, and by simplifying the use of copies and translations. Regarding the legal basis, the Commission cited Article 21 and Article 114 TFEU.

1. Could the Commission provide information regarding the phase of the legislative procedure at which this proposal stands?

2. Could the Commission explain why it decided to choose the application of Article 21 TFEU in conjunction with Article 114 TFEU?

3. How does the Commission interpret Article 114(2) TFEU, where it is clearly stated that the approximation of the provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States shall not apply to those relating to the free movement of persons?

4. Does the Commission agree that it is not possible to apply Article 114 TFEU as a legal basis, given that the primary goal of this regulation is the promotion of the free movement of citizens?

5. What does the Commission intend to do to prevent the adoption of a regulation which is based on a wrongful legal basis?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(18 July 2013)

The proposal for a regulation on promoting the free movement of citizens and businesses by simplifying the acceptance of certain public documents in the European Union and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012 (COM(2013) 228) was presented by the Commission to the JHA Council on 6 June 2013 and to the Legal Affairs Committee of the European Parliament on 19 June 2013. Discussions at the Council Working Party started on 24 June 2013.

The Commission would like to emphasise that the goal of the proposal is two-fold, i.e. to facilitate the exercise of citizens' free movement rights in case they need to present public documents in another Member State (hence, the use of Article 21(2) TFEU) and simplify the use of public documents relating to companies and other undertakings operating in a cross-border context (hence, the use of Article 114(1) TFEU).

Article 114(2) TFEU does not exclude the use of Article 114(1) TFEU in combination with Article 21(1) TFEU.

The Commission does not therefore consider that the proposal uses an incorrect legal basis and encourages its swift adoption by the co-legislators for the benefit of citizens and businesses.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005725/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 mai 2013)

Objet: Directive «mères-filiales»

La Commission va-t-elle faire une proposition de révision de la directive «mères-filiales» et de la directive concernant les intérêts et les redevances en vue de revoir et d'aligner les dispositions contre les abus de ces deux directives et d'éliminer la double non-imposition facilitée par le recours à des entités ou à des instruments financiers hybrides?

Quand va-t-elle le faire? Avant 2014, comme lui suggère avec insistance le Parlement européen?

Réponse donnée par M. Šemeta au nom de la Commission
(8 juillet 2013)

L'Honorable Parlementaire a demandé si la Commission envisageait de faire des propositions de révision de la directive «mères-filiales» et de la directive «intérêts et redevances», en vue d'une part d'harmoniser les dispositions contenues dans ces deux directives — dispositions qui luttent contre les pratiques abusives — et d'autre part d'éliminer la possibilité de double non-imposition que facilite le recours à des entités hybrides ou à des instruments financiers hybrides. La Commission a l'intention de proposer avant la fin de l'année les modifications, qui s'imposent, de la directive «mères-filiales» afin de prendre des mesures à l'égard des dispositifs financiers hybrides, comme elle l'a prévu dans son plan d'action du 6 décembre 2012.

Une proposition de la Commission portant modification de la directive «intérêts et redevances» est en attente de l'approbation du Conseil [COM(2011) 714 final]. L'une des modifications proposées dispose que les avantages de la directive ne s'appliquent que lorsque les revenus provenant de ces paiements sont effectivement soumis à l'impôt dans l'État membre bénéficiaire. Cette exigence concernant «l'assujettissement à l'impôt» est une disposition qui vise à lutter contre la double non-imposition. Dans sa résolution du 11 septembre 2012, le Parlement européen a voté en faveur de l'insertion d'un amendement dans ladite proposition, afin de s'attaquer expressément aux entités hybrides ainsi qu'aux instruments financiers hybrides. Le Conseil pourrait proposer des modifications plus spécifiques au cours des débats qu'il mènera.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005725/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Parent-Subsidiary directive

Is the Commission going to put forward a proposal for a review of the 'Parent-Subsidiary' directive and the directive on interest and royalty payments with a view to revising and aligning provisions combating the abuse of these two directives and eliminating the double non-taxation facilitated by the use of hybrid entities or hybrid financial instruments?

When is it going to do so? Will this be before 2014, as the European Parliament has urged?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

The Honourable Member has asked about possible Commission proposals to review the 'Parent-Subsidiary' directive and the 'Interest and Royalties' directive with a view to aligning their anti-abuse provisions and eliminating the double non-taxation facilitated by the use of hybrid entities or hybrid financial instruments. The Commission plans to propose the necessary amendment to the Parent-Subsidiary directive to tackle hybrid financial mismatches, as envisaged by the action plan of 6 December 2012, by the end of the year.

A Commission proposal amending the 'Interest & Royalties' directive is pending in Council (COM(2011) 714 final). One of the proposed amendments provides that the benefits of the directive are only applicable when the income derived from the payment is effectively subject to tax in the receiving Member State. The 'subject to tax' requirement is a provision fighting double non-taxation. By a Resolution of 11 September 2012 the European Parliament voted in favour of introducing an amendment to the proposal to expressly tackle hybrid instruments and hybrid entities. More specific amendments could be proposed by the Council in the course of the discussion.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005726/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 mai 2013)

Objet: Code de conduite pour les commissaires aux comptes

1. La Commission compte-t-elle, comme le lui suggère le Parlement, élaborer et promouvoir un code de conduite pour les commissaires aux comptes et les conseillers?

2. La Commission compte-t-elle inviter les sociétés d'audit à alerter les administrations fiscales nationales de tout signe de planification fiscale agressive dans les sociétés qu'elles contrôlent?

3. Comment se positionne la Commission quant à la possibilité, pour les commissaires aux comptes, de fournir des services hors du cadre de l'audit?

Réponse donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(17 juillet 2013)

1. Le 30 novembre 2011, la Commission a proposé une série de mesures visant à renforcer l'indépendance des contrôleurs légaux des comptes et à améliorer la qualité des audits sur le marché. Une proposition de directive modifiant la directive 2006/43/CE qui concerne les contrôles légaux, ainsi qu'une proposition de règlement relatif aux exigences spécifiques applicables au contrôle légal des comptes des entités d'intérêt public (EIP), ont été adoptées [COM(2011)778 et COM(2011)779], et sont actuellement en cours de négociation au Parlement européen et au Conseil. Un code de conduite à l'intention des contrôleurs légaux des comptes et des conseillers ne pourrait contrer de manière satisfaisante les menaces qui pèsent sur leur indépendance; c'est pourquoi la Commission a opté pour une approche réglementaire.

2. Les propositions de la Commission visent à améliorer les canaux de communication entre les auditeurs et les autorités de surveillance. Bien qu'il n'y ait pas d'exigence directe imposée aux cabinets d'audit de faire rapport aux autorités fiscales nationales, d'autres obligations incombent aux contrôleurs des comptes en matière d'informations à fournir aux autorités de surveillance responsables des entités d'intérêt public et aux autorités de surveillance des audits. La fourniture d'informations aux autorités fiscales pourrait être envisagée à l'avenir.

3. Fournir des services autres que d'audit alors que l'on procède à l'audit d'une société constitue une source possible de conflits d'intérêts qui pourraient émaner du cabinet d'audit ou se produire en son sein: cela se produit, par exemple, lorsqu'un cabinet d'audit a intérêt à se procurer des revenus supplémentaires en fournissant d'autres services (des services hors du cadre de l'audit). Si la fourniture de services de contrôle légal des comptes devenait en réalité un moyen de fournir des services autres que d'audit à un même client, le principe du «scepticisme professionnel» serait mis en péril. En conséquence, en vue de renforcer l'indépendance des contrôleurs des comptes, la Commission a proposé pour les services autres que d'audit une «liste noire» qui comprendrait notamment les services de conseil fiscal.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005726/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Code of conduct for auditors

1. As Parliament has suggested, will the Commission draft and promote a code of conduct for auditors and advisers?

2. Does the Commission intend to call upon auditing firms to alert national tax authorities to any signs of aggressive tax planning by audited companies?

3. What is the Commission's position on the possibility of auditors providing non-audit services?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(17 July 2013)

1. On 30 November 2011 the Commission proposed a series of measures that aim to reinforce auditors independence and to enhance audit quality in the market. A proposal for a directive amending Directive 2006/43/EC on statutory audits and a proposal for a regulation on specific measures which exclusively relate to the statutory audit of public-interest entities (PIEs) were adopted (COM(2011) 779 and COM(2011) 778) which are currently being negotiated in the Parliament and the Council. A Code of Conduct for auditors and advisers could not properly address the potential risks to independence, hence the Commission decided to follow a regulatory approach.

2. The Commission proposals aim to improve the communication channels between auditors and supervisors. Even if there is no direct requirement upon audit firms to report to national tax authorities, there are other reporting obligations upon auditors to PIE supervisors and to audit supervisors. Reporting to tax authorities could be envisaged in the future.

3. Providing non-audit services (NAS) while auditing a company presents a potential source of conflict of interest arising from or within the audit firm: i.e. the audit firm has an interest to secure additional revenue from the provision of other (non-audit) services. If the provision of statutory audit effectively becomes a gateway to the provision of NAS to the same client, 'professional scepticism' would be compromised. Thus, in order to reinforce the auditor independence, the Commission proposed a so-called 'black list' of prohibited non-audit services including tax consultancy.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005727/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 mai 2013)

Objet: Stratégie globale sur le manque à gagner fiscal

La Commission compte-t-elle enfin élaborer une stratégie globale fondée sur des mesures législatives concrètes dans le cadre des traités en vigueur afin de réduire le manque à gagner fiscal dans l'Union et de veiller à ce que toutes les entreprises qui opèrent dans l'Union remplissent leurs obligations fiscales dans tous les États membres dans lesquels elles opèrent?

Réponse donnée par M. Šemeta au nom de la Commission
(8 juillet 2013)

La Commission a présenté sa stratégie de lutte contre la fraude et l'évasion fiscales et la planification fiscale agressive le 6 décembre 2012 lors de l'adoption de sa communication sur un plan d'action pour renforcer la lutte contre la fraude et l'évasion fiscales [COM(2012) 722 final] et de deux recommandations sur la planification fiscale agressive [C(2012)8806 final] et sur des mesures visant à encourager les pays tiers à appliquer des normes minimales de bonne gouvernance dans le domaine fiscal [C(2012)8805 final].

Soucieuse de garantir un suivi efficace des actions proposées dans les délais fixés, la Commission surveille ce dossier de près. En outre, elle entend réagir rapidement aux changements de situation et saisir sans attendre chaque nouvelle opportunité. Compte tenu du consensus de plus en plus large qui semble se dégager quant à la nécessité d'étendre l'échange automatique d'informations au niveau de l'Union et à l'échelon international, la Commission a proposé, le 12 juin 2013, des modifications de la directive relative à la coopération administrative. Elle continuera également à promouvoir les mêmes principes au niveau international.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005727/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Comprehensive strategy on tax revenue loss

Does the Commission intend, at last, to draw up a comprehensive strategy based on specific legislative measures within the framework of the Treaties in force in order to reduce tax revenue loss in the EU and to ensure that all enterprises operating in the EU meet their fiscal obligations in all the Member States in which they operate?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

The Commission presented its strategy to tackle tax fraud, tax evasion and aggressive tax planning on 6 December 2012 when adopting its communication on an Action Plan to strengthen the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion (COM(2012) 722 final) and two Recommendations on Aggressive tax planning (C(2012) 8806 final) and measures intended to encourage third countries to apply minimum standards of good governance in tax matters (C(2012) 8805 final).

The Commission is keen to ensure an effective follow-up to the actions proposed in accordance with set deadlines and so monitors this closely. In addition, the Commission reacts quickly to new developments and opportunities. In view of the growing consensus regarding the need to extend automatic exchange of information at EU and international levels, the Commission proposed on 12 June 2013 amendments to the directive on administrative cooperation. It will also continue to promote the same principles at the international level.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005728/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 mai 2013)

Objet: Transparence des impôts payés par les entreprises

Quelles sont les mesures que compte prendre la Commission concernant la transparence des impôts payés par les entreprises en obligeant toutes les entreprises multinationales à publier un seul chiffre, simple, correspondant au montant des impôts versés dans chacun des États membres dans lesquels elles opèrent?

Réponse donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(12 juillet 2013)

La Commission approuve complètement les conclusions du Conseil européen du 22 mai 2013 en ce qui concerne les déclarations que les grandes entreprises et les groupes doivent faire en matière fiscale.

À cette fin, la Commission collaborera étroitement avec le Parlement européen et le Conseil pour faire en sorte que l'UE adopte dès que possible des règles dans ce domaine. Parallèlement, la Commission continuera à suivre de près les discussions internationales sur ces questions au G8, au G20 et à l'OCDE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005728/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Transparency of taxes paid by enterprises

What measures does the Commission intend to take in relation to the transparency of taxes paid by enterprises, by requiring all multinational enterprises to publish a single, simple figure that represents the amount of taxes paid in each of the Member States in which they operate?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

The Commission fully supports the European Council's conclusions of 22 May 2013 as regards reporting by large companies and groups on tax matters.

To this end, the Commission will work closely together with the European Parliament and the Council to make sure that EU rules are adopted as quickly as possible in this area. In parallel, the Commission will continue to follow closely the international discussions on these issues in the G8, G20 and OECD.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005729/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 mai 2013)

Objet: Capacité de stockage des énergies renouvelables

Il est important de garantir la sécurité de l'approvisionnement. Le développement des énergies renouvelables qui seront injectées d'une manière fluctuante dans le réseau nécessitera un équilibrage souple de ces fluctuations et des sources de secours flexibles, de sorte que le réseau électrique européen devra être intégré et interconnecté. Celui-ci devra aussi permettre le commerce transfrontalier et être doté de mécanismes de gestion des variations de la demande, de dispositifs de stockage de l'énergie et de centrales au fonctionnement flexible.

La Commission peut-elle déterminer s'il existe un problème de capacité au sein de l'Union?

La Commission peut-elle déterminer quelle est la puissance garantie pouvant être fournie par les sources d'énergie renouvelables variables au sein d'un réseau électrique européen intégré, ainsi que ses effets potentiels sur l'adéquation de la production d'électricité?

Réponse donnée par M. Oettinger au nom de la Commission
(11 juillet 2013)

L'identification d'une éventuelle insuffisance de capacité de production est un exercice complexe, mais essentiel. L'évaluation d'un problème de capacité relève de la compétence des gestionnaires de réseau ainsi que des autorités de régulation et des gouvernements nationaux. En l'absence d'informations pertinentes au niveau national, la Commission n'est donc pas en mesure d'identifier un problème de capacité au niveau de l'UE.

Selon la Commission, une évaluation de ce type doit comprendre les éventuelles importations d'électricité en provenance d'autres États membres, des données fiables et précises concernant les sources d'énergie variables telles que l'éolien et le solaire, ainsi que le potentiel de mesures de gestion de la demande. Cette évaluation permettrait de déterminer la quantité d'énergie pouvant être fournie par les sources d'énergie variables et les mesures à prendre afin de garantir une production suffisante. Durant l'été 2013, la Commission présentera un avis détaillé sur ces questions et formulera des recommandations portant sur les éléments et l'ampleur de l'évaluation.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005729/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Renewable energy storage capacity

It is important to guarantee security of supply. The development of renewable energies that will be injected into the system in a fluctuating manner will require a flexible equalisation of these fluctuations and flexible emergency sources, and so the European electricity network will have to be integrated and interconnected. The network will also have to allow cross-border trade, and be equipped with mechanisms to manage variations in demand, energy storage devices and power stations with flexible operations.

Can the Commission determine whether there is a capacity problem in the EU?

Can the Commission determine what guaranteed power can be supplied by variable renewable energy sources within an integrated European electricity network, and their potential effects on the adequacy of electricity generation?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(11 July 2013)

Identifying a potential gap of generation capacity is a complex but important exercise. Making an assessment of a capacity problem falls into the competence of System Operators, national governments and regulatory autorities. Lacking the relevant information from the national level, the Commission cannot determine whether there is a capacity problem in the EU.

In the view of the Commission such assessment must include the potential import of electricity from other Member States, reliable and precise data on variable energy sources such as wind and solar, as well as the potential of demand response measures. Such an assessment would allow to conclude how much energy can be supplied by variable energy sources and which steps would be necessary to assure generation adequacy. The Commission will present its detailed views on these issues in summer 2013, including recommendations on the elements and depth of the assessment.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005730/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 mai 2013)

Objet: Viabilité d'un système européen de promotion des sources d'énergies renouvelables

La Commission pourrait-elle indiquer si, au-delà de 2020, un système européen de promotion des sources d'énergie renouvelables offrirait un cadre plus rentable pour la pleine réalisation de leur potentiel, ainsi que la manière d'aboutir à une convergence progressive?

Sur quoi se base la Commission pour répondre à la question précédente?

Réponse donnée par M. Oettinger au nom de la Commission
(11 juillet 2013)

La Commission est convaincue que tout futur régime d'aide en faveur des énergies renouvelables doit non seulement être efficace au niveau des coûts et fondé sur le marché, mais également encourager la différenciation technologique afin de stimuler l'innovation technologique. Les mesures de ce type contribuent à diversifier notre portefeuille énergétique et à renforcer la viabilité commerciale des énergies renouvelables et leur contribution à la sécurité d'approvisionnement.

C'est la raison pour laquelle la Commission adoptera prochainement, à l'intention des États membres, des orientations relatives aux meilleures pratiques et à la conception en matière de régimes d'aide en faveur des énergies renouvelables. Ce document comprendra des recommandations pour la réforme des régimes d'aide nationaux en vue d'accroitre la convergence et la compatibilité au sein du marché intérieur européen de l'énergie.

La Commission a publié de nombreux rapports soulignant les avantages que pourraient représenter la convergence des régimes d'aide nationaux et le renforcement de la coopération entre les États membres pour la rentabilité de l'exploitation des ressources européennes en énergies renouvelables (voir:
http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/reports/reports_fr.htm

La Commission a récemment publié un livre vert ([1]) ouvrant le débat sur le futur cadre politique en matière de climat et d'énergie pour l'après-2020, notamment en ce qui concerne l'approche relative aux sources d'énergies renouvelables. S'inspirant des résultats de la consultation publique, qui a pris fin le 2 juillet 2013, la Commission entend tirer ses premières conclusions avant la fin de l'année.

([1]) COM(2013)169.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005730/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Viability of a European system to promote sources of renewable energy

Could the Commission indicate whether, after 2020, a European system to promote sources of renewable energy would offer a more profitable framework within which to fully realise their potential, and a way in which to achieve gradual convergence?

What basis does the Commission have for its answer to the previous question?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(11 July 2013)

The Commission firmly believes that any future renewable energy support scheme has to be cost-effective and market based, while allowing for technology differentiation to drive further technological innovation. Such measures help to diversify our energy portfolio and improve the commercial viability of renewable energy and its contribution to security of supply.

For this reason, the Commission will soon adopt guidance for Member States on best practice and design of renewable energy support schemes. This will include recommendations on how to reform national support schemes with a view to increase convergence and compatibility within the European internal energy market.

The Commission has produced several reports highlighting the benefits of convergence of national support schemes and of enhanced cooperation between Member States for the purposes of cost effective exploitation of Europe's renewable energy resources (see http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/reports/reports_en.htm).

As regards the future energy and climate policy framework for the period after 2020, including the approach towards renewable energy sources, the Commission has recently published a Green Paper ([1]) opening the debate on this framework. Based on the results of the public consultation, which was open until 2 July 2013, the Commission intends to draw first conclusions before the end of the year.

([1]) COM(2013) 169.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005731/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 mai 2013)

Objet: Demande énergétique

Quand la Commission compte-t-elle présenter des propositions relatives au développement, à la promotion et à la normalisation de réseaux électriques et de compteurs intelligents en tenant compte du troisième paquet relatif au marché intérieur de l'énergie, car cela permettra la participation de davantage d'acteurs sur le marché et renforcera les synergies potentielles en matière de déploiement, de développement et de maintenance à travers tous les réseaux de télécommunications et d'énergie?

La Commission envisage-t-elle de soutenir spécifiquement la recherche et le développement dans ce domaine?

La Commission va-t-elle procéder à une analyse approfondie des coûts et des avantages du déploiement des compteurs intelligents et de ses effets sur diverses catégories de consommateurs, comme le lui suggère le Parlement?

Réponse donnée par M. Oettinger au nom de la Commission
(11 juillet 2013)

Les règles de base pour la promotion et le développement des systèmes de mesure intelligents, et plus généralement des réseaux intelligents, figurent déjà dans la directive sur l'électricité ([1]), relevant du troisième paquet législatif, qui impose à cet égard des obligations claires aux États membres. Dans ses documents d'orientation ultérieurs ([2]), la Commission a prévu des actions spécifiques visant à permettre le déploiement rapide de réseaux intelligents conformément à cette législation. La Commission a par ailleurs adressé aux organismes européens de normalisation (OEN) trois mandats relatifs, respectivement, au déploiement des réseaux intelligents en Europe (M/490), aux systèmes de communication des compteurs intelligents (M/441) et à la recharge des véhicules électriques (M/468). La première série de compteurs intelligents et de normes relatives aux réseaux intelligents a été lancée en 2012, et les travaux se poursuivent en vue d'émettre prochainement des normes supplémentaires.

Les projets de recherche, de développement et de démonstration relatifs aux réseaux de distribution intelligents, le déploiement des compteurs intelligents et l'initiative «Villes et communautés intelligentes» sont financés au titre du septième programme-cadre de l'UE et constitueront encore un domaine de soutien prioritaire au titre du programme «Horizon 2020» qui lui fera suite.

La Commission examine actuellement des analyses coûts-avantages menées par certains États membres en ce qui concerne la mise en œuvre de systèmes de mesure intelligents. Un rapport d'évaluation comparative assorti de recommandations et d'orientations à l'intention des États membres doit par ailleurs être élaboré dans le courant de cette année. Ce document viendra compléter les études actuellement menées par la Commission sur le déploiement des projets de réseaux intelligents et les rapports correspondants, dont le plus récent a été publié au mois d'avril dernier ([3]).

([1]) Directive 2009/72/CE du Parlement Européen et du Conseil du 13 juillet 2009 concernant des règles communes pour le marché intérieur de l'électricité et abrogeant la directive 2003/54/CE (JO L 211 du 14.8.2009).

([2]) À savoir, notamment, la communication sur les réseaux intelligents d'avril 2011 [COM(2011)202 final] et, plus récemment, la communication sur le marché intérieur de l'énergie [COM(2012)663 final].

([3]) Commission européenne — Rapport scientifique et stratégique du Centre commun de recherche (2013) intitulé «Smart Grid projects in Europe: lessons learned and current developments — 2012 update», consultable à l'adresse (http://ses.jrc.ec.europa.eu/).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005731/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Energy demand

When does the Commission intend to submit proposals on the development, promotion and standardisation of electricity systems and smart meters, taking into account the third internal market energy package, since that will make it possible for more operators to participate in the market and will strengthen the potential synergies in terms of deployment, development and maintenance across all telecommunications and energy networks?

Does the Commission plan to provide specific support for research and development in this area?

Will the Commission carry out an in-depth analysis of the costs and benefits of deploying smart meters and the effects on various consumer groups, as Parliament has suggested?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(11 July 2013)

The basic rules for the promotion and development of smart metering systems, and more generally smart grids, are already included in the Third Package's Electricity Directive ([1]) which in this regard sets clear obligations on Member States. In its subsequent policy documents ([2]), the Commission has set out specific actions for the swift deployment of smart grids in accordance with this legislation. Furthermore, the Commission issued three mandates to the European Standardisation Associations (ESOs) concerning the smart grids deployment in Europe (M/490), smart meters communication (M/441) and charging of electric vehicles (M/468). The first set of European smart meters and smart grids standards were released in 2012 and the work is continuing to deliver further standards soon.

Research, development and demonstration projects on smart distribution grids, smart meters roll-outs, smart cities and smart communities are funded under the EU's 7th Framework Programme and will also be a priority theme for support under its successor 'Horizon 2020'.

The Commission is currently assessing cost-benefit analyses conducted by some Member States for implementing smart metering systems. A benchmarking report providing recommendations and guidance to the Member States is planned for later this year. This will complement the ongoing Commission analyses on the deployment of smart grid projects and its resulting reports, the most recent of which has been published in April ([3]).

([1]) Directive 2009/72/EC of the Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 concerning common rules for the internal market in electricity and repealing Directive 2003/54/EC, OJ L 211, 14.8.2009.

([2]) Notably the communication on Smart Grids of April 2011 (COM(2011) 202 final) and the more recent Internal Energy Market Communication (COM(2012) 663 final).

([3]) European Commission — Joint Research Centre Scientific and Policy Report (2013). 'Smart Grid projects in Europe: lessons learned and current developments — 2012 update', available at http://ses.jrc.ec.europa.eu/

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005732/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 mai 2013)

Objet: Flux de bouclage («loop flows»)

La Commission prévoit-elle un mécanisme de compensation à court terme des «loop flows», qui procure aux États membres concernés une méthode équitable de partage des coûts en attendant l'achèvement des développements nécessaires du réseau ainsi que du couplage des marchés basé sur les flux d'électricité?

Réponse donnée par M. Oettinger au nom de la Commission
(8 juillet 2013)

La Commission s'emploie à résoudre les problèmes que les flux de bouclage peuvent poser pour l'exploitation du réseau électrique de certains États membres. Dans ce contexte, le commissaire Oettinger a organisé, en 2012, deux ateliers de haut niveau centrés sur les problèmes rencontrés en Europe centrale et orientale. Les ateliers ont fortement encouragé la poursuite du travail, notamment la signature d'accords bilatéraux entre les gestionnaires de réseau de transport (GRT) allemands et polonais, en vue de limiter les flux d'électricité imprévus entre leurs réseaux. Des négociations de même type sont en cours entre les GRT allemands et tchèques; elles prévoient la mise en place de nouvelles infrastructures permettant une meilleure régulation des flux d'électricité.

En outre, la Commission a lancé une étude d'experts visant à définir et à évaluer des solutions à court, moyen et long termes. Le Forum européen de réglementation de l'électricité, qui s'est tenu en mai 2012 (Forum de Florence), a invité l'Agence de coopération des régulateurs de l'énergie et le Réseau européen des gestionnaires de réseau de transport d'électricité à définir un cadre réglementaire permettant le partage des coûts qu'entraînent les flux de bouclage transfrontaliers. Les résultats de ces études serviront, le cas échéant, de base de travail à la Commission pour l'élaboration de nouvelles propositions de mesures.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005732/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Loop flows

Is the Commission intending to establish a short-term compensation mechanism for loop flows in order to provide the Member States affected with a fair method for sharing the costs pending the completion of the steps required in the network and in market coupling based on electricity flows?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

The Commission is committed to finding solutions to problems that loop-flows may cause in certain Member States for the operation of their electricity system. In this context Commissioner Oettinger organised two high-level workshops in 2012 focusing in particular on the problems in central and eastern Europe. The workshops have given important impetus to further work including the German and Polish transmission system operators (TSO) signing bilateral agreements with a view to limit unplanned electrical flows between their networks. Similar negotiations are under way between the German and Czech TSOs which includes plans to improve the control of electrical flows by installing new infrastructure.

In addition the Commission has initiated an expert study to identify and assess short, mid and long term solutions to the problems. The May 2012 European Electricity Regulatory Forum (Florence Forum) invited the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators and the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity to identify an appropriate regulatory framework for sharing the cost caused by cross-border loop-flows. The outcome of these work streams will provide the basis for the Commission to propose further measures as appropriate.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005733/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 mai 2013)

Objet: Évaluation de la fixation d'un pourcentage d'énergies renouvelables

La Commission a-t-elle, ou va-t-elle, évaluer les coûts et les avantages de la fixation d'un pourcentage d'énergies renouvelables auquel l'Union devrait obligatoirement parvenir dans son bouquet énergétique d'ici à 2030?

La Commission peut-elle déterminer les interactions de cet objectif avec d'autres objectifs éventuels de la politique climatique et énergétique, notamment en ce qui concerne la réduction des émissions de gaz à effet de serre?

Quelle pourrait être, selon la Commission, l'influence de cet objectif sur la compétitivité de l'industrie européenne, en particulier la compétitivité du secteur des énergies renouvelables?

Réponse donnée par M. Oettinger au nom de la Commission
(9 juillet 2013)

Faisant suite à l'adoption, le 27 mars 2013, du Livre vert intitulé «Un cadre pour les politiques en matière de climat et d'énergie à l'horizon 2030 ([1])», la Commission devrait présenter des propositions concrètes d'ici la fin de l'année 2013. Ces propositions seront accompagnées d'une analyse d'impact approfondie qui abordera les différents points soulevés dans la question écrite afin qu'ils soient pris en considération dans le processus décisionnel. Il s'agit d'analyser quantitativement l'impact des différents scénarios d'action, notamment à l'aide d'outils de modélisation, et de compléter cette analyse par une appréciation plus qualitative.

Cette analyse d'impact est en cours et les scénarios n'ont pas encore été définis en détail, mais il est néanmoins certain que le rôle des énergies renouvelables en 2030 sera au cœur de l'analyse, qui porte notamment sur l'interaction entre les énergies renouvelables et la réduction des émissions de GES ainsi que sur la compétitivité de différents secteurs de l'économie de l'UE.

Les travaux préparatoires à ce cadre à l'horizon 2030 s'inspireront des précédentes initiatives de la Commission qui portaient déjà sur le rôle des énergies renouvelables au sein du futur système énergétique de l'UE. La Commission renvoie en particulier à la feuille de route sur l'énergie à l'horizon 2050 ([2]) et à l'analyse d'impact ([3]) correspondante qui aborde un grand nombre des questions soulevées par la question écrite.

([1]) COM(2013)169 final.
([2]) COM(2011)885 final.
([3]) SEC(2011)1565/2.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005733/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Assessment of the setting of a renewable energies target percentage

Has the Commission assessed, or is it going to assess, the costs and benefits of setting a renewable energies percentage which it would be mandatory for the EU to attain in its energy mix by 2030?

Can the Commission state how this target would interact with other possible climate and energy policy targets, particularly in relation to the reduction of greenhouse gases?

In the Commission's view, what influence might such a target have on the competitiveness of European industry, and in particular the competitiveness of the renewable energies sector?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

Following the adoption of the Green Paper on a 2030 framework for climate and energy policies ([1]) on 27 March 2013, the Commission is expected to come forward with concrete proposals by the end of 2013. These proposals will be accompanied by a thorough impact assessment, examining in detail the various issues raised in the written question, in order to inform the decision making process. The impacts of different policy options will be assessed quantitatively using e.g. modelling tools, complemented with more qualitative assessment.

The work on the impact assessment is ongoing and the policy options have not yet been defined in detail. Nevertheless, it is certain that the role of renewable energy in 2030 will be a central element of the assessment. The assessment includes the interrelation between renewable energy and GHG reductions as well as the competitiveness of various sectors of the EU economy.

The preparatory work for this 2030 framework will build on previous Commission initiatives which already addressed the role of renewables in the EU's future energy system. The Commission refers in particular to the Energy Roadmap 2050 ([2]) and the accompanying impact assessment ([3]) which analyses many of the issues raised by the written question.

([1]) COM(2013) 169 final.
([2]) COM(2011) 885 final.
([3]) SEC(2011) 1565/2.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005734/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 mai 2013)

Objet: Définition paradis fiscal

La Commission compte-t-elle faire un grand pas en avant, en proposant une définition claire et un ensemble commun de critères permettant d'identifier les paradis fiscaux, ainsi que des mesures appropriées s'appliquant aux juridictions identifiées, à les mettre en œuvre d'ici au 31 décembre 2014, et à en garantir l'application cohérente dans l'ensemble de la législation de l'Union?

La définition pourrait-elle se baser sur les normes de l'OCDE en matière de transparence et d'échange d'informations ainsi que sur les principes et critères fixés dans le code de conduite?

Réponse donnée par M. Šemeta au nom de la Commission
(2 juillet 2013)

La Commission a établi les critères permettant de répertorier les pays tiers qui ne satisfont pas aux normes de l'Union européenne en matière de bonne gouvernance dans le domaine fiscal. Ces critères figurent dans la recommandation de la Commission relative à des mesures visant à encourager les pays tiers à appliquer des normes minimales de bonne gouvernance dans le domaine fiscal [C(2012) 8805 final du 6 décembre 2012]. L'Honorable Parlementaire est invité à se reporter à la réponse apportée à sa question écrite précédente (E-011329/2012).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005734/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Definition of a tax haven

Will the Commission take a major step forward by proposing a clear definition and joint set of criteria for the identification of tax havens, and appropriate measures which apply to the jurisdictions identified, implementing them by 31 December 2014 and ensuring they are consistently applied within all EU legislation?

Could the definition be based on the OECD standards on transparency and exchange of information and on the principles and criteria laid down in the code of conduct?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(2 July 2013)

The Commission has set out the criteria for identifying third countries not meeting EU standards on good governance in tax matters in the Commission Recommendation regarding measures intended to encourage third countries to apply minimum standards of good governance in tax matters of 6 December 2012, C(2012)8805 final. The Honourable Member is kindly referred to the answer given to his previous Written Question E-011329/2012.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005735/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 mai 2013)

Objet: Taux légaux et taux effectifs d'imposition des sociétés

La Commission dispose-t-elle d'une analyse détaillée de la différence existant, au sein des États membres, entre taux légaux et taux effectifs d'imposition des sociétés afin d'objectiver le débat sur l'harmonisation fiscale?

Dans la négative, compte-t-elle en ordonner une?

Réponse donnée par M. Šemeta au nom de la Commission
(2 juillet 2013)

La Commission européenne publie chaque année le rapport «Tendances de la fiscalité dans l'Union européenne», qui est une publication d'Eurostat et de la DG TAXUD comprenant des données concernant à la fois les taux d'imposition légaux et implicites des sociétés. Elle publie également depuis plusieurs années les taux marginaux et moyens d'imposition effectifs des sociétés, calculés par le ZEW Institute pour la Commission européenne. Tous ces rapports sont disponibles sur le site internet de la Commission européenne ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/gen_info/economic_analysis/tax_structures/index_fr.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/publications/studies/index_fr.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005735/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Statutory rates and actual rates of tax on companies

Does the Commission have a detailed analysis of the difference, within Member States, between statutory rates and actual rates of tax imposed on companies, so that the debate on tax harmonisation may be based on specific details?

If it does not, will it order an analysis?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(2 July 2013)

The European Commission annually publishes the 'Taxation Trends in the European Union' report, which is a publication of Eurostat and DG Taxation that includes data on both statutory and implicit tax rates for corporations. It also has been publishing for several years effective marginal and average corporate tax rates, as computed by the ZEW institute for the European Commission. All these reports are publicly available from the European Commission website ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/gen_info/economic_analysis/tax_structures/index_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/publications/studies/index_en.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005736/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 mai 2013)

Objet: Système de rapports par pays pour les entreprises transnationales

Quand et comment la Commission compte-t-elle mettre en place, en tant que prochaine étape, un système de rapports par pays pour les entreprises transnationales dans tous les secteurs, système qui renforcerait la transparence des opérations de paiement, en imposant la communication d'informations portant, par exemple, sur la nature des activités de l'entreprise, sa localisation géographique, son chiffre d'affaires, le nombre d'employés en équivalent temps plein, les résultats d'exploitation avant l'impôt, les impôts payés sur le résultat et les subventions publiques reçues, pays par pays, pour les opérations d'un groupe dans son ensemble, afin de contrôler le respect des règles appropriées en matière de prix de transfert?

Réponse donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(12 juillet 2013)

Le 25 octobre 2011, la Commission a adopté une proposition législative sur la déclaration des sommes versées aux gouvernements, selon une répartition par pays et par projets, par toutes les entreprises cotées et les grandes entreprises non cotées enregistrées dans l'UE et exerçant une activité dans les secteurs pétrolier, gazier, minier et forestier. L'objectif en est de promouvoir une bonne gouvernance en fournissant à la société civile les informations nécessaires pour contrôler comment les gouvernements utilisent les recettes tirées de l'extraction des ressources naturelles. Dans la clause de réexamen, la Commission a accepté d'envisager l'extension des exigences de déclaration à d'autres secteurs d'activité. Le PE a adopté cette proposition en séance plénière le 12 juin 2013.

En mars 2013, les institutions de l'UE sont déjà parvenues à un accord politique pour imposer aux institutions financières des obligations limitées d'information pays par pays [dans le contexte de la directive sur les exigences de fonds propres (CDR IV)]. Ces obligations d'information portent principalement sur le nom des institutions, le nombre d'employés, le chiffre d'affaires réalisé dans chaque pays, le résultat d'exploitation avant impôt, l'impôt sur le résultat d'exploitation et les subventions publiques reçues.

La Commission approuve complètement les conclusions du Conseil européen du 22 mai 2013 sur la nécessité de prendre des mesures efficaces pour que la population ait confiance dans l'équité de nos régimes fiscaux, notamment en veillant à ce que les grandes entreprises et les groupes communiquent les informations pays par pays. Le moyen le plus rapide de promouvoir la transparence dans ce domaine peut consister à modifier la proposition actuelle sur la publication d'informations non financières.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005736/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: System of country reports for cross-border enterprises

When and how does the Commission intend to set up, as the next step, a system of country reports for cross-border enterprises in all sectors? Such a system would enhance the transparency of payment transactions by requiring information to be made public relating, for example, to the nature of an enterprise's activities, its geographical location, its turnover, the number of full-time equivalent employees, its pre-tax operating results, taxes paid on profits and public subsidies received, on a country by country basis, for a whole group's operations, in order to monitor compliance with the relevant rules on transfer pricing.

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

On 25 October 2011, the Commission adopted a legislative proposal on disclosure of payments to governments on a country and project basis by all listed and large unlisted companies registered in the EU with activities in the oil, gas, mining and logging sectors. The objective is to promote good governance by providing civil society information needed to monitor how governments use revenues received from the extraction of natural resources. In the review clause the Commission agreed to consider extending disclosure requirements to additional industrial sectors. The EP plenary adopted this proposal on 12 June 2013.

In March 2013, the EU institutions also reached a political agreement to introduce limited country by country reporting requirements for financial institutions (in the context of the Capital Requirements Directive IV (CRD IV)). These disclosure requirements are concentrated on names of institutions, number of employees, turnover in each country of operation, profit or loss before tax, tax on profits or loss, and public subsidies received.

The Commission fully supports the European Council's conclusions of 22 May 2013 on the need to take effective measures to ensure public confidence in fairness of our tax systems, particularly through ensuring that there will be country by country reporting by large companies and groups. An amendment to the current non-financial reporting proposal may be the quickest way in promoting more transparency in this area.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005737/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 mai 2013)

Objet: Réemploi des fonds confisqués suite à des fraudes fiscales

Comment la Commission justifie-t-elle que seulement 10 % des fonds confisqués soient réinvestis pour la lutte contre la fraude?

Compte-t-elle demander que les 90 % restants soient tracés avec nettement plus de précisions?

Compte-t-elle mettre en place des mesures permettant le réemploi social des fonds confisqués après des poursuites pénales en cas de fraude fiscale ou d'évasion fiscale?

Ne faudrait-il pas plaider dès lors pour qu'une part substantielle des fonds confisqués soit réemployée à des fins sociales et réinjectée dans les économies locales et régionales qui ont été pénalisées, directement ou non, par ces délits fiscaux?

Réponse donnée par M. Šemeta au nom de la Commission
(18 juillet 2013)

La lutte contre la fraude et l'évasion fiscale est l'une des principales priorités de la Commission. Le 6 décembre 2012, cette dernière a adopté un ensemble de mesures ambitieuses comprenant un plan d'action pour renforcer la lutte contre la fraude et l'évasion fiscales ainsi que deux recommandations, sur la planification fiscale agressive et la bonne gouvernance dans le domaine fiscal. La Commission accueille avec satisfaction et soutient les efforts déployés pour priver les fraudeurs du fruit de leur forfait, y compris la fraude fiscale. Toutefois, la Commission n'est pas habilitée à décider de la manière dont les États membres devraient utiliser les fonds confisqués. Il appartient aux États membres de décider si ces fonds doivent servir à des fins spécifiques ou alimenter les recettes publiques.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005737/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Re-use of funds confiscated following tax fraud

How does the Commission account for the fact that only 10% of funds confiscated have been reinvested in combating fraud?

Does it intend to request that the remaining 90% should be tracked in considerably more detail?

Does it intend to lay down measures to enable funds confiscated following criminal prosecutions in cases of tax fraud or tax evasion to be re-used for social purposes?

Should it not therefore be argued that a significant portion of the funds confiscated be re-used for social purposes and re-injected into the local and regional economies that have suffered, whether directly or indirectly, as a result of these fiscal crimes?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(18 July 2013)

Combatting tax fraud and tax evasion is one of the key priorities of the Commission. The Commission on 6 December 2012 adopted an ambitious package comprising an Action Plan to strengthen the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion as well as two recommendations on aggressive tax planning and tax good governance. The Commission welcomes and supports efforts to deprive fraudsters of the proceeds of crime, including tax fraud. The Commission however has no competence to decide how Member States should use confiscated funds. It is for Member States to decide whether such funds should be used for any specific purpose or contribute to state revenue.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005738/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 mai 2013)

Objet: Laïcité en danger en Russie

L'adoption en première lecture par la Douma d'État du projet de loi anti-blasphème, censée pénaliser toute «humiliation publique de rites religieux», comme «tout outrage ou insulte portés aux sentiments ou convictions religieuses du citoyen», remet en cause la laïcité de l'État russe.

À titre d'exemple, citons brièvement l'éventail des punitions prévues pour qui oserait offenser «les sentiments religieux» des croyants: une amende de quelque sept mille euros ou deux cents heures de travaux d'utilité publique ou trois ans de prison pour ceux qui s'avisent à blesser ces sentiments, et quelque douze mille euros d'amende ou quatre cents heures de travaux d'utilité publique ou cinq ans de prison pour ceux qui profanent un lieu de culte ou des reliques. Ce dernier point représente sans doute une sorte de tir de barrage contre les adeptes éventuels des Pussy Riot, condamnées à deux ans de prison pour leur acte qui a été qualifié comme profanation d'un lieu de culte.

Selon l'Assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe, la liberté de conscience et la liberté d'expression ne peuvent pas être entravées.

La Commission accepte-t-elle que ces libertés soient limitées pour la satisfaction de certains groupes religieux qui se croient offensés, ou pour le respect de certains dogmes ou croyances de telle ou telle communauté religieuse?

La Commission a-t-elle réprimandé la Russie pour cette violation des droits du citoyen et pour son comportement?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(9 juillet 2013)

L'adoption, dans la Fédération de Russie, d'une loi sur les «offenses aux sentiments religieux des croyants», à laquelle se réfère l'Honorable Parlementaire, mérite toute l'attention de l'Union européenne. L'application controversée des lois sur le blasphème dans le monde entier continue d'inquiéter sérieusement l'Union européenne, qui a exprimé clairement son opinion à ce sujet. Dans ses conclusions de novembre 2009, le Conseil a exprimé sa profonde inquiétude quant au recours fréquent, par les pays qui possèdent une législation sur la diffamation religieuse, à ladite législation pour maltraiter les minorités religieuses et restreindre la liberté d'expression et la liberté de religion ou de conviction. Le Conseil a en outre souligné que ces droits ne peuvent faire l'objet d'aucune restriction imposée au nom de la religion, et que cette dernière ne saurait en aucun cas être utilisée pour justifier ou tolérer la restriction ou la violation des droits individuels.

L'Union européenne a utilisé les deux derniers cycles de ses consultations régulières sur les Droits de l'homme avec la Fédération de Russie (décembre 2012 et mai 2013) pour s'informer de la conformité de cette loi (qui n'a pas encore été approuvée par la Douma russe) avec les engagements internationaux de la Russie, en particulier avec la Convention européenne des Droits de l'homme. La haute représentante/vice-présidente a aussi exprimé clairement sa position quant à la condamnation des membres du groupe Pussy Riot dans une déclaration du 17 août 2012, dans laquelle elle a souligné que la peine d'emprisonnement de deux ans qui leur a été infligée était incompatible avec les obligations internationales de la Russie en matière de respect de la liberté d'expression. L'Union européenne continuera de surveiller les effets de cette loi sur les Droits de l'homme en Russie une fois qu'elle sera entrée en vigueur.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005738/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Secularism under threat in Russia

The adoption at first reading by the State Duma of the anti-blasphemy bill, intended to penalise any act that 'publicly insults the faith during liturgical services', as well as 'any contempt or insults displayed towards the religious feelings or convictions of citizens', calls into question the secularism of the Russian State.

For example, the range of sanctions laid down for anyone daring to offend 'the religious feelings' of believers includes: a fine of some EUR 7 000 or 200 hours of community service or three years in prison for anyone who takes it into their head to injure these feelings, and around EUR 12 000 in fines or 400 hours of community service or five years in prison for those desecrating a place of worship or religious objects. This last point doubtless represents something like a volley of warning shots against any potential Pussy Riot devotees. The members of Pussy Riot were sentenced to two years' imprisonment for their actions, described as desecration of a place of worship.

According to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, freedom of conscience and freedom of expression may not be curtailed.

Does the Commission accept that these freedoms have been restricted in order to satisfy certain religious groups who believe themselves to have been offended, or out of respect for certain dogmas or beliefs of particular religious communities?

Has the Commission rebuked Russia for this violation of citizens' rights, and its conduct?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

The adoption of a law on 'insulting religious feelings of believers' in the Russian Federation referred to by the Honourable Member deserves full consideration from the European Union. The controversial application of the blasphemy laws worldwide remain a source of deep concern for the EU. The EU has made its views clear on such laws. The Council expressed in its November 2009 conclusions its deep concern that in countries that have legislation on defamation of religions, such legislation has often been used to mistreat religious minorities and to limit freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief. The Council furthermore underlined that no restrictions in the name of religion may be placed on those rights and that religion may never be used to justify or condone the restriction or violation of individual rights.

The European Union has used the last two recent rounds of its regular Human Rights Consultations with the Russian Federation (December 2012 and May 2013) to enquire about the conformity of this law (which had not yet approved by the Russian Duma) with Russia's international commitments, in particular with the European Convention on Human Rights. The High Representative/Vice-President has also made her views clear on the conviction of the Pussy Riot band members in a statement issued on 17 August 2012, in which she stressed that their 2-year sentence ran counter to Russia's international obligations as regards respect for freedom of expression. The European Union will continue to follow the impact of this legislation on the situation of human rights in Russia once it enters into force.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005739/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 mai 2013)

Objet: L'apostasie mérite-t-elle la mort?

Au Maroc, le Conseil supérieur des oulémas a décrété une fatwa qui menace de mort tout musulman qui aurait abjuré sa religion. Le musulman serait donc prisonnier à jamais de celle-ci. Le code pénal marocain interdit «d'ébranler la foi d'un musulman ou de le convertir à une autre religion». «L'ébranleur» risque de six mois à trois ans de prison.

1. Quelle est la position de la Commission?

2. Compte-t-elle jouer de son influence envers les autorités marocaines à propos de cette loi qui va à l'encontre de toutes les valeurs des Droits de l'homme?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(8 juillet 2013)

L'Union européenne a connaissance de rapports concernant une prétendue «fatwa» dont il est allégué que le Conseil supérieur des oulémas l'a décrétée en avril 2013 et qu'elle comprend une menace de mort pour les musulmans ayant abjuré leur religion. D'après les informations transmises par le ministre marocain des affaires religieuses, aucune nouvelle «fatwa» n'a été décrétée mais il a uniquement été fait référence à une «ra'i» (avis) datant de 2009. En outre, comme cela a été largement rapporté dans la presse, le ministre des affaires religieuses et certains imams y ont immédiatement réagi, exprimant leur soutien à la liberté de conviction et de religion. Même si le principe de liberté de religion n'est pas explicitement inscrit dans la nouvelle Constitution de 2011, le choix des individus à cet égard est généralement respecté et toléré sauf en cas de prosélytisme actif et public.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005739/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Does apostasy deserve death?

In Morocco, the High Council of Ulemas has issued a fatwa imposing a death threat on any Muslims who have renounced their faith. Muslims would thus forever be imprisoned by their religion. The Moroccan penal code prohibits 'shaking the faith of a Muslim or converting him to another religion'. Anyone who does so may receive a prison sentence of between six months and three years.

1. What is the Commission's position?

2. Does it intend to use its influence with the Moroccan authorities in relation to this law, which runs counter to all human rights values?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

The EU is aware of reports about a so-called 'fatwa' allegedly issued by the High Council of Ulemas in April 2013 that would include a death threat for Muslims having renounced their faith. According to information received from the Moroccan Minister for Religious Affairs there has been no fresh 'fatwa' but only a reference to a 'ra'i' (opinion) dating back to 2009. Moreover, as largely reported by the press, the Minister for Religious Affairs and imams have immediately reacted to it, expressing support for freedom of belief and religion. Even if the principle of freedom of religion is not explicitly anchored in the new Constitution of 2011, the choice of individuals in this respect is generally respected and tolerated except in cases of active and public proselytism.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-005740/13
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(22 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Swoboda przemieszczania się w UE

Niemcy, Austria, Wielka Brytania i Holandia pod pretekstem nadużywania praw socjalnych przez pracowników z Europy Wschodniej chcą wprowadzenia ograniczenia przepływu osób w UE. Wystosowały w tej sprawie list, w którym argumentują, że owe sankcje mają zapobiec m.in. wyłudzaniu świadczeń socjalnych i oszustwom osób starających się o prawo do stałego pobytu. Komisarz do spraw wymiaru sprawiedliwości Viviane Reding krytycznie wypowiedziała się na temat listu owych czterech państw. Z doniesień prasowych wynika, że podczas pobytu w Warszawie Komisarz zwracała uwagę władzom Polski na wagę problemu ograniczenia przepływu osób, który może dotyczyć również polskich pracowników.

Czy prawdą jest, że Pani Komisarz nie otrzymała od rządu polskiego wsparcia w tej kwestii?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Viviane Reding w imieniu Komisji
(16 sierpnia 2013 r.)

Swobodny przepływ jest jedną z najważniejszych i najcenniejszych zasad UE zapisanych w traktatach. Komisja realizuje zatem politykę ścisłego egzekwowania praw obywateli i stale wzywa państwa członkowskie do przestrzegania odpowiednich przepisów UE.

W odpowiedzi na obawy niektórych ministrów spraw wewnętrznych wyrażone podczas posiedzenia Rady ds. Wymiaru Sprawiedliwości i Spraw Wewnętrznych (WSiSW) w czerwcu br. w kwestii wdrażania w terenie przepisów prawa UE dotyczących swobodnego przepływu, Komisja wyraźnie stwierdziła, że za najważniejszą kwestię uważa pełne i prawidłowe wdrożenie przepisów o swobodnym przepływie przez wszystkie państwa członkowskie. Mając na uwadze, że istniejące przepisy UE umożliwiają zapobieganie nadużyciom, Komisja podkreśliła, że państwa członkowskie zwracające uwagę na zjawisko domniemanej „turystyki socjalnej" nie przedstawiły niezbędnych faktów i liczb.

Przeważająca większość państw członkowskich, w tym Polska, poparła stanowisko Komisji.

Stwierdzono, iż należy określić dane i informacje oraz dokładną kwalifikację prawną przedmiotowych zagadnień. Grupie ekspertów ds. swobodnego przepływu osób polecono zapewnienie działań następczych; w październiku br. Komisja przedstawi sprawozdanie Radzie ds. Wymiaru Sprawiedliwości i Spraw Wewnętrznych.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005740/13
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Freedom of movement within the EU

Citing benefit fraud by Eastern European workers as a pretext, Germany, Austria, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands want to place restrictions on the free movement of persons within the EU. A letter sent by these countries argues that these sanctions are intended to prevent social welfare scams and fraudulent applications for permanent residence. The Commissioner for Justice, Viviane Reding, has criticised the letter sent by the four countries. According to press reports, the Commissioner took the opportunity of her trip to Warsaw to draw the attention of the Polish authorities to the severity of the problem faced in association with restrictions on freedom of movement, which may also affect Polish workers.

Is it true that the Polish Government has failed to provide the Commissioner with any support on this issue?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(16 August 2013)

Free movement is one of the most important and most cherished EU principles laid down in the Treaties. The Commission therefore pursues a rigorous policy of enforcement of citizen's rights and continues to call on Member States to ensure compliance with the relevant EU rules.

In response to concern expressed by some Interior Ministers at the June Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council relating to the implementation of EC law on free movement on the ground, the Commission made clear that its primary concern is that free movement rules are fully and correctly implemented by all Member States. Recalling that existing EU rules allow for the prevention of abuses it stressed that Member States raising the alleged phenomena of 'benefit tourism' did not provide for the needed facts and figures.

An overwhelming majority of Member States, including Poland, supported the Commission.

It was concluded that it was important to establish data and facts and the exact legal qualification of the issues at stake. The expert group on Free Movement of persons was tasked to ensure follow-up and the Commission will report to the JHA Council in October this year.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005747/13
a la Comisión
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE)
(22 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Fractura hidráulica en Aragón (VI)

La Confederación Hidrográfica del Ebro está trabajando en la elaboración de los mapas de riesgo y planes de gestión necesarios para la aplicación Directiva 2007/60/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de octubre de 2007, relativa a la evaluación y gestión de los riesgos de inundación. Hasta la fecha se ha realizado la Evaluación Preliminar del Riesgo de inundación (EPRI) y se trabaja en la elaboración de los mapas de peligrosidad y riesgo, tras los cuales se elaborarán el correspondiente Plan de Gestión de los riesgos de inundación.

En la Memoria de la EPRI se recogen 46 zonas de riesgo entre las que se incluyen las de la cuenca del río Aragón más próximas al embalse de Yesa. Este embalse, que está siendo objeto de obras de recrecimiento destinadas a duplicar su capacidad de almacenamiento, está sufriendo problemas geológicos de deslizamiento de laderas en ambos extremos de la presa que ha obligado a la evacuación de dos urbanizaciones en la zona. Además, a la inestabilidad geológica se une la actividad sísmica registrada recientemente en esta zona montañosa a la que se puede añadir la derivada de la extracción de gas esquisto por fractura hidráulica (fracking) en la zona navarra de la Iruñerria, Aoiz, Salazar y Roncal (campo «Quimera», del que se ha solicitado permiso de investigación) y en la aragonesa de Berdún (con un permiso de investigación concedido en 2009).

— ¿Considera la Comisión que estos factores deberían ser tenidos en cuenta por el sistema de evaluación y gestión de riesgos de inundación, dada la potencial peligrosidad y vulnerabilidad que aportan los nuevos factores arriba expuestos?

— ¿Cree la Comisión que en tales condiciones es oportuno el recrecimiento del embalse de Yesa, incluso después de haber realizado las obras para consolidar la infraestructura actual?

— ¿Estima que, si una evaluación de riesgo de inundación que tenga en cuenta estas circunstancias indicase un probable peligro catastrófico —el que supondría una ruptura de la presa de Yesa—, debería el Gobierno español seguir adelante con su proyecto de recrecimiento y con los proyectos mineros de fractura hidráulica en la zona?

Respuesta del Sr.Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(8 de julio de 2013)

En virtud de la Directiva sobre las inundaciones ([1]), los Estados miembros debían realizar, antes del 22 de diciembre de 2011, una evaluación preliminar del riesgo de inundación basándose en la información de que se dispusiera en ese momento o que pudiera deducirse con facilidad. Ahora los Estados miembros tienen que elaborar, antes del 22 de diciembre de 2013, mapas de peligrosidad por inundaciones y mapas de riesgo de inundación y, sobre la base de esos mapas, planes de gestión del riesgo de inundación antes del 22 de diciembre de 2015. Esos planes deben contemplar objetivos adecuados de gestión del riesgo de inundación, centrados en la reducción de las consecuencias adversas potenciales. La Directiva no prevé ningún objetivo concreto en términos de reducción del riesgo, asunto que deja en manos de los Estados miembros.

En general, y en el contexto de la aplicación de la Directiva sobre las inundaciones, los Estados miembros deben abstenerse de adoptar medidas que impidan alcanzar el objetivo de esa Directiva, a saber, reducir las consecuencias negativas de las inundaciones mediante la evaluación y la gestión del riesgo de que se produzcan. Ambas tareas son responsabilidad de los Estados miembros. La Comisión, por tanto, no dispone de información sobre la evaluación del riesgo geológico del embalse de Yesa, ni sobre la posible influencia del riesgo que plantea la extracción de gas esquisto por fractura hidráulica en esa zona.

([1]) Directiva 2007/60/CE (DO L 288 de 6.11.2007, p. 27).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005747/13
to the Commission
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Hydraulic fracturing in Aragón (VI)

The Ebro Hydrographic Confederation is working to prepare the risk maps and management plans required to implement Directive 2007/60/EC of 23 October 2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council on flood risk assessment and management. To date, the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) has been completed, work is under way to prepare the hazard and risk maps and, after this, the flood risk management plan shall be prepared.

The PFRA Report shows 46 risk areas, including those in the Aragón River basin that are nearest to the Yesa reservoir. This reservoir, which is undergoing expansion works to double its storage capacity, is being affected by geological problems, with slope sliding at both ends of the dam requiring two residential areas in the locality to be evacuated. As well as this geological instability, seismic activity has been recorded recently in this mountainous area, which is in addition to such activity resulting from shale gas extraction by means of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) in the Navarre districts of Iruñerria, Aoiz, Salazar and Roncal (the 'Quimera' field, for which an exploration permit has been requested) and the Berdún district of Aragón (with an exploration permit granted in 2009).

— Does the Commission consider that these factors should be taken into account by the flood risk assessment and management system, given the potential hazard and vulnerability brought by the new factors mentioned above?

— Does the Commission consider it appropriate, under such conditions, to expand the Yesa reservoir, even after works to strengthen the existing infrastructure have been completed?

— Does it believe that, if a flood risk assessment taking these circumstances into account were to indicate a probable catastrophic danger, which would involve the Yesa dam rupturing, the Spanish Government should proceed with its expansion project and with mining projects in the area involving hydraulic fracturing?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

The Floods Directive ([1]) required Member States to undertake a preliminary flood risk assessment by 22 December 2011 based on available or readily derivable information at the time of preparation. Member States then have to prepare flood hazard and risk maps by 22 December 2013 and, on that basis, flood risk management plans by 22 December 2015. Such plans should establish appropriate objectives for the management of flood risks, focusing on the reduction of potential adverse effects. The directive does not fix any concrete objective in terms of risk reduction as this is left to Member States.

As a general rule, and in the context of the ongoing implementation of the Floods Directive, Member States should refrain from taking measures that would prevent the achievement of the objective of the directive which is to reduce the adverse consequences of floods by assessing and managing floods risks. Such assessment and management is the responsibility of Member States. The Commission therefore does not have information on the assessment of the geological risk of the Yesa reservoir, nor on the potential influence of the risk of fracking carried out in the area.

([1]) Directive 2007/60/EC, OJ L 288, 6.11.2007, p.27.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005748/13
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Nicole Kiil-Nielsen (Verts/ALE) et Yannick Jadot (Verts/ALE)
(22 mai 2013)

Objet: VP/HR — Étiquetage des produits des colonies

Le 12 mai 2012, puis le 10 décembre de la même année, les États membres de l'UE ont publiquement affirmé leur intention d'appliquer pleinement «la législation européenne et les accords bilatéraux concernant les biens produits dans les colonies», qui prévoit que toutes les implantations juives en Cisjordanie occupée et à Jérusalem-Est occupée et annexée étant illégales au regard du droit international, les biens qui y sont produits ne devraient pas bénéficier des conditions douanières préférentielles accordées par l'UE.

À nouveau, dans une lettre adressée le 11 avril dernier à M[me] Catherine Ashton, treize ministres des affaires étrangères européens se sont dits prêts à appuyer les démarches de la Vice-présidente de la Commission/Haute Représentante de l'Union pour les affaires étrangères et la politique de sécurité en vue de mettre en œuvre cette législation.

Le Parlement européen a, quant à lui, réaffirmé à plusieurs reprises par le vote de deux résolutions en juillet et en décembre 2012 sa détermination à mettre en œuvre de manière continue et effective toute la législation de l'UE en vigueur et tous les accords bilatéraux applicables aux produits des colonies.

Jusqu'à présent, au niveau de l'Union européenne, aucune mesure n'a encore été prise en ce sens. La Vice-présidente de la Commission/Haute Représentante de l'Union pour les affaires étrangères et la politique de sécurité pourrait-elle alors préciser le calendrier de la mise en application effective de la législation européenne sur l'étiquetage des produits des colonies?

Réponse donnée par la Vice-présisente/Haute Représentante Ashton au nom de la Commission
(31 juillet 2013)

La Vice-présisente/Haute Représentante a pris bonne note des résolutions du Parlement auxquelles les Honorables Parlementaires font référence. L'engagement du Parlement sur cette question a joué un rôle important, s'agissant de garantir une action de l'UE en la matière.

Si la mise en œuvre de la législation de l'UE relative à l'indication de l'origine relève des autorités compétentes des États membres, la haute représentante/vice-présidente les a effectivement déjà instamment priées de prêter une grande attention à l'importance d'une application pleine et effective de la législation de l'UE en matière d'étiquetage dans le cas d'Israël et à la nécessité d'intensifier leurs efforts à cette fin. Certains États membres se sont déjà efforcés de régler la question. Néanmoins, la Vice-présisente/Haute Représentante entend s'employer, avec les autres membres de la Commission, à élaborer, dans le courant de l'année 2013, des lignes directrices applicables au niveau de l'UE, qui permettraient de renforcer la mise en œuvre homogène de la législation de l'UE dans ce domaine et sa cohérence avec les positions de l'UE en matière de politique étrangère. La Vice-présisente/Haute Représentante a la volonté de faire progresser ces travaux le plus rapidement possible pendant l'année 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005748/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Nicole Kiil-Nielsen (Verts/ALE) and Yannick Jadot (Verts/ALE)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Labelling of products from the settlements

On 12 May 2012, and then on 10 December 2012, EU Member States publicly declared their intention of applying in full 'European Union legislation and bilateral arrangements applicable to settlement products', which state that since all the Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank and in occupied and annexed East Jerusalem are illegal under international law, products produced there should not benefit from preferential customs treatment granted by the EU.

Again, in a letter sent on 11 April 2013 to Ms Catherine Ashton, 13 European Ministers for Foreign Affairs stated that they were prepared to support steps by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to implement this legislation.

The European Parliament has on more than one occasion confirmed, by adopting two resolutions in July and December 2012, its determination to ensure continued and effective implementation of existing European Union legislation and bilateral arrangements applicable to settlement products.

To date, no measure has yet been taken at EU level to bring this about. Could the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy therefore specify the timetable for effective application of European legislation on the labelling of settlement products?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(31 July 2013)

The HR/VP has taken due note of the resolutions of Parliament referred to by the Honourable Members. Parliament's engagement on this issue has played an important role in ensuring EU action on the matter.

While implementation of EU legislation on origin labelling is the responsibility of Member States' competent authorities, the HR/VP has indeed already urged them to pay close attention to the significance of the full and effective enforcement of EU labelling legislation in the case of Israel and the need for enhanced efforts on the part of competent authorities to that end. Some Member States have already sought to address the matter. Nevertheless, the HR/VP is committed to working with her fellow Commissioners on preparing EU-wide guidelines that would strengthen the coherent implementation of relevant EU legislation and its consistency with EU foreign policy positions. The HR/VP is committed to taking forward this work during 2013 as quickly as possible.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005749/13
a la Comisión
Raimon Obiols (S&D)
(22 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Aumento en España del IVA en el sector cultural

La medida tomada por el Gobierno español de aumentar el IVA sobre los bienes y servicios culturales en 13 puntos (del 8 % al 21 %) dificulta el acceso a la cultura a una parte de la sociedad y supone un freno al desarrollo cultural del país. Además, se puede considerar que esta medida contradice lo establecido en el artículo 44, apartado 1, de la Constitución que establece: «Los poderes públicos promoverán y tutelarán el acceso a la cultura, a la que todos tienen derecho».

En un informe publicado en 2011, la Comisión de Cultura y Educación del Parlamento Europeo pide «la armonización de las medidas relativas al IVA como una de las posibles vías para el futuro desarrollo de la legislación fiscal en la EU. Al llevar a cabo estos cambios, se debe tener cuidado de no arruinar lo que se ha logrado con las exenciones del IVA en la cultura mencionadas en el estudio, y se debe seguir el ejemplo de los Estados que conceden una condición favorable y ejemplar a los bienes y servicios culturales».

La tendencia en todos los países de la UE es incluir la cultura en los tipos de IVA reducido.

— ¿Dispone la Comisión de datos que evalúen el impacto en el desarrollo y consumo de bienes y servicios culturales en España?

— ¿Se plantea la Comisión, tal y como pide el PE, concretar medidas con el objetivo de armonizar el tipo impositivo del IVA, especialmente en el sector cultural?

— ¿Considera la Comisión que se debe tomar alguna iniciativa frente a decisiones que contradicen los objetivos del Libro Verde sobre el futuro del IVA publicado en diciembre de 2010?

Respuesta del Sr. Šemeta en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de julio de 2013)

En relación con los recientes cambios introducidos en el IVA en España, la Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta dada a la pregunta escrita E-008242/2012 ([1]). La Comisión no dispone de datos para evaluar la repercusión de esos cambios en la producción y consumo de bienes y servicios culturales en España.

Con arreglo a la estructura básica de las normas sobre tipos del IVA descrita en la respuesta de la Comisión a la pregunta escrita E-011017/2012 ([2]), los Estados miembros pueden fijar el nivel de sus tipos sin necesidad de que se modifique la Directiva del IVA. De acuerdo con el principio de subsidiariedad, compete a los Estados miembros tomar una decisión sobre este asunto de conformidad con su política presupuestaria.

La Comisión no tiene intención de modificar esa estructura básica. No obstante, la Comunicación sobre el futuro del IVA ([3]) contiene tres principios rectores que deben guiar cualquier revisión del ámbito de aplicación de los tipos reducidos del IVA. A raíz de la Comunicación, la Comisión organizó una consulta pública sobre la revisión de la legislación vigente sobre los tipos reducidos ([4]). Se ha publicado un informe de los resultados de la consulta junto con las aportaciones recibidas. Uno y otras pueden consultarse en el sitio web de la Comisión ([5]). Esta consulta forma parte de un proceso de evaluación general iniciado en 2012, aún no finalizado. La consulta servirá de base para elaborar una nueva propuesta sobre los tipos del IVA.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([3]) COM(2011) 851 final.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/2012_vat_rates_en.htm
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005749/13
to the Commission
Raimon Obiols (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: VAT increase in Spain in the cultural sector

The measure adopted by the Spanish Government to increase VAT on cultural goods and services by 13% (from 8% to 21%) makes it more difficult for a part of society to access culture and puts a brake on the country's cultural development. Furthermore, this measure may be considered to contradict the provisions of Article 44 paragraph 1 of the Constitution, which states: 'The public authorities shall promote and supervise access to culture, which is everyone's entitlement'.

In a report published in 2011, the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education called for 'harmonisation of VAT measures as one of the possible avenues for future development of EU tax legislation. In making these changes, care must be taken not to ruin what has been achieved with the VAT exemptions for culture mentioned in the study, and the lead given by States in granting favourable and exemplary conditions for cultural goods and services should be followed'.

The trend in all EU countries is to apply reduced VAT rates to culture.

— Does the Commission have data to assess the impact on the development and consumption of cultural goods and services in Spain?

— Does the Commission plan to draw up measures to harmonise VAT rates, especially in the cultural sector, as requested by the EP?

— Does the Commission believe some initiative should be adopted against decisions that run counter to the objectives of the Green Paper on the future of VAT, published in December 2010?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(3 July 2013)

Concerning the recent changes to VAT in Spain, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-008242/2012 ([1]). The Commission has no data to assess the impact on the development and consumption of cultural goods and services in Spain.

Within the basic structure of the VAT rate rules described in Commission's reply to Written Question E-011017/2012 ([2]), Member States can fix the level of their rates without the need to amend the VAT Directive. In accordance with the subsidiarity principle, it is up to the Member States to make their choice on this matter according to their budgetary policy.

The Commission does not intend to change this basic structure. However, three guiding principles for any review of the scope of the VAT reduced rates are set out in its communication on the future of VAT ([3]). As a follow-up, the Commission launched a public consultation on the review of existing legislation on reduced VAT rates ([4]). A report summarising the outcome of the consultation, along with the submissions, has already been published and is available on the Commission's website ([5]). This consultation is part of the overall assessment process launched in 2012 which is still ongoing. It will feed into the preparation of a new proposal on VAT rates.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([3]) COM(2011) 851 final.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/2012_vat_rates_en.htm
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/index_en.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005750/13
al Consiglio
Lara Comi (PPE)
(22 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Garanzia per i giovani

Il 5 dicembre 2012, la Commissione ha adottato una proposta di raccomandazione del Consiglio sull'istituzione di una garanzia per i giovani di età inferiore ai 25 anni.

Il 16 gennaio 2013, il Parlamento ha adottato una sua risoluzione, estendendo questo nuovo strumento anche ai giovani laureati con meno di 30 anni.

Il 1º febbraio 2013, il Comitato delle Regioni, nel suo parere, ha riconfermato l'estensione dei sistemi di garanzia per i giovani ai neolaureati fino a 30 anni di età.

Il 22 aprile 2013, il Consiglio ha adottato una raccomandazione rivolta agli Stati membri, limitando la garanzia ai giovani di età inferiore ai 25 anni.

Il problema della disoccupazione giovanile non riguarda soltanto i giovani fino a 25 anni, ma anche quelli che, terminati gli studi universitari, non riescono a inserirsi nel mondo del lavoro.

Gli Stati membri hanno sistemi universitari che prevedono durate differenti e appare quindi opportuno e giusto non creare discriminazioni tra giovani nei vari Stati membri.

Può il Consiglio precisare se ritiene più giusto invitare gli Stati membri a estendere «la garanzia per i giovani» ai laureati con meno di 30 anni onde assicurare un aiuto più efficace al problema della disoccupazione giovanile e non creare discriminazioni all'interno dell'Unione europea?

Risposta
(11 settembre 2013)

La raccomandazione del Consiglio del 22 aprile 2013 sull'istituzione di una garanzia per i giovani raccomanda agli Stati membri di «*garantire che tutti i giovani di età inferiore a 25 anni ricevano un'offerta qualitativamente valida di lavoro, proseguimento degli studi, apprendistato o tirocinio entro un periodo di quattro mesi dall'inizio della disoccupazione o dall'uscita dal sistema d'istruzione formale*» ([1]).

La raccomandazione lascia uno spazio di manovra sufficiente agli Stati membri riguardo alla possibilità di estendere la suddetta garanzia ai giovani di età superiore ai 25 anni.

([1]) GU C 120 del 26.4.2013, pag. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005750/13
to the Council
Lara Comi (PPE)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Youth Guarantee

On 5 December 2012, the Commission adopted a proposal for a Council recommendation on establishing a guarantee for young people under the age of 25.

On 16 January 2013, Parliament adopted a resolution of its own, which extended this new instrument to recent graduates under the age of 30.

On 1 February 2013, the Committee of the Regions, in its opinion, confirmed that the Youth Guarantee Schemes should be extended to recent graduates up to the age of 30.

On 22 April 2013, the Council adopted a recommendation to the Member States, which restricted the Guarantee to young people under the age of 25.

The youth unemployment problem affects not only young people up to the age of 25, but also graduates who cannot find a job.

The higher education systems in the Member States differ in terms of the length of their courses, and so it seems only right and proper not to discriminate between young people in the various Member States.

Can the Council say whether it believes it is fairer to call on the Member States to extend the 'Youth Guarantee' to graduates under the age of 30 in order more effectively to address the youth unemployment problem and not to give rise to discrimination within the European Union?

Reply
(11 September 2013)

The Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee recommends that Member States 'ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education' ([1]).

The recommendation leaves sufficient scope for Member States, should they so decide, to extend the Youth Guarantee to young people above the age of 25.

([1]) OJ C 120, 26.4.2013, p. 1.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005751/13
alla Commissione
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(22 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Obbligo per i cacciatori di annotare i capi abbattuti

La Commissione ha intimato all'Italia il rispetto delle direttive in materia di gestione della fauna selvatica, in particolare per quanto riguarda l'applicazione del regime di deroga previsto all'articolo 9 della direttiva 2009/147/CE.

In una delle sue lettere di richiamo, la Commissione ha evidenziato, tra le altre prescrizioni, la necessità di obbligare i cacciatori ad annotare immediatamente la selvaggina abbattuta nell'apposito tesserino venatorio e di non permettere che tale incombenza venga assolta a fine giornata di caccia.

A tale scopo può la Commissione far sapere:

— in quali paesi dell'Unione europea vige l'obbligo per il cacciatore dell'annotazione nell'apposito tesserino venatorio dei capi abbattuti appartenenti alla selvaggina migratoria immediatamente dopo l'abbattimento della fauna selvatica;

— in quali paesi questo obbligo è previsto per la fine della giornata venatoria;

— in quali paesi non è invece previsto alcun obbligo quanto a detta annotazione?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(8 luglio 2013)

Nel caso italiano cui fa riferimento l'onorevole deputato, la Commissione ritiene l'obbligo di annotare correttamente il numero di esemplari immediatamente dopo l'uccisione un prerequisito indispensabile, ma non sufficiente, ai fini del rispetto delle condizioni sottoposte a rigido controllo stabilite dall'articolo 9, paragrafo 1, lettera c), della direttiva 2009/147/CE ([1]) (direttiva Uccelli).

La Commissione non dispone di informazioni sufficienti per poter rispondere ai quesiti sugli specifici obblighi di annotazione stabiliti per le attività di caccia ordinarie nei diversi Stati membri. La Commissione si occupa di tali questioni in casi specifici, allorquando sia necessario verificare il rispetto di una deroga applicata da uno Stato membro in virtù del succitato articolo 9, paragrafo 1, lettera c).

([1]) GU L 20 del 26.1.2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005751/13
to the Commission
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Requirement for hunters to keep a record of the animals they kill

The Commission has ordered Italy to comply with the directives on the management of wild fauna, in particular with regard to the application of the derogations laid down in Article 9 of Directive 2009/147/EC.

In one of its warning letters, the Commission highlighted, among the other requirements laid down, the need to make hunters immediately record on their designated hunting cards the wild game they have killed, and not to allow this task to be completed at the end of the day's hunting.

With this in mind, can the Commission say:

— which EU countries require hunters to record on their designated hunting cards the migratory game they have killed immediately after killing those wild animals;

— which countries impose this requirement at the end of the day's hunting;

— which countries, on the contrary, do not impose any such record-keeping requirement?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

In the Italian case referred to by the Honourable Member, the requirement to properly record the number of specimens immediately after their killing was considered by the Commission as a necessary, yet not sufficient, pre-condition to respect the strictly supervised conditions set by Article 9.1 c) of Directive 2009/147/EC [1] ('Birds Directive').

The Commission does not have sufficient information to be able to answer the questions on the specific record-keeping requirements established for the ordinary hunting activity in the different Member States. The Commission deals with such issues in specific cases when assessing the compliance of a derogation implemented by a Member State under the abovementioned Article 9.1 c).

[1] OJ L 020, 26.1.2010.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej P-005754/13
do Komisji
Ryszard Antoni Legutko (ECR)
(22 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Postępowanie Komisji Europejskiej w ramach procedury EU PILOT nr 277/11/ENVI

Stowarzyszenie Miłośników Ziemi Niepołomickiej (SMZN, polska organizacja pozarządowa) od dłuższego czasu prowadzi działania na rzecz budowy stopni wodnych „Niepołomice" oraz „Podwale" na rzece Wiśle.

Stowarzyszanie zabiega o to, by powyższe inwestycje zostały zrealizowane w ramach rządowego „Programu ochrony przed powodzią w dorzeczu górnej Wisły". Ich realizacja wzmocni m.in. regionalny potencjał bezpieczeństwa powodziowego oraz wpłynie na poprawę stanu zasobów wodnych w nadwiślańskich kompleksach Puszczy Niepołomickiej (Specjalny Obszar Ochrony Siedlisk Natura 2000 koło Grobli PLH 120008).

Komisja Europejska wszczęła jednakże ostatnimi czasy postępowanie w ramach procedury EU PILOT nr 277/11/ENVI kwestionujące zasadność inwestycji oraz jej zgodność z prawem unijnym (podobno miało miejsce naruszenie przepisów dyrektywy 2001/42/WE w sprawie oceny wpływu niektórych planów i programów na środowisko). SMZN podejrzewa, iż postępowanie Komisja bazuje na skardze, w której błędnie podano, że jednym z postulatów „Programu ochrony przed powodzią w dorzeczu górnej Wisły" jest budowa zbiornika wodnego „Niepołomice", co jest niezgodne z prawdą. Planowana jest bowiem budowa stopnia wodnego „Niepołomice".

W związku z zaistniałą sytuacją proszę o odpowiedź na następujące pytania:

1. Na jakiej dokładnie podstawie Komisja kwestionuje zasadność powyższych inwestycji oraz jej zgodność z prawem unijnym?

2. Na jakim obecnie etapie znajduje się postępowanie wyjaśniające Komisji i kiedy można spodziewać się ogłoszenia przez nią decyzji w tej sprawie?

3. Jakie są szanse na zamkniecie przez Komisję postępowania wyjaśniającego w tej sprawie, jeżeli zostało oparte na nieprawdziwych przesłankach?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Janeza Potočnika w imieniu Komisji
(17 czerwca 2013 r.)

Dochodzenie w ramach programu „EU Pilot" dotyczące Programu ochrony przed powodzią w dorzeczu Górnej Wisły (2779/11/ENVI) zostało zamknięte, a w związku ze stwierdzonym złamaniem prawa UE w dziedzinie ochrony środowiska, na podstawie art. 258 Traktatu o funkcjonowaniu Unii Europejskiej, wszczęto postępowanie w sprawie uchybienia zobowiązaniom państwa członkowskiego. W dniu 25 października 2012 r. Komisja wystosowała do Polski wezwanie do usunięcia uchybienia, a następnie, w dniu 26 kwietnia 2013 r., uzasadnioną opinię.

Wszczęte przeciwko Polsce postępowanie w sprawie uchybienia zobowiązaniom państwa członkowskiego dotyczy niezgodności Programu ochrony przed powodzią w dorzeczu Górnej Wisły z szeregiem unijnych dyrektyw dotyczących ochrony środowiska, tj. dyrektywą w sprawie strategicznej oceny wpływu na środowisko (dyrektywa SEA ([1])), ramową dyrektywą wodną ([2]) i dyrektywą siedliskową ([3]). W wezwaniu do usunięcia uchybienia i w uzasadnionej opinii podano przykładowo planowane projekty w celu zobrazowania wpływu działań podjętych w ramach wspomnianego programu na części wód oraz na obszary Natura 2000. Należy jednak podkreślić, że postępowanie w sprawie uchybienia zobowiązaniom państwa członkowskiego dotyczy ogólnej niezgodności programu z prawem UE, raczej niż niezgodności poszczególnych projektów.

Komisja rozważy zamknięcie postępowania jak tylko władze Polski wywiążą się ze swoich zobowiązań wynikających z prawodawstwa UE w dziedzinie ochrony środowiska.

([1]) Dz.U. L 197 z 21.7.2001, s. 30.
([2]) Dz.U. L 327 z 22.12.2000, s. 1.
([3]) Dz.U. L 206 z 22.7.1992, s. 7.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-005754/13
to the Commission
Ryszard Antoni Legutko (ECR)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Commission case under EU PILOT procedure No 277/11/ENVI

For some time now, the Association of Niepołomice Land Enthusiasts (SMZN, a Polish NGO) have been leading a campaign to have the 'Niepołomice' and 'Podwale' stages of fall constructed on the Vistula River.

The Association is trying to ensure that these investment projects are carried out as part of the Polish Government's flood protection programme for the Upper Vistula Basin. The completion of these projects would strengthen the region's defences against floods and help to improve the situation as regards water reserves in the Niepolomice Primeval Forest Complex (Koło Grobli PLH 120008 Natura 2000 Special Area of Conservation), which is adjacent to the Vistula River.

However, the Commission has recently launched a case under EU PILOT procedure No 277/11/ENVI which questions the legitimacy of the investment project and its compliance with EC law (the provisions of Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment were allegedly violated). The SMZN suspects that the Commission's case is based on a false accusation that one of the objectives of the flood protection programme for the Upper Vistula Basin is to construct a 'Niepołomice' reservoir. This is inaccurate. What is planned for construction is, in fact, the 'Niepołomice' stage of fall.

In this connection, would the Commission answer the following questions:

1. On what specific grounds is the Commission questioning the legitimacy of the aforementioned investment projects and their compliance with EC law?

2. What stage has been reached in the Commission's investigation, and when can the Commission be expected to announce its decision on this case?

3. What is the likelihood that the Commission will close its investigation if it is shown thatit was based on inaccurate information?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(17 June 2013)

An EU-Pilot procedure investigation concerning the Upper Vistula Flood Prevention Programme (2779/11/ENVI) was closed and in view of the identified breach of EU environmental law, an infringement procedure under Article 258 of the Treaty on The Functioning of the European Union was launched. The Commission addressed a letter of formal notice to Poland on 25 October 2012, followed by a Reasoned Opinion on 26 April 2013.

The infringement procedure against Poland concerns non-compliance of the Upper Vistula Flood Prevention Programme with a number of EU environmental directives, i.e. the Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (the SEA Directive ([1])), the Water Framework Directive ([2]) and the Habitats Directive ([3]). Even though the letter of formal notice and the reasoned opinion mention some examples of planned projects in order to illustrate the impact of the activities undertaken under the Programme on water bodies and Natura 2000 sites, it should be stressed that the infringement procedure concerns the overall non-compliance of the Programme with EC law, rather than the individual non-compliance of specific projects.

The Commission will consider closing the procedure as soon as the Polish authorities comply with their obligations under EU environment law.

([1]) OJ L 197/30 21.7.2001.
([2]) OJ L 327 22.12.2000 p.1.
([3]) OJ L 206 22.7.1992, p.7.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-005755/13
till kommissionen
Anna Hedh (S&D)
(22 maj 2013)

Angående: Skydd av ungdomar mot alkoholreklam

Enligt en studie som utfördes 2009 av den vetenskapliga gruppen inom European Alcohol and Health Alliance påverkar alkoholreklamen ungdomars dryckesvanor. Vi kan samtidigt konstatera att ungdomar mycket aktivt använder plattformar, såsom Facebook, Youtube och Twitter liksom mobilapplikationer.

Enbart alkoholproducenten Diageo lägger 10 miljoner US-dollar per år på Facebook och ökade förra året sin budget för digital marknadsföring med 50 procent till strax under 20 procent av bolagets totala medieutgifter. Den största delen av dess digitala investeringar går till sociala nätverk, före s.k. display och sök, vilket visar att Facebook har stor dragningskraft vad gäller varumärkesuppbyggnad för annonsörer som tidigare har satsat på icke-internetrelaterade medietjänster såsom tv.

De allt närmare band som håller på att knytas mellan sociala nätverk och alkoholdrycksproducenter i reklam- och marknadsföringssyfte (t.ex. det reklamsamarbete mellan Facebook och Diageo, världens största producent av alkoholhaltiga drycker, som utökades i september 2011) ger skäl till befogad oro när det gäller skyddet av ungdomar mot alkoholreklam.

— Planerar kommissionen att skydda ungdomar mot alkoholreklam och alkoholmarknadsföring på internet inom ramen för Safer Internet-programmet?

— Hur tänker kommissionen hantera detta problem som skapar allt större oro?

Svar från Tonio Borg på kommissionens vägnar
(15 juli 2013)

Skyddet av barn och ungdomar är en av de viktigaste prioriteringarna i EU:s alkoholstrategi ([1]).

I direktivet om audiovisuella medietjänster ([2]) förbjuds audiovisuell reklam för alkoholdrycker som riktar sig särskilt till minderåriga. Detta gäller både radio- och tv-utsändningar och så kallade audiovisuella medietjänster på begäran. Reklam som förekommer hos andra medietjänster, t.ex. sociala medier, omfattas av den nationella lagstiftningen och/eller självreglering hos internetleverantörer och alkoholproducenter.

Forumet för alkohol och hälsa är en plattform som inrättats i enlighet med EU:s alkoholstrategi och som har som mål att öka de berörda parternas frivilliga insatser. I anknytning till den har alkoholproducenterna och annonsörerna sett över sin självreglering för att skydda ungdomar från alkoholreklam även i digitala medier och sociala nätverk. Bland dessa frivilliga åtgärder finns ett åtagande om att inte göra reklam för alkohol i medier där minderåriga utgör mer än 30 % av publiken och att förbjuda alkoholreklam som riktar sig särskilt till minderåriga.

Kommissionen planerar att i slutet av året inleda en ny studie om minderårigas exponering för alkoholreklam på tv och i internetmedier.

När det gäller programmet Safer Internet, som avslutas i december 2013, ingår dess uppföljningsverksamhet i kommissionens förslag om infrastrukturer för digitala tjänster inom ramen för Fonden för ett sammanlänkat Europa ([3]).

([1]) Meddelande från kommissionen av den 24 oktober 2006: En EU-strategi för att stödja medlemsstaterna i arbetet med att minska de alkoholrelaterade skadorna, KOM(2006)625 slutlig, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/sv/com/2006/com2006_0625sv01.pdf

([2]) Europaparlamentets och rådets direktiv 2010/13/EU av den 10 mars 2010 om samordning av vissa bestämmelser som fastställs i medlemsstaternas lagar och andra författningar om tillhandahållande av audiovisuella medietjänster (direktivet om audiovisuella medietjänster) (EUT L 95/1, 15.04.2010).

([3]) KOM(2011)0665 slutlig.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005755/13
to the Commission
Anna Hedh (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Protecting children from alcohol advertising

A 2009 study by the Scientific Group of the European Alcohol and Health Alliance found that alcohol advertising had an impact on youth drinking patterns. At the same time we can see that platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, as well as mobile applications, are very actively used by young people.

The alcoholic drinks company Diageo alone is spending USD 10 million a year on Facebook, and in the last year has increased its budget for digital marketing by 50% , to just under 20% of its total media spending. Social networks are its top area of digital investment, ahead of display and search, indicating the allure for brand-building that Facebook offers advertisers who have traditionally focused on offline media such as TV.

The ever-closer ties being formed between social networks and the alcohol industry for advertising and marketing purposes, as demonstrated by the reinforced advertising partnership concluded in September 2011 between Facebook and Diageo, the world's leading drinks business, raise legitimate concerns in terms of the protection of children from alcohol advertising.

— Does the Commission plan to protect children from online alcohol advertising and marketing as part of the Safer Internet Programme?

— If so, how does the Commission plan to address this problem, which is of growing concern?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

Protecting children and young people is one of the key priorities of the EU alcohol strategy ([1]).

The Audiovisual Media Services Directive ([2]) prohibits audiovisual commercial communications for alcoholic beverages aimed specifically at minors. This applies to broadcasting and nonlinear audiovisual media services. Commercial communications on other services such as social media rely on national legislation and/or self-regulation by Internet service providers and alcohol producers.

In the context of the Alcohol and Health Forum, a platform set up under the EU alcohol strategy to step up voluntary action by stakeholders, alcohol producers and advertisers have revised their self regulations to include the protection of young people from alcohol advertising in digital media and social networks. These voluntary measures include the commitment not to advertise alcohol in media where minors make up over 30% of the audience and prohibit the targeting of alcohol advertising to under-age people.

The Commission plans to launch a new study about exposure of minors to alcohol advertising on television and online media by the end of the year.

Regarding the Safer Internet Programme, which ends in December 2013, its follow up activities are part of the Commission's proposal for digital services infrastructures under the Connecting Europe Facility ([3]).

([1]) Communication from the Commission of 24 October 2006, 'An EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm', COM(2006)625 final, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0625en01.pdf

([2]) Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) (OJ L 95/1, 15.4.2010).

([3]) COM(2011) 0665 final.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005756/13
a la Comisión
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE), Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE), Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE) y Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(22 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Apología de regímenes autoritarios en el Estado español

La delegada del gobierno en Cataluña, María de los Llanos de Luna, asistió el pasado fin de semana a un acto en homenaje a los combatientes españoles en el ejército nazi, donde entregó un diploma a la «Hermandad de Combatientes de la División Azul». En el acto, una docena de nostálgicos de la División Azul representaron la Hermandad en «trajes de falangista», el uniforme de la Falange Española Tradicionalista de las JONS, el partido político del franquismo durante la dictadura.

La UE se ha comprometido en varias ocasiones contra el fascismo y el nazismo. Así lo refleja el artículo 3 de la Decisión 1904/2006/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo que establece el programa «Memoria histórica activa en Europa» para evitar que se repitieran los crímenes del nazismo y el estalinismo. También la Comisaria Malmström puso en funcionamiento en 2011 un programa de la UE para la Sensibilización frente a la Radicalización (RSR) ([1]), donde se incluyen propuestas como formar a la policía local para detectar signos de radicalización hacia el extremismo violento y facilitar programas de desradicalización y desvinculación de los miembros de grupos extremistas.

Además, el Parlamento Europeo, en su Resolución de 2 de abril de 2009, sobre la conciencia europea y el totalitarismo, subraya, en su apartado 3 «la importancia de mantener viva la memoria del pasado, puesto que no puede haber reconciliación sin verdad y sin memoria; reafirma su oposición decidida a todo régimen totalitario, sea cual sea la ideología en que se base».

¿Entiende la Comisión que la entrega de reconocimientos militares a ex combatientes de las tropas nazis está de acuerdo con los valores en los que la Unión Europea se fundamenta, en particular con lo dispuesto en el artículo 2 del Tratado de la Unión Europea?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(30 de agosto de 2013)

La Comisión ha condenado reiteradamente toda forma y manifestación de racismo y xenofobia, por ser incompatibles con los principales valores en que se basa la UE, y se ha comprometido a combatir estos fenómenos con los instrumentos a su disposición.

Según la Decisión Marco 2008/913/JAI del Consejo relativa a la lucha contra el racismo y la xenofobia, todos los Estados miembros de la UE están obligados a sancionar penalmente la incitación pública e intencionada a la violencia y al odio contra grupos o personas por su raza, color, religión, ascendencia u origen nacional o étnico. La exculpación, negación o trivialización flagrante intencionada y pública de los crímenes nazis también deben ser sancionables penalmente. La Comisión supervisa actualmente las medidas de aplicación de los Estados miembros y elaborará un informe al respecto a finales de 2013. Sin embargo, no está autorizada a incoar procedimientos de infracción sobre la base de la Decisión Marco hasta el 1 de diciembre de 2014. Por otro lado, la investigación de los casos de incitación al odio o de negación del Holocausto y el enjuiciamiento de sus perpetradores corresponde y seguirá correspondiendo a las autoridades nacionales.

Las autoridades públicas, los partidos políticos y la sociedad civil deben condenar enérgicamente los comportamientos racistas y xenófobos y luchar contra los mismos. Por otro lado, la Comisión subraya la importancia de preservar la memoria de los crímenes cometidos por los regímenes totalitarios e insta a los Estados miembros a adoptar las disposiciones necesarias para garantizar su memoria histórica.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-59.es

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005756/13
to the Commission
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE), Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE), Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE) and Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Eulogising of authoritarian regimes in Spain

Last weekend, the Representative of the Spanish Government to Catalonia, María de los Llanos de Luna, attended a tribute to Spanish veterans of the Nazi army, where she awarded a diploma to the 'Brotherhood of Veterans of the Blue Division'. At the tribute, a dozen Blue Division veterans represented the brotherhood in 'Falangist attire', the uniform of the Traditionalist Spanish Phalanx of the Assemblies of the National Syndicalist Offensive, the political party of the Franco dictatorship.

The EU has repeatedly promised to combat fascism and Nazism. This is reflected in Article 3 of Decision No 1904/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the programme 'Active European Remembrance' to prevent any repetition of the crimes of Nazism and Stalinism. Commissioner Malmström also launched an EU programme in 2011 to address Radicalisation Awareness ('RAN') ([1]), which includes proposals on training local police to detect signs of radicalisation into violent extremism, and providing de-radicalisation or exit programmes for members of extremist groups.

Moreover, in paragraph 3 of its resolution of 2 April 2009 on European conscience and totalitarianism, Parliament 'underlines the importance of keeping the memories of the past alive, because there can be no reconciliation without truth and remembrance' and 'reconfirms its united stand against all totalitarian rule from whatever ideological background.'

Does the Commission think that presenting military awards to veterans of the Nazi army is in keeping with the values on which the EU is founded, as expressed in particular in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(30 August 2013)

The Commission has repeatedly condemned all forms and manifestations of racism and xenophobia, as they are incompatible with the principal values the EU is founded on, and is committed to combatting these phenomena with the instruments at its disposal.

According to Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating racism and xenophobia, all EU Member States are obliged to penalise the intentional public incitement to violence or hatred directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin. The intentional public condoning, denial or gross trivialisation of the Nazi crimes is also to be made criminally punishable. The Commission is currently monitoring Member State's implementing measures and will draw up a report in this regard by the end of 2013. It is not, however, authorised to launch infringement proceedings on the basis of the framework Decision until 1 December 2014. Furthermore, it is, and it will remain, for national authorities to investigate any instances of hate speech or Holocaust denial and to prosecute the perpetrators of such offences.

Public authorities, political parties, and civil society must indeed strongly condemn and actively fight against racist and xenophobic behaviour. Furthermore, the Commission underlines the importance of preserving the memory of the past crimes committed by totalitarian regimes and urges Member States to take the necessary measures to ensure their remembrance.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-59.en

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005757/13
to the Commission
David Martin (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Revision of regulation on animal transport with regard to combined sea and land journeys

In its answer to Parliamentary Question E-002709/13 the Commission stated that substituting a part of road transport by sea transport is not contrary to the scope of the regulation, as long as 'the journey and resting times for the species concerned are met'.

Furthermore the Commission stated that the derogation from the maximum transport time as laid down in point 1.7(a) of Chapter V of Annex I to Regulation 1/2005 was in its view necessary as otherwise certain regions (i.e. remote regions) of the EU would not be able to transport animals to other regions, including mainland Europe.

Against this background, I would like to give the following example of a combined road-sea-transport of animals: in June 2012 Animals' Angels observed a transport of pigs from Spain to Italy. After a transport time of nearly 24 hours on the road the truck embarked a roll-on/roll-off ferry from Salerno (Italy) to Messina (Italy). The ferry's journey time was eight hours. After arrival in Messina a short road transport to the slaughterhouse of destination followed. The total journey time. including the waiting time at Salerno harbour on board the ferry, was around 37 hours. The animals were not unloaded for rest during the entire transport.

If this transport had been carried out entirely by road, the carriers would, after a maximum transport time of 24 hours, have been required, under Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005, to unload and rest the pigs for at least 24 hours before continuing transport.

1. Does the Commission consider it contrary to the intention of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport that the regulation allows transporters to exceed 24 hours' transport time for pigs without rest, simply because road transport has been substituted by sea transport?

2. Does the Commission not take the view that regulation (EC) No 1/2005 should be revised in order to remedy this unsatisfactory situation?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(1 July 2013)

1. The Commission wants to re-emphasise what it stated in its reply to E-002709/2013 ([1]) — using sea transport to substitute for road transport is not contrary to the scope of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 ([2]), as long as the requirements concerning journey and resting times for the species concerned are met.

In the case as described in this question, it seems that these requirements were not met. It appears that, by using a ferry for part of the journey, the transporter did not allow for the animals to be properly rested. In addition, the total time animals spent travelling appears to be longer than necessary.

2. The Commission therefore remains convinced that focus must remain on improving enforcement of the regulation, and does not plan to revise it.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations; OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1. According to Point 1.4.(b) of Chapter V of Annex I to the regulation the maximum allowed journey time for pigs is 24 hours. After this time animals must be unloaded, fed and watered and be rested for at least 24 hours.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005758/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(22 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: La exención del IVA en la protección de la infancia y la juventud (II)

El ministro español de Hacienda y Administraciones Públicas, Cristóbal Montoro, ha anunciado que retirará el IVA a los comedores escolares si así se lo pide la Comisión Europea. Montoro no ha anunciado que va a retirarlo sino que está dispuesto a hacer lo que Europa le demande. «Haremos lo que entienda la CE en relación con la aplicación de ese IVA en España», ha declarado, al mismo tiempo que ha criticado que la institución europea lo diga ahora cuando este tributo se ha estado pagando también durante «un largo periodo» de Gobierno socialista, donde no se planteó el cambio de régimen de IVA en comedores escolares. Además el ministro ha añadido: «Lo plantearemos en el supuesto en que la prestación de ese comedor corra a cargo de entidades de carácter social, puesto que cuando corre a cargo de una sociedad mercantil la prestación debe tener un ordenamiento diferente de lo que es el objeto de esa sociedad, y en este caso la cobertura de ese servicio» ([1]).

En referencia a las respuestas escritas: E-003640/2013, E-003097/2013, E-003052/2013 y E-003528/2013 del Sr. Šemeta, en nombre de la Comisión, sobre la Directiva del IVA adoptada por unanimidad por los Estados miembros de la UE, las exenciones del IVA para la asistencia social y la seguridad social, para la educación y la protección de la infancia y de la juventud, ¿está de acuerdo la Comisión con las declaraciones del ministro Montoro?

¿Tiene previsto la Comisión pedir al Gobierno español que cumpla la Directiva del IVA, tal y como pide el ministro? Si no, ya ha anunciado que no la va a cumplir por lo que se refiere a los comedores escolares.

Respuesta del Sr. Šemeta en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de junio de 2013)

La Comisión ya ha preguntado a las autoridades españolas sobre este asunto. Cuando reciba una respuesta, la Comisión la analizará y decidirá el curso que dará a dicho asunto.

([1]) http://www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20130522/54373742468/montoro-retirara-iva-comedor-escolar-pide-bruselas.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005758/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: VAT exemptions for the protection of children and young people (II)

Spain's Minister for the Treasury and Public Administration, Cristóbal Montoro, has announced that he will exempt school canteens from VAT if the European Commission so requests. Mr Montoro has not said that he will definitely do this, just that he is prepared to do what Europe asks of him. His words were: 'We will do what the European Commission thinks we should in regard to applying this VAT in Spain'. At the same time he criticised the Commission for bringing this up now, since VAT had also been paid for 'a long period' while the socialists were in power, at which time the question of changing the VAT regime for school canteens had not been raised. The Minister further added: 'We will raise the question, assuming that the services in this dining hall are provided by social enterprises, since when a commercial company provides these services then the rules for these services must be different from those applying to the former, and in this instance provision of this service ([1])'.

Does the Commission agree with Mr Montoro's statements, bearing in mind Mr Šemeta's answers on behalf of the Commission to written questions E-003640/2013, E-003097/2013, E-003052/2013 and E-003528/2013 on the VAT Directive adopted unanimously by the EU Member States and on VAT exemptions for social care and social security, for education and for the protection of children and young people?

Does the Commission intend to ask the Spanish Government to comply with the VAT Directive, as the Minister asks? If not, he has already said that he will not comply with the directive with regard to school canteens.

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(28 June 2013)

The Commission has already questioned the Spanish authorities about this issue. Once a response is received, it will be analysed, and the Commission will decide on the way forward regarding this matter.

([1]) http://www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20130522/54373742468/montoro-retirara-iva-comedor-escolar-pide-bruselas.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005759/13
a la Comisión
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(22 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Explotación minera en Galicia y Red Natura 2000. El caso de la mina de Xinzo de Limia

Celebramos hoy el Día Europeo de la Red Natura 2000 que resalta el valor de más de 26 000 lugares y es la red mundial más importante de espacios naturales protegidos. La Red Natura 2000 es, sin embargo, una gran desconocida para muchos ciudadanos de Europa y existen administraciones públicas que ponen en entredicho sus objetivos tal y como he planteado en mis preguntas: E-006149/2011, E-006150/2011 y E-006217/2011.

El proyecto de promoción de la industria minera puesto en marcha por la Xunta de Galicia genera dudas en cuanto a su compatibilidad con los objetivos de la Red Natura 2000. El censo catastral minero de Galicia ([1]) ofrece una imagen de la región que se conjuga bien con el lema institucional de «Galicia es una mina». El panorama reflejado en los mapas de explotación minera de esta Comunidad Autónoma plantea interrogantes sobre el cumplimiento de la legislación comunitaria.

Mi anterior pregunta E-003515/2013, sobre la mina de Corcoesto, se enmarcaba dentro de esta preocupación que traslado ahora respecto al proyecto minero de Xinzo de Limia con cuya «Plataforma Contra la Mina» tuve ocasión de reunirme la semana pasada. Se sitúa el proyecto en una comarca considerada como Zona de Especial Protección de las Aves (ZEPA) e incorporada a la Red Natura 2000, y sus previsiones de explotación minera abarcan todo el territorio productivo de la zona, incluidas las zonas urbanizadas. Este hecho coincide con otros problemas medioambientales señalados en el área: E-005581/12 (cianobacterias en los embalses).

¿Conoce la Comisión la planificación minera de la Xunta de Galicia? ¿Ha considerado la compatibilidad de los proyectos de explotación en trámite o en curso con la legislación europea de protección de la naturaleza y, en particular, con la Red Natura 2000? ¿Se ha interesado la Comisión por el caso de la mina de Xinzo de Limia?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de julio de 2013)

La Comisión está al corriente de las solicitudes existentes en relación con proyectos de explotación minera en Galicia.

De conformidad con el artículo 6, apartado 3, de la Directiva de hábitats ([2]), cualquier plan o proyecto que pueda afectar de forma apreciable a lugares de Natura 2000 debe someterse a una adecuada evaluación de sus repercusiones en el lugar, teniendo en cuenta sus objetivos de conservación. A la vista de las conclusiones de la evaluación, las autoridades nacionales competentes solo se declararán de acuerdo con dicho plan o proyecto tras haberse asegurado de que no causará perjuicio a la integridad del lugar en cuestión. Si esto no puede determinarse con seguridad, el plan o proyecto solo podrá llevarse a cabo en las condiciones excepcionales contempladas en el artículo 6, apartado 4, de la Directiva, y a condición de que se apliquen medidas compensatorias adecuadas.

La responsabilidad de aplicar el Derecho de la UE recae en primer lugar en los Estados miembros. De acuerdo con la información de que dispone la Comisión, no ha finalizado el procedimiento de evaluación ambiental del proyecto y no se ha expedido la autorización pertinente. Por tanto, dado que parece que las autoridades competentes no han tomado ninguna decisión definitiva sobre dicho proyecto, la Comisión no observa infracción alguna de la legislación de la UE y no ha realizado ninguna investigación al respecto.

Además, la Comisión ha publicado un documento de orientación titulado «Extracción mineral no energética y Natura 2000» ([3]) que está traducido en varias lenguas, entre las cuales el español. Dicho documento pretende asistir a las autoridades de los Estados miembros y a los representantes del sector en la evaluación de la compatibilidad de los proyectos de explotación minera en zonas Natura 2000 o en sus proximidades.

([1]) http://www.censomineiro.org/
([2]) Directiva 92/43/CEE del Consejo, de 21 de mayo de 1992, relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y flora silvestres (DO L 206 de 22.7.1992).
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005759/13
to the Commission
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Mining in Galicia and the Natura 2000 network: Xinzo de Limia mine

European Natura 2000 Day, which is celebrated on 21 May, highlights the value of the more than 26 000 sites making up the world's largest network of protected natural areas. The Natura 2000 network is, however, a great unknown for many European citizens, and some authorities are jeopardising its purpose, as I have described in my questions E-006149/2011, E-006150/2011, and E-006217/2011.

The Galician Government is seeking to promote the mining industry, and doubts are being raised as to whether this plan is compatible with the aims of the Natura 2000 network. The Galician mining census ([1]) presents an image of the region matching the official slogan ('Galicia is a mine'). The overall picture reflected in Galicia's mining maps is such that compliance with EU legislation is being called into question.

My earlier Question E-003515/2013, relating to the Corcoesto mine, was prompted by the same concern as I am expressing now on account of the Xinzo de Limia mining project; I recently held a meeting with a group campaigning against the latter mine ('Plataforma Contra la Mina'). The Xinzo de Limia project is sited in a district classed for bird conservation purposes as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and included in the Natura 2000 network; all production sites, including the built environment, are encompassed within the mining forecasts. Furthermore, other environmental problems have been found to exist in the district, for example cyanobacteria in reservoirs (see Question E-005581/2012).

Is the Commission aware of the Galician Government's mining plans? Has it considered whether the mining projects in preparation or under way are compatible with European nature conservation legislation and the Natura 2000 network in particular? Has it made any enquiries about the Xinzo de Limia mine?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(3 July 2013)

The Commission is aware of existing requests for mining projects in Galicia.

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive ([2]) any plan or project likely to have a negative effect on Natura 2000 sites has to undergo an appropriate assessment having regard to the sites' conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, the competent authorities shall agree to this plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site. If this cannot be ascertained, the plan or project can only proceed under the exceptional conditions set out in Article 6(4) of the directive and must be subject to implementing adequate compensatory measures.

The responsibility for implementing EC law lies primarily with Member States. According to the information available to the Commission, it appears that the procedure for environmental assessment of the project has not concluded and that no development consent has been issued for this project. Therefore, since it appears that the relevant authorities have not taken any final decision on this project, the Commission has not identified any breach with the EU legislation and it has not made any enquiries about this project.

In addition the Commission has issued a 'Guidance Document on Undertaking Non-Energy Extractive Activities in Accordance with Natura 2000 Requirements' ([3]) that is translated in several languages, including Spanish. This guidance is meant to assist the Member States authorities and industry to assess the compatibility of the mining projects in or near Natura 2000 areas.

([1]) http://www.censomineiro.org/.
([2]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC, of 21 May 1992, on the protection of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora (O.J. L 206, 22.7.1992).
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005760/13
a la Comisión
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(22 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Respuesta de Mauricio ante la pesca ilegal

En el pasado pleno del mes de abril el Parlamento Europeo ratificaba el Protocolo de aplicación del Acuerdo de Pesca UE-Mauricio que permitirá la pesca de 5 500 tn/año a 86 buques cerqueros y palangreros europeos, con un efecto beneficioso para las tripulaciones de origen gallego y los puertos de Vigo y A Guarda.

Se trata de un acuerdo modélico que, para no afectar a las actividades de la flota local, contempla la cláusula de las 15 millas y se refiere a diferentes variedades de capturas. Las actividades de la UE son compatibles con la conservación y la explotación sostenible de recursos puesto que, como señala el Comité Científico de la Comisión del Atún para el Océano Índico, no hay sobrepesca en la región.

Mauricio recibirá anualmente 660 000 euros y otros 35 euros más por cada tonelada capturada, con la posibilidad de realizar evaluaciones anuales del estado de las poblaciones y revisar las posibilidades de captura de la flota UE, con la correspondiente revisión de la contrapartida financiera. La flota europea, que no faenaba en aguas de Mauricio desde la finalización del último acuerdo pesquero en 2007, tendrá de nuevo acceso exclusivo a los recursos pesqueros del Estado insular.

Hace algunas semanas Greenpeace denunció la autorización por el Gobierno de Mauricio de la entrada en Port Louis de un buque surcoreano de la compañía Dongwon Industries acusado de pesca ilegal en la costa africana. El buque había visto denegada la entrada en otros puertos de la región con anterioridad.

¿Conoce la Comisión esta denuncia? ¿Se ha interesado por la situación ante las autoridades de Mauricio? ¿Considera la Comisión que puede afectar la sostenibilidad de la pesca en la zona y/o el derecho de acceso exclusivo de la UE a los recursos pesqueros de Mauricio?

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de julio de 2013)

La Comisión conoce las denuncias de Greenpeace.

La Comisión cree que la sostenibilidad de la pesca en el océano Índico ocupa un lugar destacado entre las prioridades del Gobierno de Mauricio y del sector de la transformación atunera de ese país. Hasta donde sabe la Comisión, el Gobierno de Mauricio está cumpliendo todos sus compromisos internacionales de lucha contra la pesca ilegal, incontrolada y no regulada dentro de su zona económica exclusiva.

Como el buque no figuraba en ninguna lista de pesca ilegal, incontrolado y no regulada, las autoridades portuarias de Mauricio no podían denegarle el acceso a puerto. Aún así, dado el origen incierto de sus capturas, no se le permitió descargar pescado en Mauricio hasta que demostrara que las capturas eran legales y tuvo que abandonar el puerto rápidamente.

Esa decisión impidió que se transformara pescado posiblemente capturado de manera ilegal y que se exportara a la UE, de acuerdo con nuestra normativa sobre la pesca ilegal, incontrolada y no regulada actualmente en vigor.

Cuando entre en vigor el Acuerdo de cooperación pesquera con Mauricio, la Unión Europea impulsará una cooperación aún más estrecha con Mauricio para luchar contra la pesca ilegal, incontrolada y no regulada, garantizando que la flota europea faene en un contexto sostenible en las aguas de Mauricio.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005760/13
to the Commission
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Mauritius's response to illegal fishing

At the April 2013 part-session the European Parliament ratified the implementing protocol to the EU-Mauritius fisheries agreement, under which 86 European seiners and long liners will be given an annual quota of 5 500 tons, which is good news for Galician crews and the ports of Vigo and A Guarda.

This is an agreement which will serve as a model and which, in order not to undermine the activities of the local fleet, incorporates a 15-mile clause and covers different types of catch. According to the Scientific Committee of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission the region does not suffer from overfishing. EU fishing activities in the area are thus consistent with conservation efforts and sustainable resource use.

Under the agreement Mauritius will receive an annual sum of EUR 660 000, plus another EUR 35 for each tonne caught, and will be able to carry out annual assessments of the fish stocks and to alter the EU fleet's catch quotas (and the corresponding financial contribution). The European fleet, which has not fished in Mauritian waters since the previous fisheries agreement came to an end in 2007, will once again have exclusive access to the island's fisheries resources.

A few weeks ago Greenpeace criticised the Mauritian Government's decision to allow into harbour in Port Louis, the country's capital, a South Korean vessel (owned by Dongwon Industries) which had been accused of illegal fishing off the African coast. Prior to that the vessel had been denied entry into other ports in the region.

Is the Commission aware of the criticism voiced by Greenpeace? Has the Commission requested information from the Mauritian authorities? Does it think that the sustainability of fishing in the area and/or the exclusive access to Mauritian fisheries resources enjoyed by the EU could be affected?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

The Commission is aware of the criticism voiced by Greenpeace.

The Commission believes that sustainability of fishing in the Indian Ocean is high on the agenda of the Mauritius Government and also of the Mauritius tuna processing industry. As far as the Commission is aware, the Government is complying with all its international commitments to fight IUU fishing in its Economic Exclusive Zone.

Given the fact that the vessel was not listed on any IUU list, its access to the port could not be denied by the Mauritius Port Authorities. However, considering the uncertainty of the origin of its catches, the vessel was not allowed to unload its fish in Mauritius until the proof of the legality of the catches was provided and had to leave the port as soon as possible.

This decision prevented fish possibly originating from illegal fishing activities from being processed and exported to the EU, in respect of our IUU regulation in force.

Once the Fisheries Partnership Agreement with Mauritius enters into force, the European Union will foster an even closer cooperation with Mauritius in the fight against IUU, ensuring that the European fleet is operating in a sustainable context in Mauritius waters.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-005761/13
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(22 mai 2013)

Subiect: Finanțarea lucrărilor de cadastru

Recent, aflat în România, comisarul pentru agricultură a afirmat că Comisia insistă de câțiva ani pe lângă Guvernul României să atragă fonduri europene pentru finanțarea unui proiect de cadastru „la scară mai largă", dar „nimic semnificativ nu s-a întâmplat, iar banii nu au fost atrași".

Anterior, ca răspuns la întrebarea parlamentară E-004174/2011, comisarul pentru agricultură a afirmat în 17 iunie 2011 că „lucrările de cadastru intră în responsabilitatea autorităților naționale și regionale ale statelor membre. Legislația actuală din domeniul dezvoltării rurale nu conține dispoziții referitoare la sprijinirea lucrărilor de cadastru".

Comisia este rugată:

1. Să precizeze dacă își menține punctul de vedere exprimat în răspunsul său la întrebarea parlamentară menționată.

2. Să aducă completări cu privire la sursele de finanțare indicate de comisarul pentru agricultură în recenta sa declarație.

Răspuns dat de dl Cioloş în numele Comisiei
(18 iulie 2013)

1. Necesitatea de a dispune de un sistem unificat, eficient și adecvat de cadastru, ca bază pentru sprijinul acordat de Uniunea Europeană, a fost evocată înainte de aderarea României la UE. Acest aspect a fost sesizat de Comisia Europeană de mai multe ori în ultimii ani, în discuțiile cu diferiții reprezentanți ai guvernului care au fost responsabili cu gestionarea fondurilor UE, atât în contextul aplicării politicii de coeziune, cât și în cazul aplicării PAC. Comisia împărtășește opinia conform căreia dezvoltarea unui sistem funcțional de cadastru care să acopere teritoriul țării este unul dintre factorii de succes pentru furnizarea eficientă a fondurilor UE, astfel cum se arată în Poziția serviciilor Comisiei cu privire la dezvoltarea unui Acord de parteneriat și a unor programe în ROMÂNIA în perioada 2014-2020, disponibilă la adresa:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/pdf/partnership/ro_position_paper.pdf

2. Declarația comisarului vine în contextul menționat mai sus și vizează posibilitățile de finanțare ale Uniunii Europene, pe marginea cărora autoritățile române și Comisia Europeană au discutat de mai multe ori începând din 2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005761/13
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Financing of land registration activities

On a recent visit to Romania, the Agriculture Commissioner said that the Commission had been urging the Romanian Government to draw on European funds to finance a large-scale land registration project for some years, but that no significant developments had taken place and no funding had been taken up.

On 17 June 2011, the Agriculture Commissioner stated in reply to an earlier written question (E-004174/2011) that 'the work on land register is the responsibility of national and regional authorities in the Member States. There are no provisions in the current rural development legislation concerning support for the work on land register'.

1. Does the Commission still take the view expressed in its answer to the above parliamentary question?

2. Can it provide further information on the sources of funding referred to by the Agriculture Commissioner in his recent statement?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(18 July 2013)

1. The need to have a unified, efficient and adequate cadastre as the basis for European Union support was raised before Romania's accession to the EU. This is an issue that has been approached by the European Commission several times in the last years in its discussions with the different government representatives that have been in charge of managing the EU funds both in the context of Cohesion Policy implementation, as well as in the case of CAP implementation. The Commission shares the view that the development of a functional cadastre system covering the territory of the country is one of the success factors for an effective delivery of EU funds, as stated by the Position of the Commission Services on the development of Partnership Agreement and programmes in ROMANIA for the period 2014-2020, available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/pdf/partnership/ro_position_paper.pdf

2. The statement of the Commissioner comes in the context mentioned above and concerns European Union financing possibilities, which have been discussed several times since 2010 by the Romanian authorities and the European Commission.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-005762/13
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(22 mai 2013)

Subiect: Interpretarea corectă a prevederilor Directivei 96/53/CE a Consiliului din 25 iulie 1996

Invocând art. 6 din Directiva 96/53/CE a Consiliului din 25 iulie 1996 de stabilire, pentru anumite vehicule rutiere care circulă în interiorul Comunității, a dimensiunilor maxime autorizate în traficul național și internațional și a greutății maxime autorizate în traficul internațional (JO L 235, 17.9.1996, p. 59), Ministerul Transporturilor din România a emis un ordin prin care impune montarea pe categoriile de mașini care fac obiectul Directivei a unor plăcuțe pe care să fie înscrise o serie de date, precum capacitatea și greutatea mașinii. Operatorii contestă necesitatea acestei măsuri, pe care o consideră costisitoare.

Comisia este rugată să răspundă la următoarele întrebări:

1. Directiva se referă la deținerea unuia „dintre certificatele prevăzute la literele (a), (b) și (c)"; este, din punctul de vedere al Comisiei, corectă interpretarea conform căreia numai unul dintre certificate este obligatoriu?

2. Cum a fost transpusă Directiva menționată în legislația statelor membre ale UE, respectiv câte au optat pentru certificatele prevăzute la litera (a), respectiv (b) și respectiv (c)?

3. Are Comisia în vedere propuneri de modificare a acestei Directive în cursul actualului mandat?

Răspuns dat de Kallas în numele Comisiei
(9 iulie 2013)

1. Articolul 6 alineatul (1) din Directiva 96/53/CE ([1]) prevede că vehiculele trebuie să dețină „unul din certificatele prevăzute la literele (a), (b) și (c)" ([2]). Prin urmare, doar una dintre aceste dovezi este suficientă pentru a oferi dovada de conformitate a vehiculelor cu această directivă. Conform acestei interpretări textuale, Ministerul Transporturilor din România nu are dreptul de a impune montarea a două sau mai multe elemente de probă (plăcuțe).

2. O anchetă privind aplicarea articolului 6 din Directiva 96/53/CE în statele membre este în curs de desfășurare. După încheierea acestei anchete, Comisia va trimite distinsului membru concluziile desprinse.

3. Comisia a adoptat recent o propunere (COM (2013) 195) de modificare a Directivei 96/53/CE, dar articolul 6 din directiva actuală nu este vizat de această revizuire.

([1]) JO L 235, 17.9.1996.
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=DD:07:04:31996L0053:RO:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005762/13
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Correct interpretation of Council Directive 96/53/EC of 25 July 1996

On the basis of Article 6 of Council Directive 96/53/EC of 25 July 1996 laying down for certain road vehicles circulating within the Community the maximum authorised dimensions in national and international traffic and the maximum authorised weights in international traffic (OJ L 235, 17.9.1996, p. 59), the Romanian Transport Ministry issued an order requiring that categories of vehicle subject to the directive be fitted with a plate recording a series of characteristics such as capacity and weight. Operators have challenged the need for this measure, which they consider costly.

1. The directive refers to the carrying of 'one of the proofs referred to in (a), (b) and (c)'; does the Commission consider the interpretation according to which only one of these proofs is mandatory to be correct?

2. How has this directive been transposed into national law in the EU Member States, and how many Member States have opted for the proofs referred to in points (a), (b) and (c) respectively?

3. Is the Commission planning to propose amendments to this directive during its current term of office?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

1. Article 6 § 1 of Directive 96/53/EC ([1]) provides that vehicles have to 'carry one of the proofs referred to in (a), (b) or (c)' ([2]). Therefore just one of these proofs is sufficient to give the evidence of compliance of vehicles with this directive. According to this textual interpretation the Romanian Transport Ministry has no right to impose the carriage of two or more elements of proof.

2. An enquiry on the application of Article 6 of Directive 96/53/EC in the Member States is currently ongoing. The Commission will send the Honourable Member the conclusions of this enquiry once it is accomplished.

3. The Commission has recently adopted a proposal (COM(2013) 195) to amend Directive 96/53/EC, but Article 6 of the current Directive is not concerned by this revision.

([1]) OJ L 235, 17.9.1996.
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31996L0053:en:NOT.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-005763/13
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(22 mai 2013)

Subiect: Modificarea legislației comunitare cu privire la produsele alimentare tratate cu radiații ionizante

Comisia este rugată să precizeze dacă are intenția ca, în cursul actualului mandat, să prezinte propuneri de modificare a prevederilor următoarelor acte normative:

— Directiva 1999/2/CE a Parlamentului European și a Consiliului din 22 februarie 1999 de apropiere a legislațiilor statelor membre privind produsele și ingredientele alimentare tratate cu radiații ionizante, modificată și completată;

— Directiva 1999/3/CE a Parlamentului European și a Consiliului din 22 februarie 1999 privind stabilirea unei liste comunitare cu produsele și ingredientele alimentare tratate cu radiații ionizante.

Răspuns dat de dl Borg în numele Comisiei
(1 iulie 2013)

Există două acte legislative principale care reglementează tratarea cu radiații ionizante a produselor alimentare la nivelul UE (Directiva 1999/2/CE ([1]) și Directiva 1999/3/CE ([2])). Ambele directive au intrat în vigoare la 20 septembrie 2000. Comercializarea oricărui produs care nu este în conformitate cu directivele este interzisă începând din martie 2001.

Comisia a solicitat avizul Autorității Europene pentru Siguranța Alimentară cu privire, pe de o parte, la siguranța chimică a radiațiilor ionizante și, pe de altă parte, la eficacitatea și siguranța microbiologică a tratării cu radiații ionizante a produselor alimentare. EFSA a publicat două avize în 2011 ([3]). Comisia analizează modul de abordare a acestor avize.

([1]) JO L 66/16, 13.3.1999.
([2]) JO L 66/24, 13.3.1999.
([3]) EFSA 2011 ; 9 (4) : 1930 — EFSA 2011; 9 (3) : 2103.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005763/13
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Amendment of EU legislation regarding food products treated with ionising radiation

Does the Commission, in the course of its current mandate, intend to table amendments to the following legislative acts:

— Directive 1999/2/CE of the European Parliament and the Council of 22 February 1999 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States concerning foods and food ingredients treated with ionising radiation, as amended and supplemented and

— Directive 1999/3/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 February 1999 on the establishment of a Community list of foods and food ingredients treated with ionising radiation?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(1 July 2013)

There are two main pieces of legislation regulating the irradiation of food at EU level (Directive 1999/2/EC ([1]) and Directive 1999/3/EC ([2])). Both directives became applicable on 20 September 2000. The marketing of any product not complying with the directives is prohibited since March 2001.

The Commission asked for the European Food Safety Authority opinion on the chemical safety of irradation, on one hand, and the efficacy and microbiological safety of irradiation of food, on the other hand. The EFSA published two opinions in 2011 ([3]). The Commission is reflecting on the way to address these opinions.

([1]) OJ L 66/16, 13.3.1999.
([2]) OJ L 66/24, 13.3.1999.
([3]) EFSA 2011; 9(4): 1930 — EFSA 2011; 9(3): 2103.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-005764/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(22 Μαΐου 2013)

Θέμα: Κίνδυνοι αύξησης ανισοτήτων και φτώχειας λόγω των μέτρων δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής

Σύμφωνα με πρόσφατα στοιχεία που δημοσίευσε ο ΟΟΣΑ ([1]) η ανισότητα έχει αυξηθεί περισσότερο κατά τα πρώτα τρία χρόνια της παγκόσμιας οικονομικής κρίσης, μέχρι δηλαδή το τέλος του 2010 που υπάρχουν διαθέσιμα στοιχεία, απ' ό,τι τα προηγούμενα 12 χρόνια. Ο Γενικός Γραμματέας του ΟΟΣΑ, Ανχελ Γκουρία δήλωσε ότι «τα ανησυχητικά αυτά αποτελέσματα υπογραμμίζουν την ανάγκη προστασίας των πιο ευάλωτων στην κοινωνία, ιδιαίτερα όταν οι κυβερνήσεις επιχειρούν το απαραίτητο έργο να θέσουν τις δημόσιες δαπάνες υπό έλεγχο» ([2]). Παράλληλα, λίγες εβδομάδες νωρίτερα (22 Απριλίου 2013), ο Πρόεδρος της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής Ζοζέ Μανοέλ Μπαρόζο δήλωσε ότι οι πολιτικές δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής «παρ' ότι επί της αρχής ορθές, έχουν φθάσει τα όρια τους από πολλές απόψεις» ενώ υποστήριξε ότι για να είναι επιτυχημένες απαιτείται «αποδοχή, πολιτική και κοινωνική» ([3]).

Η Επιτροπή ερωτάται:

1. Παρακολουθεί τις επιπτώσεις των πολιτικών δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής στις εισοδηματικές ανισότητες, τη φτώχεια, την ανεργία και γενικότερα στην κοινωνική συνοχή και πώς αξιολογεί τους σχετικούς κινδύνους που επισημαίνονται από τον ΟΟΣΑ;

2. Με δεδομένο ότι τα στοιχεία του ΟΟΣΑ αφορούν τα έτη μέχρι το 2010, διαθέτει πιο πρόσφατα δεδομένα όσον αφορά στην εξέλιξη των εισοδηματικών ανισοτήτων και της φτώχειας στις χώρες της ΕΕ;

3. Εάν ναι, σε ποιες χώρες της ΕΕ παρατηρούνται οι μεγαλύτερες και σε ποιες οι μικρότερες ανισότητες;

4. Σκοπεύει να αξιολογήσει τις πολιτικές λιτότητας λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τις κοινωνικές αυτές παραμέτρους; Ποια άμεσα μέτρα θεωρεί αποτελεσματικά για την άμβλυνση της ανισότητας και της φτώχειας;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Ιουλίου 2013)

Οι εξελίξεις των όσον αφορά τις συνθήκες που επικρατούν στην αγορά εργασίας, τη φτώχεια, την ανισότητα και την κοινωνική ένταξη τελούν υπό τη σταθερή παρακολούθηση της Επιτροπής και λαμβάνονται δεόντως υπόψη στη συνολική πολιτική κατεύθυνση σε επίπεδο ΕΕ, όπως υπογραμμίζεται στην ετήσια επισκόπηση της ανάπτυξης του 2012 και του 2013 ([4]).

Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί και αξιολογεί τακτικά τις κοινωνικές επιπτώσεις της δημοσιονομικής εξυγίανσης στα κράτη μέλη. Ένα πρόσφατο παράδειγμα εντοπίζεται στη τριμηνιαία επισκόπηση της εργασιακής και κοινωνικής κατάστασης στην ΕΕ, του Μαρτίου 2013 ([5]), όπου δίδεται ιδιαίτερη έμφαση στον αντίκτυπο που έχει η δημοσιονομική εξυγίανση στην ανάπτυξη, την απασχόληση και τις συνθήκες διαβίωσης. Λαμβανομένων υπόψη των μεταρρυθμίσεων μέχρι τα μέσα του 2012, διαπιστώνεται ιδίως ότι ο σχεδιασμός των μέτρων έχει καθοριστική σημασία για την αποφυγή κατάστασης στην οποία πλήττονται περισσότερο τα νοικοκυριά με χαμηλό εισόδημα, ενώ υπάρχουν ενδείξεις για μείωση του αντίκτυπου σε κάποιες χώρες.

([1]) http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/OECD2013-Inequality-and-Poverty-8p.pdf
([2]) http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/growing-risk-of-inequality-and-poverty-as-crisis-hits-the-poor-hardest-says-oecd.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/ireland/press_office/news_of_the_day/barroso-brussels-think-tank-22-april-2013_en.htm
([4]) Ετήσια επισκόπηση της ανάπτυξης.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1852&furtherNews=yes

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005764/13
to the Commission
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Risks posed by the increase in inequality and poverty due to the fiscal adjustment measures

According to recent OECD ([1]) data, inequality increased more during the first three years of global economic crisis, i.e. until the end of 2010 (data are only available until then), than during the previous 12 years. OECD Secretary-General Ángel Gurría said that 'these worrying findings underline the need to protect the most vulnerable in society, especially as governments pursue the necessary task of bringing public spending under control' ([2]). A few weeks earlier (22 April 2013), Commission President José Manuel Barroso had said that the fiscal adjustment policies, although in principle correct, had reached their limits from many points of view and argued that, in order to be successful, 'acceptance…, political and social' was needed ([3]).

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Is it monitoring the impact of fiscal adjustment policies on income disparities, poverty, unemployment and social cohesion in general and how does it evaluate the risks highlighted by the OECD?

2. Given that the OECD data only concern the years up to 2010, does it have any more recent data on the evolution of income inequality and poverty in EU countries?

3. If so, in which EU countries is inequality most, and in which is it least pronounced?

4. Does it intend to evaluate the austerity policies taking into account these social parameters? What immediate measures does it consider would be effective in alleviating inequality and poverty?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(5 July 2013)

Developments in labour market conditions, poverty, inequality and social inclusion are being constantly monitored by the Commission, and duly taken into consideration in the overall policy guidance at EU level as stressed in the 2012 and 2013 AGS ([4]).

The Commission is regularly monitoring and evaluating social impacts of fiscal consolidation in Member States. A recent example can be found in the March 2013 Quarterly review on EU employment and social situation ([5]), which features a special focus on impact of fiscal consolidation on growth, employment and living conditions. Taking account of reforms until mid-2012, it notably shows that the design of measures is crucial to avoid that low income households are more affected, with signs of regressive impacts in a few countries.

([1]) http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/OECD2013-Inequality-and-Poverty-8p.pdf
([2]) http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/growing-risk-of-inequality-and-poverty-as-crisis-hits-the-poor-hardest-says-oecd.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/ireland/press_office/news_of_the_day/barroso-brussels-think-tank-22-april-2013_en.htm
([4]) Annual Growth Survey.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1852&furtherNews=yes

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-005765/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(22 mei 2013)

Betreft: Kan een onwettig voorstel op rechtmatige wijze worden ingediend?

Het beginsel van rechtszekerheid, een door de jurisprudentie van het Hof van Justitie ontwikkeld algemeen beginsel van het Unierecht dat derhalve bindend is voor de EU-instellingen, houdt in dat de goedkeuring van wetten met rechtsgevolgen in de EU een behoorlijke rechtsgrondslag moet hebben.

Op grond van de huidige bewoordingen van het Verdrag is de Europese Centrale Bank niet volledig bevoegd om toezichthoudende taken uit te voeren. Deze visie is bevestigd door dhr. Wolfgang Schäuble ([1]), Duits lid van Ecofin en de Eurogroep. Daarnaast heeft dhr. Schäuble op 12 mei 2013 verklaard dat een gemeenschappelijk afwikkelingsmechanisme juridisch onhoudbaar is zonder een verdragswijziging ([2]). Diverse leden van het Parlement, waaronder ikzelf ([3]), delen dit standpunt.

Als hoedster van het Verdrag is de Commissie verantwoordelijk voor het waarborgen van het huidige Verdrag. De Commissie heeft echter diverse voorstellen inzake de EMU ingediend die onverenigbaar zijn met het huidige Verdrag en derhalve een inbreuk vormen op het beginsel van rechtszekerheid, zoals het voorstel over een gemeenschappelijk toezichtsmechanisme (GTM).

In het licht van het bovengenoemde:

1. Deelt de Commissie de mening dat het GTM-voorstel een inbreuk vormt op artikel 282 VWEU? Zo niet, kan de Commissie duidelijk toelichten waarom niet?

2. Op welke gronden kan de Commissie voorstellen doen die onverenigbaar zijn met het huidige Verdrag?

3. Kan de Commissie haar standpunt geven over de tijdelijkheid van een verdragswijziging? Kan het Verdrag met terugwerkende kracht worden gewijzigd?

4. Zo niet, hoe kan de indiening van deze voorstellen verenigbaar zijn met de rol van hoedster van het Verdrag?

Antwoord van de heer Barnier namens de Commissie
(9 augustus 2013)

De Commissie is het ermee eens dat voor een bankenunie die onder meer in een streng toezicht op banken en in doelmatige procedures voor het aanpakken van faillerende banken binnen de Europese Unie voorziet, een solide juridische grondslag in de EU-Verdragen is vereist.

Op grond van artikel 127, lid 6, VWEU kunnen aan de Europese Centrale Bank specifieke taken worden opgedragen betreffende het bedrijfseconomisch toezicht op kredietinstellingen en andere financiële instellingen, met uitzondering van verzekeringsondernemingen. De Commissie heeft er vertrouwen in dat het voorstel voor een verordening waarbij specifieke toezichttaken aan de Europese Centrale Bank worden opgedragen en waarover het Europees Parlement en de Raad van de Europese Unie voorlopige overeenstemming hebben bereikt, aan de in de genoemde bepaling gestelde voorwaarden en beperkingen voldoet, en bijgevolg volledig aan het Verdrag beantwoordt.

([1]) http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/eea3918c-a51b-11e2-8777-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2Tq1tv85Q.
([2]) http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/366eff18-bb03-11e2-b289-00144feab7de.html#axzz2Tq1tv85Q.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/plenary/video?intervention=1369147085324.

In verband met de instelling van een gemeenschappelijk afwikkelingsmechanisme, waaraan de Commissie momenteel werkt, zij erop gewezen dat elk voorstel op het bestaande Verdrag zal zijn gebaseerd en ten volle zal voldoen aan de beperkingen die door het Verdrag worden gesteld. Volgens de rechtspraak van het Europees Hof van Justitie hangt de rechtsgrondslag van een wetgevingsvoorstel af van het doel en de inhoud van de wetgevingshandeling (zie bv. het arrest van 11 juni 1991 in zaak C-300/89, Commissie/Raad, punt 10). Bij elke beoordeling van de rechtsgrondslag moet bijgevolg worden uitgegaan van de inhoud van de handeling. Een dergelijke beoordeling kan derhalve pas worden verricht als de gedetailleerde inhoud van de handeling bekend is. Zodra het wetgevingsvoorstel is aangenomen, zal de Commissie met genoegen in detail uitleggen waarom deze Verdragsbasis is gekozen en hoe de in het Verdrag gestelde beperkingen worden gerespecteerd.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005765/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Can an illegal proposal be legally submitted?

The principle of legal certainty, which is a general principle of EC law developed in the case-law of the Court of Justice and thus binding on the EU institutions, implies that the adoption of laws which will have legal effect in the EU must have a proper legal basis.

Under the current formulation of the Treaty, the European Central Bank is not fully entitled to perform supervisory tasks. This view was confirmed by Mr Wolfgang Schäuble ([1]), German member of Ecofin and the Eurogroup. Furthermore, on 12 May 2013, Mr Schäuble also warned that a Single Resolution Mechanism is legally untenable without a Treaty change ([2]). Several members of Parliament, including myself ([3]), share this stance.

As a guardian of the Treaty, the Commission has a responsibility to uphold the current Treaty. However, the Commission has submitted several proposals on EMU, such as the one on a Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM), which are incompatible with the current Treaty and which, therefore, violate the principle of legal certainty.

In the light of this:

1. Does the Commission share the opinion that the SSM proposal violates Article 282 TFEU? If not, can the Commission clearly state why?

2. On what grounds can the Commission draw up proposals that are incompatible with the current Treaty?

3. Could the Commission express its stance on the temporality of a Treaty change? Can the Treaty be changed retroactively?

4. If not, how can the submission of these proposals be compatible with the role of guardian of the Treaty?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(9 August 2013)

The Commission agrees that a Banking Union including strong supervision of banks and effective procedures to deal with failing banks within the European Union requires a solid legal basis in the EU Treaties.

Article 127 para 6 TFEU allows conferring upon the ECB specific tasks concerning policies relating to the prudential supervision of credit institutions and other financial institutions with the exception of insurance undertakings. The Commission is confident that the proposed Regulation conferring specific supervisory tasks on the European Central Bank as preliminarily agreed by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union respects the conditions and limits established by that Article and is therefore fully in line with the Treaty.

As regards a Single Resolution Mechanism, on which the Commission is currently working, any proposal will be based on the existing Treaty and will fully respect the limits posed by the Treaty. According to the case law of the European Court of Justice, the legal basis of a legislative proposal depends on the content and the objectives of the legislative act (see e.g. Case C-300/89, Commission v Council, Judgment of 11 June 1991, Pt. 10). Any assessment of the legal basis therefore depends on the substance of that act, and can only be carried out once the detailed content of the act is known. Once the legislative proposal is adopted, the Commission looks forward to explain in detail the reasons for the choice of its Treaty basis and how the limits put by the Treaty are respected.

([1]) http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/eea3918c-a51b-11e2-8777-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2Tq1tv85Q.
([2]) http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/366eff18-bb03-11e2-b289-00144feab7de.html#axzz2Tq1tv85Q.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/plenary/video?intervention=1369147085324.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-005766/13
adresată Comisiei
Minodora Cliveti (S&D)
(22 mai 2013)

Subiect: Situația redeschiderii pieței muncii la nivel european pentru cetățenii români la începutul anului 2014

În condițiile în care 10 state membre UE, practic jumătate dintre celelalte minus România și Bulgaria, cer Comisiei suspendarea dreptului românilor de a lucra în aceste state, aș dori să întreb Comisia Europeană următoarele:

— Consideră Comisia că este firesc ca o țară membră din 2007, stabilă social și economic, care respectă reglementările europene în materie de mobilitate profesională, care trimite pe piața muncii europene mai ales personal calificat, apreciat și care nu pune probleme statelor gazdă, să aibă parte de un tratament diferențiat?

— În afară de acceptarea cererilor de suspendare a primirii românilor pe piața muncii pe perioade determinate, are Comisia vreo strategie de rezolvare a acestei situații care poate fi considerată discriminatorie la adresa lucrătorilor români?

— Poate Comisia să ofere României garanția că, la finalul anului 2013, toate aceste state membre vor redeschide piața muncii pentru români?

Răspuns dat de dl Andor în numele Comisiei
(12 iulie 2013)

Anexa VII la Actul de aderare a Republicii Bulgaria și a României permite statelor membre să aplice dispoziții tranzitorii privind accesul la piața muncii la nivel național pentru lucrătorii români și bulgari. Aceste dispoziții tranzitorii au fost aplicate și cu ocazia extinderilor anterioare și Actul de aderare a Croației prevede, de asemenea, acest lucru.

Dispozițiile tranzitorii se aplică pe o perioadă de maximum șapte ani, pe baza unui acord „2+3+2”. Statele membre pot aplica legislația națională pentru accesul la piața muncii în cursul primilor doi ani după aderare. În urma unei revizuiri efectuate de Consiliu în ceea ce privește funcționarea măsurilor tranzitorii, statele membre pot, după ce informează Comisia, să continue să aplice legislația națională pentru o perioadă suplimentară de trei ani. La sfârșitul celor cinci ani, în cazul în care există o perturbare gravă a pieței forței de muncă sau riscul de producere a unor astfel de perturbări și după notificarea Comisiei, statele membre pot aplica în continuare legislația națională în ceea ce privește accesul la piața muncii. În conformitate cu aceste norme, opt state membre încă mai aplică restricții privind accesul la piața muncii pentru lucrătorii români și bulgari. În plus, Spania, care eliminase în 2009 restricțiile privind lucrătorii români, le-a reintrodus în iulie 2011 în cadrul dispozițiilor tranzitorii, pe baza „clauzei de salvgardare”.

Așa cum se precizează în actul de aderare, dispozițiile tranzitorii și posibilitatea de a impune restricții privind lucrătorii români și bulgari se vor încheia în mod irevocabil la 31 decembrie 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005766/13
to the Commission
Minodora Cliveti (S&D)
(22 May 2013)

Subject: Situation regarding the opening of the European labour market to Romanian citizens at the start of 2014

Given that 10 Member States, i.e. almost half of all the EU countries minus Romania and Bulgaria, asked the Commission to suspend the right of Romanian citizens to work in those countries, can the Commission answer the following questions:

— Does the Commission consider it normal for differential treatment to be given to a country that has been an EU member since 2007, that is socially and economically stable, that complies with European rules on professional mobility, and that mainly provides skilled workers for the European labour market who are valued and who do not pose any problems for their host countries?

— Apart from granting the requests for the temporary suspension of the obligation to accept Romanian citizens on the labour market, does the Commission have any strategy for resolving this situation, which can be considered discrimination against Romanian workers?

— Can the Commission give Romania a guarantee that all the Member States will reopen their labour markets for Romanian citizens at the end of 2013?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

Annex VII to the 2005 Act of Accession of the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania permits Member States to apply transitional arrangements to access to their labour markets by Romanian and Bulgarian workers. Such transitional arrangements were applied in previous enlargements and the Act of Accession of Croatia also foresees it.

The transitional arrangements apply for a maximum of seven years on the basis of a '2+3+2' arrangement. Member States may apply national law to access to their labour markets for the first two years following accession. Following a review by the Council of the functioning of the transitional arrangements, Member States may, after notifying the Commission, continue to apply national law for a further period of three years. At the end of five years, in the event of a serious disturbance of their labour market or threat thereof and after notifying the Commission, Member States may continue to apply national law to access to their labour markets. In accordance with those rules, eight Member States still apply restrictions on access to their labour markets by Romanian and Bulgarian workers. In addition, Spain, which had lifted restrictions on Romanian workers in 2009, reintroduced them in July 2011 on the basis of the 'safeguard clause' in the transitional arrangements.

As the Act of Accession states, the transitional arrangements and the possibility of imposing restrictions on Romanian and Bulgarian workers will end irrevocably on 31 December 2013.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005767/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(23 mai 2013)

Objet: Liste noire européenne des paradis fiscaux

La Commission va-t-elle recenser les paradis fiscaux et les inscrire sur une liste noire européenne publique d'ici au 31 décembre 2014?

Dans ce cadre, la Commission est-elle d'accord:

— de suspendre ou de résilier les conventions en matière de double imposition passées avec des juridictions figurant sur la liste noire et de conclure des conventions en matière de double imposition avec les juridictions qui cessent d'être des paradis fiscaux?

— d'interdire l'accès aux marchés publics de biens et services de l'Union et de refuser l'octroi de toute aide d'État aux sociétés ayant leur siège dans des juridictions figurant sur la liste noire?

— d'interdire l'accès aux aides d'État ou de l'Union pour les sociétés qui continuent de mener des opérations impliquant des entités qui relèvent de juridictions inscrites sur la liste noire?

— de procéder à un réexamen des directives concernant l'établissement et le contrôle des comptes afin d'exiger une comptabilité et un audit distincts des pertes et profits de chaque société holding dépendant d'une entité juridique de l'Union qui serait située dans une juridiction inscrite sur la liste noire?

— d'interdire aux établissements financiers et aux conseillers financiers de l'Union de créer ou de conserver des filiales ou des succursales dans des juridictions figurant sur la liste noire, et d'envisager de révoquer les licences des établissements financiers et des conseillers financiers européens qui conservent des filiales et continuent d'opérer dans des juridictions figurant sur la liste noire?

— d'instaurer un prélèvement spécial sur toutes les opérations en direction ou en provenance de juridictions figurant sur la liste noire?

— de supprimer l'exonération de retenue à la source pour les contribuables non résidents de pays inscrits sur la liste noire?

— d'examiner diverses options pour la non-reconnaissance, au sein de l'Union, du statut juridique des sociétés constituées dans des juridictions figurant sur la liste noire?

Réponse donnée par M. Šemeta au nom de la Commission
(10 juillet 2013)

Le 6 décembre 2012, la Commission a adopté une recommandation «relative à des mesures visant à encourager les pays tiers à appliquer des normes minimales de bonne gouvernance dans le domaine fiscal» [C(2012) 8805 final] à l'appui d'une politique fiscale commune des États membres à l'égard des pays tiers souvent qualifiés de paradis fiscaux. La recommandation définit à la fois les critères permettant de déterminer les pays tiers qui ne respectent pas ces normes et des mesures visant à parvenir à un meilleur respect de ces critères. Ces mesures doivent être compatibles avec la législation de l'Union et doivent être efficaces et proportionnées compte tenu de leur objectif.

La Commission estime que les États membres sont les mieux placés pour dresser une liste des paradis fiscaux, et veillera à ce qu'ils s'acquittent de cette tâche de manière coordonnée. La mise en œuvre de la recommandation fera l'objet d'un suivi sous plusieurs formes, y compris dans le cadre de la toute nouvelle plateforme pour la bonne gouvernance fiscale.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005767/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: European blacklist of tax havens

Does the Commission intend to compile and create a public European blacklist of tax havens by 31 December 2014?

In this connection, does the Commission agree to:

— suspend or terminate existing Double Tax Conventions with jurisdictions that are on the blacklist, and to initiate Double Tax Conventions with jurisdictions that cease to be tax havens?

— prohibit access to EU public procurement of goods and services and refuse to grant state aid to companies based in blacklisted jurisdictions?

— prohibit access to state and EU aids for companies that continue to conduct operations involving entities belonging to blacklisted jurisdictions?

— review the Auditing and Accounting Directives so as to require separate accounting and auditing of profits and losses of each holding company of a given EU legal entity situated in a blacklisted jurisdiction?

— prohibit EU financial institutions and financial advisors from establishing or maintaining subsidiaries and branches in blacklisted jurisdictions and to consider revoking licenses for European financial institutions and financial advisors which maintain branches and continue operating in blacklisted jurisdictions?

— introduce a special levy on all transactions to or from blacklisted jurisdictions?

— secure the abolition of exemptions from taxation at source for individuals who are non-residents for tax purposes in blacklisted jurisdictions?

— examine a range of options for the non-recognition, within the EU, of the legal status ofcompanies set up in blacklisted jurisdictions?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(10 July 2013)

On 6 December 2012 the Commission adopted a recommendation 'regarding measures intended to encourage third countries to apply minimum standards of good governance in tax matters' [C(2012) 8805 final] to further a common tax policy by Member States towards those third countries often referred to as tax havens. The recommendation includes both the criteria for identifying non-compliant third countries as well as measures to improve compliance with these criteria. These measures must be compatible with EC law and must be effective and proportionate in view of their objective.

The Commission believes that the Member States are best placed to draw up a list of tax havens, and will ensure that this is done in a coordinated way. The implementation of the recommendation will be followed-up in different ways, including in the recently established Platform for Tax Good Governance.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-005768/13
à la Commission
José Bové (Verts/ALE)
(23 mai 2013)

Objet: Emploi du temps du président de la Commission européenne

1. Pouvez-vous me confirmer si M. José Manuel Durão Barroso, président de la Commission européenne, a eu des contacts avec des représentants de Tabaqueira Portugal à Lisbonne en novembre 2011?

2. En cas de réponse affirmative, pourriez-vous m'envoyer le compte rendu de cette rencontre, eu égard à l'article 5, paragraphe 3, de la convention-cadre de l'OMS?

Réponse donnée par M. Barroso au nom de la Commission
(15 juillet 2013)

1. La réponse à cette question est non. Cette rencontre n'a jamais eu lieu.

2. Il ne peut y avoir de compte rendu d'une rencontre qui n'a pas eu lieu.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-005768/13
to the Commission
José Bové (Verts/ALE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Schedule of the President of the Commission

1. Can you confirm whether Mr José Manuel Durão Barroso, President of the Commission, met representatives of Tabaqueira Portugal in Lisbon in November 2011?

2. If he did, and in the light of Article 5(3) of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, could you send me the minutes of that meeting?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

1. The answer to this question is no. No such meeting took place.

2. There can be no minutes of meetings which did not take place.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-005769/13
à la Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(23 mai 2013)

Objet: Libre circulation des travailleurs — crèches

La libre circulation des travailleurs à l'intérieur de l'Union reste, pour nombre de nos concitoyens, un sujet dont les règles d'application sont complexes et difficilement accessibles.

En ce qui concerne plus particulièrement les règles applicables au secteur de la petite enfance, et notamment aux employés des crèches, la Commission peut-elle préciser si une personne diplômée qui travaille dans une crèche dans un État membre est libre d'aller travailler au sein d'une crèche dans un autre État membre en tant qu'employée en contact direct avec des enfants?

Réponse donnée par M. Andor au nom de la Commission
(20 juin 2013)

L'article 1er du règlement (UE) n° 492/2011 ([1]) dispose que «tout ressortissant d'un État membre, quel que soit le lieu de sa résidence, a le droit d'accéder à une activité salariée et de l'exercer sur le territoire d'un autre État membre, conformément aux dispositions législatives, réglementaires et administratives régissant l'emploi des travailleurs nationaux de cet État». La liberté de circulation des travailleurs au sein de l'Union européenne est également garantie par l'article 45 du TFUE.

La Commission ne voit pas pourquoi une personne diplômée qui travaille dans une crèche ne pourrait aller travailler dans une crèche située dans un autre État membre en tant qu'employé en contact direct avec les enfants.

La Commission a récemment présenté une proposition de directive du Parlement européen et du Conseil relative à des mesures facilitant l'exercice des droits conférés aux travailleurs dans le contexte de la libre circulation des travailleurs ([2]). De plus amples informations sur la réglementation de l'UE en matière de libre circulation des travailleurs sont disponibles sur le site web de la Commission ([3]).

([1]) Règlement (UE) n° 492/2011 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 5 avril 2011 relatif à la libre circulation des travailleurs à l'intérieur de l'Union, JO L 141 du 27.5.2011.
([2]) COM(2013) 236 du 26.4.2013.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=457&langId=fr

(English version)

Question for written answer P-005769/13
to the Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Freedom of movement for crèche workers

For many people, freedom of movement for workers within the European Union remains an area where the rules are complex and information is difficult to find.

Taking the specific example of the early childhood sector, and crèche workers in particular, could the Commission clarify whether a qualified crèche worker in one Member State is free to take a job in a crèche in another Member State which involves direct contact with children?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(20 June 2013)

In accordance with Article 1 of Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 ([1]), nationals of any Member State, irrespective of their place of residence, have the right to take up an activity as employed persons, and to pursue such activity within the territory of another Member State in accordance with the provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action governing the employment of nationals of that State. Freedom of movement for workers within the EU is also guaranteed by Article 45 TFEU.

The Commission sees no reason why a qualified crèche worker should not be free to take a job involving direct contact with children in a crèche in another Member State.

The Commission recently put forward a proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and the Council on measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers in the context of freedom of movement for workers ([2]). Comprehensive information concerning EU rules on free movement of workers is available on the Commission's website ([3]).

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on freedom of movement for workers within the Union, OJ L 141, 27.5.2011.
([2]) COM(2013) 236 of 26 April 2013.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=457&langId=en

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-005770/13
alla Commissione
Fabrizio Bertot (PPE)
(23 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Risarcimenti a rischio nel processo Eternit

Ieri si è diffusa la notizia della scomparsa di Louis de Cartier de Marchienne, all'età di 92 anni. Era, insieme a Stephan Schmidheiny, il principale imputato nel processo Eternit, che lo vedeva accusato di disastro ambientale colposo e omissione volontaria delle cautele anti-infortunistiche.

Nel febbraio 2012, il Tribunale di Torino lo aveva condannato a 16 anni di carcere e al pagamento di 98 milioni di euro di provvisionale, in attesa dell'accertamento completo del danno. Nel dettaglio, il capo d'accusa riguardava il disastro ambientale provocato dall'attività produttiva nei quattro stabilimenti italiani della multinazionale Eternit (Casale Monferrato, Cavagnolo, Rubiera e Bagnoli) e conteneva un elenco di 2191 morti e 665 persone affette da patologie causate dall'amianto.

Ora, la scomparsa di de Cartier potrebbe mettere a repentaglio i risarcimenti in favore delle famiglie delle vittime e degli enti pubblici che si sono costituiti parti civili nel processo, costringendoli eventualmente a citare in sede civile la finanziaria Etex a lui riconducibile. Ricominciando però un iter che per giungere alla sentenza ha già reso necessarie 65 udienze per un procedimento lungo 15 anni.

Alla luce di queste considerazioni, vista la gravità dei fatti accertati, l'ampiezza dei territori colpiti e l'elevato numero di vittime, può la Commissione riferire se intenda promuovere, in attesa che il processo concluda il suo iter giudiziario, la creazione di un fondo ad hoc a tutela delle parti civili e degli enti pubblici coinvolti, prevedendo all'interno del bilancio un apposito capitolo di spesa?

Può inoltre la Commissione far sapere quali iniziative intende promuovere per potenziare la difesa del territorio e dell'ambiente attraverso programmi di bonifica delle aree interessate dalle attività di estrazione e lavorazione dell'amianto?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(1º luglio 2013)

Attualmente non sono previste misure a livelli di UE per fornire un sostegno finanziario in una controversia civile che verte su danni causati in situazioni come quella in oggetto.

L'articolo 9, paragrafo 5, della convenzione sull'accesso alle informazioni, la partecipazione pubblica ai processi decisionali e l'accesso alla giustizia in materia ambientale (convenzione di Aarhus) ([1]), prevede la possibilità di appropriati meccanismi di assistenza finanziaria in relazione alle controversie ambientali. Tuttavia, data l'assenza di disposizioni dell'Unione in materia, ciò sarebbe attualmente di competenza delle autorità nazionali.

In base al regolamento n. 1080/2006, il Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale (FESR) può finanziare interventi a favore dell'ambiente e della prevenzione dei rischi, in particolare gli investimenti per il recupero dell'ambiente fisico. Il quadro strategico di riferimento italiano per il periodo 2007-2013 (QSN 2007-2013), che stabilisce le specifiche condizioni di intervento del FESR in Italia, prevede tuttavia che questo sostenga soltanto gli interventi in aree pubbliche, o dichiarate di pubblica utilità in conformità con il principio del «chi inquina paga» e, rispettivamente, le norme di ammissibilità del FESR relative alle regioni degli obiettivi «Convergenza» e «Competitività regionale e occupazione». Inoltre, gli interventi in zone contaminate da amianto sono subordinati alla conclusione della pianificazione di settore.

([1]) Ratifica della convenzione di Aarhus mediante decisione 2005/370/CE del Consiglio.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-005770/13
to the Commission
Fabrizio Bertot (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Compensation at risk in Eternit trial

On 21 May 2013 Louis de Cartier de Marchienne died at the age of 92. He and Stephan Schmidheiny were the main defendants in the Eternit trial, in which they were charged with serious environmental negligence and deliberate failure to comply with workplace health and safety rules.

In February 2012, the Turin District Court had sentenced de Cartier to 16 years in prison and ordered him to pay an initial EUR 98 million in compensation pending a comprehensive assessment of the damage caused. The indictment referred to the environmental disaster caused by the operation of Eternit's four Italian plants (Casale Monferrato, Cavagnolo, Rubiera and Bagnoli) and included a list of 2191 people who had died and 665 who had contracted diseases as a result of exposure to asbestos.

The death of de Cartier could now jeopardise the compensation to which the victims' families, and the public bodies which also sued for damages in the trial, are entitled. This may force them to bring a civil action against the holding company Etex, which de Cartier also owned. However, this would mean reopening proceedings in this case, which took 15 years and 65 hearings to produce a final judgment.

In view of the seriousness of the situation, the wide areas affected and the large number of victims, can the Commission state whether, pending completion of the legal proceedings, it intends to incorporate a new item into the budget which could be used to set up an ad hoc fund to assist the civil parties and public bodies involved?

Can it also state what measures it intends to take, in the form of programmes to clean up sites affected by asbestos extraction and processing, in order to protect local people and the environment more effectively?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(1 July 2013)

There are currently no measures envisaged at EU level for financially supporting civil litigation based on harm caused in circumstances such as those described.

Article 9(5) of the Convention on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters (Aarhus Convention) ([1]) makes provision for the possibility of appropriate financial assistance mechanisms in relation to environmental litigation. However, given the absence of EU rules on the subject, this would currently be a matter for national authorities.

According to Regulation No1080/2006, the European regional development fund (ERDF) can support assistance on the environment and risk prevention and in particular investments for the rehabilitation of the physical environment. The Italian Strategic Reference Framework for 2007-2013 (QSN 2007-2013), which stipulates the specific conditions for intervention of the ERDF in Italy, provides however that the ERDF will only support interventions in public areas, or areas declared of public utility in compliance with 'the polluter pays' principle and the ERDF eligibility rules provided for, respectively, the Convergence and Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective regions. Moreover, interventions in asbestos contaminated areas are conditional upon the completion of sector planning (pianificazione di settore).

([1]) Ratification of the Aarhus Convention by Council Decision 2005/370/EC.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-005771/13
adresată Comisiei
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(23 mai 2013)

Subiect: Semințe tradiționale

S-a dat undă verde dispariției a sute de mii de soiuri vechi de semințe, printr-o nouă propunere de comercializare a semințelor.

Diversitatea distribuirii semințelor tradiționale ar rămâne în continuare cea mai directă și mai puțin birocratică modalitate de promovare a biodiversității. În acest mod, libertatea opțiunilor alimentare pentru consumatori ar fi asigurată și țăranii, precum și micile întreprinderi ar fi mai despovărați de birocrație.

Deși acceptate pentru producție și comercializare pe piață, varietățile de semințe ale țăranilor sunt în continuare amenințate cu dispariția. Mai multe organizații internaționale, asociații de țărani și consumatori solicită eliminarea înregistrării obligatorii a varietăților de semințe. Cu toate acestea, eliminarea înregistrării obligatorii a varietăților de semințe solicitată până acum nu a fost îndeplinită.

Deși situațiile diferă la o țară la alta, în România semințele tradiționale sunt baza producției agricole pentru mai mult de 4 milioane de țărani.

În acest context, ce măsuri are în vedere Comisia pentru a proteja dispariția soiurilor vechi de semințe, dar, în același timp, și pentru a-i proteja pe agricultorii statelor membre care folosesc semințele tradiționale?

Răspuns dat de dl Borg în numele Comisiei
(12 iulie 2013)

Comisia o invită pe doamna deputată să consulte răspunsul la întrebarea scrisă E-005627/13. ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/ro/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005771/13
to the Commission
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Traditional seed strands

A recent seed marketing proposal would, if adopted, effectively give the go-ahead for the elimination of hundreds of thousands of traditional seed strands.

Continued diversity with regard to traditional seed distribution is the most direct and least bureaucratic means of promoting biodiversity, ensuring freedom of choice for consumers in respect of food and easing bureaucratic burdens on farmers and small businesses.

While accepted for production and marketing purposes, farmers' seed varieties are in constant danger of disappearing and a number of international organisations and associations representing farmers and consumers are calling for an end to the compulsory registration thereof. However, to date, this has not been brought about.

While the situation differs from one country to another, over four million farmers in Romania depend on traditional seed strands for production purposes.

In view of this, what action will the Commission take to prevent the disappearance of traditional seed strands and at the same time protect farmers in those Member States where they are used?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to written question E-005627/13 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-005772/13
aan de Commissie
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)
(23 mei 2013)

Betreft: Nauwkeurigheids- en betrouwbaarheidscriteria in de Universele Dienstenrichtlijn met betrekking tot 112-oproepen

Artikel 26, lid 5, van Richtlijn 2009/136/EG (Universele Dienstenrichtlijn) ([1]) stelt dat „de bevoegde regelgevende instanties criteria vaststellen voor de nauwkeurigheid en betrouwbaarheid van de verstrekte locatiegegevens". Artikel 26, lid 7, stelt daarnaast dat „de Commissie, na raadpleging van Berec (Orgaan van Europese regelgevende instanties voor elektronische communicatie), technische uitvoeringsmaatregelen kan nemen". Nochtans heeft de Commissie beslist om deze verantwoordelijkheid uit te besteden aan CEPT (Europese Conferentie voor post en telecommunicatie), een privéorganisatie die niet de bevoegdheden heeft om verplichte voorwaarden vast te leggen.

1. Kan de Commissie uitleggen waarom noch de Commissie, noch Berec verantwoordelijk is voor het neerleggen van nauwkeurigheids- en betrouwbaarheidscriteria?

2. Kan de Commissie meedelen wat de geschatte tijdsduur en het werkingsgebied zijn van de CEPT-werkgroep?

3. Kan de Commissie zeggen welke autoriteit de uiteindelijke nauwkeurigheids- en betrouwbaarheidscriteria zal vastleggen voor 112-oproepen voor elke lidstaat?

4. Welk tijdskader werd voorzien voor de definitie van de nauwkeurigheids- en betrouwbaarheidscriteria voor elke lidstaat?

Antwoord van mevrouw Kroes namens de Commissie
(26 juni 2013)

Locatie-informatie over de oproeper is van vitaal belang voor goed functionerende noodhulpdiensten. Volgens het EU-regelgevingskader stellen de bevoegde regelgevende instanties criteria vast voor de nauwkeurigheid en betrouwbaarheid van de verstrekte locatiegegevens. De Commissie kan technische uitvoeringsbepalingen vaststellen om te zorgen voor daadwerkelijke toegang tot het 112-nummer. Dergelijke maatregelen moeten gebaseerd zijn op een grondige analyse van de haalbaarheid van de momenteel beschikbare technische oplossingen, zowel oplossingen die op het netwerk zijn gebaseerd als die waarbij wordt uitgegaan van de handset, waarbij de Commissie een beroep moet doen op ter zake deskundigen om doeltreffende oplossingen in kaart te brengen.

Het door de Europese Conferentie van Post- en Telecommunicatieadministraties (CEPT) samengestelde projectteam (Project Team Emergency Services — PT ES), waarin de bevoegde autoriteiten van de lidstaten zijn vertegenwoordigd, beschikt over de vereiste technische expertise om deze analyse uit te voeren. De Deskundigengroep voor Noodtoegang werkt onder leiding van de Commissie nauw samen met het projectteam. Verwacht wordt dat de analyse in de loop van het komende jaar resultaat zal opleveren.

Het PT ES zal technische aanbevelingen formuleren op basis waarvan de Commissie technische uitvoeringsmaatregelen kan bepalen met betrekking tot de locatie van de oproeper na overleg met het Orgaan van Europese regelgevende instanties voor elektronische communicatie (BEREC).

Wat de verplichting betreft voor de lidstaten om criteria voor de nauwkeurigheid en betrouwbaarheid van locatie-informatie vast te stellen, blijkt uit het verslag over de tenuitvoerlegging in 2012 dat het overgrote deel van de lidstaten reeds cel-ID hanteert als criterium voor de nauwkeurigheid.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:337:0011:0036:nl:PDF.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005772/13
to the Commission
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Accuracy and reliability criteria in the Universal Services Directive with regard to calls to the emergency services

Article 26(5) of Directive 2009/136/EC (Universal Services Directive) ([1]) stipulates that 'Competent regulatory authorities shall lay down criteria for the accuracy and reliability of the caller location information provided'. Moreover, Article 26(7) lays down that 'the Commission, having consulted BEREC (Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications), may adopt technical implementing measures'. However, the Commission has decided to delegate this responsibility to the CEPT (European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations), a private organisation which does not have the power to impose compulsory conditions.

1. Can the Commission explain why neither the Commission nor BEREC is responsible for laying down accuracy and reliability criteria?

2. Can the Commission indicate how long it is estimated that the CEPT working party will need to carry out its remit and what that remit is?

3. Can the Commission indicate what authority will lay down the ultimate accuracy and reliability criteria for calls to the emergency services for each Member State?

4. What is the time frame for the adoption of accuracy and reliability criteria for each Member State?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(26 June 2013)

Caller location is a key element of a well-functioning emergency service. According to the EU regulatory framework the competent regulatory authorities shall lay down criteria for the accuracy and reliability of caller-location information. The Commission may adopt technical implementing measures to ensure effective access to '112'. Any such measure should be based on a thorough analysis of the feasibility of currently available technical solutions, both network based and handset-based, for which the Commission needs the input of the appropriate experts to ensure effective solutions are identified.

The Project team set up by CEPT (Project Team Emergency Services — PT ES), where the competent activities of Member States are represented, has the necessary technical expertise to conduct this analysis. The Commission-led Expert Group on Emergency Access closely cooperates with the project team. The analysis is expected to produce results in the course of next year.

The PT ES will provide technical recommendations on the basis of which the Commission may lay down technical implementing measures on caller location, after having consulted BEREC.

As regards the obligation for Member States to adopt caller location accuracy and reliability criteria, the 2012 implementation report shows that the broad majority of Member States has already implemented Cell ID as an accuracy requirement.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:337:0011:0036:nl:PDF.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005773/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(23. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: Senkung des Leitzinses durch die EZB

Am 2. Mai 2013 senkte die Europäische Zentralbank den Leitzins für die Eurozone von 0,75 % auf das Rekordtief von 0,5 %. Begründet wurde diese Maßnahme mit der schwachen Wirtschaftsleistung und der angespannten Lage am Arbeitsmarkt in der Eurozone.

1. Sieht die Kommission in der Senkung des Leitzinses auf 0,5 % ebenfalls das Potential, zur Erholung der Wirtschaft in der Eurozone beizutragen?

2. Die Inflationsrate in der Eurozone lag im April bei 1,2 %, während Sparer nach der Zinssenkung nun kaum noch Zinsen auf ihre Spareinlagen bekommen. Wie bewertet die Kommission die Tatsache, dass das Vermögen der Sparer somit an Wert verliert?

Antwort von Herrn Rehn im Namen der Kommission
(15. Juli 2013)

Die Kommission möchte daran erinnern, dass die Geldpolitik in die ausschließliche Zuständigkeit der EZB fällt, die gemäß dem ihr durch den Vertrag übertragenen Mandat völlig unabhängig handelt.

Durch eine Senkung des Leitzinses verringern sich die Refinanzierungskosten der Kreditinstitute, die von der Bereitstellung von Liquidität aus dem Eurosystem abhängig sind. Durch niedrigere Finanzierungskosten können Banken die Kosten für Kredite an den nichtfinanziellen Sektor senken und hierdurch die Gesamtnachfrage stützen.

Gemäß dem Vertrag besteht das vorrangige Ziel der EZB in der Wahrung der Preisstabilität. Der EZB-Rat definiert Preisstabilität als eine Inflation des harmonisierten Verbraucherpreisindexes (HVPI), die mittelfristig bei knapp 2 % liegt. Nach der Frühjahrsprognose 2013 der Kommissionsdienststellen dürfte sich die durchschnittliche Inflation im Euro-Raum im Jahr 2013 auf 1,6 % und im Jahr 2014 auf 1,5 % belaufen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005773/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: ECB's reduction of key interest rate

On 2 May 2013 the European Central Bank cut the key interest rate for the eurozone from 0.75% to a record low of 0.5%. The reason given for this measure was poor economic performance and the tense situation on the job market in the eurozone.

1. Does the Commission also consider that cutting the base rate to 0.5% has the potential to help economic recovery in the eurozone?

2. In April 2013 the inflation rate in the eurozone stood at 1.2%, while since the rate cut savers now hardly earn any interest on their savings. This means that savers' money is losing value. What does the Commission think about this?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

The Commission recalls that monetary policy is the exclusive competence of the ECB, which acts in full independence in line with its mandate set out by the Treaty.

A cut in the MRO rate lowers the refinancing costs for credit institutions dependent on liquidity provision from the Eurosystem. Lower funding costs allow banks to decrease costs of credit to the non-financial sector and thus support aggregate demand.

According to the Treaty, the primary objective of the ECB is to maintain price stability. The ECB's Governing Council defines price stability as a year-on-year HICP inflation of below, but close to, 2% over the medium term. The Commission services spring 2013 forecast foresees annual inflation in the euro area to average 1.6% in 2013 and 1.5% in 2014.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005774/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(23. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: Von Generaldirektionen einberufene Sachverständige mit Vergütung

Die Generaldirektionen der Kommission berufen gelegentlich Sachverständige ein, wie beispielsweise die GD CNECT den ehemaligen deutschen Verteidigungsminister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg.

1. Wie viele Personen wurden als „Sachverständige mit Vergütung" von den einzelnen Generaldirektionen der Kommission jeweils seit Amtsantritt der derzeitigen Kommissare einberufen?

2. Wie hoch waren jeweils die Ausgaben der einzelnen Generaldirektionen für die Vergütung von Sachverständigen?

3. Wie viele Sachverständige mit Vergütung befinden sich derzeit im Dienst der Kommission?

Antwort von Herrn Šefčovič im Namen der Kommission
(23. Juli 2013)

Gemäß Artikel 204 der Haushaltsordnung kann die Kommission vergütete externe Sachverständige berufen, die die Organe bei der Bewertung von Finanzhilfeanträgen, Projekten und Angeboten unterstützen und in spezifischen Fällen Stellung nehmen und beraten. Darüber hinaus ist im Rahmenprogramm für Forschung und Entwicklung vorgesehen, dass die Bewertungen von vergüteten Sachverständigen durchgeführt und Gruppen von Sachverständigen bestellt werden, die die Kommission bei der Konzeption und Umsetzung der gemeinschaftlichen Forschungspolitik beraten ([1]).

Die Verzeichnisse der für das Rahmenprogramm bestellten Sachverständigen werden auf der folgenden Webseite veröffentlicht:
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/experts_en.html

Alle Sachverständigengruppen werden im Expertengruppen-Register der Kommission veröffentlicht:
http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/

Für die Beantwortung einer schriftlichen Anfrage kann die Kommission nicht die langwierigen und kostspieligen Nachforschungen durchführen, die notwendig wären, um dem Herrn Abgeordneten die in Punkt 1 und 3 verlangten Informationen bereitzustellen.

([1]) Siehe Artikel 27 Absätze 4 und 5 der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1906/2006 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 18. Dezember 2006 zur Festlegung der Regeln für die Beteiligung von Unternehmen, Forschungszentren und Hochschulen an Maßnahmen des Siebten Rahmenprogramms sowie für die Verbreitung der Forschungsergebnisses (2007-2013), ABl. L 391 vom 30.12.2006, S. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005774/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Paid experts consulted by the Commission's directorates-general

From time to time, the Commission's directorates-general use the services of experts — DG CNECT, for example, has consulted former German Defence Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg.

1. How many people have been consulted in the capacity of paid experts by each of the Commission's directorates-general since the current College of Commissioners took office?

2. How much has each directorate-general spent on payments to such experts?

3. How many paid experts are currently providing services to the Commission?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(23 July 2013)

As provided for Article 204 of the Financial Regulation, the Institution may remunerate external experts for assisting in the evaluation of grant applications, projects and tenders and for providing opinions and advice in specific cases. In addition, the framework Programme (FP) for Research and Development foresees that evaluations must be carried out by remunerated experts, and that expert groups may be set up to advise on the design and implementation of Community research policy ([1]).

Lists of appointed experts for the FP are published on the following website:
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/experts_en.html

All expert groups are published on the following Register of Commission expert groups:
http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/

The Commission cannot undertake, for the purpose of answering a written question, the lengthy and costly research that would be required to provide the Honourable Member with the information requested under sub-questions 1 to 3.

([1]) See Article 27(4) and (5) of the regulation (EC) No 1906/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 laying down the rules for the participation of undertakings, research centres and universities in actions under the Seventh Framework Programme and for the dissemination of research results (2007-2013) OJ L 391, 30.12.2006, p.1.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005775/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(23. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: Liberalisierung des französischen Energiemarktes

Im Februar 2011 erklärten die EU-Staats- und Regierungschefs, der Energiebinnenmarkt müsse bis 2014 vollendet werden. Dazu wird auch die Liberalisierung der nationalen Energiemärkte gezählt. In Frankreich ist der Energiemarkt nach Ansicht von Experten weiterhin stark konzentriert und wird durch das größtenteils im Staatsbesitz befindliche Unternehmen Électricité de France SA (EdF) dominiert.

1. In welcher Form beeinträchtigt die Dominanz des französischen Energiemarktes durch EdF das Funktionieren eines integrierten europäischen Energiebinnenmarktes?

2. Wurde Frankreich seit Februar 2011 zu konkreten Maßnahmen zur Energiemarktliberalisierung aufgefordert oder verpflichtet? Wenn ja, zu welchen Maßnahmen wurde Frankreich verpflichtet und welche Maßnahmen hat der französische Staat zusätzlich unternommen? Wenn nicht, warum wurden keine verpflichtenden Maßnahmen beschlossen?

3. Wurden diese Maßnahmen von Frankreich umgesetzt? Wenn ja, inwieweit wurden sie umgesetzt? Wenn nicht, wurde Frankreich deshalb mit Sanktionen belegt?

4. Welche zukünftigen Maßnahmen plant die Kommission, um Frankreich zu einer schnelleren Liberalisierung des Energiemarktes zu bringen?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(6. August 2013)

1. Die marktbeherrschende Stellung der EDF auf dem französischen Strommarkt führt zu fehlendem Wettbewerb auf den französischen Großhandelsmärkten, die daher unterentwickelt und illiquide sind. In gekoppelten europäischen Strommärkten kann dies auch für Nachbarländer negative Auswirkungen haben.

2. Die Durchsetzungsmaßnahmen der Kommission (Vertragsverletzungsverfahren Nr. 2006/2054 und Beihilfesache Nr. C17/2007 zu regulierten Tarifen für Nichthaushaltskunden) hatten die Einführung des „NOME"-Gesetzes (Gesetz über die Neuorganisation des Strommarkts) in Frankreich zur Folge. Aufgrund dieses Gesetzes haben die Wettbewerber der EDF seit Juli 2011 Zugang zu maximal 100 TWh Kernenergie zu einem regulierten Preis. Seither hat sich der Wettbewerb verbessert. Regulierte Tarife für Nichthaushaltskunden wurden für die größten Industriekunden bereits bis zum Juli 2011 schrittweise abgeschafft, und die verbleibenden werden bis Ende 2015 nach und nach auslaufen. Die Kommission hat Frankreich auch aufgefordert, seine Wasserkraftkapazitäten auszuschreiben.

3. Nach den Erkenntnissen der Kommission wurden die Maßnahmen, die im Rahmen des Vertragsverletzungsverfahrens und der Beihilfesache gefordert wurden, weitgehend umgesetzt, insbesondere was den Zugang zur Kernenergie betrifft. Im Bereich der Wasserkraft steht die Umsetzung noch aus. Die Kommission wird die Situation in Frankreich weiterhin aufmerksam verfolgen.

4. Die Kommission arbeitet im Interesse einer vollständigen Einhaltung der EU-Vorschriften eng mit den französischen Behörden zusammen, und sie wird gegebenenfalls von ihren Befugnissen Gebrauch machen, um eine ordnungsgemäße Umsetzung des EU-Rechts sicherzustellen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005775/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Liberalisation of the French energy market

In February 2011, the EU's heads of state and government announced that the internal market for energy had to be completed by 2014. This would also entail the liberalisation of national energy markets. According to expert opinion, the French energy market remains highly concentrated and is dominated by the predominantly state-owned company Électricité de France SA (EdF).

1. How would EdF's dominance of the French energy market affect the functioning of an integrated European energy market?

2. Has France been asked or obliged to take meaningful action to liberalise its energy market since February 2011? If so, what measures has it been obliged to implement, and what additional steps has the French Government taken? If not, why were no mandatory measures enforced?

3. Have these measures actually been implemented by France? If so, to what extent have they been implemented? If not, have sanctions against France been imposed?

4. What future measures does the Commission intend to take to force France to liberalise its energy market more quickly?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(6 August 2013)

1. EDF's dominance of the French energy market leads to an absence of competition on the French wholesale markets which, as a result, is underdeveloped and illiquid. This can have negative effects also for neighbouring countries in the coupled European electricity markets.

2. The Commission's enforcement activities (an infringement procedure n°2006/2054 and a State Aid case n°C17/2007 on regulated tariffs for non-household customers) led France to propose the 'Nome' law. This law has allowed EDF's competitors in France to obtain access to a maximum of 100 TWh of nuclear energy at a regulated price since July 2011. Competition has been improving since then. Regulated tariffs for non-household customers were already phased out for the biggest industrial customers by July 2011 and the remaining ones will be phased out by end 2015. The Commission has also requested France to tender its hydrocapacity.

3. To the Commission's knowledge, the measures called for in the infringement procedure and the State Aid case have been largely implemented, in particular regarding the access to nuclear energy. For hydroenergy the implementation is still pending. The Commission will continue to monitor the situation in France closely.

4. The Commission is working in close cooperation with the French authorities to ensure the full respect of EU rules and will use its powers to ensure a proper implementation of EC law if needed.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-005776/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(23. Mai 2013)

Betrifft: Liberalisierung der europäischen Energiemärkte

Im Februar 2011 erklärten die EU-Staats- und Regierungschefs, der Energiebinnenmarkt müsse bis 2014 vollendet werden. Dazu wird auch die Liberalisierung der nationalen Energiemärkte gezählt. In Interviews und Pressemitteilungen ([1]) betonte Energie-Kommissar Günther Oettinger wiederholt die große Bedeutung einer weiter gehenden Liberalisierung der europäischen Energiemärkte für die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der EU. In Frankreich ist der Energiemarkt trotz aller Appelle des Energiekommissars weiterhin stark konzentriert und wird vom Staatsunternehmen EDF dominiert.

1. Welche konkreten Maßnahmen hat die Kommission seit Februar 2011 unternommen, um die Liberalisierung der europäischen Energiemärkte voranzutreiben?

2. Wie wirkt die Kommission auf die Mitgliedstaaten ein, in denen der Energiemarkt noch stark konzentriert ist und großer Staatseinfluss den Wettbewerb belastet?

3. In welchen Mitgliedstaaten ist der Energiemarkt nach Ansicht der Kommission noch immer zu stark konzentriert? Hat die Kommission den betreffenden Staaten bestimmte Maßnahmen zur Liberalisierung ihrer Energiemärkte angeraten?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(10. Juli 2013)

Seit dem Auftrag des Europäischen Rates ([2]), den Energiebinnenmarkt bis 2014 zu vollenden, hat die Kommission zahlreiche Initiativen unternommen. Im Folgenden werden einige genannt: Das Energieinfrastrukturpaket ist nunmehr in Kraft, wobei die Agentur für die Zusammenarbeit der Energieregulierungsbehörden (ACER) noch vor der förmlichen Verabschiedung dieses Pakets zusammen mit der Kommission mit der Auswahl von Vorhaben von gemeinsamem Interesse begonnen hat. Die Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1227/2011 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates über die Integrität und Transparenz des Energiegroßhandelsmarkts (REMIT) wurde erlassen. Sie enthält klare Vorschriften für den Energiehandel und verfolgt das Ziel, Vertrauen in ein ordnungsgemäßes Funktionieren des Marktes zu schaffen. Außerdem befinden sich die ersten EU-weiten Netzkodizes in der letzten Phase ihrer Ausarbeitung.

In der Mitteilung ([3]) der Kommission vom November 2012 sind viele weitere Maßnahmen aufgeführt; sie enthält überdies eine Bestandsaufnahme der bereits erzielten Erfolge und der wichtigsten Herausforderungen, die sich auf unserem Weg zu einem wirklich vollständigen und funktionierenden Markt stellen.

Diese Herausforderungen lassen sich in drei Kategorien einteilen: a) Umsetzung und *Anwendung* der vorhandenen Rechtsvorschriften *in der Praxis*, b) Gewährleistung der aktiven Beteiligung und Zusammenarbeit der Verbraucher, die man benötigt, damit der Markt funktioniert, die jedoch derzeit vom Binnenmarkt nicht vollständig überzeugt sind, und c) Verbesserung der Vorbereitung des bevorstehenden Übergangs zu einer nachhaltigeren Energieversorgung.

Das Vorgehen gegen einen hohen Konzentrationsgrad auf den Endkundenmärkten fällt in die zweite der oben genannten Kategorien und ist ein wichtiger Schwerpunkt der Arbeit der Kommission. Wie in der oben erwähnten Mitteilung dargelegt, gibt es in der EU acht Länder, in denen der Konzentrationsgrad auf den Endkundenmärkten sehr hoch ist. Häufig besteht eine Verbindung zur Preisintervention und zur Regulierung durch den Staat. Die Mitteilung enthält auch konkrete Empfehlungen, die an die betreffenden Länder gerichtet sind.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-410_de.htm
([2]) Februar 2011, im Mai 2013 erneut bestätigt.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas_electricity/internal_market_de.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005776/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Liberalising the European energy market

In February 2011 the EU Heads of State or Government stated that the internal energy market must be completed by 2014. Liberalisation of national energy markets is also included under this heading. In interviews and press releases ([1]) Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger has repeatedly stressed how important the further liberalisation of the European energy markets is for the competitiveness of the EU. The energy market in France, despite all the Energy Commissioner's appeals, continues to be heavily concentrated and is dominated by the State-owned EDF.

1. What specific measures has the Commission taken since February 2011 to drive forward liberalisation of the European energy market?

2. What action is the Commission bringing to bear on Member States whose energy market is still heavily concentrated and where heavy State influence has an adverse effect on competition?

3. In which Member States does the Commission consider the energy market to be still too heavily concentrated? Has the Commission made recommendations to the countries concerned on specific measures to liberalise their energy markets?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(10 July 2013)

Since the mandate of the European Council ([2]) to complete the Internal Energy Market by 2014 the Commission has taken numerous initiatives. To name just a few: The Energy Infrastructure Package is now in force and even before its formal adoption, the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) started working with the Commission in the selection of projects of common interest. The regulation (EU) No 1227/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council on wholesale energy market integrity and transparency (REMIT) has been adopted, setting clear rules for energy trading and aiming to create confidence in proper market functioning. The first EU-wide Network Codes are in their final stages of preparation.

The November 2012 Communication of the Commission ([3]) enumerates many more actions and takes stock of what has been achieved and what the main challenges are that remain on our path towards calling the market truly complete and functioning.

These challenges can be grouped into three categories: a) implementing and *applying in practice* existing legislation, b) ensuring the active involvement and cooperation of consumers who are needed to make the market work but who are at present insufficiently convinced of the internal market and c) improving preparation for the energy transition ahead of us.

Addressing high concentration in retail markets falls in the second of the above categories and is a main focus for the Commission. As set out in the aforementioned Communication there are eight countries with a very high concentration in retail markets. Often there is a link to price intervention and regulation of the government. The communication also contains concrete recommendations to each of the countries concerned.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-410_en.htm
([2]) February 2011, reconfirmed in May 2013.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas_electricity/internal_market_en.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-005777/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(23 mai 2013)

Objet: Danger du made in China

Plus de la moitié des jouets, produits électroniques et vêtements dangereux bloqués dans l'Union européenne proviennent de Chine et le nombre de signalements a progressé de 4 % en 2012 en dépit des promesses de coopération de Pékin.

De plus, mis à l'écart en raison par exemple de la présence de composants chimiques cancérigènes ou de «liens étrangleurs» pour les vêtements, 2 278 produits auraient ainsi fait l'objet l'année dernière d'une alerte de la part des autorités européennes. Et, comme le souligne le rapport annuel de Rapex, le système d'alerte rapide de l'Union pour les produits dangereux non alimentaires, 58 % de ces produits provenaient de Chine.

1. La Commission compte-t-elle prendre des mesures encore plus contraignantes vis-à-vis des entreprises chinoises, voire de la Chine, d'où provient l'ensemble de ces produits dangereux?

2. À quel type de sanction la Commission songe-t-elle?

Réponse donnée par M. Mimica au nom de la Commission
(23 juillet 2013)

La surveillance du marché et l'application de mesures répressives, notamment sous la forme de sanctions à l'encontre des opérateurs économiques, relèvent de la compétence des États membres. Les mesures prises par les autorités nationales ou par les opérateurs économiques contre des produits dangereux sont donc notifiées à la Commission.

Comme l'Honorable Membre du Parlement l'a indiqué, le rapport annuel RAPEX pour 2012 montre une légère augmentation du nombre de biens de consommation d'origine chinoise notifiés via le système RAPEX parce que présentant un risque grave pour la santé et la sécurité. Cette augmentation reste dans la fourchette de la moyenne observée au cours des dernières années. Parallèlement, elle témoigne du renforcement par les autorités nationales de leurs mesures de répression et des mesures prises par les opérateurs économiques. L'augmentation du nombre de notifications pourrait également résulter de la forte pénétration des produits chinois sur les marchés en Europe.

La Commission ne cesse de travailler avec la Chine pour améliorer cette situation. Dans le cadre du système «RAPEX Chine», les autorités chinoises reçoivent régulièrement des informations de la Commission sur les problèmes recensés et les produits dangereux d'origine chinoise; de leur côté, elles rendent périodiquement compte des mesures correctives prises dans leur pays, notamment des interdictions d'exportation imposées à des fabricants et des exportateurs. La Commission continue de collaborer avec les autorités chinoises pour améliorer ce mécanisme, notamment au moyen d'actions de communication intensive destinées à informer les fabricants chinois des exigences européennes en matière de sécurité des produits.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005777/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Dangers lurking behind the words 'Made in China'

More than half the dangerous toys, electronic products and clothes withdrawn from the market by the European Union originate from China, and the number of products identified as posing a risk to health or safety rose by 4% in 2012, despite promises of cooperation from Beijing.

In 2012, 2 278 dangerous products were the subject of notifications to the European authorities. Some of these products were withdrawn from the market because they contained carcinogens or, in the case of clothing, because they presented a strangulation risk. As the annual report on RAPEX, the EU's Rapid Alert System for non-food dangerous products, emphasises, 58% of these products originated from China.

1. Does the Commission plan to take still firmer action against Chinese companies, or even against China, where all of these dangerous products originated?

2. What kinds of penalties does the Commission plan to impose?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(23 July 2013)

The enforcement and market surveillance, including imposing penalties on economic operators is the responsibility of the Member States. Measures taken by national authorities or by economic operators against unsafe products are consequently notified to the Commission.

As pointed out by the Honourable Member, the annual RAPEX report for 2012 shows a slight increase in the number of consumer products of Chinese origin posing serious risk to the health and safety notified through RAPEX. This increase remains in the range of the average observed over recent years. At the same time, it is an indication of strengthened enforcement activities by national authorities and of actions taken by economic operators. The higher number of notifications could also be attributed to the significant market penetration of Chinese products in Europe.

The Commission is continuously working bilaterally with China in order to further improve this situation. In the framework of the 'RAPEX China', Chinese authorities regularly receive information from the Commission on identified problems and dangerous products of Chinese origin and regularly report back on corrective actions taken in China, including export bans imposed on manufacturers and exporters. The Commission is continuously cooperating with Chinese authorities in order to improve this mechanism, including through intensive communication actions that are undertaken to inform Chinese manufacturers on European product safety requirements.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-005778/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(23 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Zamachy bombowe na chrześcijan w Libii

W miniony piątek w Bengazi doszło to wybuchu bomby w katolickiej świątyni. Wcześniej celem ataków terrorystycznych stali się Koptowie. Zagrożenie spowodowało konieczność wycofania się z terenu Cyrenajki niektórych wspólnot zakonnych, które świadczyły pomoc także miejscowej społeczności muzułmańskiej. Islamscy bojownicy nasilają ataki na mniejszości religijne, a także cudzoziemców.

Proszę o informacje jakie czynności podejmuje Unia Europejska celem przeciwdziałania aktom przemocy oraz zabezpieczenia pracujących, bądź przebywających na terenie Libii obywateli europejskich? Czy i w jakim stopniu realizowana jest także współpraca z instytucjami wyznaniowymi w tym zakresie?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(15 lipca 2013 r.)

UE z zaniepokojeniem obserwuje eskalację przemocy w Libii, w tym ataki i akty dyskryminacji skierowane przeciwko wspólnotom wyznaniowym, m.in. chrześcijanom oraz muzułmańskiej wspólnocie Ahmadijja.

Sytuacja w Libii w zakresie praw człowieka jest przedmiotem regularnej dyskusji z władzami. Podczas wizyty premiera Libii Aliego Zajdana w Brukseli w dniu 27 maja 2013 r. zarówno przewodniczący Barroso, jak i przewodniczący Van Rompuy poruszali w rozmowach z nim kwestię naruszeń praw człowieka w Libii. Premier Libii przyznał, że naruszenia te trwają, i zapewnił, że ministerstwa sprawiedliwości i spraw wewnętrznych dokładają wszelkich starań w celu poprawy sytuacji.

UE będzie nadal wzywać władze Libii do zapewnienia przestrzegania uzgodnionych na szczeblu międzynarodowym standardów w zakresie praw człowieka. Jednocześnie Unia będzie wspierać władze w realizacji ich zobowiązań wynikających z prawa międzynarodowego. Przykładem jest zaoferowany przez UE pakiet wsparcia o wartości 20 mln euro, służący poprawie ochrony grup szczególnie wrażliwych, w tym migrantów.

Delegatura UE w Libii organizuje i prowadzi regularne spotkania z akredytowanymi w Trypolisie przedstawicielami 19 państw członkowskich UE. Podczas tych spotkań poruszane są kwestie konsularne i zagadnienia bezpieczeństwa dotyczące obywateli UE w celu zapewnienia dobrej koordynacji działań będących w zakresie kompetencji państw członkowskich UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005778/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Bomb attacks on Christians in Libya

On 17 May 2013, a bomb exploded in a Catholic church in Benghazi. Prior to this, Copts had been the target of terrorist attacks. The threat of terrorism has forced a number of Christian religious orders, which also provided assistance to the local Muslim community, to leave the Cyrenaica area. Islamist fighters are stepping up their attacks on religious minorities and foreigners.

What action is the EU taking to counter the violence and maintain the security of EU citizens living and working in Libya?

Is cooperation being undertaken with religious institutions in this regard? If so, how?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

The EU has followed with concern the escalation of violent events which have taken place in Libya, including attacks or discrimination against religious communities such as Christians or Ahmadi Muslims.

The human rights situation in the country is regularly discussed with the authorities. During the visit of the Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zeidan in Brussels on 27 May 2013, both Presidents Barroso and Van Rompuy raised human rights violations in Libya. The Libyan Prime Minister acknowledged the persistence of human rights violations in the country and assured that Ministries of Justice and Interior were doing their utmost to improve the situation.

The EU will continue to call on the Libyan authorities to ensure respect for internationally agreed human rights standards. At the same time, the EU will continue to support the authorities in meeting their responsibilities under international law. As an example, the EU is providing a EUR 20 million support package aimed at improving the protection of vulnerable groups including migrants.

The EU Delegation in Libya organises and chairs regular meetings with the 19 EU Member represented in Tripoli where consular and security issues affecting EU nationals are discussed in order to ensure good coordination of activities falling under the competence of EU Member States.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-005779/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(23 maja 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Zatrzymanie byłego premiera Gruzji

Pod zarzutem korupcji aresztowano w Gruzji byłego premiera, uprzednio ministra spraw wewnętrznych, Wano Merabiszwilego. Osoba ta pełni również obecnie funkcję sekretarza generalnego prezydenckiej partii Zjednoczony Ruch Narodowy, jest zatem bardzo wpływowym politykiem w kraju.

W trosce o rozwój demokracji w Gruzji oraz w obliczu jej prounijnych aspiracji, pragnę zwrócić się z prośbą o udzielenie odpowiedzi na następujące pytania:

1. Czy ESDZ monitoruje sprawę pana Merabiszwilego?

2. Czy przedstawione byłemu premierowi zarzuty zostały wiarygodnie udokumentowane?

3. Czy w opinii Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel powyższa sprawa mieści się w kanonach walki z przestępczością gospodarczą, czy też może nosić znamiona dyskryminacji działaczy opozycji?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(11 lipca 2013 r.)

Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca z uwagą śledzi sprawę Wano Merabiszwilego oraz inne głośne procesy w Gruzji. Wydawanie opinii na temat rzetelnego udokumentowania sprawy w postępowaniu sądowym nie jest zadaniem Wysokiej Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącej. UE śledzi natomiast uważnie ten i inne procesy oraz ocenia, czy należycie zastosowano się do procedury, zgodnie ze wspólnymi wartościami podzielanymi przez Unię i Gruzję oraz ustalonymi normami międzynarodowymi. Rząd Gruzji zapewnił, że nie pozwoli na to, aby na toczące się postępowania sądowe wywierano jakikolwiek nacisk polityczny.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005779/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Arrest of former Prime Minister of Georgia

Vano Merabishvili, a former Prime Minister and Minister of Internal Affairs, was arrested in Georgia in connection with corruption charges. He serves as Secretary-General of the President's party, the United National Movement, making him an extremely influential politician in Georgia.

The situation gives rise to concerns about the evolution of democracy in Georgia and the country's EU aspirations. Therefore, I should like to put the following questions:

1. Is the EEAS monitoring the Merabishvili case?

2. Does credible evidence exist for the charges levelled against the former Prime Minister?

3. In the Vice-President/High Representative's opinion, should this case be seen in thecontext of the fight against economic crime, or does it rather smack of discriminationagainst opposition activists?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(11 July 2013)

The HR/VP is closely monitoring the case of Vano Merabishvili and other high profile prosecutions in Georgia. It is not for the HR/VP to form an opinion on the strength of the prosecution's case in any given legal proceeding; rather, the EU will carefully monitor this and other trials and assess whether due process is being applied, in line with the common values shared by the EU and Georgia and adhering to established international norms. The government of Georgia has given assurances that it will not permit any political influence over ongoing judicial processes.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005780/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(23 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Anulación del juicio de Ríos Montt

Durante los últimos meses hemos asistido a la realización del juicio del exdictador guatemalteco Efraín Ríos Montt que inició sus vistas orales y testimonios el pasado 19 de abril. Durante todo este tiempo hemos estado advirtiendo sobre las continuas irregularidades y amenazas que pendían sobre dicho proceso judicial que, finalmente, parecen confirmarse.

El pasado 20 de mayo, efectivamente, se confirmaron todas las sospechas que, desde múltiples sectores, entre ellos esta oficina, habíamos expresado sobre la capacidad del sistema judicial guatemalteco de poder realizar un juicio imparcial al dictador. Tras un irregular juicio, repleto de suspensiones, retrasos y amenazas, Efraín Ríos Montt fue condenado a 80 años, dicha sentencia ha durado apenas nueve días, el tiempo que ha necesitado el Tribunal Constitucional de Guatemala para anular dicha sentencia.

Durante los testimonios del *juicio se afirmó que el actual Presidente del país podría haber estado involucrado en los crímenes cometidos por Ríos Montt, lo que daba por sentado que la débil justicia guatemalteca no podría gestionar este proceso hasta sus últimas consecuencias. Pero no siendo suficiente las dudas razonadas que planeaban sobre dicho sistema, la Asociación de Veteranos Militares de Guatemala (Avemilgua) y la patronal, representada por el Comité Coordinador de Asociaciones Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras (Cacif), han presionado para anular dicho juicio. Unos amenazaron con la movilización de paramilitares y otros, comunicando a través de la prensa su oposición a la existencia de un genocidio.*

En este contexto, *la justicia guatemalteca ha anulado un juicio justo y de nuevo ha pasado a no reconocer los crímenes ni restablecer la memoria de las víctimas, eliminando de un plumazo la credibilidad internacional que había ganado dicho sistema judicial con la condena.*

¿Considera la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante que la anulación del juicio obedece a bases jurídicas suficientes o supone una cesión ante las amenazas de patronal y militares? *Ante los comunicados emitidos por Cacif, ¿considera pertinente detener los acuerdos comerciales con los empresarios que la integran hasta que respeten los derechos humanos, acepten la existencia del genocidio y no extorsionen a la sociedad guatemalteca?*

¿Considera que se debe suspender el proceso de ratificación del Acuerdo de Asociación con la Región Centroamericana hasta que el Gobierno guatemalteco pueda hacer efectiva la condena a Ríos Montt?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de julio de 2013)

El juicio sigue en curso. Remitimos a la respuesta dada a las preguntas anteriores sobre el mismo asunto E-004454/2013 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005780/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Conviction of Ríos Montt overturned

The trial of former Guatemalan dictator Efraín Ríos Montt opened a number of months ago, and on 19 April the court began to hear submissions and testimony. Since day one concern has been expressed at the repeated allegations (which have now seemingly been confirmed) of irregularities in the proceedings and attempts to put pressure on persons connected with the case.

On 20 May 2013 the fears held by many people (including me) that the capacity of Guatemala's judicial system would not be able to give the former dictator a fair trial were proved to be entirely justified. Following a flawed trial, beset by adjournments, delays and threats, Efraín Ríos Montt was sentenced to 80 years in prison. Guatemala's Constitutional Court then took only nine days to quash the sentence.

According to the testimony heard in court the country's current President may also have been involved in the crimes committed by Ríos Montt — proof that Guatemla's judicial system is too weak to see the case through to its logical conclusion. As if those reasonable doubts about the country's legal system were not already enough, the Guatemala Veterans Association (Avemilgua) and the Coordinating Committee for Business, Industrial and Financial Associations (Cacif), representing employers, were also lobbying for the conviction to be overturned. Some Ríos Montt supporters threatened to mobilise paramilitary groups, whilst others used the press to reject all accusations of genocide.

By overturning what was a valid conviction, Guatemala's judicial system has failed once again to acknowledge past crimes and to honour the memory of the victims. At a stroke it has forfeited the international credibility it had earned by handing down a guilty verdict.

Does the Vice-President/High Representative think that the conviction was overturned because it was genuinely regarded as unsafe or in response to threats from employers' groups and members of the armed forces? In view of the press releases issued by Cacif, does she think that it would be appropriate to suspend the trade agreements with Cacif employers until the latter show that they respect human rights, acknowledge that a genocide took place, and stop blackmailing Guatemalan society?

Should the ratification process for the EU-Central America association agreement be suspended until the Guatemalan Government manages to have Ríos Montt's original conviction reinstated?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

The trial is still ongoing. Please refer to the answer given to earlier questions on the same matter E-004454/2013 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005781/13
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(23 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Mito dirompente della quota novanta

Recentemente è stato dimostrato che la teoria di due economisti americani, secondo cui il rapporto debito pubblico/pil al 90 % rappresenta il limite massimo oltre il quale inizia il crollo della crescita economica di un Paese, non solo è errata, ma è il frutto di grossolane manipolazioni statistiche. Orbene, questo limite del 90 % pare sia diventato in Europa un imperativo categorico.

È sempre successo che tutti gli oracoli negativi e le cure depressive provenienti dagli Usa abbiano trovato ascolto ed applicazione in Europa. Da alcuni anni, nella tempesta della crisi dell'euro e delle difficoltà incontrate dall'Unione europea, le politiche di austerità e di taglio ai bilanci imposte ai Paesi europei più indebitati e con l'economia più debole strutturalmente, sono state giustificate anche con la teoria del 90 %.

Il ministro del bilancio tedesco e lo stesso commissario hanno giustificato le politica d'austerità riferendosi alla teoria dei due economisti americani. Ora però, per fortuna, molti si stanno rendendo conto, anche in Germania, che queste politiche imposte ai Paesi del Sud Europa hanno conseguenze disastrose per la produzione e l'occupazione e stanno riverberando effetti negativi anche sull'economia tedesca, a partire dalle esportazioni di automobili di piccola e media cilindrata, con ricorsi alla cassa integrazione in diverse fabbriche: appare evidente quindi l'errore dei due economisti menzionati.

Può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se condivide l'opinione che quando la crescita si ferma parte l'aumento del debito pubblico;

2. se ritiene perciò che lo sforzo dovrebbe essere concentrato nell'individuazione delle migliori proposte per sostenere gli investimenti e la ripresa produttiva;

3. se considera che queste teorie meccanicistiche — come quella dell' «inflazione controllata» dello stesso duo d'economisti — non tengano conto, nelle terapie prospettate, di fattori molto importanti, come quello umano e della recessione, quindi dell'impoverimento, fattori questi molto reali rispetto all'astrazione teorica che poi si ritorcono contro gli obiettivi da raggiungere;

4. se si augura che il fallimento di queste teorie riporti l'Europa verso la solida, anche se un po' vecchia, economia sociale di mercato che dalla fine della Seconda guerra mondiale ha promosso uno sviluppo sociale ed economico stabile ed equilibrato nei principali Paesi disastrati dal conflitto?

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(16 luglio 2013)

La Commissione ritiene che il consolidamento fiscale sia un mezzo che consente alle autorità pubbliche di ripristinare la loro sovranità fiscale, in modo da poter investire nella crescita sostenibile. In un contesto di deficit pubblici elevati e di aumento del debito la Commissione propugna la necessità di un consolidamento fiscale che dovrebbe avvenire in modo differenziato e tale da non ostacolare la crescita, tenendo conto delle peculiarità di ciascun paese. Le più recenti proposte della Commissione nel merito sono contenute nel pacchetto presentato il 29 maggio che comprendeva, tra l'altro, delle raccomandazioni della Commissione al Consiglio al fine di estendere i termini per la rettifica del disavanzo eccessivo in sei paesi: Spagna, Francia, Paesi Bassi, Polonia, Portogallo e Slovenia. Il pacchetto comprende inoltre gruppi di raccomandazioni specifiche per paese volte a identificare le principali sfide che i singoli paesi si trovano ad affrontare e proposte di riforme strutturali da attuarsi per assicurare la crescita sostenibile e la creazione di posti di lavoro.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005781/13
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Devastating 90% myth

It has recently been shown that the theory of two US economists, according to which a debt-to-GDP ratio of 90% is the upper limit above which a country's economic growth begins to collapse, is not only wrong but is the result of coarse statistical manipulation. However, this 90% limit seems to have become a categorical imperative in Europe.

All the negative oracles and treatment for depression from the US have always been listened to and applied in Europe. For some years now, in the throes of the euro crisis and the difficulties encountered by the European Union, the policies of austerity and budget cuts imposed on the most indebted European countries with the structurally weaker economies, have been justified also by this 90% theory.

The German Budget Minister and the relevant Commissioner have justified their austerity policies with reference to the theory of these two American economists. But now, thankfully, many are realising, even in Germany, that these policies being imposed on the countries of Southern Europe are having disastrous consequences on production and employment and are even having negative repercussions on the German economy, for instance on exports of small and medium-sized cars, with a number of factories being forced to lay off workers. The error made by the two abovementioned economists thus appears evident.

Can the Commission therefore answer the following questions:

1. Does it share the view that when growth stops, government debt begins to increase?

2. Does it therefore not agree that efforts should be focused on identifying the best proposals for supporting investment and economic recovery?

3. Does it not agree that these mechanistic theories — such as that of 'controlled inflation' by the same two economists — do not take account, in their proposed therapies, of very important factors, such as the human, recession and impoverishment factors, which are all too real compared to abstract theories which then backfire in terms of the objectives to be achieved?

4. Does it hope that the failure of these theories will take Europe back to the solid, if a little old-fashioned, social market economy which, since the end of World War II has promoted stable and balanced social and economic development in the main countries stricken by this conflict?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(16 July 2013)

The Commission considers that fiscal consolidation is a means for public authorities to regain their fiscal sovereignty to be able to invest in sustainable growth. Against the background of high public deficits and rising debt levels, the Commission is advocating the need for fiscal consolidation, which should take place in a differentiated and growth-friendly manner, specific to each country. Most recent Commission proposals in this regard can be found in the package presented on the 29th of May, which notably included Commission Recommendations to the Council with a view to extend the deadlines for correcting the excessive deficit in six countries: Spain, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia. Furthermore, the package includes sets of country specific recommendations aimed at identifying countries' main challenges and proposals for structural reforms to be implemented in order to ensure sustainable growth and job creation.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005782/13
a la Comisión
Maria Badia i Cutchet (S&D) y Raimon Obiols (S&D)
(23 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Apología de regímenes autoritarios en el Estado español

Según se ha publicado en la prensa catalana el pasado 11 de mayo de 2013, la delegada del Gobierno de España en Catalunya, María de los Llanos de Luna, participó en un acto de reconocimiento a militares en la localidad de Sant Andreu de la Barca. La delegada entregó un reconocimiento a la Hermandad de Combatientes de la División Azul, una entidad de veteranos militares que luchó en la Segunda Guerra Mundial sirviendo como la división de infantería número 250 de las tropas hitlerianas. Algunos de los miembros de esta hermandad fueron a recoger su reconocimiento vestidos con la indumentaria habitual de los falangistas, brazo político del franquismo durante la dictadura.

La Unión Europea reconoce en el preámbulo de la Carta de Derechos Fundamentales de la UE que «la Unión está fundada sobre los valores indivisibles y universales de la dignidad humana, la libertad, la igualdad y la solidaridad, y se basa en los principios de la democracia y del Estado de Derecho», reconociendo que «la Unión contribuye a la preservación y al fomento de estos valores comunes dentro del respeto de la diversidad de culturas y tradiciones de los pueblos de Europa». Además, el Parlamento Europeo, en su Resolución de 2 de abril de 2009, sobre la conciencia europea y el totalitarismo, subraya, en su punto número 3 «la importancia de mantener viva la memoria del pasado, puesto que no puede haber reconciliación sin verdad y sin memoria; reafirma su oposición decidida a todo régimen totalitario, sea cual sea la ideología en que se base».

— ¿Entiende la Comisión que la entrega de reconocimientos militares a excombatientes de las tropas nazis está de acuerdo con los valores en los que la Unión Europea se fundamenta, en particular con lo dispuesto en el artículo 2 del Tratado de la Unión Europea?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(31 de julio de 2013)

De conformidad con la Decisión Marco 2008/913/JAI del Consejo relativa a la lucha contra el racismo y la xenofobia, todos los Estados miembros de la UE tienen la obligación de castigar la incitación pública e intencionada a la violencia o al odio dirigidos contra un grupo de personas o un miembro de tal grupo definido en relación con la raza, el color, la religión, la ascendencia o el origen nacional o étnico. Asimismo, la apología pública, la negación o la trivialización fragrante e intencionada de los crímenes nazis deben castigarse penalmente. Actualmente la Comisión está supervisando las medidas de aplicación de los Estados miembros y elaborará un informe sobre este tema para finales de 2013. Corresponde a las autoridades nacionales investigar los casos de llamamiento al odio o negación del Holocausto y perseguir a los autores de tales delitos.

De hecho, las autoridades públicas, los partidos políticos y la sociedad civil deben condenar firmemente los comportamientos racistas y xenófobos y luchar activamente contra ellos. Por añadidura, la Comisión subraya la importancia de mantener viva la memoria de los crímenes pasados, en particular del Holocausto y de los crímenes cometidos durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, e insta a los Estados miembros a tomar las medidas necesarias para garantizar que no se borre su recuerdo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005782/13
to the Commission
Maria Badia i Cutchet (S&D) and Raimon Obiols (S&D)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Eulogising of authoritarian regimes in Spain

As was reported in the Catalan press on 11 May 2013, the Spanish Government's delegate in Catalonia, María de los Llanos de Luna, recently attended a ceremony in the town of Sant Andreu de la Barca paying tribute to military personnel. The delegate presented an award to the Veterans' Brotherhood (*Hermandad de Combatientes*) of the *División Azul*, an organisation of military veterans who fought in World War II — as the 250th Infantry Division — alongside Hitler's troops. Some members of the brotherhood went to collect their awards dressed in the usual attire of the Falangists, the political arm of the Franco dictatorship.

The preamble to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights states 'the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law' and that it 'contributes to the preservation and to the development of these common values — while respecting the diversity of cultures and traditions of the peoples of Europe'. Furthermore, in paragraph 3 of its resolution of 2 April 2009 on European conscience and totalitarianism, the European Parliament underlined 'the importance of keeping the memories of the past alive, because there can be no reconciliation without truth and remembrance … [and] reconfirm[ed] its united stand against all totalitarian rule from whatever ideological background'.

— Does the Commission believe that presenting military awards to veterans of the Nazi army is an act in keeping with the values on which the EU is founded, as expressed in particular in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(31 July 2013)

According to Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating racism and xenophobia, all EU Member States are obliged to penalise the intentional public incitement to violence or hatred directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin. The intentional public condoning, denial or gross trivialisation of Nazi crimes is also to be made criminally punishable. The Commission is currently monitoring Member State's implementing measures and will draw up a report on this issue by the end of 2013. It is for national authorities to investigate any instances of hate speech or Holocaust denial and to prosecute the perpetrators of such offences.

Public authorities, political parties, and civil society must indeed strongly condemn and actively fight against racist and xenophobic behaviour. Furthermore, the Commission underlines the importance of preserving the memory of the past crimes, in particular of the Holocaust and of the crimes committed during World War II, and urges Member States to take the necessary measures to ensure their remembrance.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005783/13
a la Comisión
María Irigoyen Pérez (S&D) y Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto (S&D)
(23 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Retraso en la absorción financiera de los recursos programados

El pasado mes de abril, la Comisión publicó el Informe estratégico de 2013 sobre la aplicación de los programas de política de cohesión del periodo 2007-2013, que finalizan en 2015. El informe, que resume los 27 informes estratégicos presentados por los Estados miembros a finales de 2012, destaca que muchos programas se enfrentan a problemas con la cofinanciación nacional o regional.

En el caso de España, las limitaciones presupuestarias han supuesto que no haya recursos disponibles para la aportación de la parte de cofinanciación nacional de las actuaciones de los Fondos y que los proyectos no hayan salido adelante. Asimismo, el retraso en la absorción financiera de los recursos programados ha conllevado un descompromiso automático de fondos.

Con el objetivo de frenar esta tendencia, se aprobó un Reglamento en 2010 para simplificar determinados requisitos y disposiciones relativas a la gestión financiera. ¿Dispone la Comisión de informaciones que confirmen que las nuevas disposiciones han repercutido positivamente en el aumento del grado de absorción financiera de los fondos en los Estados miembros afectados y en España en particular?

A principios de 2012, la Comisión se comprometió a apoyar los esfuerzos para aumentar el empleo, especialmente en los Estados miembros, como España, con los niveles de desempleo juvenil más elevados, mediante la reasignación de los fondos aún no comprometidos. Asimismo, se acordó la creación de un Grupo de Acción con responsables tanto de la Comisión de la UE como de la Administración española para poner en marcha una serie de actuaciones.

¿Puede informar la Comisión sobre los trabajos de ese Grupo de Acción y de los resultados de esas iniciativas?

¿Considera la Comisión que, a la luz del incremento del nivel de desempleo en España, el Programa Nacional de Reformas de España implementado por el Gobierno camina en la buena dirección?

Respuesta del Sr. Hahn en nombre de la Comisión
(24 de julio de 2013)

En 2012, la mayoría de los programas españoles cofinanciados en el marco del Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional (FEDER) sufrieron modificaciones que supusieron un incremento de sus tasas de cofinanciación hasta el máximo permitido por el Reglamento, lo que redujo el riesgo de liberación de compromisos N+2. En la actualidad, estos programas presentan una ejecución financiera media del 57 %, frente a la media del 55 % de la Europa de los Veintisiete ([1]).

En el marco del Equipo de Acción para el Fomento del Empleo Juvenil se ha llevado a cabo un importante ejercicio de reprogramación para adaptar los programas a las prioridades de Europa 2020 y a la Iniciativa sobre Empleo Juvenil. Hasta el final de 2012, la reprogramación de los fondos del FEDER alcanzó más de 1 000 millones de euros en apoyo a medidas como el establecimiento de fondos rotativos para facilitar a las PYME el acceso a la financiación y crear y mejorar infraestructuras de educación y formación. Por lo que respecta al Fondo Social Europeo, se reasignaron más de 286 millones de euros para acciones relacionadas con el empleo juvenil y así, por ejemplo, se dedicaron 135 millones de euros al servicio público de empleo para ayudar a los jóvenes a encontrar trabajo y se dieron subsidios en forma de reducciones de las cotizaciones a la seguridad social a las empresas que contrataron jóvenes, medida de la que se beneficiaron 142 000 jóvenes.

En el contexto del Semestre Europeo, la Comisión efectúa un estrecho seguimiento de cómo evolucionan los mercados de trabajo. Los análisis sobre los retos y las medidas necesarias se resumen en las recomendaciones por país y en el documento de trabajo de los servicios de la Comisión adoptado por esta el 29 de mayo de 2013 ([2]).

([1]) Datos de julio de 2013.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005783/13
to the Commission
María Irigoyen Pérez (S&D) and Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto (S&D)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Delay in absorption of programmed funds

In April, the Commission published the Strategic Report 2013 on implementation of the 2007-2013 cohesion policy programmes which are due to end in 2015. The report, which summarises the 27 strategic reports presented by the Member States at the end of 2012, highlights that many programmes are coming up against problems with national or regional co-financing.

In Spain's case, budget restrictions have meant that there are no resources available for the national share of co-financing for actions under the Funds and that projects have not gone ahead. The delay in absorption of programmed funds has likewise led to funds being automatically de-committed.

A regulation was adopted in 2010 to curb this trend by simplifying certain requirements and provisions relating to financial management. Does the Commission have information to confirm that the new provisions have had a positive effect on the rise in the rate of financial absorption of funds in the Member States affected and in Spain in particular?

In early 2012, the Commission undertook to support efforts made to increase employment, especially in Member States like Spain which have the highest levels of youth unemployment, by reassigning funds which had not yet been committed. An Action Group was also formed, staffed by officials from both the Commission and the Spanish civil service, to implement a series of measures.

Could the Commission say what work this Action Group has carried out and what have been the results of these initiatives?

Does the Commission consider, in light of the rising level of unemployment in Spain, that the Spanish National Reform Programme implemented by the Government is going in the right direction?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(24 July 2013)

In 2012, most of the Spanish programmes co-financed under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) were modified, entailing an increase of their intervention rates up to the maximum allowed by the regulation, which reduced the risk of N+2 de-commitment. Currently, these programmes show an average financial execution of 57% as compared to the EU-27 average which is at 55% ([1]).

In the framework of the Youth Action Team, a major reprogramming exercise has been carried out to align programmes with the EU 2020 priorities and the Youth Employment Initiative. Up to end 2012, reprogramming of ERDF funds has reached more than EUR 1 billion in support of measures such as the set-up of revolving funds for easing access to finance for SMEs and building and upgrade of education and training infrastructures. Regarding the European Social Fund, over EUR 286 million were reallocated to actions related to youth employment, e.g. EUR 135 million were directed to the public employment service to help young people find work and subsidies in the form of reductions in social security contributions for companies recruiting young people were implemented for 142 000 young people.

Within the European Semester, the Commission monitors closely labour market developments. The analysis regarding the challenges and needed measures are summarised in the country-specific recommendations and the Staff working document adopted by the Commission on 29 May 2013 ([2]).

([1]) Data: July 2013.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005784/13
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE)
(23 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Impatto occupazione della delocalizzazione di imprese all'interno dell'UE

È di questi giorni la notizia che un'impresa italiana, l'ennesima, poche settimane dopo l'acquisizione da parte di un'azienda straniera, e contrariamente a quanto annunciato nei comunicati stampa, viene delocalizzata in altri Paesi europei. In Italia a conferma dell'interesse per l'Italia da parte dell'impresa resta solo il team commerciale, mentre la produzione viene spostata in un altro Stato e centinaia di dipendenti restano in cassa integrazione, pesando, loro malgrado, sul bilancio dello Stato italiano le cui finanze già non sono floride.

A questo quadro si aggiunge il fatto che lo Stato di destinazione dell'investimento non ha un costo del lavoro più basso né il suo mercato immobiliare risulta essere più conveniente.

Alla luce di queste considerazioni, può la Commissione far sapere se:

— vi sono i presupposti per investigare l'eventuale presenza di aiuti pubblici in una scelta aziendale di tale genere;

— ritiene che scaricare l'impatto occupazionale su una collettività alla quale in nessun modo si contribuisce sia scorretto eticamente e imprenditorialmente nonché fonte di indebiti benefici economici;

— ritiene che una completa tracciabilità delle fasi produttive possa tutelare i lavoratori, permettendo di riunire geograficamente l'interesse per la clientela e quello per il destino dei dipendenti?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(18 luglio 2013)

1. In mancanza di informazioni sull'impresa interessata e sugli eventuali aiuti concessi da un altro Stato membro, la Commissione non ha motivi per investigare se l'eventuale disponibilità di aiuti di Stato sia stata tra i fattori che hanno influenzato la decisione dell'impresa a delocalizzarsi.

2. La Commissione non ha poteri per interferire nelle decisioni specifiche delle imprese. Essa le sollecita, tuttavia, a seguire le buone pratiche e a prevedere con anticipo e a gestire in modo socialmente responsabile le ristrutturazioni. Dando seguito al suo Libro verde del gennaio 2012 ([1]) e all'adozione ad opera del Parlamento europeo, il 15 gennaio 2013, della relazione Cercas, la Commissione proporrà nell'autunno 2013 una comunicazione relativa a un Quadro di qualità sulla ristrutturazione che inquadrerà la legislazione e le iniziative unionali in materia di ristrutturazioni e presenterà le pratiche ottimali in questo ambito. La Commissione desidera inoltre far presente che i lavoratori oggetto di ristrutturazione possono ottenere un sostegno dal FSE e, a condizione che siano soddisfatte le condizioni previste, dal Fondo europeo di adeguamento alla globalizzazione.

3. L'esperienza insegna che sono essenzialmente le scelte del pubblico, in particolare dei consumatori, a determinare un cambiamento positivo verso un comportamento socialmente responsabile da parte delle imprese se i loro prodotti sono percepiti e apprezzati in quanto fabbricati in modo responsabile e vengono quindi preferiti ad altri.

([1]) Cfr. le risposte e una sintesi all'indirizzo http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=8908&langId=en.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005784/13
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Plant relocations within the EU: the impact on workers

According to recent press reports yet another Italian company has shifted production from Italy to other parts of Europe. This move, which comes just weeks after the company in question was taken over by a foreign firm, is at odds with the announcements made in the company's press releases. As a token gesture of its commitment to Italy the company has kept its sales team in the country; production, meanwhile, has been relocated elsewhere and hundreds of employees have been made redundant. The redundancy payouts are costing the State money, through no fault of the workers themselves, at a time when Italy's finances are already under pressure.

To add insult to injury, labour costs and property prices in the country to which production has moved are no lower than in Italy.

— Does the Commission think that there are grounds for investigating whether the possible availability of state aid was a factor in the company's decision to relocate?

— Does it think that it is wrong from an ethical and business perspective for a company to inflict mass redundancies on a country whilst giving nothing whatsoever back, bearing in mind that in taking the step of relocating the company is effectively earning itself an unmerited economic windfall?

— Does it agree that if the public and the authorities know where each stage in the production process takes place workers would be protected and companies would be more willing to reconcile their commercial interests with their responsibilities as employers?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(18 July 2013)

1. In the absence of any information about the company involved and on potential aid granted by another Member State, there are no grounds for the Commission to investigate whether the possible availability of state aid was a factor in the company's decision to relocate.

2. The Commission has no powers to interfere in specific company's decisions. It urges them, however, to follow good practices anticipation and socially responsible management of restructuring. Following its January 2012 Green Paper ([1]) and the adoption by the European Parliament on 15 January 2013 of the Cercas report, the Commission will propose in autumn 2013 a communication establishing a Quality Framework on Restructuring that will frame the EU legislation and initiatives relevant to restructuring and will present the best practices in this field. The Commission would also point out that workers affected by restructuring may qualify for support from the ESF and, provided that the necessary conditions are met, from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund.

3. Practice shows that it is mainly the public and in particular the consumers' choice that might bring about a positive change toward socially responsible behaviour by companies if their products are perceived and valued to be produced responsibly and consequently preferred to other products.

([1]) See the replies and a summary under http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=8908&langId=en.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005786/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(23 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Commercializzazione di prodotti agricoli dalla Cina provenienti dai «laogai»

Coldiretti Italia denuncia che nel 2012, solamente nel nostro Paese, sono stati importati 85 milioni di kg di pomodori conservati e nel complesso sono stati importati pomodori, ortaggi e frutta per un valore di circa 500 milioni di euro.

La maggior parte di questi prodotti sono stati coltivati nei «laogai», i campi di lavoro forzato cinesi la cui produzione è destinata al mercato interno, ma anche a quello dell'esportazione. Tali campi non solo violano i diritti umani, scontrandosi chiaramente con le norme della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea, ma permettono alla Cina di immettere sul mercato prodotti dal prezzo competitivo, sfruttando il lavoro dei detenuti.

La Commissione:

— è a conoscenza di questi fatti?

— Come intende agire per tutelare il mercato italiano ed europeo dalle distorsioni create dall'immissione di prodotti cinesi coltivati in situazione di dumping sanitario e ambientale e impiegando lavoratori costretti in una situazione di palese violazione dei diritti dell'uomo?

— Può fornire i dati relativi alle quantità e al valore dei prodotti agricoli commercializzati nell'UE provenienti da coltivazioni come quelle sopra descritte?

— Considerando la risoluzione del Parlamento europeo sulle relazioni UE-Cina (P6_TA(2006)0346), nella quale il Parlamento «*condanna in particolare l'esistenza, in tutto il paese, dei campi di lavoro laogai, in cui la RPC detiene attivisti democratici, attivisti sindacali e membri delle minoranze, privati di un giusto processo e costretti a lavorare in condizioni spaventose e senza cure mediche;*» e «*invita la Cina ad attestare per iscritto che i prodotti esportati non sono stati fabbricati in un campo di lavoro forzato laogai e, in mancanza di una siffatta garanzia, insiste affinché la Commissione vieti l'importazione nell'Unione europea dei prodotti in questione*», può fornire indicazioni sullo stato di attuazione di questa risoluzione e precisare se intende vietare la commercializzazione di prodotti ottenuti con il lavoro dei detenuti nei «laogai»?

Risposta di Karel De Gucht a nome della Commissione
(8 luglio 2013)

La Commissione ha ripetutamente invitato la Cina a porre fine al sistema di rieducazione attraverso il lavoro. Tale questione verrà sollevata ancora una volta in occasione del dialogo UE-Cina sui diritti umani del 25 giugno 2013.

Per quanto riguarda le questioni relative alla quantificazione del fenomeno e alle iniziative prese in questo ambito la Commissione rinvia l'onorevole parlamentare alla propria risposta all'interrogazione E-002019/2013 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005786/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Sale of Chinese agricultural products from the Laogai labour camps

Coldiretti Italia (Italian National Farmers Confederation) has reported that in 2012, in Italy alone, 85 million kg of tinned tomatoes were imported and, overall, tomatoes, vegetables and fruits for a value of approximately EUR 500 million were imported.

Most of these products were grown in the Chinese Laogai labour camps and intended not only for the domestic market but also for the export market. Not only do these labour camps violate human rights, in clear breach of the rules laid down in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, but they enable China to place products on the market at a competitive price, exploiting the labour of prisoners.

— Is the Commission aware of these facts?

— What action will it take to protect the Italian and European markets from distortions created by the introduction of Chinese products grown in a situation of environmental and health dumping and using workers who are forced into a situation in which their human rights are blatantly violated?

— Can it provide data on the quantity and value of agricultural products sold in the EU from cultivations such as those described above?

— In view of the European Parliament resolution on EU-China relations (P6_TA (2006) 0346), in which Parliament 'condemns in particular the existence of the Laogai labour camps across the country, in which the PRC detains pro-democracy activists, labour activists and members of minorities without a fair trial, forcing them to work in appalling conditions and without medical treatment' and 'calls on China to give a written undertaking in relation to any given exported product that it has not been produced by forced labour in a Laogai camp and, if no such assurance can be given, insists that the Commission prohibit its importation into the EU', can the Commission provide any information on the state of implementation of this resolution and clarify whether it intends to prohibit the marketing and sale of products obtained from the work of prisoners in the Laogai camps?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

The Commission has repeatedly called on China to end the Re-education through Labour (RTL) system. The issue will be raised again at the EU-China human rights dialogue on 25 June 2013.

With regard to issues related to the quantification of this phenomenon and to the ongoing work undertaken in this area, the Commission refers the Honourable Member to its reply to Question E-002019/2013 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-005787/13
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(23 mai 2013)

Subiect: Regimul fiscal al subvențiilor agricole: supliment la întrebarea parlamentară E-006079/2012

Ca răspuns la întrebarea parlamentară E-006079/2012, Comisia a arătat, la 13 august 2012, că nu este în măsură să ofere un răspuns precis pentru că nu a fost precizată natura subvențiilor menționate. Arăt că problema supusă atenției Comisiei era legată de plățile directe pe suprafață acordate în cadrul Schemei de plată unică pe suprafață (SPUS), finanțată din Fondul European de Garantare Agricolă (FEGA).

Comisia este rugată să aibă bunăvoința de a răspunde din nou la întrebare, pe baza precizării formulate.

Răspuns dat de dl Šemeta în numele Comisiei
(3 iulie 2013)

În temeiul articolului 73 din Directiva TVA ([1]) și în conformitate cu jurisprudența Curții de Justiție ([2]), numai subvențiile legate direct de prețul livrărilor de bunuri sau prestărilor de servicii sunt incluse în baza de impozitare.

Comisia va solicita informații din partea autorităților române cu privire la tratamentul TVA aplicat plăților directe pe suprafață acordate pentru agricultori în cadrul schemei de plată unică pe suprafață (SAPS) finanțată din Fondul European de Garantare Agricolă (FEGA). Comisia Europeană va examina problema ridicată de distinsul membru luând în considerare răspunsul autorităților române cu scopul de a asigura aplicarea corectă a legislației UE și îl va ține la curent cu privire la rezultatele acestei cereri de informații.

([1]) Directiva 2006/112/CE a Consiliului din 28 noiembrie 2006 privind sistemul comun al taxei pe valoarea adăugată, JO L 347, 11.12.2006, p.1.
([2]) A se vedea, de exemplu, hotărârea Curții din 22 noiembrie 2001 în Cauza C-184/00, Office des produits wallons și hotărârile Curții din 15 iulie 2004 în cazurile C-381/01, Comisia/Italia, C-495/01, Comisia/Finlanda, C-144/02, Comisia/Germania și C-463/02, Comisia/Suedia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005787/13
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Taxation of farm subsidies: supplementary to Written Question E-006079/2012

In its answer of 13 August 2012 to Written Question E-006079/2012, the Commission said that it was not in a position to provide a specific answer because the type of subsidies concerned was not specified. The problem brought to the Commission's attention concerned direct area payments granted as part of the single area payment scheme (SAPS) financed from the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF).

Can the Commission answer the question again on the basis of the type of subsidies specified above?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(3 July 2013)

Under Article 73 of the VAT Directive ([1]) and the case-law of the Court of Justice ([2]), only the subsidies directly linked to the price of the supply of goods or services are included in the taxable amount.

The Commission will request information from the Romanian authorities on the VAT treatment of the direct area payments granted to farmers under the single area payment scheme (SAPS) financed from the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF). It will examine the matter raised by the Honourable Member in light of their reply with a view of ensuring the correct application of EC law and will keep him informed of the results of this request of information.

([1]) Council Directive 2006/112/EC of 28 November 2006 on the common system of value added tax, OJ L 347, 11.12.2006, p. 1.
([2]) See, for example, the judgment of the Court of 22 November 2001 in Case C-184/00, Office des produits wallons and the judgments of the Court of 15 July 2004 in Cases C-381/01, Commission v. Italy, C-495/01, Commission v. Finland, C-144/02, Commission v. Germany and C-463/02, Commission v. Sweden.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés P-005788/13
a Bizottság számára (Alelnök / Főképviselő)
Surján László (PPE)
(2013. május 23.)

Tárgy: VP/HR – A Fülöp-szigetek és Tajvan közötti vita

A Fülöp-szigeteki parti őrség egyik hajója tüzet nyitott egy tajvani halászhajóra 2013. május 9-én, aminek következtében egy halász életét vesztette.

Mit lehet tudni az incidens okáról? A nemzetközi jog alapján megfelelően kezeli-e a vitát a Fülöp-szigetek, és kielégítőek-e a Fülöp-szigeteki kormány által adott válaszok, illetve a megtett intézkedések?

Catherine Ashton főképviselő/alelnök válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2013. július 16.)

A főképviselő/alelnök értesült a 2013. május 9-i Fülöp-szigetek és Tajvan közötti tengeri incidensről, és nagyon sajnálja, hogy az incidens következtében Hung Shih-Cheng tajvani halász életét vesztette.

A főképviselő/alelnök szoros figyelemmel követte az eset kapcsán a Fülöp-szigetek és Tajvan között kialakult fejleményeket, többek közt az EU manilai küldöttsége és tajpeji képviseleti irodája által gyűjtött részletes információk alapján.

A Fülöp-szigetek és Tajvan párhuzamos vizsgálatokat folytattak, és a két fél között hasznos együttműködés folyt. Egyelőre korai lenne bármilyen következtetések levonása, különösen, hogy a vizsgálatok eredményeinek közzététele a közeljövőben várható. Az a véleményünk, hogy továbbra is mindkét félnek önmérsékletet kell tanúsítania, és azon dolgoznia, hogy megelőzzék a helyzet eszkalálódását.

A Dél-kínai-tenger nemcsak nagyon fontos hajózási és kereskedelmi terület, hanem halászati térség is, amely több ország part menti közösségeinek megélhetését biztosítja. Valószínűleg jelentős ásványkincseket is rejt.

A kérdéssel kapcsolatban régóta képviselt álláspont, melyet például a 2012. szeptember 25-i állásfoglalás is tartalmaz, hogy az EU valamennyi érintett felet arra bíztatja, hogy békés és együttműködő megoldásokat keressenek a nemzetközi joggal, különösen az ENSZ Tengerjogi Egyezményével összhangban. Az EU következetesen arra bátorította valamennyi felet, hogy tegyék egyértelművé igényeik alapját, tartózkodjanak minden agresszív megnyilvánulástól vagy erőszak alkalmazásától, és tegyenek előrelépést a Dél-kínai-tenger magatartási kódexének kidolgozása terén. Ezen intézkedések kölcsönös tisztelet alapján való végrehajtása hozzájárulna egy olyan békés és együttműködő környezet megteremtéséhez, amely kedvező alapot képezne a közös erőfeszítésekhez és megoldásokhoz a Dél-kínai-tengeren.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-005788/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
László Surján (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Dispute between Taiwan and the Philippines

On 9 May 2013, a Taiwanese fishing boat was fired upon by a Philippine Coast Guard vessel, resulting in the death of a fisherman.

What is known about the cause of this incident? Is the treatment of the dispute, along with the responses and actions taken by the Philippine Government, satisfactory under international law?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(16 July 2013)

The HR/VP is aware of the maritime incident of 9th May 2013 between the Philippines and Taiwan, and very much regret the resulting loss of life of Mr Hung Shih-Cheng, a Taiwanese fisherman.

The HR/VP has been monitoring closely the development of the ensuing dispute between the Philippines and Taiwan, including through detailed information gathered by our Delegation in Manila and Office in Taipei.

The Philippines and Taiwan have conducted parallel investigations and there was a useful level of cooperation between the two sides. It would be premature to draw any conclusions now, particularly since the announcement of the findings is expected shortly. We believe all sides should continue to exercise restraint and work towards de-escalating the situation.

The South China Sea is not only crucial shipping and trading area but also a fishing ground which coastal communities from different countries depend on. It also potentially holds significant mineral resources.

Long-held view on this issue, expressed notably in statement of 25 September 2012, has been to encourage all parties concerned to seek peaceful and cooperative solutions in accordance with international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The EU has been consistent in encouraging all parties to clarify the basis for their claims, refrain from any aggressive posturing or use of force and to make progress on a Code of Conduct for the South China Sea. If these measures are observed, based on mutual respect, they would contribute to the creation of a peaceful and cooperative environment conducive to joint efforts and solutions in the South China Sea.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005789/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(23 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Importazioni dalla Cina di giocattoli rischiosi per la salute

Nel 2012 sono aumentate le importazioni di prodotti pericolosi per la salute dei cittadini europei: il rapporto del sistema di informazione rapida dell'UE (Rapex) conferma che lo scorso anno le segnalazioni degli Stati membri sui prodotti pericolosi diversi dagli alimenti sono state 2 278, registrando un aumento del 26 % rispetto al 2011. Sempre secondo il Rapex, il 58 % dei prodotti pericolosi proviene dalla Cina e l'11 % è di origine sconosciuta. Il fenomeno riguarda soprattutto i giocattoli, dei quali il 93 % è di provenienza cinese.

La Commissione:

1. Non ritiene necessario applicare controlli più severi per salvaguardare la salute dei cittadini degli Stati membri?

2. Considerata la risposta alla mia interrogazione «Sequestri in Italia di giocattoli non conformi "Made in China"» (E-006159/2012): «Per migliorare l'ottemperanza dei fabbricanti cinesi alla legislazione vigente dell'UE sulla sicurezza dei giocattoli è in corso da diversi anni una cooperazione efficace con le autorità cinesi. Tale cooperazione comporta uno scambio regolare d'informazioni sui requisiti di sicurezza e sugli standard applicabili tra esperti europei e cinesi di sicurezza dei prodotti, lo scambio d'informazioni sui giocattoli non sicuri di origine cinese reperiti sul mercato dell'UE, l'organizzazione di attività mirate di sensibilizzazione all'indirizzo dei fabbricanti in Cina nonché la formazione di funzionari del governo cinese che intervengono nei controlli obbligatori preventivi effettuati dalla Cina sulle esportazioni» e a fronte dei risultati del rapporto Rapex sopra citati, come valuta l'efficacia della cooperazione sinora portata avanti fra UE e Cina?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(5 luglio 2013)

La sicurezza dei giocattoli è una delle priorità della Commissione. La nuova direttiva sulla sicurezza dei giocattoli adottata nel 2009 accresce la protezione della salute e della sicurezza, in particolare per quanto concerne le sostanze chimiche, applicando regole che sono tra le più rigorose al mondo.

L'aumento nel 2012 delle notifiche RAPEX di prodotti pericolosi, che rappresenta un ritorno ai livelli elevati del 2010, indica che le autorità di controllo del mercato degli Stati membri hanno nuovamente compiuto grandi sforzi per salvaguardare la salute dei cittadini dell'UE. È anche rassicurante constatare che le notifiche RAPEX riguardavano i giocattoli quale seconda categoria maggiormente rappresentata (19 %) mentre gli articoli di abbigliamento (in particolare quelli per l'infanzia: 34 %) erano al primo posto. Ciò rispecchia l'importanza che le autorità attribuiscono alla protezione dei bambini. Nel 2012 l'88 % di tutti i giocattoli notificati nel sistema RAPEX proveniva dalla Cina. Nel 2011 tale percentuale era dell'87 %.

La Commissione continua a cooperare con le autorità cinesi. In proposito si è recentemente concordato di intensificare la cooperazione in particolare in materia di valutazione del rischio presentato dai prodotti, di gestione del rischio e di sorveglianza post commercializzazione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005789/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Imports from China of toys that are hazardous to health

In 2012, imports of products that are hazardous to the health of European citizens increased. The EU Rapid Alert System (RAPEX) report confirms that last year there were 2278 notifications from Member States on non-food dangerous products — an increase of 26% compared to 2011. Also according to RAPEX, 58% of dangerous products come from China and 11% are of unknown origin. The problem concerns mainly toys, of which 93% are from China.

1. Does the Commission not consider it necessary to apply more stringent controls in order to safeguard the health of EU citizens?

2. Given the answer to my written question 'Seizures in Italy of toys "Made in China" which are in breach of safety regulations' (E-006159/2012):'To improve Chinese manufacturers' compliance with applicable EU toy safety legislation, effective cooperation has been in place for several years with the Chinese authorities. Such cooperation involves a regular exchange of information about applicable safety requirements and standards between European and Chinese product safety experts, exchange of information on unsafe Chinese origin toys found on the EU market, the organisation of targeted outreach activities for manufacturers in China as well as training of Chinese government officials active in preventive enforcement as part of China's mandatory export controls' and in view of the results of the RAPEX report mentioned above, how effective does the Commission think that the EU-China cooperation hitherto implemented has been?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(5 July 2013)

Toy safety is one of the Commission's priorities. The new Toy Safety Directive adopted in 2009 enhances safety and health protection, in particular with regard to chemical substances, which are among the strictest worldwide.

The increase of RAPEX notifications on dangerous products in 2012, which represents a return to 2010 levels, shows that Member States' market surveillance authorities have again undertaken considerable efforts to safeguard the health of EU citizens. It is also reassuring to see that the RAPEX notifications targeted toys as the second most prominent product category (19%), with clothing (in particular for children: 34%) being the first. This reflects the importance that authorities also attach to the protection of children. In 2012, 88% of all toys notified in RAPEX came from China. In 2011 this figure was 87%.

The Commission will continue to cooperate with the Chinese authorities. In this respect, it was recently agreed to intensify cooperation, in particular on product risk assessment, risk management and post-market surveillance.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005791/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(23 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Nuove esecuzioni capitali in Arabia Saudita

Nei giorni scorsi in Arabia Saudita cinque yemeniti colpevoli di furto e di omicidio sono stati condannati alla pena capitale nella città di Jizan, nella zona sud-ovest del paese. I cinque, dei quali tre erano fratelli, avrebbero ucciso un cittadino saudita soffocandolo. I loro corpi decapitati sono stati poi esposti al pubblico nella piazza davanti al campus dell'università e la foto dei cadaveri è stata fatta girare sui social network. Alla pena di morte è stato condannato anche un saudita della provincia di Assir. Secondo i dati di France Press, sono già 47 le esecuzioni effettuate nel regno dall'inizio del 2013. L'organizzazione internazionale non governativa Human Rights Watch è intervenuta a difesa dei diritti umani, sostenendo che questo genere di pratiche non fa che mettere in luce le lacune di un sistema giudiziario basato su una rigida versione della legge islamica, su arresti arbitrari, processi ingiusti e condanne eccessive.

La Commissione:

— È a conoscenza degli eventi?

— Considerato l'intervento di condanna da parte dell'Alto Rappresentante dell'Unione per gli affari esteri e la politica di sicurezza, Catherine Ashton, a proposito delle esecuzioni avvenute il primo aprile 2013 in Kuwait, non ritiene opportuno ribadire anche in questo caso l'opposizione dell'Unione europea alla pena di morte, essendo l'Arabia Saudita uno dei paesi con il più alto tasso di esecuzioni al mondo?

— Come valuta le relazioni politiche ed economiche con il paese alla luce della divergenza sulla questione del rispetto dei diritti umani?

Risposta dell'Alto Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(9 luglio 2013)

L'Alto Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton è perfettamente al corrente di tali eventi. Il 24 maggio ha infatti rilasciato una dichiarazione ([1]) in cui deplora le esecuzioni cui fa riferimento l'interrogazione e in cui ribadisce l'opposizione di principio dell'Unione alla pena di morte in qualsiasi caso o circostanza.

L'UE si sta attivamente occupando della questione della pena di morte nei suoi contatti con l'Arabia Saudita e con altri paesi, ribadendo la propria opposizione di principio a tale pena. I provvedimenti diplomatici presi nei confronti di paesi terzi variano notevolmente e possono essere di dominio pubblico (come le dichiarazioni) oppure più discreti come le iniziative o gli interventi ad hoc durante i dialoghi politici o specificamente dedicati ai diritti umani. La scelta dello strumento è sempre basata su una valutazione dell'efficacia dei provvedimenti in funzione degli obiettivi previsti.

Oltre a sfruttare ogni occasione per affermare all'Arabia Saudita la propria posizione quanto alla pena di morte e la propria preoccupazione in merito all'alto numero di persone giustiziate, l'Unione chiede regolarmente all'Arabia Saudita di prendere in considerazione almeno una moratoria. Di fronte a tale richiesta le autorità saudite sostengono che la pena di morte è parte integrante della loro cultura, tradizione e religione e che la legge islamica non può essere modificata. Nonostante queste difficoltà l'Alto Rappresentante/Vicepresidente continuerà a sollevare la questione della pena capitale nei suoi contatti con l'amministrazione saudita attraverso canali appropriati, sia in forma pubblica sia in modo più discreto.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137268.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005791/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Fresh executions in Saudia Arabia

Recently, in Saudi Arabia, five Yemenis guilty of theft and murder were sentenced to death in the city of Jizan, in the south-west of the country. The five, three of whom were brothers, allegedly killed a Saudi citizen by choking him. Their decapitated bodies were then displayed to the public in the square in front of the university campus and a photo of the corpses was disseminated on social networks. A Saudi national from the province of Assir was also sentenced to death. According to Agence France-Presse, there have already been 47 executions in the kingdom since the beginning of 2013. The international non-governmental organisation Human Rights Watch has intervened in defence of human rights, arguing that this kind of practice simply highlights the shortcomings of a judicial system based on a strict version of Islamic law, arbitrary arrests, unfair trials and excessive sentences.

— Is the Commission aware of these events?

— Given the condemnation by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, of the executions which took place on 1 April 2013 in Kuwait, does the Commission not consider it appropriate, in this case too, to reiterate the EU's opposition to the death penalty, given that Saudi Arabia is one of the countries with the highest rate of executions in the world?

— What is its view of political and economic relations with that country in the light of the difference of opinions on respect for human rights?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

The HR/VP is well aware of these events. She issued a statement on 24 May ([1]), deploring the executions to which the question refers and reminding of EU's prinicpled opposition against capital punishment in all cases and under all circumstances.

The EU is actively addressing the issue of death penalty in its relations with Saudi Arabia as with other countries, based upon the EU's principled position against capital punishment. The diplomatic actions undertaken towards third countries range from the more public ones (e.g. statements), to more discreet action, such as demarches or during political or dedicated Human rights dialogues. The choice of the tool is always based upon an assessment of what action would be the most effective as to the expected outcome.

In adition to using every opportunity to flag to Saudi Arabia its principled line on death penalty and its concerns over the high number of individuals executed, the EU regularly asks Saudi Arabia to consider at least a moratorium. When confronted with this request, the Saudi authorities argue that death penalty is enshrined in their culture, tradition and religion and that the Islamic law cannot be changed. In spite of these difficulties, the HR/VP will continue to raise the issue of capital punishment with the Saudi authorities through appropriate channels, whether publicly or outside the public eye.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137268.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005792/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(23 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Nuovi casi di discriminazione religiosa contro i cristiani in Arabia Saudita

In Arabia Saudita si registrano nuovi casi di discriminazione religiosa. A tutte le religioni non musulmane è fatto divieto di professare la propria fede non solo in luogo pubblico, ma anche in privato. Sono tuttora in carcere i 35 etiopi cristiani, dei quali 29 donne, che nel dicembre 2011 furono sorpresi a pregare in una casa privata a Jeddah. La polizia religiosa aveva fatto irruzione nell'abitazione e arrestato tutti i presenti. Durante la detenzione essi sono stati più volte picchiati e insultati. All'arresto, per presunte irregolarità nei permessi di soggiorno e «socializzazione illecita», non è mai seguito un processo vero e proprio e sul caso non è mai stata fatta chiarezza.

Lo scorso 8 febbraio ad Dammam altri 53 etiopi cristiani, 46 donne e 6 uomini, sono stati arrestati mentre svolgevano un incontro di preghiera all'interno di un'abitazione privata. I cristiani non solo sono costretti a tenere segreta la loro fede, ma rischiano anche l'omicidio d'onore da parte di qualunque musulmano senza che quest'ultimo incorra in sanzioni legali. Ciò è avvenuto nonostante il governo saudita avesse fatto sapere nel 2009 attraverso un comunicato all'agenzia di stampa saudita (SPA) del Vicepresidente della commissione per i diritti umani, Zeid al-Hussein, che i non musulmani presenti nel paese godevano della libertà religiosa e potevano liberamente professare la loro fede eseguendo le pratiche rituali nelle proprie case. Nel comunicato si affermava inoltre che le violazioni dei diritti umani nei confronti dei non musulmani erano da imputare alla responsabilità di singoli individui e che il governo saudita intendeva procedere sulla strada del dialogo interreligioso.

È al corrente la Commissione di questi casi?

— Qual è la sua posizione sulla questione?

— Non ritiene opportuno intervenire in difesa della libertà di culto dei 543.000 cristiani presenti nel paese?

— Come intende relazionarsi con il governo saudita sul piano politico ed economico alla luce degli eventi?

Risposta dell'Alto Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(12 luglio 2013)

La libertà di religione o di credo rappresenta una delle maggiori priorità nella politica dell'UE sui diritti umani, è un diritto umano inalienabile e un pilastro fondamentale della società. La libertà di pensiero, di coscienza, di religione e di credo è sancita in quanto tale in diversi strumenti internazionali nonché nella Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'UE, che specifica che ogni individuo ha diritto alla libertà di pensiero, di coscienza e di religione (articolo 10) e che va rispettata la diversità culturale, religiosa e linguistica. Sono inoltre in fase di preparazione per l'adozione nel prossimo futuro orientamenti dell'UE in materia di promozione e tutela della libertà di religione o di credo.

Per quanto riguarda le questioni sollevate dall'onorevole parlamentare, l'Alto Rappresentante/Vicepresidente è a conoscenza delle restrizioni alla libertà di religione o di credo messe in atto nel Regno dell'Arabia Saudita (SA) e ricorda, a tale proposito, che gli Stati hanno il dovere di proteggere chiunque da discriminazione, violenza e altre violazioni dei diritti, compresi gli appartenenti a minoranze. Le missioni diplomatiche dell'UE e la delegazione a Riyadh seguono da vicino e riferiscono regolarmente sulla situazione in materia di diritti umani, inclusa la libertà religiosa.

Attualmente non esistono accordi bilaterali tra UE ed Arabia Saudita e non esiste quindi un dialogo politico bilaterale istituzionale con tale paese. L'interazione ha luogo a livello regionale in seno al Consiglio di cooperazione del Golfo, di cui l'Arabia Saudita è membro. La delegazione UE a Riyadh solleva inoltre regolarmente la questione dei diritti umani e delle libertà fondamentali nel corso dei contatti con i rappresentanti del governo saudita.

L'UE continuerà ad affrontare tali problematiche con i suoi interlocutori del Golfo, avvalendosi appieno delle opportunità a sua disposizione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005792/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: New cases of religious discrimination against Christians in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia new cases of religious discrimination have been recorded. All non-Muslim religions have now been banned from professing their faith not only in public but also in private. The 35 Ethiopian Christians, 29 of whom women, who in December 2011 were found praying in a private home in Jeddah, are still in prison. The religious police had raided the house and arrested everyone present. During their detention they were repeatedly beaten and insulted. Their arrest, for alleged irregularities in their residence permits and 'illicit socialising', was never followed by an actual trial and the case against them has never been clarified.

On 8 February 2013 in Dammam another 53 Ethiopian Christians — 46 women and 6 men — were arrested while holding a prayer meeting in a private home. Christians are not only forced to conceal their faith but may also be victims of honour killings by any Muslim, who will not even be punished for it. This is despite the fact that in 2009 the Saudi government, through a press release to the Saudi news agency (SPA) by the Deputy Chair of the Committee for Human Rights, Zeid al-Hussein, had stated that non-Muslims in the country enjoyed freedom of religion and were able freely to profess their faith by performing their ritual practices in their own homes. The press release also stated that any human rights violations against non-Muslims were the responsibility of individuals and that the Saudi government intended to continue along the path of interreligious dialogue.

Is the Commission aware of these cases?

— What is its position on this issue?

— Should it not take action to defend the freedom of worship of the 543 000 Christians living in the country?

— How will it relate to the Saudi government, in political and economic terms, in the light of these events?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

Freedom of religion or belief is a high priority of the EU's human rights policy, an inalienable human right and an essential pillar of society. Freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief is enshrined, as such, in a number of international instruments as well as in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which makes clear that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Art 10) and that cultural, religious and linguistic diversity should be respected. In addition, EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief are currently being prepared for adoption in the near future.

As regards the issues referred to by the honourable member, the HR/VP is aware of restrictions on freedom of religion or belief in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and in this regard recalls that states have a duty to protect everyone, including persons belonging to minorities, from discrimination, violence and other violations. The EU diplomatic missions and the Delegation in Riyadh are closely following the human rights situation, including religious freedom, as part of their regular reporting.

There are currently no bilateral agreements between the EU and Saudi Arabia and thus no institutional bilateral political dialogue with the KSA. The interaction takes place at regional level with the Gulf Cooperation Council, of which Saudi Arabia is a member. In addition, the EU Delegation in Riyadh raises human rights and fundamental freedoms regularly in contacts with Saudi officials.

The EU will continue to raise these issues with its Gulf interlocutors, making full use of the opportunities at its disposal.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005793/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(23 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Presenza di mercurio ed altre sostanze nocive per la salute umana nei vaccini

Nel 1999 l'Agenzia Europea per i Farmaci (EMEA) ha inviato a tutti gli Stati membri una raccomandazione per promuovere l'uso di vaccini privi di mercurio e alluminio, sostanze che possono provocare danni permanenti al sistema nervoso, al fegato e ai reni.

L'anno seguente la stessa agenzia segnalava la presenza in commercio di vaccini potenzialmente dannosi.

Sebbene nel 2001 in Italia con un decreto ministeriale ne sia stato vietato l'utilizzo, il mercurio è ancora presente in vaccini destinati tanto a neonati che adulti. Sono oltre 40 mila le domande inoltrate alle autorità e alle case farmaceutiche per la richiesta di risarcimento del danno da vaccino.

Recentemente, lo scorso 25 ottobre 2012, sollecitata da nuovi casi sospetti, l'Agenzia Italiana del Farmaco (AIFA) aveva disposto a scopo cautelativo il divieto di utilizzo dei vaccini influenzali prodotti dalla ditta Novartis Vaccines and Diagnostics S.r.l, che è poi stato revocato il 9 novembre 2012.

Può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

— è informata dei fatti sopra esposti?

— ritiene opportuno intervenire imponendo l'uso obbligatorio e immediato di vaccini del tutto privi di sostanze che minacciano la salute dei cittadini europei?

— come intende tutelare i cittadini italiani ed europei vittime delle sostanze dannose presenti nei vaccini?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(11 luglio 2013)

1. La Commissione è a conoscenza delle discussioni sulla presenza di tiomersale (mercurio) e di alluminio nei vaccini.

2. I vaccini presenti sul territorio dell'Unione europea devono rispettare severe norme di qualità, sicurezza e efficienza. Per quanto riguarda i vaccini contenenti tiomersale, l'Agenzia europea per i medicinali ha tratto le conclusioni che questi prodotti continuano a presentare evidenti vantaggi alla popolazione in generale, inclusi i neonati. L'Agenzia ha accertato che i prodotti contenenti tiomersale non sono nocivi, e che i dati a disposizione non evidenziano un rischio per lo sviluppo neurologico. Tuttavia, la presenza di tiomersale dovrebbe essere indicata sulle etichette a causa di un rischio potenziale di sensibilizzazione ([1])

Il recente esame effettuato dall'Organizzazione mondiale della sanità (OMS) nel 2012 ([2]) ha inoltre confermato la sicurezza del tiomersale usato come agente conservante dei vaccini inattivati.

3. I danni causati dai medicinali rientrano nel campo di applicazione della direttiva 85/374/CEE ([3]) in materia di responsabilità per danno da prodotti difettosi. Si possono applicare inoltre le disposizioni nazionali relative alla responsabilità contrattuale o extracontrattuale.

([1]) 1999: http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Scientific_guideline/2009/09/WC500003902.pdf;
2004: Dichiarazione pubblica sul tiomersale nei vaccini per uso umano:
http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Scientific_guideline/2009/09/WC500003904.pdf;
2007: Documento di sintesi sul tiomersale del Comitato per i medicinali per uso umano. Attuazione di un avvertimento sulla sensibilizzazione:
http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Scientific_guideline/2009/09/WC500003905.pdf;
2009: Nota esplicativa sulle considerazioni scientifiche relative al rilascio dell'autorizzazione al vaccino pandemico A(H1N1)v:
http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Medicine_QA/2009/11/WC500007567.pdf

([2]) http://www.who.int/vaccine_safety/committee/topics/thiomersal/Jun_2012/en/index.html

([3]) GU L 210 del 07.08.85.

La politica sanitaria nonché l'organizzazione e la fornitura dell'assistenza sanitaria rientrano nella competenza degli Stati membri ai sensi dell'articolo 168 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea. Di conseguenza, i regimi di risarcimento in caso di infortunio non rientrano nella competenza dell'UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005793/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Presence of mercury and other substances harmful to human health in vaccines

In 1999, the European Medicines Agency (EMEA) sent all Member States a recommendation to promote the use of vaccines that did not contain mercury and aluminium, substances that can cause permanent damage to the nervous system, liver and kidneys.

The following year, the same agency reported the presence on the market of some potentially harmful vaccines.

Even though in 2001 a ministerial decree in Italy prohibited the use of mercury, that substance is still contained in vaccines for both infants and adults. Over 40 000 claims for damages have been lodged with the authorities and with pharmaceutical companies for vaccine-related damage.

Recently, on 25 October 2012, prompted by further suspected cases, the Italian Medicines Agency (AIFA) had established a precautionary ban on the use of influenza vaccines produced by Novartis Vaccines and Diagnostics S.r.l. The ban was subsequently lifted on 9 November 2012.

Can the Commission answer the following questions:

— Is it aware of the above facts?

— Should it not take action by ordering the immediate use of vaccines that are entirely devoid of substances that jeopardise the health of European citizens?

— How does it intend to protect the Italian and European citizens who are victims of the harmful substances contained in vaccines?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(11 July 2013)

1. The Commission is fully aware of discussions around the presence of thiomersal (mercury) and aluminium in vaccines.

2. Vaccines in the EU have to meet strict standards of quality, safety and efficacy. As regards vaccines containing thiomersal, the European Medicines Agency reached the conclusion that these products continue to offer clear benefits to the general population, including infants. The Agency found that there is no harm from thiomersal containing products and that available data does not indicate any neurodevelopmental risk. However, presence of thiomersal should be labelled due to a potential risk for sensitisation ([1]).

Thiomersal's safety as a preservative for inactivated vaccines has been also confirmed in the recent WHO review in 2012 ([2]).

3. Damage caused by medicinal products is covered by the scope of Directive 85/374/EEC ([3]) concerning liability for defective products. In addition, national provisions governing contractual or non-contractual liability may apply.

([1]) 1999: http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Scientific_guideline/2009/09/WC500003902.pdf
2004: Public Statement on thiomersal in vaccines for human use:
http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Scientific_guideline/2009/09/WC500003904.pdf
2007: CHMP Position Paper on Thiomersal Implementation of the Warning Statement Relating to Sensitisation
http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Scientific_guideline/2009/09/WC500003905.pdf
2009: Explanatory note on scientific considerations regarding the licensing of pandemic A(H1N1)v vaccines
http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Medicine_QA/2009/11/WC500007567.pdf
([2]) http://www.who.int/vaccine_safety/committee/topics/thiomersal/Jun_2012/en/index.html
([3]) OJ L 210, 7.8.1985.

Health policy, as well as the organisation and delivery of healthcare, is a Member State competence under Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. As such, injury compensation schemes are not a matter of EU competence.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005794/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(23 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Riforma del sistema dei Laogai in Cina

Meng Jianzhu a capo della Commissione centrale politica e legale del Partito comunista ha dichiarato, a inizio febbraio, in una riunione ufficiale, che entro la fine di quest'anno non avrebbe più condannato alla reclusione nei «Laogai» alcuna persona.

I «Laogai» nacquero nel 1957 e nella risoluzione del Parlamento europeo sulle relazioni UE-Cina (P6_TA(2006)0346) essi sono definiti come «*dei campi di lavoro laogai, in cui la RPC detiene attivisti democratici, attivisti sindacali e membri delle minoranze, privati di un giusto processo e costretti a lavorare in condizioni spaventose e senza cure mediche[…]*».

Può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

— È al corrente delle dichiarazioni sopra riportate?

— Può riferire in merito?

— Il Governo cinese sta effettivamente andando verso l'eliminazione dei campi di lavoro chiamati «Laogai»?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(17 luglio 2013)

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente è a conoscenza delle recenti dichiarazioni riguardanti il sistema di rieducazione attraverso il lavoro in Cina e sostiene la riforma di tale sistema nel paese, sebbene l'UE ne abbia chiesto l'abolizione. L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente è anche preoccupata per il fatto che possano essere utilizzate forme alternative e arbitrarie di detenzione. Contrariamente ad alcuni resoconti dei media, le dichiarazioni di Meng Jianzhu si riferivano solo alla sanzione «non penale» o «amministrativa», nota come «rieducazione attraverso il lavoro» e applicata esclusivamente dalla polizia. Questa pena è diversa dalla «riforma attraverso il lavoro», riservata alla maggior parte dei criminali condannati. Quest'ultima si svolge nei cosiddetti campi laogai, ossia prigioni convenzionali.

Il SEAE continuerà a seguire gli sviluppi e a invocare l'abolizione di tale sistema.

Si ricorda inoltre che la Commissione europea ha istituito un gruppo interservizi, che riunisce tutti i servizi competenti della Commissione nonché il SEAE, e che ha il compito di esaminare la questione del commercio di articoli prodotti nei campi di lavoro forzato. Attraverso le delegazioni dell'UE il gruppo ha raccolto informazioni sull'estensione, a livello mondiale, del lavoro forzato nelle prigioni ed è attualmente impegnato ad analizzarle. Ha inoltre raccolto informazioni sulle restrizioni già applicate agli articoli prodotti con il lavoro forzato dei detenuti, in particolare dagli Stati Uniti.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005794/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Reform of the Laogai system in China

In early February this year, at an official meeting, Meng Jianzhu, head of the Central Politics and Law Commission of the Communist Party of China, stated that, from the end of the year, people would no longer be sentenced to imprisonment in the Laogai labour camps.

The Laogai were established in 1957 and, in the European Parliament resolution on EU-China relations (P6_TA (2006) 0346), are defined as follows: 'the Laogai labour camps […] in which the PRC detains pro-democracy activists, labour activists and members of minorities without a fair trial, forcing them to work in appalling conditions and without medical treatment […]'.

Can the Commission answer the following questions:

— Is it aware of the above statements?

— Can it report on this issue?

— Is the Chinese government genuinely moving towards the abolition of the Laogai labour camps?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(17 July 2013)

The High Representative/ Vice-President is aware of the recent statements concerning the Re-education Through Labour (RTL) system in China and supports the reform of the RTL system in China although this falls short from the EU calls for abolition., The High Representative/Vice-President is also concerned that alternative arbitrary forms of detention may be used. Contrary to some media reports, Meng Jianzhu, spoke solely about the 'non-criminal' or 'administrative' punishment known as 're-education through labour', dispensed by the police alone. This is different from the 'reform through labour' where many convicted criminals will continue to be sent to. These 'reform to labour' are the so-called laogai camps and are conventional prisons.

The EEAS will continue to monitor development and call for the abolition of the system.

I would also like to recall that the European Commission has established an inter-service group, bringing together all concerned Commission departments, as well as the EEAS, with the mandate of looking into the issue of trade in goods made by forced prison labour. Through EU Delegations, the Group has gathered information on the extent of forced prison labour worldwide, which it is analysing, as well as information on restrictions on goods made by forced prison labour already in force, notably by the United States.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005795/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(23 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Situazione dei rifugi alpini in Veneto e nel bellunese

I rifugi alpini, che secondo il D.Lgs. 79 del 23 maggio 2011 rientrano fra le strutture recettive extralberghiere, sono recentemente stati parificati alle strutture alberghiere con l'obbligo di uniformarsi alle normative di sicurezza in vigore per queste ultime entro il 6 ottobre 2013. Fra le opere da realizzare in tutti i rifugi alpini vi è l'adeguamento delle dimensioni delle porte, la presenza di porte di emergenza antipanico orientate in apertura verso l'esterno, l'aggiornamento degli impianti antincendio, nuovi impianti elettrici e scale esterne agli edifici. La peculiarità di tali strutture, che sono divise in varie categorie in base al dislivello dal fondovalle e alla difficoltà d'accesso, è quella di fornire ricovero e riparo a turisti, alpinisti ed escursionisti che frequentano la montagna. In Veneto vi sono 142 rifugi: nella sola provincia di Belluno ve ne sono 35, di cui 20 necessitano di interventi quali quelli sopra descritti, per un costo complessivo che supera il milione di euro.

Considerando:

— che se le opere sopra descritte non verranno ultimate nei tempi previsti tali strutture non potranno aprire;

— che molti di questi edifici sono siti in zone difficilmente raggiungibili e dove la quantità di neve è ancora elevata;

— che alcuni rifugi sono aperti solo 3 mesi l'anno e un'eventuale chiusura implicherebbe la perdita dell'intera stagione;

— che una struttura alberghiera sita a fondovalle accessibile in auto non è equiparabile a un rifugio sito a 3 000 metri di quota raggiungibile solo a piedi attraverso complessi passaggi alpinistici o in elicottero;

— che molte delle opere messe in cantiere sono standardizzate e non tengono conto né del contesto naturalistico, né delle difficoltà climatiche cui le strutture devono far fronte, come tempeste di neve o pioggia,

può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

— È a conoscenza dei fatti sopra esposti?

— Quali sono i disposti comunitari che disciplinano gli interventi strutturali da apportare a tali edifici?

— Non reputa necessario differenziare tali opere anche in base all'ubicazione specifica delle strutture?

— Valuta la possibilità di concedere deroghe di adeguamento o di tempistica per le strutture site nelle zone più impervie?

— Vi sono finanziamenti comunitari di cui gli enti che gestiscono tali strutture possono usufruire per eseguire questi lavori?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(27 agosto 2013)

Spetta ad ogni Stato membro regolamentare gli aspetti di progettazione strutturale per gli edifici costruiti sul suo territorio e, in base all'ubicazione specifica dell'edificio, decidere se sia opportuno operare una distinzione o concedere una deroga alle disposizioni regolamentari. Di conseguenza, spetta agli Stati membri prendere decisioni in merito alle prescrizioni relative ai lavori di ristrutturazione, nel cui ambito rientrano anche quelle menzionate nell'interrogazione dell'onorevole parlamentare. La Commissione va informata solo per quanto riguarda i progetti di norme tecniche al fine di evitare l'introduzione di ostacoli ingiustificati agli scambi. La direttiva 2010/31/UE sulla prestazione energetica nell'edilizia (rifusione) ([1]) impone tra l'altro agli Stati membri di fissare una serie di requisiti minimi in materia di prestazione energetica per gli edifici nuovi e per edifici sottoposti a importanti ristrutturazioni (hotel compresi).

([1]) GU L 153 del 18.6.2010.

Per quanto riguarda le regioni interessate dall'obiettivo «Competitività regionale e occupazione» (tra le quali rientra anche il Veneto), il Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale (FESR) può sostenere i progetti volti alla protezione e alla valorizzazione del patrimonio naturale a sostegno dello sviluppo socioeconomico nonché quelli volti alla promozione dei beni naturali in quanto potenziale di sviluppo per un turismo sostenibile. Tuttavia, i progetti miranti a rendere le strutture recettive conformi alle disposizioni in vigore non rientrano nell'ambito di tali obiettivi e non sono pertanto ammissibili al cofinanziamento.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005795/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Alpine refuges in Veneto and the Belluno area

Alpine refuges, which, under Legislative Decree No 79 of 23 May 2011, are classified as being 'non-hotel accommodation', have recently been officially recognised as being equivalent to hotels and are thus required to comply with the relevant safety regulations by 6 October 2013. The work to be carried out in all Alpine refuges includes adjusting the size of the doors, installing outward-opening anti-panic emergency doors, updating firefighting equipment and installing new electrical systems and external staircases. The distinguishing feature of these facilities, which are split into various categories according to their distance from the bottom of the valley and their difficulty of access, is that of providing shelter and refuge to tourists, mountain climbers and hikers in the mountains. In Veneto there are 142 such refuges. In the province of Belluno alone there are 35 of them, 20 of which require work such as that described above, for a total cost of over one million euro.

In view of the following:

— unless the work is completed on schedule, the facilities in question will be unable to open;

— many of these buildings are located in areas that are difficult to reach and in which there is still a great amount of snow;

— some refuges are only open three months a year, and their closure would mean that the entire season would be lost;

— a hotel located in the valley and accessible by car is not comparable to a refuge at 3 000 metres above sea level that can be reached only on foot through complex mountain passes or by helicopter;

— many of the works scheduled are standardised and do not take account either of the natural environment or of the climatic difficulties which the facilities have to face, such as snow- or rainstorms,

can the Commission answer the following questions:

— Is it aware of the above facts?

— What EU provisions govern the structural work to be done to these buildings?

— Should such work not be differentiated also on the basis of the specific location of the facilities?

— Would the Commission consider allowing exemptions or extensions to the time frame for facilities located in the most inaccessible areas?

— Is there any EU funding that the management bodies for these facilities could use to carry out the necessary work?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(27 August 2013)

Every Member State has the competence to regulate structural design aspects for buildings erected in its territory and to decide if a differentiation or exception from its regulatory provisions are necessary due to the specific location of the building. Therefore, it is up to the Member States to decide on the conditions for renovation works such as those mentioned in the question of the Honourable Member. The Commission is only informed on the draft technical regulations in order to prevent unjustified barriers to trade. Directive 2010/31/EU on the energy performance of buildings (recast) ([1]) , requires Member States, among others, to establish minimum energy performance requirements for new buildings and buildings undergoing major renovation (including hotels).

([1]) OJ L153, 18.6.2010.

In Employment and Regional Competitiveness regions, to which the Veneto region belongs, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) can provide assistance to projects designed to protect and enhance the natural heritage in support of socioeconomic development and the promotion of natural assets such as the potential for development of sustainable tourism. Projects designed to bring reception facilities in line with existing regulations do not fall, however, within these objectives and are therefore not eligible for co-financing.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005796/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(23 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Biodiversità del patrimonio ambientale italiano a rischio

Con il rapporto annuale pubblicato lo scorso 21 maggio 2013 Legambiente denuncia i rischi per la salvaguardia della biodiversità ambientale in Italia e nel bacino del Mediterraneo. Proprio in queste aree si concentra il più ricco patrimonio in termini di flora e fauna: 67.500 specie animali e vegetali, pari al 43 % del patrimonio europeo e al 4 % di quello mondiale.

L'Italia ospita sul proprio territorio più di un terzo dell'intera fauna europea (57.468 specie). Cambiamenti climatici, inquinamento, sfruttamento delle risorse e modifiche dell'habitat naturale mettono a rischio la biodiversità. Alle 335 specie in via di estinzione, circa il 28 % del totale, si aggiunge la diminuzione del numero complessivo degli esemplari esistenti. Lo sfruttamento delle risorse comporta non solo conseguenze sulla biodiversità, ma anche costi economici in termini di posti di lavoro nel settore forestale e della pesca.

Alla luce di quanto sopra, la Commissione:

— È al corrente della situazione?

— Non ritiene necessario mettere gli Stati membri al corrente della situazione, al fine di intensificare l'impegno comune verso uno sviluppo economico e un benessere sociale basato sulla biodiversità?

— Con riferimento alla politica ambientale dell'Unione e, in particolare, alla direttiva europea 92/43/CEE del 21 maggio 1992 relativa alla conservazione degli habitat naturali e seminaturali della flora e della fauna selvatiche, non ritiene opportuno adottare misure concrete che mettano in pratica le buone proposte che non hanno ancora trovato attuazione, al fine di salvaguardare la ricchezza del patrimonio ambientale per le generazioni future?

— Intende collaborare con le autorità italiane in materia, essendo l'Italia il paese maggiormente coinvolto?

— Riguardo alla relazione del 26 novembre 2012 «The EU biodiversity objectives and the labour market: benefits and and identification of skill gaps in the current workforce», è in grado di fornire informazioni sui benefici della strategia adottata, in termini di posti di lavoro?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(8 luglio 2013)

La Commissione è al corrente dello stato di conservazione degli habitat e delle specie protetti e delle specie minacciate in Italia. Le informazioni in materia sono accessibili al pubblico tramite le liste rosse dell'IUNC ([1]) e grazie ai dati trasmessi dall'Italia a norma dell'articolo 17 della direttiva Habitat ([2]).

La Commissione si è impegnata a fondo per aumentare la consapevolezza generale sulla biodiversità, anche tramite iniziative politiche quali la strategia dell'UE sulla biodiversità fino al 2020 ([3]).

La direttiva Habitat impone agli Stati membri di adottare le misure specifiche necessarie per mantenere habitat e specie protetti in uno stato di conservazione soddisfacente. La Commissione fornisce assistenza, in particolare sostegno finanziario tramite i fondi dell'UE, e orientamenti circa le misure di conservazione e l'integrazione della biodiversità nell'elaborazione di altre politiche pertinenti (ad esempio documenti di orientamento a livello settoriale ([4])).

([1]) http://iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/europe/?1290
https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/italy_s_biodiversity_at_risk_fact_sheet_may_2013.pdf
([2]) Direttiva 92/43/CE, del 21 maggio 1992, relativa alla conservazione degli habitat naturali e seminaturali e della flora e della fauna selvatiche.
([3]) COM(2011)244 definitivo.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/action_plans/index_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/guidance/index_en.htm

Mantiene inoltre contatti regolari con tutte le autorità nazionali competenti in materia di biodiversità e protezione della natura tramite una serie di comitati di regolamentazione e gruppi di lavoro quali il comitato habitat, il comitato ORNIS e il gruppo di esperti sulla gestione di Natura 2000.

Lo studio a cui si riferisce l'onorevole parlamentare è accessibile al pubblico e contiene stime approssimative del numero di potenziali posti di lavoro che possono essere creati grazie alla strategia dell'UE sulla biodiversità fino al 2020 ([5]). Inoltre, una recente relazione sui vantaggi economici della rete Natura 2000 ([6]) fornisce utili informazioni sui benefici della rete in termini di creazione di posti di lavoro: si stima ad esempio che il turismo e le attività ricreative nei siti Natura 2000 permettano di mantenere un numero di posti di lavoro compreso tra 4,5 e 8 milioni, a cui si aggiungono 1,5 milioni di posti di lavoro nel settore agricolo, 70 000 nel settore forestale e circa 200 000 nel settore della pesca.

([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/pubs/pdf/biodiversity/Biodiversity%20and%20Jobs_final%20report.pdf
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005796/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Biodiversity of Italy's natural heritage at risk

In its annual report published on 21 May 2013, *Legambiente* denounced the present threats, in Italy and the Mediterranean area, to the protection of environmental biodiversity. These areas contain the richest heritage in terms of flora and fauna — 67 500 animal and plant species, accounting for 43% of the total European heritage and 4% of world heritage.

Italy is home to more than one third of all European fauna (57 468 species). Climate change, pollution, exploitation of natural resources and habitat changes are all threatening biodiversity. Over and beyond the 335 species in danger of extinction — some 28% of the total — we are also seeing a reduction in the overall numbers of existing specimens. The exploitation of resources is not only having an impact on biodiversity, but also involves economic costs, in terms of jobs, in the forestry and fishing sectors.

Can the Commission therefore answer the following questions:

— Is it aware of this situation?

— Does it not think it should make Member States aware of the situation, in order to step up the common commitment to an economic development and social well-being based on biodiversity?

— With reference to the Union's environmental policy and, in particular, to EU Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, does it not agree that it should adopt specific measures to put into practice the good proposals that have not yet been implemented, in order to preserve the richness of the environmental heritage for future generations?

— Will it cooperate with the Italian authorities on this matter, since Italy is the country most affected?

— With reference to the report of 26 November 2012 entitled 'The EU biodiversity objectives and the labour market: benefits and identification of skill gaps in the current workforce', can it provide any information on the benefits, in terms of jobs, of the strategy adopted?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

The Commission is informed about the conservation status of protected habitats and species and threatened species in Italy. This information is also publicly available through IUCN Red Lists ([1]) and information reported by Italy under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive ([2]).

The Commission has made considerable efforts to increase general awareness on biodiversity including via policy initiatives such as the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy ([3]).

The Habitats Directive requires Member States to establish specific measures necessary to achieve favourable conservation status of protected habitats and species. The Commission provides assistance, including financial support through EU funds, and guidance about conservation measures and biodiversity integration in the development of other relevant policies (e.g. sectorial guidance documents ([4])).

The Commission is in regular contact with all national authorities dealing with biodiversity and nature protection through a number of regulatory committees and working groups such as the Habitats Committee, the Ornis Committee and the Expert Group on management of Natura 2000.

([1]) http://iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/europe/?1290
https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/italy_s_biodiversity_at_risk_fact_sheet_may_2013.pdf
([2]) Directive 92/43/EC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.
([3]) COM(2011) 244.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/action_plans/index_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/guidance/index_en.htm

The study referred to is publicly available ([5]) and provides rough estimates of the potential new jobs that the implementation of the EU2020 Biodiversity Strategy can bring about. In addition, a recent report on the Economic benefits of the Natura 2000 network ([6]) also provides useful information about the benefits for job creation of that network (e.g. it is estimated that tourism and recreation in Natura 2000 sites supports between 4.5 and 8 million jobs in addition to estimated 1.5 million jobs in agriculture, 70 000 jobs in forestry and around 200 000 jobs in fishing).

([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/pubs/pdf/biodiversity/Biodiversity%20and%20Jobs_final%20report.pdf
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/index_en.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-005797/13
alla Commissione
Erminia Mazzoni (PPE)
(23 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Grandi progetti in Campania

Nel 2010 in Campania la Giunta Caldoro avviò la riprogrammazione dei fondi europei al fine di sbloccarne l'utilizzo, considerando che gli impegni arrivavano allora al 3 % (oggi al 22 %).

La scelta strategica, avallata dalla Commissione, fu di convogliare le risorse europee su pochi grandi progetti, tra cui il Parco urbano di Bagnoli, alcune linee della Metropolitana di Napoli, il rifacimento del Golfo di Salerno, il Centro storico di Napoli, la Mostra d'Oltremare, la depurazione in varie aree della Regione, la banda larga e il porto di Napoli.

Considerato l'approssimarsi del termine del 31.12.2013 per gli impegni e l'impiego delle risorse, nonché le recenti dichiarazioni del Presidente Caldoro di ritirare il progetto per il porto di Napoli (260 milioni di euro), vista l'impasse che si è generata tra i soggetti coinvolti, può la Commissione riferire:

— se è informata al riguardo;

— se il grande progetto del porto di Napoli è stato da essa già approvato in via definitiva;

— quali sono le scadenze che la Regione Campania dovrà rispettare al fine di non perdere le risorse europee messe a disposizione, in particolare per i lavori del porto di Napoli;

— qual è lo stato di attuazione dei grandi progetti della Campania?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(24 giugno 2013)

La Commissione è consapevole della situazione in cui si trova il programma. Stando ai dati più recenti, gli impegni per il programma del Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale relativo alla Campania corrispondono all'80 % mentre i pagamenti al 18 % del bilancio complessivo. La scadenza per assorbire i finanziamenti restanti è fissata al 31 dicembre 2015.

La Commissione si trova attualmente nella fase di approvazione dell'ultima grande revisione del programma nell'ambito del quale i grandi progetti menzionati dall'onorevole deputata costituiscono in effetti un elemento importante. La Commissione ha ricevuto la candidatura per il grande progetto del porto di Napoli, ma, prima di poter approvare tale progetto, sono necessari chiarimenti su questioni importanti quali il calendario d'implementazione, gli aspetti legati agli aiuti di Stato e la compatibilità con il piano normativo del porto. Se questo progetto dovesse essere escluso, in toto o in parte, dal programma, l'importo dei finanziamenti così sbloccati dovrebbe essere destinato ad altri progetti per evitare che vada perso.

La maggior parte dei grandi progetti contemplati nel programma ha ora raggiunto la fase dei contratti d'appalto e dell'esecuzione dei lavori; per diversi di essi i lavori si trovano in fase avanzata. Tuttavia, considerato il fatto che rimangono soltanto poco più di due anni del periodo di programmazione, è chiaro che i tempi sono stretti e che si dovrebbe fare il possibile per accelerare l'implementazione e il completamento dei progetti.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-005797/13
to the Commission
Erminia Mazzoni (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Major projects in the Campania Region

In 2010, the Campania Regional Council, headed by President Caldoro, decided to reprogramme its EU funding in an effort to overcome the obstacles preventing its use. At the time only 3% of the funding available had been committed (today: 22%).

The Commission approved the strategic decision to channel EU funds into a small number of major projects, such as creating the Bagnoli urban park, extending certain underground lines in Naples, the regeneration of the Gulf of Salerno, the historic centre of Naples and the exhibition centre 'Mostra d'Oltremare', cleaning up various sites in the region, expanding broadband coverage and the upgrading of the Port of Naples.

In view of the approaching deadline of 31 December 2013 for the commitment and disbursement of funding, and the recent announcement by President Caldoro of the decision to abandon the project concerning the Port of Naples (EUR 260 million), given the deadlock between the stakeholders involved, can the Commission say:

— Whether it is aware of the above developments?

— Whether it has definitively approved the major project concerning the Port of Naples?

— What deadlines the Campania Region must meet so as not to lose out on available EU funding, in particular for the Port of Naples?

— What stage the major projects in the Campania Region have reached?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(24 June 2013)

The Commission is aware of the state of play of the programme. According to latest figures, commitments for the European Regional Development Fund programme for Campania stand at 80% and payments stand at 18% of the overall budget. The final deadline for absorbing the remaining funds is 31 December 2015.

The Commission is currently in the process of approving the last major revision of the programme, in which the major projects mentioned by the Honourable Member indeed constitute a significant element. The Commission received the application for the Naples Port major project, but, before this project can be approved, important issues have to be clarified regarding the implementation schedule, state aid aspects and compatibility with the regulatory plan of the port. If this project would have to be wholly or partially excluded from the programme, the amount in funding thus freed up should be allocated to other projects in order not to be lost.

Most major projects in the programme have by now reached the stage of tendering contracts and carrying out the works; for a number of them, works are at an advanced stage. However, given the fact that only slightly more than two years of the programming period remain, it is clear that time is tight and that every effort should be made to speed up the implementation and completion of the projects.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005798/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(23 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Possibili finanziamenti per un progetto di integrazione di attività sportive e sociali

Il Comitato provinciale di Pesaro Urbino dell'ASI (Alleanza sportiva italiana) ha sede a Fano e opera sul territorio con attività sportive, culturali e di sostegno alle fasce deboli. L'ente collabora con i servizi sociali del comune di Fano ed ha anche attivato delle borse lavoro per permettere esperienze lavorative a soggetti svantaggiati dal punto di vista psicofisico.

Tra i progetti che vorrebbe attuare vi è lo svolgimento di attività quali:

— attività motoria di base in fase evolutiva;

— attività motoria per la terza età;

— basket per la disabilità e l'integrazione.

Per lo svolgimento di tali attività, si rende necessaria la ristrutturazione e l'adeguamento della palestra (con abbattimento delle barriere architettoniche) che l'ente gestisce e alla quale sono state già apportate migliorie importanti, secondo un approccio di integrazione sempre maggiore tra le attività sportive e sociali.

Trattandosi di una palestra scolastica comunale, le migliorie apportate andrebbero a vantaggio anche degli alunni.

Considerando che la Strategia europea sulla disabilità (2010-2020) mira, tra l'altro, a garantire l'accessibilità di organizzazioni, strutture e servizi, inclusi quelli sportivi e culturali alle persone con disabilità e che l'anno europeo 2012 ha posto particolare attenzione all'integrazione degli anziani per un invecchiamento attivo anche attraverso il volontariato, l'apprendimento permanente, l'espressione culturale e lo sport, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. se esistono possibili finanziamenti per la realizzazione dei lavori di ristrutturazione e adeguamento necessari per l'attuazione del progetto?

2. se esistono eventuali progetti analoghi finanziati attraverso fondi europei?

3. qual è il quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(18 luglio 2013)

Migliorare l'accessibilità delle strutture e dei servizi per l'istruzione, lo sport e la cultura è uno degli obiettivi chiave della strategia europea sulla disabilità 2010-2020, in linea con la Convenzione delle Nazioni Unite sui diritti delle persone con disabilità, di cui l'UE è parte contraente.

L'accessibilità per le persone con disabilità è uno dei criteri applicati per valutare le operazioni da cofinanziare mediante i Fondi strutturali e da prendere in considerazione durante le diverse fasi d'attuazione. Per quanto riguarda Fano e la Regione Marche, la realizzazione di infrastrutture sociali, per l'istruzione e lo sport non può essere cofinanziata mediante i suddetti fondi, poiché le Marche rientrano negli obiettivi «competitività regionale e occupazione» nel periodo 2007-2013 e regione «più sviluppata» nel periodo 2014-2020. Tuttavia, le regioni come le Marche hanno l'obbligo di garantire il rispetto dei diritti di accessibilità alle persone con disabilità.

Esempi di tipi di investimenti cofinanziati dai Fondi strutturali in Italia nel periodo 2007-2013 sono disponibili al sito http://www.opencoesione.gov.it/. Per informazioni analoghe a livello dell'UE, visitare il sito:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/projects/stories/index_en.cfm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005798/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Possibility of funding for an integration project relating to sports and social activities

The Pesaro-Urbino Provincial Committee of the ASI (Italian Sports Alliance) is based in Fano and works in the local area providing sports, cultural activities and support for disadvantaged members of society. The committee cooperates with the social services of the municipality of Fano and has also set up work experience grants to enable those who are physically and/or psychologically disadvantaged to gain work experience.

Among the projects it would like to implement are activities such as:

— basic developmental motor activity;

— motor activity for seniors;

— basketball for people with disabilities, to encourage integration.

In order to carry out such activities, the gym managed by the organisation needs to be renovated and adapted (including the removal of architectural barriers). Significant improvements have already been made in this regard, with a view to continuing to increase the integration of sports and social activities.

Since it is a municipal school gym, its upgrading would also be of benefit to pupils.

Given that the European Disability Strategy (2010-2020) aims, among other things, to ensure that organisations, facilities and services, including sports and cultural activities, are accessible to people with disabilities and that the 2012 European Year placed special emphasis on the integration of the elderly, for active ageing also through volunteering, lifelong learning, cultural expression and sport, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Is there any possible funding available to carry out the renovation and adjustment work that is needed in order to implement the project?

2. Have any similar projects been financed by EU funds?

3. Can it provide an overview of the situation?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(18 July 2013)

Improving accessibility of *inter alia* education, sports and cultural facilities and services is one of the key objectives of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to which the EU is a party.

Accessibility for persons with disabilities is one of the criteria for assessing operations to be co-financed by the Structural Funds and to be taken into account during the various stages of implementation. As regards the Region Marche, where Fano is located, the realisation of education, social and sports infrastructures is not eligible for co-financing by the funds, since Marche is 'regional competitiveness and employment' type of region for 2007-2013 and a 'more developed' region for 2014-2020. However, regions like Marche are nevertheless obliged to guarantee the respect of accessibility rights for persons with disabilities.

Examples of the types of investments co-financed by Structural Funds in Italy over the 2007-2013 period are available at the following website: http://www.opencoesione.gov.it/. Similar information at EU level is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/projects/stories/index_en.cfm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005799/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(23 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Possibili finanziamenti per il progetto «Nonni al lavoro»

La popolazione dell'Unione europea va incontro ad un progressivo invecchiamento: le persone con più di 65 anni sono oltre 87 milioni (17,4 % della popolazione totale) e, secondo le proiezioni, saranno oltre 150 milioni nel 2060 (circa il 30 %). «Nonni al lavoro» è un'idea progettuale basata sull'anzianità attiva come supporto socio-sanitario e sulla cittadinanza partecipata, al fine di valorizzare le risorse volontarie all'interno delle strutture sanitarie rivolte all'utenza ospedaliera.

Il progetto si basa sulla valorizzazione del contributo degli anziani a sostegno della sanità pubblica con grande impatto sociale, affettivo e culturale nei confronti degli assistiti e coinvolge anche le fasce giovanili della popolazione.

Il concetto di base va oltre l'idea di volontariato ed è quello di fornire una nuova forza lavoro a complemento dell'azione di infermieri e medici, fornendo accessi appropriati per le cure primarie e di malattie croniche; il tutto sarebbe svolto sotto l'attenta supervisione di personale medico e dopo una formazione paramedica adeguata.

Gli obiettivi del progetto sono:

— ridurre la congestione nei dipartimenti di emergenza, negli ambulatori e negli ospedali attraverso l'assistenza domiciliare;

— ridurre la curva dei costi con cure più accessibili;

— creare posti di lavoro valorizzando il contributo degli anziani che vogliono essere utili alla propria comunità.

Considerando che il secondo programma d'azione comunitaria in materia di salute (2008-2013) mira, tra l'altro, a promuovere la salute e l'invecchiamento attivo e il terzo programma pluriennale per il periodo 2014-2020 mira anche a realizzare sistemi sanitari innovativi e sostenibili, per affrontare la carenza di risorse umane e finanziarie può la Commissione precisare quanto segue:

1. sono previsti programmi o finanziamenti per la realizzazione del progetto denominato «Nonni al lavoro»;

2. qual è il quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(9 luglio 2013)

L'invecchiamento della popolazione e, in particolare, l'invecchiamento attivo e in buona salute rappresenterà un elemento cruciale nei futuri programmi di finanziamento per il periodo 2014-2020. Il sostegno finanziario al progetto «Nonni al lavoro» potrà di conseguenza provenire da diverse fonti, a seconda dei criteri di ammissibilità previsti da ciascuno strumento.

Interessanti fonti di finanziamento potrebbero essere il programma «Salute» per il periodo 2014-2020 ([1]) ed Orizzonte 2020, il programma dell'UE di finanziamento della ricerca per il periodo 2014-2020, in particolare la parte concernente la sfida societale «Salute, cambiamento demografico e benessere». Ulteriori strumenti intesi ad affrontare le problematiche di ciascuno Stato membro individuate nelle raccomandazioni specifiche per paese e nel documento di sintesi dei servizi della Commissione per la politica di coesione nel futuro periodo di programmazione sono i fondi strutturali, in particolare il Fondo sociale europeo.

Per quanto riguarda la situazione attuale, la Commissione negli ultimi due anni ha contribuito con un significativo intervento finanziario ai vari progetti in materia di invecchiamento. Nel 2012 è stato pubblicato un invito specifico a presentare proposte a valere sul programma «Salute» (per un valore di 4 milioni di EUR), reiterato nel 2013 (6 milioni di EUR). Questa tematica è stata inoltre oggetto di due inviti pubblicati rispettivamente nel 2012 e nel 2013 nell'ambito del programma «Competitività e innovazione» (per un importo totale di 63 milioni di EUR).

([1]) COM(2011)709 definitivo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005799/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Possibility of funding for the 'Grandparents to work' project

The EU population is gradually ageing. More than 87 million people are over the age of 65 (i.e. 17.4% of the total population) and, according to projections, this figure will increase to over 150 million in 2060 (some 30% of the total population). 'Grandparents to work' is an idea based on participatory citizenship and on the active ageing and providing support in the social and health fields, in order to make the most of volunteer resources for hospital users.

The project seeks to capitalise on the contribution of elderly people in support of the public health sector, which has a high social, emotional and cultural impact on patients and will involve also the younger population.

The basic concept goes beyond the idea of volunteering and is that of providing a new workforce to complement the work of nurses and doctors, with appropriate access to patients in primary care and those being treated for chronic diseases, under the careful supervision of medical staff and after receiving adequate paramedical training.

The aims of the project are:

— to reduce congestion in accident and emergency departments, healthcare centres and hospitals, by means of home care;

— to reduce the cost curve, with treatment being made more accessible;

— to create jobs by valuing the contribution of older people who want to be useful to their community.

Given that the Second Programme of Community Action in the Field of Health (2008-2013) aims, among other things, to promote healthy and active ageing and the Third Multi-Annual Programme of Action for Health (2014-2020) also aims to establish innovative and sustainable healthcare systems, in order to address the shortage of human and financial resources can the Commission:

1. say whether any programmes or funding might be available for the 'Grandparents to work' project;

2. give an overview of the situation?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

Ageing, and particularly active and healthy ageing, will feature prominently in the future funding programmes for the period 2014-2020. Accordingly, funding opportunities for the 'Grandparents to work' might be available under various sources depending on the eligibility criteria foreseen by each instrument.

The Health Programme 2014-2020 ([1]) and Horizon 2020, the new research funding programme of the EU for the period 2014-2020, in particular its Societal Challenge 'Health, Demographic change and wellbeing' part, might be an interesting source of funding. Also the Structural Funds, particularly the European Social Fund, address the challenges of each Member State as identified in the Country Specific Recommendations and the Commission Service Position Papers for the future cohesion programming period.

Regarding the current situation, during the last two years the European Commission has made a significant financial contribution to various projects in the field of Ageing. A specific call on this issue was published in 2012 under the Health programme (EUR 4 million) as well as in 2013 (EUR 6 million). Furthermore two calls respectively in 2012 and in 2013 of the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (for a total amount of EUR 63 million) addressed the issue.

([1]) COM(2011) 709 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005800/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(23 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Possibili finanziamenti comunitari a supporto di attività sociali finalizzate all'inserimento lavorativo delle categorie disagiate

Le associazioni DAi SI VA e RisoIVo operanti sul territorio di Roma, sono promotrici di un progetto formativo finalizzato all'inserimento lavorativo e alla formazione continua di persone appartenenti a categorie svantaggiate e offrono assistenza a tutte quelle PMI presenti sul territorio che desiderano assumere lavoratori che necessitano di essere inseriti nel mondo del lavoro.

Il progetto si pone il duplice obiettivo di assistere il cittadino/lavoratore valutando le persone, analizzando le loro capacità professionali e offrendo se necessario una formazione adeguata al fine di procedere a una reintegrazione sociale della persona.

Inoltre, i promotori offrono un servizio di selezione di personale qualificato e di supporto e intermediazione tra il datore di lavoro e il lavoratore, qualora vi fosse la necessità di risolvere qualunque problematica che può sorgere in un rapporto di lavoro.

Tali enti sono costituiti da professionisti appartenenti ai settori dello sviluppo delle risorse umane, psicologia e sociologia e il loro obiettivo progettuale è finalizzato essenzialmente a dare un valido contributo al rilancio dell'economia, alla riqualificazione del territorio e al reinserimento sociale dell'individuo.

Alla luce di quanto sopra, può la Commissione comunicare:

1. quali tipi di finanziamenti comunitari, diretti e indiretti, possono sostenere le attività promosse dal progetto suesposto;

2. a quali tipi di programmi comunitari presenti nella futura programmazione finanziaria 2014-2020 possono accedere gli enti promotori di tale progetto;

3. se è a conoscenza di un quadro dei progetti e delle buone pratiche promosse in altri Stati membri e aventi finalità simili;

4. un quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(24 luglio 2013)

Mediante il Fondo sociale europeo (FSE) l'Unione europea sostiene l'erogazione di servizi di formazione e di assistenza *ad hoc* per promuovere l'occupazione. Tale sostegno si basa su programmi operativi elaborati ed attuati dagli Stati membri e/o dalle loro regioni. Per il periodo di programmazione 2007-2013 sono stati stanziati complessivamente 2,4 miliardi di EUR per garantire un accesso paritario all'occupazione in tutti gli Stati membri.

La proposta della Commissione ([1]) relativa al Fondo sociale europeo e ad altri fondi strutturali dell'UE per il periodo 2014-2020 individua diversi settori di intervento per sopperire alle esigenze delle persone svantaggiate. L'inclusione attiva, la lotta contro la discriminazione ed il miglioramento dell'accesso costituiscono nello specifico tre priorità di investimento per conseguire l'obiettivo di inclusione sociale dell'FSE. La Commissione ha inoltre proposto che almeno il 20 % delle risorse dell'FSE siano stanziate per misure di inclusione sociale.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=62&langId=it.

La principale comunicazione della Commissione ([2]) nell'ambito del pacchetto di investimenti sociali ([3]) auspica un consolidamento delle politiche di inclusione sociale attiva per incrementare la partecipazione al mercato del lavoro dei lavoratori sottorappresentati, mentre il documento di lavoro dei servizi della Commissione ad essa allegato intitolato ***Social Investment through the European Social Fund*** ([4]) (investimenti nel settore sociale attraverso il Fondo sociale europeo) presenta orientamenti ed esempi di progetti finanziati dall'FSE. Numerosi esempi sono inoltre riportati nel sito web dell'FSE ([5]).

([2]) «Investire nel settore sociale a favore della crescita e della coesione, in particolare attuando il Fondo sociale europeo nel periodo 2014-2020», COM(2013)83 definitivo del 20 febbraio 2013.

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1044&newsId=1807&furtherNews=yes.

([4]) SWD(2013)44 definitivo del 20 febbraio 2013, all'indirizzo: http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=9772&langId=en.

([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=46&langId=it.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005800/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Possibility of EU funding to support social activities aimed at integrating less privileged groups into the labour market

The associations DAi SI VA and RisolVo, which operate in and around Rome, are sponsoring a training project aimed at providing employment and ongoing training for people from disadvantaged groups and are offering assistance to all local SMEs that wish to recruit workers who need to be integrated into the labour market.

The project has the dual aim of assisting citizens/workers by assessing people, examining their skills and providing, if necessary, the appropriate training in order to reintegrate them into society.

Furthermore, the promoters of the project offer a qualified personnel selection service, provide support and act as an intermediary between employer and employee, should there be a need to resolve any problems that might arise in a working relationship.

These associations are made up of professionals from the fields of human resource development, psychology and sociology and their goal is essentially to make a significant contribution to the revival of the economy, local regeneration and the social reintegration of individuals.

In light of the above, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. What types of EU funding, both direct and indirect, might be able to support the activities promoted by the above project?

2. To what types of EU programmes in the future 2014-2020 financial programming period might the promoters of this project be able to have access?

3. Is it aware of any framework of projects and good practices carried out in other Member States which have similar purposes?

4. Can it provide an overview of the situation?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(24 July 2013)

The European Union provides support through the European Social Fund (ESF) for tailor-made training services and assistance to help people into employment. This support is based on operational programmes developed and implemented by the Member States and/or their regions. A total of EUR 2.4 billion was allocated to improving equal access to employment in all the Member States for the 2007 to 2013 programming period.

The Commission proposal ([1]) for the ESF and other EU Structural Funds for 2014 to 2020 identifies several areas where assistance can be provided to meet the needs of disadvantaged people. In particular, active inclusion, combating discrimination and improving access to social services are three investment priorities for the ESF's social inclusion objective. The Commission has also proposed that at least 20% of ESF funding should be earmarked for social inclusion measures.

The main Commission communication ([2]) in the Social Investment Package ([3]) calls for enhanced active inclusion policies to boost the participation of workers under-represented on the labour market, while the attached Commission staff working document '**Social investment through the European Social Fund' ([4])** provides guidance and examples of projects financed by the ESF. The ESF website ([5]) also gives many examples.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=62&langId=en.
([2]) 'Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion — including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020' (COM(2013) 83 final of 20 February 2013).
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1044&newsId=1807&furtherNews=yes.
([4]) SWD(2013) 44 final of 20 February 2013, at: http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=9772&langId=en.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=46&langId=en.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-005801/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI) en Lucas Hartong (NI)
(23 mei 2013)

Betreft: Campagne — inbreuk op de regels van de interne markt

Bloemenbureau Holland krijgt de komende drie jaar een subsidie met middelen van de begroting van de EU voor de campagne „woonplant van de maand". Deze campagne van Bloemenbureau Holland is gericht op Nederland, Duitsland, Frankrijk en Groot-Brittannië. Het budget van de campagne is bijna 6 miljoen EUR, waarvan de EU de helft (d.w.z. 3 miljoen EUR) voor haar rekening neemt ([1]).

In haar brief van 15 juli 2011 (C(2011)5184) concludeert de Commissie dat deze subsidie neerkomt op overheidssteun in de zin van artikel 107, lid 1, van het VWEU, maar tegelijkertijd verenigbaar is met de internemarktregels ([2]).

1. Hoe beoordeelt de Commissie de systemen van gedeelde subsidies, die gedeeltelijk worden gefinancierd door de EU en gedeeltelijk door de lidstaten?

2. Hoe zijn de mededingingsregels in dit geval van toepassing? Zijn zij ook van toepassing op het bedrag van de subsidie van de EU?

3. Hoe zit het met de toepassing van het solidariteitsbeginsel in dit geval, waarbij het een campagne betreft die (gedeeltelijk) wordt gefinancierd door bij Bloemenbureau Holland aangesloten Nederlandse producenten (die verplicht zijn bij te dragen) maar die ook ten goede komt aan producenten in andere lidstaten?

4. De consument kan zijn geld slechts één keer uitgeven. Het kan goed zijn dat hij ervoor kiest de „woonplant van de maand" te kopen in plaats van een ander product. Is de Commissie het met ons eens dat het bevorderen van specifieke producten, zoals met de bovenvermelde campagne gebeurt, tot concurrentieverstoring leidt tussen de producenten van het gepromote product en de producenten van producten die door consument als vervangingsproducten worden gezien, en derhalve problemen oplevert voor de goede werking van de interne markt?

Antwoord van de heer Cioloş namens de Commissie
(12 juli 2013)

1. De gezamenlijke financiering van bevorderingsmaatregelen door de EU en een lidstaat, zoals in het programma dat in april 2013 door de Commissie is goedgekeurd bij besluit C(2013)2261, is geregeld in artikel 13, lid 2, en de artikelen 8 en 9 van Verordening (EG) nr. 3/2008 ([3]). In haar beoordeling volgt de Commissie de regels van deze verordening alsook die van Verordening (EG) nr. 501/2008 ([4]).

2. Krachtens artikel 13, lid 6, van Verordening (EG) nr. 3/2008, en krachtens artikel 42 VWEU ([5]) zijn de regels inzake staatssteun (artikelen 107 tot en met 109 VWEU) niet van toepassing op betalingen door de lidstaten in overeenstemming met deze verordening, met inbegrip van de som die door de EU is verstrekt.

Besluit SA.32714 ([6]) had echter geen betrekking op de medegefinancierde bevorderingsmaatregelen die in april 2013 zijn goedgekeurd, maar op een regeling die volledig met nationale middelen is gefinancierd. Zoals reeds is gemeld, mocht die steun niet met andere financiering worden gecumuleerd, met inbegrip van financiering door de Unie.

3. Producten van de bloementeelt die in Nederland worden geproduceerd of worden ingevoerd, zijn onderworpen aan parafiscale heffingen. De steun die met de inkomsten uit de heffingen wordt gefinancierd, komt in gelijke mate ten goede aan al wie aan de heffingen bijdraagt, omdat met die steun de consumptie van producten van de bloementeelt wordt bevorderd en hij de vraag naar die producten dus doet toenemen.

Aangezien producten van Nederlandse herkomst en ingevoerde producten in dezelfde mate voordeel ondervinden van de reclamecampagnes die door de inkomsten uit de heffingen worden gefinancierd, is er dus geen sprake van discriminatie.

([1]) http://www.bloemenblad.nl/nieuws/4225/woonplant-van-de-maand-krijgt-eu-steun.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/cases/239953/239953_1341178_111_1.pdf
([3]) PB L 3 van 5.1.2008.
([4]) PB L 147 van 6.6.2008.
([5]) Verdrag betreffende de werking van de Europese Unie.
([6]) Besluit betreffende staatssteun SA.32714 (2011/N), C(2011)5184 van 15 juli 2011.

4. Het gaat om algemene reclamecampagnes. Alle partijen, dus ook producenten en invoerders, kunnen de inhoud ervan mee bepalen. Bovendien wordt er campagne gevoerd rond algemene thema's zoals Valentijnsdag of Moederdag en zijn de campagnes gericht op de aankoop van bloemproducten in het algemeen. Alle soorten producten van de bloementeelt worden gepromoot, ongeacht hun herkomst.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005801/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI) and Lucas Hartong (NI)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Campaign in breach of internal market rules

The Flower Council of Holland is entitled to a grant from the European Union's budget for the coming three years for its 'Living plant of the month' campaign. The Flower Council of Holland has focused this international campaign on the Netherlands, Germany, France and Britain. It has a budget of almost EUR 6 million, EUR 3 million of which is provided by the European Union ([1]).

The Commission concluded, in its letter of 15 July 2011 (C(2011)5184), that these measures constitute state aid within the meaning of Article 107(1) TFEU but are compatible with internal market rules ([2]).

1. What is the Commission's assessment of systems of shared grants that are financed partly by the EU and partly by means of state resources?

2. How do the rules on competition apply in this case? Do they also apply to the sum provided by the EU?

3. What is the situation with regard to the solidarity principle in this case, in which a campaign that is (partly) financed by associated Dutch producers, who are obliged to contribute, also has benefits for producers in other Member States?

4. Consumers can only spend their money once. They may well choose to buy the 'living plant of the month' instead of another product. Does the Commission agree that promoting specific products, as the above campaign does, distorts competition between the producers of the product that is being promoted and the producers of products which are, in the eyes of consumers, substitute products, and thus poses a problem in terms of the proper functioning of the internal market?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(12 July 2013)

1. Joint funding of promotion measures by the EU and a Member State as it is the case in respect of the programme approved by the Commission in April 2013 by Decision C(2013)2261 is governed by Article 13(2) and Articles 8 and 9 of Regulation 3/2008. ([3]) In its assessment the Commission follows the rules of that regulation and Regulation 501/2008. ([4])

2. According to Article 13(6) of Regulation 3/2008, and in accordance with Article 42 TFEU ([5]) the rules on state aid (Articles 107 to 109 TFEU) do not apply to payments by Member States in accordance with that regulation, including the sum provided by the EU.

However, Decision SA.32714 ([6]) did not concern the co-financed promotion measures approved in April 2013 but a scheme purely financed from national funding. As notified, that aid was not to be cumulated with any other funding, including Union funding.

3. Parafiscal levies are imposed on flower cultivation products produced in and imported into the Netherlands. The aid financed from the levy revenues will equally benefit all levy contributors as it promotes the consumption of flower cultivation products and thus increases demand in them.

Consequently, where products of Dutch origin and of imported origin equally benefit from the advertising measures financed by levy revenues, there is no discrimination .

([1]) http://www.bloemenblad.nl/nieuws/4225/woonplant-van-de-maand-krijgt-eu-steun
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/cases/239953/239953_1341178_111_1.pdf
([3]) OJ L 3, 5.1.2008.
([4]) OJ L 147, 6.6.2008.
([5]) Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.
([6]) State Aid Decision SA.32714 (2011/N), C(2011)5184 of 15 July 2011.

4. The advertising campaigns are generic. All parties including producers and importers have the opportunity to decide on their content. Moreover, the campaigns are conducted around general themes (Valentine's or Mother's day) and therefore focus on the purchase of flower products in general. The promotion involves all types of flower products irrespective of their origin.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-005802/13
a la Comisión
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(23 de mayo de 2013)

Asunto: Evolución de la flota cefalopodera en la República Islámica de Mauritania

El Protocolo de Pesca UE-Mauritania, rubricado el 26 de julio por un período de dos años y pendiente de ratificación por el Parlamento Europeo, es el más relevante de los acuerdos internacionales de la política pesquera europea. Entre sus principales problemas se cuenta la expulsión de la flota de cefalopoderos y las dudas sobre la efectividad de la prioridad de acceso pesquero de la UE frente a terceras partes. Así lo he puesto de manifiesto en mis preguntas E-007843/2012 y E-010633/2012.

La pesca de cefalópodos por buques europeos comenzó en 1965 y el primer acuerdo de la Unión Europea con Mauritania data de 1987. Los datos del informe del Comité Científico, Técnico y Económico de Pesca (CCTEP), previo a la firma del nuevo protocolo, relativos a 2008, señalaban que la flota mauritana se componía de 900 canoas artesanales y 200 congeladores arrastreros reabanderados bajo pabellón mauritano.

Las prácticas de reabanderamiento de buques procedentes de terceros Estados bajo pabellón mauritano y la existencia de acuerdos privados entre Mauritania, incluso después de la expulsión de la flota cefalopodera europea, ponen en entredicho la credibilidad de las relaciones pesqueras.

— ¿Dispone la Comisión de datos sobre la evolución de la flota cefalopodera que opera en Mauritania por categorías desde que existen relaciones pesqueras con la Unión Europea?

— ¿Cómo valora la Comisión esta evolución?

— ¿Cuál es la situación actual?

— ¿Va a reclamar la Comisión transparencia en las relaciones pesqueras con Mauritania?

— ¿Va a aceptar la Comisión la discriminación de la flota europea en la captura de cefalópodos en aguas mauritanas?

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(2 de agosto de 2013)

Los datos más recientes sobre las actividades de las flotas de pesca de cefalópodos en Mauritania se pusieron a disposición del Parlamento Europeo en el informe del último comité científico conjunto (Rennes, 2 — 5 de abril de 2013).

En la actualidad, la mayor parte de las capturas de cefalópodos son efectuadas por la flota artesanal de Mauritania. Según los datos disponibles, también hay algunos buques de cefalópodos industriales mauritanos, que, sin embargo, están siendo retirados progresivamente porque incumplen las normas de la UE en materia sanitaria.

Como corolario de las negociaciones del nuevo Protocolo con Mauritania, los cefalópodos no están excluidos, pero sí mencionados con un cupo nulo, ya que Mauritania ha decidido no conceder ninguna posibilidad de pesca de cefalópodos a las flotas extranjeras. Mauritania ha dejado patente su intención de desarrollar su propia pesquería costera de cefalópodos. No obstante, el protocolo garantiza el acceso prioritario de las flotas de la Unión Europea a los excedentes disponibles en las zonas de pesca de Mauritania (art. 1.4). Esto significa que, en cuanto un excedente de la población de cefalópodos esté disponible, y si Mauritania está de acuerdo en asignar parte de este excedente a las flotas extranjeras, las flotas de la UE tendrán acceso prioritario por delante de otras flotas extranjeras. La Comisión seguirá cooperando con Mauritania para asegurar el mejor resultado posible para la flota de la UE y la sostenibilidad de las poblaciones. Un marco alternativo, basado en un enfoque espaciotemporal, podría generar, en efecto, un aumento de los rendimientos futuros de esta pesquería. No existe discriminación contra la flota de pesca de cefalópodos de la UE en aguas mauritanas. La transparencia en las relaciones de pesca con Mauritania y con todos los países asociados sigue siendo un principio fundamental para la Comisión a la hora de negociar acuerdos de colaboración en el sector pesquero sostenibles.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005802/13
to the Commission
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Development of the cephalopod fleet in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

The EU-Mauritania fisheries protocol, which was signed on 26 July 2012 for a period of two years and is awaiting ratification by Parliament, is the most important of the international agreements under the EU fisheries policy. The principal problems with this agreement, as I have already said in my written questions E-007843/2012 and E-010633/2012, lie in the expulsion of the cephalopod fleet and doubts as to how effective the EU's priority over third countries in accessing fishing grounds will be.

Cephalopod fishing by European vessels first began in 1965 and the European Union's first agreement with Mauritania dates from 1987. Figures in the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) report for 2008, i.e. prior to signature of this new protocol, show the Mauritanian fleet to consist of 900 artisanal canoes and 200 freezer trawlers which had been re-registered under the Mauritanian flag.

The practice of reflagging vessels from third countries under the Mauritanian flag and the existence of private agreements with Mauritania, even after the EU cephalopod fleet had been expelled, call the credibility of the fisheries relationship into question.

— Does the Commission have data by categories on how the cephalopod fleet fishing in Mauritania has developed since Mauritania's fisheries relationship with the European Union began?

— What is the Commission's assessment of how this has developed?

— What is the current situation?

— Will the Commission call for transparency in fisheries relationships with Mauritania?

— Is the Commission going to accept this discrimination against the EU fleet in cephalopod fishing in Mauritanian waters?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(2 August 2013)

The most recent data on activities of cephalopod fleets fishing in Mauritania have has been made available to the European Parliament in the report of the last Joint Scientific Committee (Rennes, 2-5 April 2013).

Currently, most of the cephalopod catches are made by the Mauritanian artisanal fleet. According to the available data, there are also some Mauritanian industrial cephalopods vessels, which are however being phased out due to non-compliance with EU sanitary rules.

As an outcome of negotiations of the new Protocol with Mauritania, cephalopods are not excluded but mentioned with zero quota, since Mauritania has decided not to grant any cephalopods fishing possibilities to foreign fleets. Mauritania has made clear its intention to develop its own coastal cephalopod fishery. Nevertheless, the protocol grants European Union fleets priority access to available surpluses in Mauritanian fishing zones (art. 1.4). This means that as soon as a surplus of the cephalopod stock is available, and if Mauritania agrees to allocate part of this surplus to foreign fleets, EU fleets will have priority access over other foreign fleets. The Commission will continue to work with Mauritania in order to secure the best possible outcome for the EU fleet and sustainability of the stock. An alternative framework, based on a spatio-temporal approach, might indeed generate increases of future yields of this fishery. There is no discrimination against the EU fleet cephalopod fleet in Mauritanian waters. Transparency in fisheries relationships with Mauritania and all partners countries remains a fundamental principle for the Commission when negociating Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005803/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(23 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Sparizione di persone in Messico

Di recente molte organizzazioni umanitarie hanno lanciato l'allarme di come si stia verificando, in Messico, una delle maggiori operazioni di rapimento dei dissidenti politici e un aumento delle violenze anche ai danni dei turisti europei. Si tratterebbe di un piano volto a far sparire migliaia di persone, che riporta alla memoria gli analoghi crimini attuati dalle dittature sudamericane negli scorsi decenni. Una ricerca elaborata da fonti governative evidenzia come tra il 2006 e il 2012 in Messico siano scomparse più di 26 mila persone. L'organizzazione Human Rights Watch ha inoltre calcolato che, tra queste, in almeno 150 casi vi sarebbe prova del diretto coinvolgimento delle forze di polizia nel rapimento della vittima. Atti di violenza particolarmente gravi si sono verificati anche nei confronti di sei turiste spagnole e di un'italiana nel marzo di quest'anno.

L'Unione europea tutela la libertà di pensiero: ai sensi dell'articolo 10 della Convenzione europea dei diritti dell'uomo (CEDU): «Ogni persona ha diritto alla libertà di espressione. Tale diritto include la libertà di opinione e la libertà di ricevere o di comunicare informazioni o idee senza ingerenza alcuna da parte delle autorità pubbliche, e senza considerazione di frontiera».

Inoltre, nella risoluzione P7_TA(2010)0063, promossa con riferimento ad altri analoghi casi verificatisi sull'isola di Cuba, il Parlamento europeo «invita il governo (…) a rilasciare immediatamente e incondizionatamente tutti i prigionieri politici e i prigionieri di coscienza» ed «esprime la propria profonda solidarietà al popolo (…), sostiene le azioni a favore della democrazia e del rispetto e della promozione dei diritti fondamentali (…)».

Alla luce di quanto sopra, può la Commissione far sapere:

— se è a conoscenza di quanto si sta ora verificando in Messico;

— in che modo intenda intervenire, sul piano internazionale, per contribuire a porre fine a questa situazione, pericolosa anche per i cittadini europei in viaggio nel paese?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(25 luglio 2013)

L'Unione europea segue la questione delle sparizioni nel quadro dei suoi dialoghi politici con il Messico, in particolare dei dialoghi ad alto livello in materia di diritti umani, sicurezza e giustizia. Sulla base di tali dialoghi, l'UE intende impegnarsi in una cooperazione con il Messico per la prevenzione della criminalità e continuare a sostenere l'attuazione della riforma della giustizia penale, nonché la tutela e promozione dei diritti umani.

L'UE ha ripetutamente ribadito al governo messicano l'esigenza di creare un registro completo di tutte le sparizioni. L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente accoglie con favore il recente annuncio, da parte del governo messicano, della creazione di un'unità investigativa speciale per le persone scomparse.

L'UE riconosce che le riforme istituzionali e sociali avviate di recente, tra cui quelle dei settori della sicurezza e dell'istruzione, nonché la strategia per eradicare la povertà, dovrebbero esercitare un effetto positivo in Messico.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005803/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Disappearance of people in Mexico

Recently, many humanitarian organisations have sounded the alarm about how, in Mexico, one of the biggest operations of abduction of political dissidents is taking place, together with an increase in violence, even against European tourists. There is allegedly a plan to get rid of thousands of people, bringing back memories of similar crimes carried out by Latin American dictatorships over past decades. Research conducted by government sources shows that between 2006 and 2012 more than 26 000 people disappeared in Mexico. The organisation Human Rights Watch has calculated that, among these, in at least 150 cases there is evidence of the direct involvement of the police in the abduction of the victim. In March this year there were also some particularly serious acts of violence against six Spanish and one Italian tourist.

The European Union protects freedom of thought. Under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), 'everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.'

Furthermore, in Resolution P7_TA (2010) 0063, with reference to other similar cases that took place on the island of Cuba, the European Parliament 'calls on the (…) Government for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience' and 'voices its profound solidarity with the entire (…) people and its support for them in their progress towards democracy and respect and promotion of fundamental freedoms(…).'

In light of the above, can the Commission say:

— whether it is aware of what is occurring in Mexico;

— what action it intends to take internationally, to help put an end to this situation, which is even becoming dangerous for European citizens travelling in that country?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(25 July 2013)

The EU follows the issue of disappearances in the framework of its policy dialogues with Mexico, notably the high-level dialogues on human rights; and on security and justice. As a result of these dialogues, the EU intends to engage in cooperation on crime prevention with Mexico, and to continue supporting the implementation of the criminal justice reform, and the protection and promotion of human rights.

The EU has insisted with the Mexican government about the need to create a comprehensive registry of all disappearances. The HR/VP welcomes the announcement recently made by the Mexican government about the creation of a special investigative unit for missing people.

The EU acknowledges the positive impact that the institutional and social reforms recently launched — such as the reforms of the sectors of security and education, as well as the strategy to eradicate poverty — are expected to have in Mexico.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005804/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(23 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Terrorismo islamico a Londra

Nella giornata di ieri, 22 maggio, un militare inglese è stato ucciso da due fanatici islamici a Woolwich, il quartiere a sud-est di Londra. Gli aggressori, armati di machete, subito dopo l'omicidio hanno affermato in un video: «Giuriamo su Allah l'onnipotente che non smetteremo mai di combattervi».

Considerando la comunicazione della Commissione europea al Parlamento e al Consiglio (COM(2010)0386) del 20 luglio 2010, in cui si afferma che il principale quadro di riferimento dell'UE per la lotta al fanatismo continua ad essere la strategia anti-terrorismo del 2005, incentrata sulla prevenzione del fenomeno, sul perseguimento e sulla risposta;

osservando altresì la decisione quadro 2002/475/GAI sulla lotta contro il terrorismo, che mira ad avvicinare le normative nazionali relative al reclutamento e all'addestramento dei futuri terroristi e, soprattutto, alla repressione delle provocazioni pubbliche che inducono a commettere atti simili;

considerando infine che la protezione delle persone e delle infrastrutture è un altro obiettivo basilare della strategia anti-terrorismo e abbraccia «un'ampia gamma di attività, come la valutazione delle minacce a livello UE, la sicurezza della catena di approvvigionamento, la protezione delle infrastrutture critiche, la sicurezza dei trasporti e i controlli alle frontiere, così come la ricerca in materia di sicurezza»;

si chiede alla Commissione:

— quanto è stato davvero fatto, in concreto, per dare attuazione alla strategia anti-terrorismo;

— come si ritiene di dover procedere per arginare il fenomeno, sempre più evidente, del fanatismo religioso.

Risposta di C. Malmström a nome della Commissione
(4 luglio 2013)

L'Unione europea ha predisposto una serie di politiche e di interventi nei quattro settori della strategia antiterrorismo dell'Unione europea, prevenzione, protezione, perseguimento e risposta. Nella comunicazione «La politica antiterrorismo dell'UE: principali risultati e sfide future» ([1]), la Commissione presenta un resoconto dettagliato dei principali risultati ottenuti dall'UE nella lotta contro il terrorismo.

L'UE può fornire un quadro ed un livello supplementare di sostegno agli Stati membri in relazione alle loro particolari situazioni nazionali, ma la responsabilità di affrontare le sfide connesse alla radicalizzazione e al reclutamento dei terroristi incombe in primo luogo agli Stati membri. Per la Commissione una delle priorità in termini di sicurezza interna consiste nell'elaborare strumenti che aiutino gli Stati membri ad affrontare le suddette sfide, a prescindere dalla motivazione soggiacente e dai metodi impiegati.

La rete dell'UE per la sensibilizzazione in materia di radicalizzazione (RAN), avviata dalla Commissione nel 2011, lavora con un'ampia gamma di operatori di tutta l'Europa per scambiare informazioni sui migliori metodi per attenuare i pericoli connessi all'estremismo. I risultati della RAN hanno consentito di confermare che, malgrado la strategia dell'Unione europea del 2005 volta a combattere la radicalizzazione e il reclutamento nelle file del terrorismo continui ad essere valida in termini di ambito di applicazione, è necessario garantire che una serie di importanti fattori sia tenuta nella debita considerazione.

Di conseguenza, nelle conclusioni adottate dal Consiglio GAI il 7 giugno 2013 si raccomanda di aggiornare la strategia dell'UE. Alla Commissione è stato chiesto di presentare una comunicazione che esponga misure riguardanti metodi innovativi per contrastare l'estremismo violento, basati in parte sull'esperienza della RAN. Nella comunicazione si terrà conto dell'approccio basato sulle comunità e saranno forniti elementi atti a sostenere l'impegno degli Stati membri nell'affrontare la questione.

([1]) COM(2010)386 definitivo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005804/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Islamic terrorism in London

On 22 May 2013, a British soldier was killed by two Islamic extremists in Woolwich in south-east London. The attackers, who were armed with machetes, were filmed immediately after the murder saying: 'We swear by Almighty Allah we will never stop fighting you'.

Commission Communication COM(2010)0386 to the European Parliament and the Council of 20 July 2010 states that the 2005 Counter-Terrorism Strategy continues to be the main reference framework for combating extremism and preventing, pursuing and responding to this phenomenon.

Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA on combating terrorism aims to harmonise national laws which address the issue of the recruitment and radicalisation of future terrorists, and, in particular, clamp down on public statements which incite people to commit terrorist acts.

Another fundamental objective of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy is to protect people and infrastructure. The strategy 'covers a wide range of activity, including EU-wide threat assessments, security of the supply chain, protecting critical infrastructure, transport security and border controls, as well as security research'.

Could the Commission say:

— exactly what steps have been taken to put the Counter-Terrorism Strategy into practice?

— how it intends to curb religious extremism, which is becoming increasingly widespread?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(4 July 2013)

The European Union has put in place a number of policies and actions in the four strands of the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy — prevent, protect pursue and respond. In its communication 'The EU Counter-Terrorism Policy: main achievements and future challenges' ([1]), the Commission gave a detailed account of the main EU achievements in the fight against terrorism.

While the EU can provide a framework and an additional level of support for Member States in relation to their particular domestic circumstances, the responsibility for confronting the challenge posed by radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism, rests primarily with Member States. The Commission continues to work on ways to assist them in addressing this challenge, regardless of motivation and methods, as one of the internal security priorities.

The Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), launched by the Commission in 2011, works with a wide range of practitioners from all over Europe to exchange information on how best to mitigate the risks of extremism. The findings of the RAN have served to confirm that while the 2005 EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism is still valid in its scope, there is a need to ensure that due consideration is given to a number of significant factors.

Consequently, the JHA Council of 7 June 2013 adopted conclusions calling for an update of the EU Strategy. The Commission has been invited to present a communication outlining measures on innovative ways to counter violent extremism, based in part on the experience of the RAN. The communication will take into account the community based approach, and provide elements to support Member States' efforts to address this issue.

([1]) COM(2010)386 final.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005807/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Austeridade: Declarações do secretário do Tesouro dos EUA

O secretário norte-americano do Tesouro, Jacob Lew, afirmou no Senado do seu país que as políticas de saneamento nos países mais ricos deveriam ser «reorientadas» para promover o crescimento económico e o emprego. «Nas economias avançadas há uma necessidade de reorientar o ritmo de saneamento orçamental com o fim de promover o crescimento económico e o emprego», acrescentou.

«Reduzir o défice não pode ser o único objetivo da política orçamental. A criação de empregos e o crescimento devem ser a prioridade», insistiu o secretário do Tesouro.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Que comentários lhe merecem as declarações de Jacob Lew?

— Concorda com a sua avaliação?

— Que medidas crê serem as mais importantes a tomar para assegurar o resultado almejado de promover o crescimento económico e o emprego na União Europeia?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(2 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão não comenta declarações publicadas na imprensa de membros individuais das diferentes administrações. No entanto, a Comissão recorda ao Senhor Deputado que a política orçamental na União Europeia é regulada pelo Pacto de Estabilidade e Crescimento, que constitui o enquadramento orçamental assente em regras consignado no Tratado.

Nesse contexto, a Comissão considera que o considerável esforço orçamental já desenvolvido até à data e a deterioração da situação económica, em especial nos Estados-Membros mais vulneráveis, poderão permitir uma modulação da estratégia de consolidação.

A Comissão recorda que sempre defendeu um esforço de consolidação orçamental diferenciado, uma vez que cada Estado-Membro enfrenta uma situação económica e orçamental distinta. Os planos orçamentais a médio prazo, recentemente apresentados, mostram que o esforço de ajustamento tem sido maior nos Estados-Membros que estão a reequilibrar as suas economias e menor nos Estados-Membros com maior margem de manobra orçamental, o que vem confirmar que se justifica uma consolidação diferenciada a nível da UE. Além disso, e em conformidade com o Pacto de Estabilidade e Crescimento, as estratégias orçamentais visam obter progressos a nível estrutural, mais do que meramente em termos nominais, o que permite que o ritmo da consolidação seja modulado em função da evolução da situação económica.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005807/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Austerity: statements by the US Treasury Secretary

The US Treasury Secretary, Jacob Lew, has told the US Senate that fiscal consolidation policies in the richest countries should be 'recalibrated' to foster economic growth and job creation. According to Mr Lew, 'In the advanced economies, there is a need to recalibrate the pace of fiscal consolidation to promote economic growth and employment.'

The Treasury Secretary stressed that 'shrinking the budget deficit cannot be the only focus of fiscal policy. Job creation and economic growth have to be a top priority.'

— What does the Commission's have to say about Jacob Lew's statements?

— Does it agree with his evaluation?

— What measures does it believe must be taken to achieve the desired result of promoting economic growth and employment in the EU?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(2 July 2013)

The Commission does not comment on statements appeared in the press by individual government members. However, the Commission reminds to the honourable Member that budgetary policy in the European Union is regulated by the Stability and Growth Pact, the rule-based fiscal framework grounded in the Treaty.

Within this framework, the Commission considers that sizeable fiscal effort undertaken so far and the deterioration of the economic situation, especially in the most vulnerable Member States, can allow for a modulation of the consolidation strategy.

The Commission recalls that it has always advocated a differentiated fiscal consolidation effort, given that each Member State faces a different fiscal and economic position. The recently submitted medium term fiscal plans reveal that fiscal efforts are larger in Member States undergoing rebalancing of their economies and lower for Member States with a wider fiscal space. This confirms the appropriateness of the differentiated nature of consolidation in the EU. Moreover, in line with the Stability and Growth Pact, fiscal strategies focus on progress achieved in structural rather than purely nominal terms, which allows the pace of consolidation to be modulated as a function of the economic developments.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005808/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Ásia-Pacífico — escassez de recursos hídricos

A primeira-ministra tailandesa, Yingluck Shinawatra, afirmou, na Reunião da Água Ásia-Pacífico, realizada na cidade tailandesa de Chiang Mai, que «pode acontecer uma guerra pelos recursos» naquela região do globo.

Os esforços regionais para garantir o acesso à água, tanto no centro, como no sudeste asiático, têm provocado tensões entre vizinhos, que dependem dos rios para alimentar uma população em pleno crescimento. A urbanização galopante, as mudanças climáticas e a crescente expansão agrícola aumentam a pressão sobre os recursos hídricos escassos, apesar de a maioria das populações na região não ter acesso à água potável e não obstante o forte crescimento económico registado nos últimos anos.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

— Tem conhecimento destes factos?

— Que avaliação faz dos mesmos?

— Considera iminente o risco de conflito?

— A União Europeia pode contribuir para reduzir a tensão regional quanto à disputa pelos recursos hídricos?

— Já o faz?

— De que formas e com que resultados?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(10 de julho de 2013)

A segurança dos recursos hídricos foi debatida na reunião «Gymnich» informal do Conselho dos Negócios Estrangeiros da UE, realizada em Paphos em setembro de 2012. No ano passado, em Nova Iorque, a Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente patrocinou igualmente, em conjunto com os EUA e as Nações Unidas, um evento dedicado à segurança dos recursos hídricos, onde salientou que a água vai ser muito importante para o desenvolvimento sustentável, a luta contra as alterações climáticas e a estabilidade em muitas partes do mundo.

Na Ásia, a situação é especialmente difícil. Um estudo recente, elaborado conjuntamente pelo Banco Asiático de Desenvolvimento e pelo Fórum da Água Ásia-Pacífico, alertou para o facto de mais de 75 % dos países de região da Ásia e do Pacífico estarem confrontados com problemas graves a nível da segurança dos recursos hídricos. A UE e mais de dez Estados-Membros estão a financiar vários projetos de cooperação e gestão dos recursos hídricos na região do Baixo Mekong. A UE é o maior doador de ajuda ao desenvolvimento para os países do Baixo Mekong e contribui com mais de 65 % do orçamento do Plano Estratégico do Rio Mekong para 2011-2015.

As questões ligadas à água, à adaptação às alterações climáticas e à redução dos riscos de catástrofe estão estreitamente interligadas. No âmbito da Aliança Global contra as Alterações Climáticas, a UE fornece assistência à iniciativa de adaptação às alterações climáticas da região do Mekong.

Em 1 de junho de 2013, a Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente proferiu um importante discurso sobre «defesa dos interesses nacionais e prevenção de conflitos», em que salientou a importância dos riscos para a segurança que as alterações climáticas e a segurança dos recursos hídricos implicam e delineou a resposta da UE, incluindo a cooperação avançada UE-ASEAN em matéria de prevenção e resposta a catástrofes.

Na Ásia Central a Comissão desenvolve várias ações relativas à questão da melhoria da gestão da água, como o Fundo Fiduciário Multidoadores para a energia e a água, o Programa de Energia Sustentável e a facilitação dos diálogos nacionais sobre recursos hídricos nos países da EOCAC.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005808/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Asia-Pacific: shortage of water resources

The Thai Prime Minister, Yingluck Shinawatra, has told the Asia-Pacific Water Summit, held in the Thai city of Chiang Mai, that 'there could be a fight over resources' in that part of the world.

Regional efforts to ensure access to water, both in Central and South East Asia, have caused tensions between neighbouring countries that depend on rivers to feed a rapidly growing population. Rampant urbanisation, climate change and increasing agricultural expansion are putting further pressure on scarce water resources, although most people in the region do not have access to drinking water and despite strong economic growth in recent years.

— Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of these facts?

— What is her assessment of them?

— Does she believe that the risk of conflict is imminent?

— Can the EU help to reduce tension in the region regarding the dispute over water resources?

— Is it already intervening?

— If so, how, and what results have been achieved?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(10 July 2013)

Water security was discussed in the EU informal Gymnich Foreign Affairs Council in Paphos in September 2012. Last year in New York, the HR/VP has also co-sponsored together with the US and the UN a water security event where she stressed that water is going to be very important for sustainable development, for tackling climate change and for stability in many parts of the world.

In Asia the situation is particularly difficult. A recent study prepared jointly by the Asian Development Bank and Asia-Pacific Water Forum warned that more than 75% of the countries in Asia and the Pacific are experiencing a serious lack of water security. The EU and over 10 Member States are financing several individual water management and cooperation projects in the Lower Mekong region. The EU is the largest development aid provider to the countries of the Lower Mekong and contributes to over 65% of the budget to the Mekong River Strategic Plan 2011-2015.

Water issues, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction are closely interrelated. Under the Global Climate change Alliance, the EU provides assistance for the climate change adaptation initiative of the Mekong region

On 1 June 2013 the HR/VP delivered a major speech on 'Defending national interests, preventing conflict' where she stressed the important security risks of climate change and water security and outlined the EU's response, including the advanced EU-ASEAN cooperation on disaster prevention and response.

For Central Asia the Commission is active in the sector of improved water management through several actions, such as the Multi-donor Trust Fund for energy and water, the Sustainable Energy Program and the facilitation of National dialogues on water in the EECCA countries.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005809/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Apple — «engenharia» fiscal

Notícias recentes dão conta de que as conclusões preliminares de um inquérito parlamentar norte-americano ao grupo empresarial Apple apontam para o facto de esta ter utilizado uma complexa rede de empresas subsidiárias no estrangeiro para evitar o pagamento de milhares de milhões de dólares em impostos nos Estados Unidos. O relatório, que deve servir de base para uma auditoria no Senado, não acusa a Apple diretamente de atividade ilegal, mas afirma que o grupo utilizava «estratégias de grande magnitude para evitar pagar impostos».

Alegadamente, o grupo criou um conglomerado virtual para administrar as suas atividades no estrangeiro denominado «Apple Operations International», que «não tem funcionários ou sede física», e, assim, evitou declarar vários milhões de dólares num período de cinco anos, usando a seu favor lacunas nos sistemas fiscais, nomeadamente, dos Estados Unidos e Irlanda.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Tem conhecimento destes factos?

— Em que medida a atividade do grupo Apple na União Europeia integrou a estratégia global de redução das contribuições fiscais devidas?

— Dispõe de informações sobre as lacunas detetadas pelo relatório parlamentar norte-americano nos sistemas fiscais envolvidos na operação de minimização do valor fiscal em dívida por parte do grupo Apple? Por que formas poderão essas lacunas ser colmatadas e como poderá ser reposta a justiça fiscal?

Resposta dada por Algirdas Šemeta em nome da Comissão
(5 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão tomou nota da cobertura mediática relacionada com a audição do Subcomité do Senado dos EUA sobre a estrutura fiscal internacional da Apple. A Comissão não comenta a posição fiscal dos contribuintes individuais. No entanto, a Comissão está ciente das grandes preocupações sobre o modo como as multinacionais exploram as disparidades entre os sistemas fiscais de dois ou mais países. Estas questões altamente complexas estão atualmente em discussão pelo Grupo do Código de Conduta e farão igualmente parte do plano de ação global que está a ser desenvolvido pela OCDE. A Comissão apoia fortemente soluções eficazes nestas áreas e participa ativamente em ambas as instâncias.

Além disso, em dezembro de 2012, a Comissão publicou um «Plano de Ação para reforçar a luta contra a fraude e a evasão fiscais ([1])», que esboçou a intenção de proceder à revisão da Diretiva sociedades-mães e sociedades afiliadas a fim de combater a utilização de estruturas que usam as disparidades, bem como de rever as disposições antiabuso nas Diretivas relativas aos juros e royalties, às fusões e às sociedades-mãe e sociedades afiliadas. Por outro lado, o plano de ação inclui também uma recomendação aos Estados-Membros relativa a duas estratégias de luta contra o planeamento fiscal agressivo: uma abordagem para combater a dupla não tributação e uma regra geral antiabuso (GAAR) ([2]).

([1]) COM(2012) 722 final, de 6 de dezembro de 2012.
([2]) COM(2012) 8806 final, de 6 de dezembro de 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005809/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Apple — tax 'engineering'

According to recent news reports, the preliminary findings of a US Senate investigation into Apple Inc. indicate that the group used a complex network of offshore subsidiaries to avoid paying billions of dollars in tax in the United States. The report, which is to form the basis for a Senate hearing, does not accuse Apple directly of illegal activity, but says that the group went to great lengths to avoid paying taxes.

The group allegedly created a virtual conglomerate called 'Apple Operations International', which 'has no employees or physical presence', to manage its offshore activities. It therefore avoided declaring several millions of dollars over a five-year period, using loopholes in tax systems, particularly in the United States and Ireland, to its advantage.

— Is the Commission aware of these facts?

— To what extent has Apple's activity in the EU formed a part of its global tax reduction strategy?

— Does the Commission have any information on the tax loopholes identified in the US Senate report which enable Apple to pay less tax? How can these loopholes be closed and how can fiscal justice be restored?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(5 July 2013)

The Commission has taken note of the media coverage related to the US Senate's Subcommittee hearing on Apple's international tax structure. The Commission does not comment on the tax position of individual tax payers. Nevertheless the Commission is conscious of wide concerns about how multinationals exploit mismatches between the tax systems of two or more countries. These highly complex issues are currently under discussion by the Code of Conduct Group and will also be part of the Comprehensive Action Plan that is being developed by the OECD. The Commission strongly supports effective solutions in these areas and actively contributes in both fora.

In addition in December 2012 the Commission issued an 'Action Plan to strengthen the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion' ([1]) which outlined plans to revise the Parent-Subsidiary Directive in order to tackle structures making use of mismatches, and to review the anti-abuse provisions in the directives on Interest and Royalties, Mergers and Parent-Subsidiary. Furthermore, the action plan also comprises a recommendation to Member States concerning two strategies to tackle aggressive tax planning: an approach to counter double non-taxation and a General Anti-Abuse Rule (GAAR) ([2]).

([1]) COM(2012) 722 final of 6 December 2012.
([2]) COM(2012) 8806 final of 6 December 2012.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005810/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Combate à fraude e evasão fiscais

O presidente da Comissão Europeia propôs recentemente aos Estados-Membros da União Europeia que aumentassem a troca de informações, de modo a melhorar o combate à fraude e evasão fiscais.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Que acolhimento colheu a proposta junto dos chefes de Estado e de governo reunidos em Conselho Europeu?

— Que medidas concretas acordaram em adotar, de modo a prosseguir este objetivo?

— Crê que as mesmas são suficientes e adequadas para estimular uma maior e mais eficaz troca de informação em matéria fiscal entre Estados-Membros?

Resposta dada por Algirdas Šemeta em nome da Comissão
(4 de julho de 2013)

Em 22 de maio de 2013, o Conselho Europeu acordou que deve ser dada prioridade a esforços para alargar a troca automática de informações tanto a nível da UE como a nível mundial. Em 12 de junho de 2013, a Comissão apresentou uma proposta ([1]) com vista a alargar o domínio de aplicação da troca automática de informações no âmbito da Diretiva relativa à cooperação administrativa. Com a presente proposta, a União Europeia e os seus Estados-Membros terão um sistema vasto de troca automática de informações com o padrão internacional mais elevado.

A Comissão considera que a troca automática de informações é um instrumento essencial no combate contra a fraude e a evasão fiscais. No entanto, por si só, não é suficiente. O plano de ação para reforçar a luta contra a fraude e a evasão fiscais, que a Comissão adotou em 6 de dezembro de 2012, prevê um amplo quadro para o combate contra a fraude e a evasão fiscais, com mais de 30 medidas concretas. A combinação destas ações proporciona uma resposta global e eficaz para os diversos desafios colocados pela fraude e a evasão fiscais, podendo, por conseguinte, contribuir para aumentar a equidade dos sistemas fiscais dos Estados-Membros, para garantir as receitas fiscais necessárias e, em última análise, para melhorar o bom funcionamento do mercado interno.

([1]) Proposta de uma Diretiva do Conselho que altera a Diretiva 2011/16/UE no que respeita à troca automática de informações obrigatória no domínio da fiscalidade, COM(2013) 348 final, de 12.6.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005810/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Combating tax fraud and evasion

The President of the European Commission recently proposed that EU Member States enhance information exchange to improve the fight against tax fraud and evasion.

— How was this proposal received by the Heads of State or Government meeting at the European Council?

— What specific measures did they agree to adopt to achieve this objective?

— Does the Commission believe that these measures are sufficient and adequate to stimulate a greater and more effective exchange of tax information between Member States?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(4 July 2013)

On 22 May 2013 the European Council agreed that priority should be given to efforts to extend the automatic exchange of information at the EU and global levels. On 12 June 2013 the Commission presented a proposal ([1]) with a view to expanding the scope of automatic exchange of information under the directive on Administrative Cooperation. With this proposal, the European Union and its Member States will have a comprehensive system of automatic exchange of information of the highest international standard.

The Commission believes that automatic exchange of information is a vital instrument in the fight against tax fraud and evasion. However, automatic exchange of information alone is not sufficient. The action plan to strengthen the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion, which the Commission adopted on 6 December 2012, provides a broad framework for combating tax fraud and tax evasion with over 30 concrete actions. The combination of these actions provides a comprehensive and effective response to the various challenges posed by tax fraud and evasion and can thus contribute to increasing the fairness of Member States' tax systems, to securing much needed tax revenues and ultimately to improving the proper functioning of the internal market.

([1]) Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2011/16/EU as regards mandatory automatic exchange of information in the field of taxation, COM(2013)348 final of 12.6.2013.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005811/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Dia Internacional da Biodiversidade

Celebra-se, em 22 de maio, o Dia Internacional da Biodiversidade, instituído pela Assembleia Geral das Nações Unidas, em 20 de dezembro de 2006. Este dia comemorativo tem como objetivo promover o conhecimento sobre a biodiversidade e alertar para os problemas que lhe estão associados, como as alterações climáticas, as rápidas mudanças nos diferentes habitats e as consequentes modificações nas taxas de reprodução animal e no crescimento das plantas.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— De que forma se associa à celebração do Dia Internacional da Biodiversidade?

— Como avalia o atual estado da biodiversidade na União Europeia?

— Quais considera serem as principais ameaças com que a União Europeia se vê confrontada?

— Que medidas crê serem mais importantes para assegurar a manutenção e, sempre quepossível, a melhoria dos níveis de biodiversidade na União Europeia?

Resposta dada por Janez Potočnik em nome da Comissão
(27 de junho de 2013)

1. A Comissão participará nas celebrações do Dia Internacional da Diversidade Biológica, em 22 de maio de 2014, e planeia organizar nesta ocasião um evento de sensibilização de alto nível em que serão apresentados os primeiros resultados preliminares do trabalho desenvolvido no âmbito da cartografia e avaliação dos serviços ecossistémicos na Europa.

2. De acordo com o último relatório da Agência Europeia do Ambiente sobre o estado do ambiente na Europa, apenas 17 % dos habitats e espécies e 11 % dos principais ecossistemas protegidos pela legislação da UE se encontravam num estado favorável em 2010. O trabalho desenvolvido no âmbito da cartografia e avaliação dos serviços ecossistémicos complementará e aperfeiçoará esta avaliação, constituindo uma parte essencial da Estratégia de Biodiversidade da UE para 2020. Os resultados preliminares de 2014 servirão de base para a revisão intercalar da estratégia da UE.

3. Segundo o nível de referência da biodiversidade da UE para 2010, as principais causas da perda de biodiversidade são as mudanças nos habitats naturais. Estas são, na maior parte dos casos, causadas por: sistemas de produção agrícola intensiva e abandono das terras; construção e transporte (fragmentação); sobre-exploração de florestas, oceanos, rios, lagos e solos; invasão de espécies alóctones; poluição; e — cada vez mais — alterações climáticas.

4. A Estratégia de Biodiversidade da UE para 2020 articula-se em torno de seis objetivos que incidem nos principais fatores de perda de biodiversidade e que têm por objetivo reduzir as principais pressões a que a natureza e os serviços ecossistémicos estão sujeitos na UE. Cada objetivo é ainda traduzido num conjunto de ações com prazos definidos e de outras medidas de acompanhamento.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005811/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: International Day for Biological Diversity

The International Day for Biological Diversity, established by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 December 2006, is held on 22 May each year. The aim of this commemorative day is to promote awareness of biodiversity and to alert people to the problems affecting it, such as climate change, rapid changes in our various habitats and the resulting changes in animal reproduction rates and plant growth.

— How will the Commission take part in celebrating the International Day for Biological Diversity?

— How does it assess the current state of biodiversity in the European Union?

— What does it think are the main threats facing the EU?

— What does it think are the most important steps to take to ensure that biodiversity levels in the EU are maintained and, as far as possible, improved?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(27 June 2013)

1. The Commission will take part in the celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity of 22 May 2014 and plans to organise on this occasion a high-level outreach event at which the first preliminary results of the work on Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and Services in Europe will be presented.

2. According to the latest Report of the European Environment Agency on the State of Environment in Europe, only 17% of habitats and species and 11% of key ecosystems protected under EU legislation were in a favourable state in 2010. The work on mapping and assessment of the state of ecosystems and their services will complement and refine this assessment and is an essential part of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. The preliminary results of 2014 will support the EU Mid-Term Review of the strategy.

3. From the EU 2010 Biodiversity Baseline, the main causes of biodiversity loss are changes in natural habitats. These are mostly due to: intensive agricultural production systems and land abandonment; construction and transport (fragmentation); overexploitation of forests, oceans, rivers, lakes and soils; invasion of alien species; pollution; and — increasingly — climate change.

4. The EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy is built around six mutually supportive targets, which address the main drivers of biodiversity loss and aim to reduce the key pressures on nature and ecosystem services in the EU. Each target is further translated into a set of time-bound actions and other accompanying measures

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005813/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Mali — doadores

Uma centena de países e instituições internacionais estiveram reunidos em Bruxelas, por iniciativa da França e da União Europeia, com o objetivo de mobilizar fundos para ajudar o Mali a sair da crise em que se encontra imerso.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

— Como avalia o resultado da reunião?

— Que disposição encontrou por parte dos potenciais doadores?

— Consegue indicar o montante de ajuda já acordado pelos doadores?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(9 de julho de 2013)

A conferência internacional de alto nível para o desenvolvimento do Mali organizada em Bruxelas, em 15 de maio, foi um êxito. 108 países e instituições estiveram representados por 13 Chefes de Estado e de Governo e um grande número de ministros dos Negócios Estrangeiros e de altos representantes. Foram prometidos 3 285 mil milhões de euros para apoiar o plano de recuperação sustentável do Mali 2013-2014, dos quais 520 milhões de euros provieram das instituições da UE. Este montante inclui 54 milhões de euros para ajuda humanitária, um contrato de apoio orçamental de 225 milhões de euros, 17 milhões de euros para assistência eleitoral, 27,7 milhões de euros para reforçar a capacidade de resistência das populações vulneráveis e melhorar a segurança alimentar e ainda um montante significativo para assistência a curto prazo à reabilitação, à recuperação e ao desenvolvimento conjugados, entre outros.

Foi amplamente reconhecido que a execução do roteiro para a transição política e do plano para a recuperação sustentável do Mali 2013-2014 se apoiarão mutuamente. Por último, foi dada uma atenção específica a toda a região do Sahel.

O seguimento dado a esta conferência será crucial para incentivar ainda mais a execução do plano de recuperação sustentável e coordenar a disponibilização efetiva de todos os compromissos financeiros assumidos. As autoridades malianas e a comunidade internacional decidiram dar um seguimento de alto nível à conferência, em Bruxelas, através de reuniões de representantes das capitais na sede, realizadas alternadamente em Bamaco e fora do Mali, e com a participação das partes interessadas não governamentais. A UE, a França e o Mali, na qualidade de copresidentes da conferência de alto nível, estão determinados a tomar rapidamente iniciativas com base nessas reuniões.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005813/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Donors to Mali

Some 100 countries and international institutions have met in Brussels, on the initiative of France and the European Union, with the aim of mobilising funds to help Mali overcome the crisis in which it is embroiled.

— What is the Vice-President/High Representative's view of the outcome of the meeting?

— What arrangement did the potential donors come to?

— Can she say how much aid the donors agreed to give?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

The international high level conference for the development of Mali organised in Brussels on 15 May was a success. 108 countries and institutions were represented by 13 heads of State and Government and a large number of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and senior representatives. EUR 3,285 billion were pledged in support of the Plan for the Sustainable Recovery of Mali 2013-2014 and EUR 520 million by the EU institutions alone. This amount includes notably EUR 54 million in humanitarian aid, a EUR 225 million budget support contract, EUR 17 million in electoral assistance, EUR 27,7 million to reinforce the resilience of vulnerable population and to enhance food security, and a significant provision for short term assistance linking rehabilitation, recovery and development, among others.

It was widely recognised that the implementation of the Road Map of the political Transition and the Plan for the Sustainable Recovery of Mali 2013-2014 will be mutually supportive. Finally, a specific attention was given to the wider Sahel region.

The follow-up to this conference will be crucial to further encourage the implementation of the Plan for the Sustainable Recovery and coordinate the actual disbursement of all pledges made. The Malian authorities and the international community agreed to provide high-level follow-up to the Brussels conference via meetings of representatives of the capitals at headquarters, held alternately in Bamako and outside Mali, and involving non-governmental stakeholders. The EU, France and Mali as co-chairs of the high level conference are determined to take swiftly initiatives on this follow-up.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005814/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Zimbabué: nova constituição

Os senadores do Zimbabué aprovaram a nova Constituição do país, uma semana após a sua adoção pela Assembleia Nacional. A nova lei fundamental do país aguarda a assinatura do presidente Robert Mugabe, no poder há 33 anos.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

— Que apreciação faz da nova Constituição zimbabueana?

— A União Europeia tomou posição pública a seu respeito?

— Considera que a nova Constituição contribuirá positivamente para democratização efetiva do país?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(19 de julho de 2013)

Numa declaração publicada em 25 de março de 2013, a Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton, em nome da UE, felicitou o Zimbabué pela aprovação da sua nova Constituição em 16 de março de 2013. Nessa declaração, a UE reiterava a importância da aprovação de uma nova Constituição pelo Zimbabué, assinalando que tal representa um passo significativo para a aplicação do Acordo Político Global, que continua a ser essencial para que o país se torne mais pacífico, próspero e democrático. A conclusão do processo de elaboração da nova Constituição, confirmada pela sua aprovação pelo Senado, também abre caminho à realização de eleições legislativas no final do ano, altura em que o povo do Zimbabué deverá poder exercer o seu direito de voto democrático e, assim, eleger o Governo da sua escolha no quadro de eleições pacíficas, transparentes e credíveis.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005814/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — New constitution of Zimbabwe

Senators in Zimbabwe have approved the country's new constitution, one week after it was adopted by the House of Assembly. The country's new basic law is awaiting signature by the President, Robert Mugabe, who has been in power for 33 years.

— What does the Vice-President/High Representative think about the new Zimbabwean constitution?

— Has the European Union adopted a public position on it?

— Does she think that the new constitution will make a positive contribution towards the effective democratisation of Zimbabwe?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(19 July 2013)

In a declaration issued by the HR/VP Ashton on behalf of the EU on March 25 2013 the EU congratulated Zimbabwe on the successful vote approving a new constitution on 16 March 2013. The same declaration reiterated the EU's position that the adoption of a new constitution in Zimbabwe represents a significant step in the implementation of the Global Political Agreement, which remains key to achieving a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic Zimbabwe. The conclusion of the constitution making process, as confirmed by the Senate's approval of the countries new constitution, also paves the way for the holding of general elections later this year, in which the people of Zimbabwe should be able to excise their democratic right to elect the Government of their choice in a peaceful, transparent and credible elections.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005815/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Apreciação negativa da União Europeia

Um relatório recentemente divulgado pelo Pew Research Center conclui que, na maior parte dos países da União, a apreciação negativa acerca desta está ou aproxima-se do seu ponto mais baixo de sempre. Esta circunstância levou os autores do relatório a considerarem ser a União Europeia o novo «homem doente da Europa».

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Que comentário lhe merece este relatório?

— Quais são, em seu entender, as principais razões para o agravamento da apreciação negativa da União por parte dos cidadãos?

— Crê haver razões para a mesma?

— Em que medida uma reflexão acerca do modo de funcionamento e competências da União poderia ser benéfica para inverter esta perceção?

— De que forma pretende contribuir para a sua inversão?

Resposta dada por Viviane Reding em nome da Comissão
(1 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão tem vindo a realizar inquéritos Eurobarómetro (EB) em todos os Estados-Membros desde 1973. Os inquéritos Eurobarómetro são realizados à escala da UE utilizando a mesma metodologia e perguntas idênticas em todos os Estados-Membros. Em contrapartida, o inquérito Pew foi realizado apenas em oito países da União, pelo que a Comissão não considera que possa ser utilizado para se tirar conclusões relativamente à UE no seu conjunto.

Os inquéritos EB normais têm dado panorâmicas preciosas do estado da opinião pública na União Europeia durante as últimas quatro décadas. Os números revelam uma mistura de elementos positivos e negativos. Embora os dados relativos aos últimos anos revelem uma tendência de declínio da confiança do público nas instituições europeias e nacionais — em particular desde o surgimento da crise económica e financeira após 2007-2008 — têm, no entanto, demonstrado também resultados mais positivos, como a manutenção de níveis elevados de apoio ao euro e à estratégia Europa 2020 e o facto de a UE ser vista como a melhor forma de enfrentar a crise.

No contexto das várias iniciativas empreendidas durante o Ano Europeu dos Cidadãos 2013, para ajudar a sensibilizar os cidadãos para as vantagens da UE e colmatar a lacuna constatada em relação ao grande público, a Comissão encetou uma série de debates em todos os Estados-Membros, os quais reúnem os cidadãos europeus e os membros da Comissão Europeia no intuito de refletir sobre os desafios que se oferecem à UE e as formas de os enfrentar. Estes «diálogos com os cidadãos» complementam o trabalho diário de aproximação das Representações da Comissão Europeia e da rede de mais de 500 centros de informação Europe Direct, que todos os dias aproximam a UE dos cidadãos europeus.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005815/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Negative view of the EU

A report recently released by the Pew Research Center concludes that, in most EU countries, positive views of the European Union are at or near an all-time low. This has led the report's authors to dub the EU the new 'sick man of Europe'.

— What does the Commission have to say about this report?

— What does it believe are the main reasons for citizens' increasingly negative view of the EU?

— Does it believe there are reasons for this?

— To what extent might a reflection on how the EU operates and its competences help to reverse this perception?

— How does the Commission intend to help bring about this change?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(1 July 2013)

The Commission has conducted Eurobarometer (EB) surveys in all Member States since 1973. Eurobarometer surveys are carried out EU-wide using the same methodology and identical questions in each Member State. In contrast, the Pew survey was only carried out in eight EU countries, and the Commission therefore does not believe it can be used draw conclusions for the EU as a whole.

Standard EB surveys have been providing valuable snapshots of the state of public opinion in the European Union for four decades. The figures reveal a mixture of positive and negative elements. While the figures for recent years reveal a trend decline in the public's confidence in EU-level and national institutions, particularly since the onset of the economic and financial crisis after 2007-08, they have however also shown more positive results, such as continued high levels of support for the Euro and the Europe 2020 strategy and the fact that the EU is seen as the best means to tackle the crisis.

As one of several initiatives taken during the European Year of Citizens 2013 to help raise awareness among citizens of the benefits of the EU, and bridge the perceived gap with the general public, the Commission has initiated a series of debates in each Member State that bring together European citizens and members of the European Commission to reflect on challenges facing the EU and the ways to tackle them. These 'Citizens' Dialogues' complement the daily outreach work of the European Commission's Representation Offices and the network of over 500 Europe Direct Information Centres, which bring the EU closer to European citizens every day.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005816/13
ao Conselho
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: FMI — progressos e desafios da Grécia

Num recente relatório, o FMI considerou que a Grécia fez progressos e percorreu um longo caminho para endireitar as suas contas públicas e que o maior desafio para o país continua a ser a reativação do crescimento, havendo a necessidade de continuar com as reformas estruturais.

Assim, pergunto ao Conselho:

— Que apreciação faz da posição pública do FMI quanto aos progressos e desafios da Grécia?

— Considera que o maior desafio para o país continua a ser o crescimento?

— Tomou medidas visando contribuir para a promoção do crescimento naquele país?

— Pode indicar quais e, se aplicável, quais os resultados já verificados?

Resposta
(11 de setembro de 2013)

O Conselho não está em condições de comentar a avaliação feita pelo Fundo Monetário Internacional (FMI) dos progressos realizados pela Grécia nem os desafios com que esse Estado-Membro se depara, tal como constam do relatório do FMI.

Atuando em nome dos Estados-Membros da área do euro, a Comissão é parte integrante da Troica, juntamente com o FMI e o Banco Central Europeu (BCE), empenhada em gerir a assistência financeira e o programa de ajustamento para a Grécia. A Comissão publica os seus próprios relatórios técnicos sobre a execução dos programas, o último dos quais foi publicado em maio de 2013.

O Conselho chama a atenção do Senhor Deputado para a declaração do Eurogrupo de 13 de maio de 2013 na qual o Eurogrupo registou com satisfação que a Grécia realizara novos progressos substanciais na execução das reformas orçamentais e estruturais estipuladas na condicionalidade política acordada.

Felicitou as autoridades pelo seu forte e contínuo empenho em aplicar o programa de ajustamento e reiterou a sua apreciação pelos esforços realizados pelos cidadãos gregos. Além disso, registou que as perspetivas económicas permanecem em grande medida inalteradas desde a análise anterior, com a probabilidade persistente de um regresso progressivo ao crescimento em 2014. O Eurogrupo congratulou-se igualmente com o facto de o desempenho orçamental em 2012 ter respeitado os objetivos do programa, prevendo-se que tal continue a verificar-se em 2013 e 2014. O Eurogrupo registou que a Grécia estava rapidamente a voltar a ganhar competitividade com base nos custos, mas que a reforma do mercado de produtos e serviços precisava de ser acelerada a fim de permitir que esse ganho baseado nos custos se repercutisse mais rapidamente nos preços.

O Eurogrupo congratulou-se igualmente com o facto de que as etapas do Memorando de Entendimento para o mês de março, que incluíam medidas importantes no que diz respeito à reforma e racionalização da administração pública, tenham sido concluídas e que, assim sendo, o Fundo Europeu de Estabilidade Financeira (FEEF) tinha desembolsado 2,8 mil milhões de euros em 3 de maio.

O Eurogrupo congratulou-se ainda com os notáveis progressos realizados pela Grécia em matéria de execução das ações prévias exigidas para o próximo pagamento da ajuda financeira.

Congratulou-se em particular com as importantes medidas tomadas na perspetiva do reforço da organização e da eficácia da administração fiscal que, juntamente com a reforma do sistema fiscal adotada no passado mês de janeiro, assim como com outras medidas em curso no sentido de reforçar os procedimentos fiscais, deverá melhorar a cobrança de receitas fiscais. O Eurogrupo afirmou a necessidade de uma forte determinação no que respeita à criação de uma nova estrutura organizativa e à luta contra a evasão fiscal, assim como o facto de que é essencial assegurar uma distribuição mais equilibrada e equitativa do ajustamento e apoiar a consecução dos objetivos orçamentais.

O Eurogrupo congratulou-se ainda com as medidas tomadas para recapitalizar plenamente os principais bancos gregos e consolidar o sistema bancário, mas afirmou que será necessário trabalhar mais no sentido de implementar plenamente a totalidade da lista de ações prioritárias.

Realçou ainda que será doravante importante assegurar a execução rápida e total de todas as medidas de reforma restantes, incluindo as ações prioritárias, essenciais para o funcionamento harmonioso da economia e para a criação de condições para mais inovação e para um crescimento da produtividade mais sólido, assim como as novas oportunidades para as empresas e a criação de emprego, o que contribuirá para conseguir a realização de um crescimento e emprego sustentados e assegurar a sustentabilidade das finanças públicas, concretizando assim plenamente os objetivos do programa.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005816/13
to the Council
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Progress made by Greece and the challenges it faces according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

According to a recent report by the IMF, Greece has made progress and come a long way in sorting out its public finances, but the greatest challenge facing the country remains restoring growth and the country needs to continue with its structural reforms.

— What is the Council's assessment of the IMF's public position regarding the progress made by Greece and the challenges it faces?

— Does it think that growth is still the greatest challenge facing Greece?

— Has the Council taken steps to help encourage growth in the country?

— Can it say what steps it has taken and what results they have had, if any?

Reply
(11 September 2013)

The Council is not in a position to comment on the assessment by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) of progress made by Greece and the challenges it faces as detailed in the IMF's 'staff report'.

Acting on behalf of the euro area Member States, the Commission is part of the Troika, together with the IMF and the European Central Bank (ECB), engaged in managing financial assistance and the adjustment programme for Greece. The Commission publishes its own technical reports on the implementation of the programmes, the latest one was published in May 2013.

The Council draws the attention of the Honourable Member to the Eurogroup statement of 13 May 2013 in which the Eurogroup noted with satisfaction that Greece had made further substantial progress in implementing the fiscal and structural reforms provided for in the agreed policy conditionality.

It commended the authorities for their continued strong commitment to the adjustment programme and reiterated its appreciation for the efforts made by Greek citizens. Moreover, it took note that the economic outlook remained largely unchanged from the previous review, with continued prospects for a gradual return to growth in 2014. The Eurogroup also welcomed the fact that the fiscal performance in 2012 had complied with the programme targets and that it was expected to continue in 2013 and 2014. It noted that Greece was quickly regaining cost competitiveness, but that product and services market reforms would need to be accelerated to allow gains in cost competitiveness to translate more rapidly into prices.

The Eurogroup also welcomed the fact that the memorandum of understanding (MoU) milestones for March, including important steps with regard to the reform and streamlining of the public administration, had been achieved and that the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) on that basis disbursed EUR 2.8 billion on 3 May.

The Eurogroup also welcomed the good progress made by Greece in implementing the required prior actions for the next disbursement.

In particular it welcomed the important measures taken with a view to strengthening the organisation and effectiveness of the revenue administration which, coupled with the reform of the tax system adopted last January and other on-going steps to enhance tax procedures, should improve revenue collection. It stated that strong resolve would be needed in the establishment of the new organisational structure and the fight against tax evasion, and that it was essential to ensure a more balanced and fair distribution of the adjustment and to support the achievement of fiscal targets.

The Eurogroup also welcomed the steps taken to fully recapitalise Greek core banks and to consolidate the banking system, but said that further work was needed to fully implement the entire list of prior actions.

It also stressed that it would now be important to ensure a rapid and full implementation of all the remaining reform measures, including the prior actions, which are key to the smooth functioning of the economy and to create the conditions for more innovation and stronger productivity growth, and new opportunities for business and job creation. This will contribute to bringing about sustained growth and employment and to securing the sustainability of public finances, thereby fully delivering the programme objectives.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005817/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Timor-Leste — Aumento do fundo petrolífero

Segundo o banco central de Timor-Leste, o Fundo Petrolífero do país aumentou de 728,4 milhões de euros para 9,9 mil milhões de euros. Segundo o documento, a entrada bruta de capital proveniente de impostos, royalties e outras receitas foi de 728,4 milhões de euros e as saídas de dinheiro foram de dois milhões de euros para «pagar a gestão externa e interna».

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Que apreciação faz deste reforço do Fundo?

— Considera que a sua instituição e gestão poderia ser um exemplo para outros países em desenvolvimento que possuam recursos energéticos desta natureza?

— Tem recomendações a fazer a Timor-Leste quanto ao mesmo?

Resposta dada por Andris Piebalgs em nome da Comissão
(25 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão gostaria de sublinhar que o Governo de Timor-Leste, representado pelo Ministro das Finanças, é responsável pela globalidade da gestão e estratégia de investimento do Fundo Petrolífero. A Comissão não está envolvida na gestão do Fundo, pelo que apenas pode exprimir a sua opinião com base em informações disponíveis publicamente.

Tendo em conta a relativa estabilidade dos preços do petróleo, o contínuo nível de produção e os custos de exploração inalterados, o aumento das receitas do Fundo no último trimestre era esperado.

As retiradas de verbas do Fundo Petrolífero para financiar o orçamento de Estado estão teoricamente sujeitas a um limite calculado como uma Estimativa de Rendimento Sustentável (ERS) que garante que a utilização do Fundo se mantenha sustentável. A política de investimento do Fundo baseia-se numa clara afetação de ativos e em limites de risco. Timor-Leste é um país que tem respeitado os requisitos da Iniciativa para a Transparência das Indústrias Extrativas desde 2010.

No entanto, o Governo tem de ser prudente e manter a sustentabilidade orçamental. Até à data, tem antecipado a realização de despesas públicas (investimentos em infraestruturas básicas), mas esta situação levou a retiradas excessivas do Fundo e a uma inflação de dois dígitos. Se esta tendência se mantiver, poderá ter um efeito permanente nos balanços do Fundo e esgotá-los se o crescimento das despesas públicas não abrandar e a qualidade das despesas se mantiver baixa e a inflação elevada.

Neste contexto, a Comissão apoia a decisão do Governo de reduzir o crescimento no orçamento do Estado em 2013 com vista a reduzir a inflação. A Comissão apoia também plenamente o compromisso do Governo de desenvolver e expandir o setor não petrolífero, a fim de aumentar as fontes de receita nacionais.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005817/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Increase of the Timor-Leste petroleum fund

According to the central bank of Timor-Leste, the country's petroleum fund has increased by EUR 728.4 million to EUR 9.9 billion. According to the document, gross income from taxes, royalties and other income was EUR 728.4 million, and expenditure to pay for internal and external management was EUR 2 million.

— What does the Commission think of the fund's increase?

— Does it think that the way the fund was set up and is managed could serve as an example to other developing countries that have energy resources of this kind?

— Does it have any recommendations for Timor-Leste regarding the fund?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(25 July 2013)

The Commission would like to stress that the Government of Timor-Leste, represented by the Minister of Finance, is responsible for the overall management and investment strategy of the Petroleum Fund (PF). The Commission is not involved in the management of the Fund and can therefore only express its opinion on the basis of publicly available information.

In view of the relative stability of oil prices, the continuing level of production and unchanged operational costs, the increase in the Fund's revenues in the last quarter was expected.

The withdrawals from the PF to finance the State Budget are theoretically subject to a limit calculated as an Estimated Sustainable Income (ESI), which ensures that the use of the Fund remains sustainable. The PF's investment policy is based on clear asset allocation and risk limits. Timor Leste has been an Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative compliant country since 2010.

The Government however needs to be prudent and maintain fiscal sustainability. Until now, it has been frontloading public expenditure (basic infrastructure investments) but this has led to excessive withdrawals from the PF and to double digit inflation. If this trend continues, it could have a permanent effect on the PF's balances and exhaust them, if public spending growth does not slow down, spending quality remains weak and inflation high.

In this context, the Commission supports the decision by the Government to reduce the growth in the State Budget in 2013 in order to mitigate inflation. The Commission also fully supports the Governement's commitment to develop and expand the non-oil sector in order to increase domestic revenue sources.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005818/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Associação Internacional de Reguladores Nucleares — Fukushima

A Associação Internacional de Reguladores Nucleares realizou recentemente uma reunião em Tóquio destinada a analisar o grave acidente nuclear de Fukushima em 2011. A França, a Alemanha, a Espanha, a Suécia e o Reino Unido são os membros europeus da referida associação.

1. Dispõe a Comissão de informações acerca do conteúdo e resultados da referida reunião?

2. Foi a Comissão informada acerca da mesma pelos Estados-Membros participantes?

3. Pode a Comissão destacar alguns pontos, conclusões ou matérias em estudo que considere deverem ser objeto de reflexão e decisão ao nível da União Europeia?

Resposta dada por Günther Oettinger em nome da Comissão
(10 de julho de 2013)

1-2. O objetivo principal da Associação Internacional de Reguladores Nucleares (INRA — *International Nuclear Regulators' Association*) é influenciar e reforçar a regulamentação da segurança nuclear entre os seus membros e a nível mundial. A Comissão não foi informada da reunião a que o Senhor Deputado se refere e não tem conhecimento da sua agenda e dos resultados.

3. Em resposta ao acidente nuclear de Fukushima, em estreita cooperação com o Grupo de Reguladores Europeus em matéria de Segurança Nuclear (Ensreg), a Comissão lançou uma avaliação exaustiva da arquitetura de segurança nuclear da UE, que começou com a realização de testes de resistência ([1]) aos reatores nucleares europeus e conduziu à recente adoção de uma proposta de alteração da atual Diretiva «Segurança Nuclear» ([2]), com vista a reforçar as respetivas disposições ([3]).

([1]) Os resultados destes testes de resistência constam da Comunicação da Comissão sobre as avaliações exaustivas de risco e segurança («testes de resistência») das centrais nucleares na União Europeia e atividades correlatas (COM(2012) 571).

([2]) Diretiva 2009/71/Euratom do Conselho, de 25 de junho de 2009, que estabelece um quadro comunitário para a segurança nuclear das instalações nucleares.

([3]) Proposta de Diretiva do Conselho que altera a Diretiva 2009/71/Euratom do Conselho, de 25 de junho de 2009, que estabelece um quadro comunitário para a segurança nuclear das instalações nucleares (COM(2013) 343).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005818/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: International Nuclear Regulators' Association — Fukushima

The International Nuclear Regulators' Association recently held a meeting in Tokyo to discuss the serious accident that took place in Fukushima in 2011. France, Germany, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom are the European members of the association.

1. Does the Commission have any information about the agenda and outcome of this meeting?

2. Was the Commission informed of the meeting by the participating Member States?

3. Can the Commission highlight some issues, conclusions or discussion points that it thinks should be considered and upon which decisions should be taken in the EU?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(10 July 2013)

1-2. The main purpose of the International Nuclear Regulators' Association (INRA) is to influence and enhance nuclear safety regulation among its members and worldwide. The Commission was not informed of the meeting referred to by the Honourable Member and has no knowledge of its agenda and outcome.

3. As a response to the Fukushima nuclear accident, the Commission, in close cooperation with the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG), embarked on a comprehensive review of the nuclear safety architecture in the EU, starting with stress tests ([1]) conducted at European nuclear reactors and leading to the recent adoption of a proposal to amend the existing nuclear safety directive ([2]) with a view to strengthening its provisions ([3]).

([1]) The results of these stress tests were set out in the Commission's Communication on the comprehensive risk and safety assessments ('stress tests') of nuclear power plants in the European Union and related activities (COM(2012) 571).
([2]) Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom of 25 June 2009 establishing a Community framework for the nuclear safety of nuclear installations.
([3]) Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2009/71/Euratom establishing a Community framework for the nuclear safety of nuclear installations (COM(2013) 343).

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005819/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: FMI — progressos e desafios da Grécia

Num recente relatório, o FMI considerou que a Grécia fez progressos e percorreu um longo caminho para endireitar as suas contas públicas e que o maior desafio para o país continua a ser a reativação do crescimento, havendo a necessidade de continuar com as reformas estruturais.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Que apreciação faz da posição pública do FMI quanto aos progressos e desafios da Grécia?

— Considera que o maior desafio para o país continua a ser o crescimento?

— Tomou medidas visando contribuir para a promoção do crescimento naquele país?

— Pode indicar quais e, se aplicável, quais os resultados já verificados?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(21 de junho de 2013)

A Comissão publicou, em 17 de maio, a sua avaliação dos progressos realizados pela Grécia no contexto do segundo programa de ajustamento económico. A Comissão considera, com efeito, que a Grécia continua a fazer progressos no âmbito do programa. As finanças públicas estão a melhorar de forma contínua, a recapitalização do setor bancário atingiu uma fase avançada e estão a ser implementadas reformas estruturais importantes, embora sejam necessários novos esforços significativos para cumprir os compromissos assumidos em muitos domínios.

O programa caracteriza-se por uma forte tónica nas reformas estruturais, determinantes para melhorar a posição concorrencial da Grécia e criar a base para o regresso ao crescimento sustentável e à criação de emprego no país. A Grécia já realizou enormes progressos a nível do reforço da competitividade dos seus custos e a balança de transações correntes está claramente a melhorar, embora subsistam desafios importantes e a plena execução do programa continue a ser essencial.

Para informações complementares, a Comissão remete o Senhor Deputado para o relatório: *The Second Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece — Second Review May 2013*
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/op148_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005819/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Progress made by Greece and the challenges it faces according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

According to a recent report by the IMF, Greece has made progress and come a long way in sorting out its public finances, but the greatest challenge facing the country remains restoring growth and the country needs to continue with its structural reforms.

— What is the Commission's assessment of the IMF's public position regarding the progress made by Greece and the challenges it faces?

— Does it think that growth is still the greatest challenge facing Greece?

— Has the Commission taken steps to help encourage growth in the country?

— Can it say what steps it has taken and what results they have had, if any?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(21 June 2013)

On 17 May, the Commission published its assessment of progress made by Greece in the context of the 2nd economic adjustment programme. The Commission is indeed of the opinion that Greece continues to make progress under the Programme. Public finances are steadily improving, the banking sector recapitalisation has reached an advanced stage and important structural reforms are being implemented, although further major efforts are needed to fully deliver in many fronts.

The programme has a strong focus on structural reforms which are key to improve Greece's competitiveness position and create the basis for the return of sustainable growth and employment creation to the country. Greece has already made huge progress in improving its cost competitiveness and the current account balance is clearly improving, although important challenges remain and full implementation of the programme remains essential.

For further information, The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the report: The Second Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece — Second Review May 2013 (http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/op148_en.htm).

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005820/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: China — fraudes alimentares

Segundo a comunicação social, as autoridades chinesas anunciaram a detenção de mais de novecentas pessoas por fraudes com alimentos, entre elas a venda de ratos e raposas apresentados como carne bovina ou de carneiro. Alegadamente terão sido descobertos 382 casos de carne injetada com água, falsa carne de carneiro ou bovina, carne estragada e produtos que continham carne tóxica e perigosa. Esta descoberta motivou a apreensão de vinte mil toneladas de carne.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Tem conhecimento destas detenções?

— Que apreciação faz das mesmas?

— Contactou as autoridades chinesas a este respeito?

— Dispõe de informações sobre se os alimentos em questão se destinavam ao mercado interno chinês ou se terão sido exportados, nomeadamente para a União Europeia?

— Considera haver riscos para a saúde pública dos consumidores europeus?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(11 de julho de 2013)

— Sim, a Comissão está ciente das detenções em questão.

— Não são permitidas na UE quaisquer importações de carne de bovino ou de carne de carneiro provenientes da China e não foram comunicadas à Comissão quaisquer suspeitas de importação ilegal dessas carnes provenientes desse país.

— Tendo em conta o exposto, não surgiu a necessidade de contactar as autoridades chinesas.

— No que se refere à quarta e quinta perguntas, a Comissão remete o Senhor Deputado para a resposta à pergunta escrita E-005630/2013 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005820/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Food fraud in China

According to media reports, the Chinese authorities have announced that they have arrested over 900 people for food fraud, including passing off rat and fox meat as beef or mutton. Three hundred and eighty-two cases have allegedly been discovered, involving meat being injected with water, fake mutton or beef, rotten meat and products containing toxic and dangerous meat. This discovery has led to 20 000 tonnes of meat being seized.

— Is the Commission aware of these arrests?

— What is its assessment of them?

— Has it contacted the Chinese authorities about this matter?

— Does it have any information on whether the foodstuffs in question were intended for the domestic market in China or were exported, specifically to the European Union?

— Does it think there are any risks to EU public health?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(11 July 2013)

— Yes, the Commission is aware of the arrests in question.

— No imports of beef or mutton meat from China are allowed into the EU and no suspicion of illegal import of this meat from China has been reported to the Commission.

— In view of the above, the need to contact the Chinese authorities did not arise.

— As regards the fourth and fifth question, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-005630/2013 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005821/13
ao Conselho
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Apelo de Itália — Prioridade ao combate ao desemprego jovem

O novo primeiro-ministro de Itália, Enrico Letta, pediu à União Europeia que intervenha rapidamente para combater o problema do elevado desemprego entre os jovens, solicitando que o assunto esteja no topo da agenda do Conselho Europeu de junho de 2013.

1. Que apreciação faz o Conselho do pedido do novo primeiro-ministro de Itália?

2. Considera o Conselho que o mesmo deve merecer a prioridade recomendada?

3. Apoia o Conselho esta recomendação?

4. Tomou o Conselho medidas nesse sentido?

Resposta
(11 de setembro de 2013)

A importância crítica de combater a situação de desemprego juvenil na Europa foi reconhecido pelo Conselho em várias ocasiões ([1]) e, muito recentemente, pelo rápido acordo que levou à adoção da recomendação do Conselho de 22 de abril de 2013 sobre a criação de uma Garantia para a Juventude. ([2])

Além disso, o Conselho está envolvido em negociações com o Parlamento Europeu, no âmbito do processo legislativo ordinário, tendo em vista a aprovação do pacote legislativo da política de coesão para 2014-2020, no âmbito do qual estão a ser debatidas as modalidades concretas da Iniciativa para o Emprego dos Jovens (IEJ), conforme acordado pelo Conselho Europeu de 7-8 de fevereiro de 2013.

Chama-se também a atenção do Senhor Deputado para o facto de que, no contexto do processo do Semestre Europeu de 2013, em 29 de maio de 2013 a Comissão apresentou propostas de recomendações ([3]) específicas por país que incluem recomendações relacionadas com a juventude. O Conselho Europeu subscreveu, na generalidade, as recomendações específicas por país em 27-28 de junho de 2013

O desemprego juvenil também foi o tema de um debate no Conselho na sessão de 20 de junho de 2013 ([4]), e a questão também foi discutida na reunião do Conselho Europeu de 27-28 de junho de 2013 ([5]). O Conselho Europeu chegou a acordo sobre uma abordagem abrangente para combater o desemprego dos jovens com base nas seguintes medidas concretas: acelerar e antecipar a Iniciativa para o Emprego dos Jovens, acelerar a implementação da Garantia para a Juventude, aumento da mobilidade dos jovens e envolvimento dos parceiros sociais. ([6])

([1]) 11838/11 e 17590/11, entre outros.
([2]) JO C 120 de 26.4.2013, p. 1.
([3]) 10345/13.
([4]) 10375/13.
([5]) EUCO 104/2/13.
([6]) Ibid.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005821/13
to the Council
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Italy urges the EU to prioritise the fight against youth unemployment

The new Italian Prime Minister, Enrico Letta, has urged the EU to act swiftly to tackle high youth unemployment and has requested that the issue be placed at the top of the European Council's agenda in June 2013.

1. What is the Council's assessment of the new Italian Prime Minister's request?

2. Does it believe that this issue should take precedence, as he recommends?

3. Does the Council support this recommendation?

4. Has it taken action in this regard?

Reply
(11 September 2013)

The critical importance of tackling the youth unemployment situation in Europe has been recognised by the Council on numerous occasions ([1]), most recently by the rapid agreement leading to the adoption of the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee ([2]).

Furthermore, the Council is engaged in negotiations with the European Parliament in the context of the ordinary legislative procedure with a view to the adoption of the Cohesion Policy legislative package for 2014-2020, where the concrete modalities of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), as agreed upon by the European Council on 7-8 February 2013, are being discussed.

The Honourable Member's attention is also drawn to the fact that, in the context of the 2013 European Semester process, on 29 May 2013 the Commission submitted proposals for country-specific recommendations ([3]) which include youth-related recommendations. The European Council generally endorsed the country-specific recommendations on 27-28 June 2013.

Youth unemployment was also the subject of a policy debate at the Council at its session on 20 June 2013 ([4]), and the issue was also discussed at the European Council meeting of 27-28 June 2013 ([5]). The European Council agreed on a comprehensive approach to combat youth unemployment, building on the following concrete measures: speeding up and frontloading the Youth Employment Initiative, speeding up implementation of the Youth Guarantee, increased youth mobility and involvement of the social partners ([6]).

([1]) 11838/11, 17590/11, 14426/12, *inter alia*.
([2]) OJ C 120, 26.4.2013, p. 1.
([3]) 10345/13.
([4]) 10375/13.
([5]) EUCO 104/2/13.
([6]) Ibid.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005822/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Apelo de Itália — Prioridade ao combate ao desemprego jovem

O novo primeiro-ministro de Itália, Enrico Letta, pediu à União Europeia que intervenha rapidamente para combater o problema do elevado desemprego entre os jovens, solicitando que o assunto esteja no topo da agenda do Conselho Europeu de junho de 2013.

1. Que apreciação faz a Comissão do pedido do novo primeiro-ministro de Itália?

2. Considera a Comissão que o mesmo deve merecer a prioridade recomendada?

3. Apoia a Comissão esta recomendação?

4. Tomou a Comissão medidas nesse sentido?

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(9 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão está consciente da situação alarmante dos jovens e do desemprego galopante que os assola, nomeadamente em Itália, onde aumentou drasticamente nos últimos dois anos.

Já em dezembro de 2011, a Comissão lançou a Iniciativa Oportunidades para a Juventude, que incluía a criação de «equipas de ação» nos Estados-Membros com elevados níveis de desemprego da juventude, nomeadamente a Itália. Em conjunto com a Comissão, a Itália identificou uma série de medidas que visam promover o emprego e o empreendedorismo dos jovens em Itália. A Comissão está a acompanhar de perto a execução destas medidas ([1]).

A Comissão adotou ainda novas ações a fim de fazer face a este desafio, incluindo o Pacote de Emprego dos Jovens ([2]), adotado em dezembro de 2012. Este pacote visa i) facilitar a transição do sistema de ensino para o mundo do trabalho, nomeadamente através de regimes de aprendizagem e estágio de qualidade; ii) promover a mobilidade no interior da UE e iii) estabelecer uma Garantia para a Juventude destinada aos jovens até 25 anos. A Comissão irá controlar a execução destas ações e garantir a utilização do financiamento da UE para a criação dos mecanismos dessa garantia nos Estados-Membros, nomeadamente em Itália.

Em fevereiro de 2013, o Conselho Europeu decidiu afetar um montante de 6 mil milhões de euros a uma Iniciativa para o Emprego dos Jovens ([3]), que visa ajudar as regiões da UE com taxas de desemprego juvenil superiores a 25 % a implementar o Pacote de Emprego dos Jovens e, em particular, a Garantia para a Juventude. Em resposta, a Comissão adotou uma comunicação e uma proposta legislativa com vista à implementação da Iniciativa para o Emprego dos Jovens.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/barroso/report_en.pdf
([2]) COM(2012) 727-728-729 de 5.12.2012.
([3]) COM(2013) 145 final de 12.3.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005822/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Italy urges the EU to prioritise the fight against youth unemployment

The new Italian Prime Minister, Enrico Letta, has urged the EU to act swiftly to tackle high youth unemployment and has requested that the issue be placed at the top of the European Council's agenda in June 2013.

1. What is the Commission's assessment of the new Italian Prime Minister's request?

2. Does it believe that this issue should take precedence, as he recommends?

3. Does the Commission support this recommendation?

4. Has it taken action in this regard?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

The Commission is aware of the alarming situation of young people and of growing unemployment within their ranks, particularly in Italy where it has dramatically increased over the last two years.

The Commission launched the Youth Opportunity Initiative as early as December 2011 which included the establishment of 'action teams' in Member States with high levels of youth unemployment, including Italy. Together with the Commission, Italy has identified a series of measures aimed at promoting youth employment and youth entrepreneurship in Italy. The Commission is closely monitoring the implementation of those measures ([1]).

It has taken further measures in order to tackle this challenge, including the Youth Employment Package ([2]) (YEP) adopted in December 2012. The YEP focuses on i) facilitating transition from education to work, including through high quality apprenticeships and traineeships; ii) promoting intra-EU mobility and iii) establishing a Youth Guarantee for young people up to 25. The Commission will monitor its implementation and ensure that EU funding will be used for setting up Youth Guarantee schemes in the Member States, including in Italy.

In February 2013, the European Council decided to earmark EUR 6 billion to a Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) ([3]) which aims to help EU regions with a youth unemployment rate above 25% to implement the YEP, and in particular the Youth Guarantee. In response to this, the Commission adopted a communication and a legislative proposal to implement the YEI.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/barroso/report_en.pdf
([2]) COM(2012) 727-728-729 of 5.12.2012.
([3]) COM(2013) 145 of 12.3.2013.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005823/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: França — Necessidade de reformas estruturais

A Comissão Europeia pediu recentemente à França que desenvolva «reformas estruturais corajosas» em troca de uma prorrogação de dois anos para reduzir o défice abaixo dos 3 % do PIB.

O senhor Comissário Rehn declarou esperar «que o governo francês execute reformas estruturais de vasto alcance. É importante para os franceses, para que a França possa reativar o crescimento e gerar empregos».

1. Pode a Comissão indicar que receção teve o seu pedido?

2. Considera a Comissão que a França se comprometeu efetivamente com a adoção de reformas estruturais de alcance tal que provoquem os efeitos pretendidos? Quais destaca a Comissão?

3. Quais são, no entender da Comissão, os principais problemas que obstam à reativação do crescimento e do emprego naquele país?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(9 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão propôs uma prorrogação de dois anos para corrigir a situação de défice excessivo em França, a fim de limitar os efeitos negativos da consolidação orçamental para o crescimento, em conformidade com o disposto no PEC. O Ministro das Finanças francês congratulou-se com esta proposta. No entanto, a Comissão deixou claro que a prorrogação não constitui uma medida de clemência. A França deverá tirar partido da prorrogação do prazo para acelerar as reformas estruturais.

A Comissão congratula-se com os esforços de reforma recentemente realizados em França, especificamente com o pacto de competitividade e a lei sobre a criação de emprego.

No entanto, é necessário fazer mais. Tal como foi evidenciado na análise aprofundada de 2013 dos serviços da Comissão, a França tem atualmente desequilíbrios macroeconómicos que exigem uma ação política decidida. Por conseguinte, a necessidade de aumentar a competitividade foi colocada no cerne da proposta da Comissão de recomendações específicas por país.

A Comissão considera, mais especificamente, que o custo da mão de obra deve ser ainda mais reduzido. O sistema de pensões tem de ser sustentável, sem comprometer os esforços para reduzir o custo do trabalho. O sistema fiscal francês deverá ser racionalizado e tornar-se mais eficiente. O enquadramento empresarial, assim como a inovação e a capacidade de exportação das empresas, precisam de ser melhorados. Além disso, há ainda margem para aumentar a concorrência nas profissões regulamentadas, no setor retalhista e nas indústrias de rede. O funcionamento do mercado de trabalho pode também ser mais orientado para o crescimento e a criação de emprego.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005823/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Need for structural reforms in France

The Commission recently called on France to undertake 'bold structural reforms' in exchange for two more years to bring the deficit below 3% of GDP.

Commissioner Rehn said he hoped that the French Government would implement comprehensive structural reforms, which were important for its citizens, so that France could return to growth and create jobs.

1. Can the Commission say how its request was received?

2. Does it believe that France has actually undertaken to adopt structural reforms which are comprehensive enough to achieve the desired effects? Which of these reforms would the Commission highlight?

3. In the Commission's view, what are the main obstacles to France returning to growth and creating jobs?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

The Commission has proposed a two-year extension to correct the excessive deficit in France in order to limit the negative impact of fiscal consolidation on growth and in line with the provisions of the SEP. The French Finance Minister welcomed this proposal. However, the Commission made it clear that the extension is no leniency. France should take advantage of this deadline extension to speed up structural reforms.

The Commission welcomes the reform efforts recently undertaken in France, specifically, the competitiveness pact and the law on securing jobs.

However, further action is needed. As highlighted in the 2013 Commission services' in-depth review, France is experiencing macroeconomic imbalances that require decisive policy action. Therefore, the need to improve competitiveness was put at the core of the Commission proposal for Country-Specific Recommendations.

Specifically, the Commission considers that the cost of labour should be further reduced. The pension system needs to be made sustainable without undermining efforts to reduce the cost of labour. The French tax system should be streamlined and made more efficient. The business environment as well as the innovation and export capacity of firms need to be improved. Furthermore, there is room to increase competition in the regulated professions, the retail sector and network industries. The functioning of the labour market can also be made more conducive to growth and job creation.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005824/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Roberto Azevêdo — director-geral da OMC

Na primeira conferência de imprensa após ter sido designado para assumir a direção da OMC, o futuro diretor-geral da organização, Roberto Azevêdo, declarou que as grandes nações comerciais devem combater o protecionismo e agir para salvar e relançar as negociações sobre a liberalização do comércio.

Para Azevêdo, «O protecionismo é generalizado, não se trata de dois ou três membros da OMC. Temos de estar vigilantes» e «Com a crise de 2008, as tendências protecionistas surgiram, elas ainda estão em vigor. Temos de lutar».

No entender do diplomata brasileiro, a Conferência Ministerial dos 159 Estados-membros que terá lugar em dezembro próximo, na Indonésia, «oferece uma oportunidade para dar os primeiros passos para salvar o sistema».

Esperando que «o paciente ainda tenha o seu coração a bater» quando assumir o seu mandato em setembro, Azevêdo concluiu dizendo que «Hoje não se trata de ter o que queremos, e sim salvar o que temos».

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Que apreciação faz da eleição de Roberto Azevêdo?

— Como avalia as suas declarações?

— Que esforços concretos desenvolve ou pode a União Europeia desenvolver de modo a contribuir para «salvar o sistema», tal como desejado pelo futuro diretor-geral da OMC?

Resposta dada por Karel De Gucht em nome da Comissão
(3 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão congratula-se com a nomeação de Roberto Carvalho de Azevêdo como Diretor-Geral da Organização Mundial do Comércio (OMC) e está convicta de que assumirá a liderança necessária para reforçar a OMC.

A Comissão partilha o parecer de Roberto de Azevêdo sobre os desafios que se colocam à OMC e a dificuldade de resolver o impasse em que se encontram as negociações multilaterais da Agenda de Desenvolvimento de Doha (ADD). A OMC encontra-se numa encruzilhada e, se bem que incumba a todos os membros da OMC traçar o rumo, a Comissão considera que Roberto de Azevêdo irá ajudar todos os membros da OMC a retomarem a agenda multilateral com a meta final de se alcançar a conclusão bem-sucedida da ADD.

Neste contexto, a Comissão considera igualmente que o primeiro passo crucial será a 9.ª Conferência Ministerial da OMC, que se realizará em dezembro de 2013, com o objetivo de obter resultados em matéria de facilitação do comércio, bem como de questões relacionadas com a agricultura e o desenvolvimento. Se se obtivessem resultados concludentes em Bali, um tal êxito enviaria ao mundo um sinal significativo do papel crucial da OMC e da importância do sistema de comércio multilateral que esta organização representa.

Nos dois últimos anos, a UE tem dinamizado os esforços no sentido de preparar o êxito da 9.ª Conferência Ministerial da OMC, ao lançar negociações ativas, ao preparar textos de compromisso sobre determinados elementos do projeto de acordo em matéria de facilitação do comércio, ao tentar conciliar as principais diferenças entre os membros da OMC e ao propiciar discussões sobre questões essenciais a nível de embaixadores e de altos funcionários.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005824/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Roberto Azevêdo — Director-General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO)

In his first press conference since being appointed head of the WTO, the organisation's incoming Director-General, Roberto Azevêdo, said that the major trading nations must combat protectionism and act to save and resume negotiations on trade liberalisation.

Azevêdo said that 'Protectionism is widespread, I wouldn't concentrate it in any one, two or three members of the WTO. I think we have to be watchful.' He added that 'Since the crisis emerged in 2008, protectionist trends emerged … and those trends are still there and still with us. We need to fight them.'

According to the Brazilian diplomat, the Ministerial Conference of the 159 Member States to be held in December in Indonesia offers 'a chance to take a first step towards rescuing the system.'

Hoping that he will 'still find a patient with a heartbeat' when he takes the helm in September, Azevêdo concluded by saying that 'At this point in time, it should not be about getting what we want. It should be about saving what we have.'

— What is the Commission's assessment of Roberto Azevêdo's election?

— How does it view his remarks?

— What tangible efforts is the EU making, or might it make, to help 'rescue the system', in line with the future Director-General of the WTO's wishes?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(3 July 2013)

The Commission welcomes the appointment of Mr Roberto Carvalho de Azevêdo as the next Director General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and is confident that he will provide the necessary leadership to strengthen the WTO.

The Commission shares Mr Azevedo's assessment of the challenges facing the WTO and the difficulty of reinvigorating the stalled multilateral negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda (DDA). The WTO is at crossroads and, while it is for all WTO Members to set the course, the Commission is convinced that Mr Azevêdo will help all WTO members put the multilateral agenda back on track with the ultimate aim of a successful conclusion of the DDA.

In this respect, the Commission agrees that a critical first step will be the 9th WTO Ministerial Conference that will be held in December 2013, which aims to get results on trade facilitation, as well as some agriculture and development related issues. A successful outcome in Bali would send an important signal to the world of the WTO's crucial role as well as the importance of the multilateral trading system it represents.

For the last two years, the EU has strongly been pushing to prepare for a successful outcome of the 9th WTO Ministerial Conference, by actively engaging in negotiations, preparing compromise texts with regard to certain elements of the draft Trade Facilitation agreement, helping bridge the main differences among WTO Members and orchestrating Ambassador level and Senior Official discussions on key issues.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005825/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Hezbollah: fornecimento de armas pela Síria

O secretário-geral do Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, anunciou que a Síria tenciona fornecer novos tipos de armas a este movimento xiita libanês. Nasrallah acrescentou que apoiará a Síria nas tentativas de recuperar os montes Golan, ocupados por Israel.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

— Tem conhecimento destas afirmações de Nasrallah?

— Dispõe de dados acerca das mesmas?

— Não crê que a distribuição de armas por parte da Síria ao Hezbollah se arrisca a agravar a situação já tensa e precária no Médio Oriente?

— Contactou as autoridades sírias e israelitas a este propósito?

— A União Europeia tomou posição pública a este respeito?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(17 de setembro de 2013)

A AR/VP tem acompanhado atentamente todos os desenvolvimentos relacionados com o conflito na Síria, incluindo no que diz respeito aos países vizinhos e a intervenientes como o Hezbollah. A AR/VP está perfeitamente consciente do envolvimento do Hezbollah no conflito sírio e da relação estreita entre o Hezbollah e o regime sírio.

A UE tem sistematicamente defendido que todos os intervenientes libaneses devem respeitar na prática a política de dissociação do conflito sírio, tal como acordado pelos dirigentes políticos libaneses. Qualquer envolvimento de forças de países vizinhos comporta sérios riscos para a estabilidade da região e, em especial, desses países. A distribuição de armas mencionada na pergunta deve ser vista nesta perspetiva mais ampla.

A UE tem mantido intensos contactos com as autoridades dos países da região sobre diferentes aspetos da crise.

A AR/VP tem repetidamente afirmado, publicamente, que o conflito na Síria e as suas implicações para o Médio Oriente só poderão ser resolvidos através de um processo político e de negociações.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005825/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Syria supplying weapons to Hezbollah

The Secretary-General of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, has announced that Syria intends to supply new types of weapons to the Lebanese Shiite movement. Nasrallah added that Hezbollah would support Syria's attempts to recover the Golan Heights, occupied by Israel.

— Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of Nasrallah's claims?

— Does she have any information about them?

— Does she not believe that Syria's decision to supply weapons to Hezbollah risks worsening the already tense and precarious situation in the Middle East?

— Has she contacted the Syrian and Israeli authorities in this regard?

— Has the EU taken a public stance on this matter?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(17 September 2013)

The HR/VP has been following closely all developments related to the Syrian conflict, including in relation to the neighbouring countries and actors such as Hizbullah. The HR/VP is well aware of the involvement of Hizbullah in the Syrian conflict, and of the close relation between Hizbullah and the Syrian regime.

The EU has consistently maintained that all Lebanese actors must observe in practice the policy of dissociation from the Syrian conflict, which was agreed by Lebanon's political leaders. Any involvement of forces from neighbouring countries bears serious risks for stability of the region, and particularly the countries concerned. Transfers of weapons, as referred to in the question, are to be seen in this broader perspective.

The EU has been in intensive contact with the authorities of the regional countries on various aspects of the Syrian crisis.

The HR/VP has repeatedly stated, publicly, that the Syrian conflict and its implications in the Middle East can only be solved through a political process and negotiations.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005826/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: França: novos casos de Coronavírus

As autoridades sanitárias francesas anunciaram que foram identificados três novos casos de potenciais contaminações com o coronavírus, um vírus que se assemelha à Síndrome Respiratória Aguda Severa. De acordo com a imprensa internacional, três pessoas que estiveram em contacto com um paciente contaminado apresentam sintomas do coronavírus, encontrando-se em observação.

Atualmente já foram identificados em todo o mundo 31 casos de coronavírus, que vitimaram 18 pessoas, sobretudo na Arábia Saudita.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Tem conhecimento destas situações?

— Dispõe de dados acerca de mais casos na União Europeia?

— As autoridades sanitárias devem tomar medidas cautelares adicionais?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(1 de julho de 2013)

1. A Comissão tem conhecimento do surto causado pelo vírus recentemente descoberto designado por «Coronavírus da Síndroma Respiratória do Médio Oriente» (MERS-CoV). Desde setembro de 2012 que está a acompanhar a situação em estreito contacto com as autoridades sanitárias dos Estados-Membros, a Organização Mundial de Saúde e o Centro Europeu de Prevenção e Controlo das Doenças.

2. Os casos de MERS-CoV mais recentes, confirmados na União, foram notificados em 31 de maio de 2013 pela Itália (três casos). O número total eleva-se agora a 11 casos confirmados na União (dois em França, dois na Alemanha e quatro no Reino Unido). A nível mundial, em 12 de junho de 2013 havia 55 casos confirmados de MERS-CoV notificados em todo o mundo, incluindo 31 vítimas mortais. Todos os casos continuam associados a situações de transmissão na Arábia Saudita, no Catar, na Jordânia e nos Emirados Árabes Unidos. Os casos notificados na Europa mostram que o Coronavírus da Síndroma Respiratória do Médio Oriente pode ser transmitido por uma pessoa infetada a uma pessoa saudável. Não obstante, tal parece ocorrer apenas através de contacto próximo, não dispondo a Comissão de qualquer indício de transmissão sustentada entre seres humanos.

3. Nesta fase, não foram adotadas outras medidas cautelares além das medidas já acordadas com os Estados-Membros, com base nas avaliações da situação levadas a cabo pela Organização Mundial de Saúde e pelo Centro Europeu de Prevenção e Controlo das Doenças ([1]). Além disso, o MERS-CoV foi extensamente debatido na sessão plenária do Comité de Segurança da Saúde de 5 de junho de 2013, tendo-se chegado a acordo sobre a preparação de declarações comuns em matéria de informação sanitária destinada às pessoas que viajam para os países em risco e o aconselhamento a prestar aos profissionais de saúde que cuidem de pacientes com uma infeção confirmada ou possível pelo MERS-CoV.

([1]) http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/risk-assessment-middle-east-respiratory-syndrome-coronavirus-MERS-CoV-17-may-2013.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005826/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: New cases of coronavirus in France

According to the French health authorities, three new potential cases of coronavirus have been identified. The virus is similar to severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). According to international media reports, three people who had been in contact with an infected patient were showing symptoms of coronavirus and were under observation.

Some 31 cases of coronavirus have been identified worldwide and 18 people have died after becoming infected, mostly in Saudi Arabia.

— Is the Commission aware of these situations?

— Does it have any information on more cases in the EU?

— Should health authorities take additional precautionary measures?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(1 July 2013)

1. The Commission is aware of the outbreak caused by the newly discovered virus called 'Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus' (MERS-CoV), and since September 2012 is monitoring the situation in close contact with the health authorities in Member States, with the World Health Organisation and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

2. The most recent MERS-CoV confirmed cases in the Union have been notified on 31 May 2013 by Italy (three cases). These brought the total number of confirmed cases in the Union to 11 (two in France, two in Germany and four in United Kingdom). Concerning the global situation, at 12 June 2013, 55 MERS-CoV confirmed cases have been reported worldwide including 31 fatalities. All cases remain associated with transmission in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, and United Arab Emirates. The cases notified in Europe show that the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus can be transmitted from an infected person to a healthy person. However, this appears to occur only through close contact; and the Commission does not have any evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission.

3. At this stage no precautionary measures have been taken in addition to the ones already agreed with the Member States on the basis of the assessments of the situation prepared by the World Health Organisation and by the European Centre for disease Prevention and Control ([1]). In addition MERS-CoV was extensively discussed during the plenary meeting of the Health Security Committee held on 5 June 2013, where it was agreed to prepare common statements covering health information for persons travelling in countries at risk and advice to healthcare workers caring for patients with confirmed or possible MERS-CoV infection.

([1]) http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/risk-assessment-middle-east-respiratory-syndrome-coronavirus-MERS-CoV-17-may-2013.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005827/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Medicamentos: Cartões de desconto distribuídos por médicos

O ministro da Saúde português considerou recentemente que a entrega de cartões de descontos pelos médicos aos seus doentes, de modo a que estes possam comprar medicamentos a preços mais baixos nas farmácias configura uma prática comercial que «não é salutar» e pediu à Autoridade Nacional do Medicamento (Infarmed) para avaliar a situação.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Tem conhecimento destas situações?

— Dispõe de dados acerca deste tipo de descontos na União Europeia?

— Crê ser deontológica a aceitação por parte de clínicos deste tipo de cartões e a sua distribuição aos doentes?

— Não considera, tal como o ministro português, que esta prática não é benéfica para os sistemas de saúde e consubstancia um entorse à concorrência e aos princípios que devem nortear o exercício da medicina?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(9 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão não tem conhecimento da situação descrita pelo Senhor Deputado.

O artigo 168.°, n.° 7, do Tratado sobre o Funcionamento da União Europeia estabelece que os Estados-Membros são responsáveis pela definição das respetivas políticas de saúde, bem como pela organização e prestação de serviços de saúde e de cuidados médicos.

A legislação no domínio farmacêutico ([1]) determina que, no âmbito da promoção de medicamentos junto das pessoas habilitadas para os receitar ou fornecer, é proibido conceder, oferecer ou prometer a essas pessoas quaisquer prémios, benefícios pecuniários ou benefícios em espécie, exceto quando se trate de objetos de valor insignificante e estejam relacionados com a prática da medicina ou da farmacologia. O Tribunal de Justiça da União Europeia ([2]) declarou que estes requisitos devem ser interpretados como não obstando a regimes de incentivos financeiros implementados pelas autoridades nacionais de saúde pública a fim de reduzirem as suas despesas com a saúde pública.

No âmbito do processo sobre a responsabilidade das empresas na indústria farmacêutica, os serviços da Comissão facilitaram os trabalhos da Plataforma sobre Ética e Transparência no setor farmacêutico. Essa plataforma baseou-se na participação e colaboração voluntária das partes interessadas em representação das autoridades públicas, dos pagadores, dos profissionais de saúde, dos doentes e da indústria. No outono de 2012, chegaram a acordo sobre uma lista de «Princípios diretores para uma boa governação no setor farmacêutico» que, embora não seja juridicamente vinculativa, aborda várias questões que vão além das relações bilaterais entre as partes interessadas ([3]).

Quanto à questão de saber se a prática pode ser prejudicial à concorrência, a Comissão não dispõe de informação suficiente sobre esta questão para se poder pronunciar sobre o assunto.

([1]) Diretiva 2001/83/CE do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 6 de novembro de 2001, que estabelece um código comunitário relativo aos medicamentos para uso humano (JO L 311 de 28.11.2001, p. 67).
([2]) TJUE, processo C-62/09.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/healthcare/files/docs/outcomes_et_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005827/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Medication discount cards distributed by doctors

The Portuguese Health Minister recently said that doctors who distribute discount cards to their patients, so that they can buy medication at lower prices in pharmacies, are engaging in an 'unhealthy' commercial practice and has asked the Portuguese National Authority of Medicines and Health Products (Infarmed) to look into the matter.

— Is the Commission aware of these situations?

— Does it have any information on such discounts in the EU?

— Does it believe it is ethical for GPs to accept these cards and to distribute them to their patients?

— Does it agree with the Portuguese Health Minister that this practice does not benefit health systems and that it is detrimental to competition and the principles that should govern medical practice?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

The Commission is not aware of the situation described by the Honourable Member.

Article 168(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that the Member States are responsible for the definition of their health policy and for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care.

The pharmaceutical legislation ([1]) provides that where medicinal products are being promoted to persons qualified to prescribe or supply them, no gifts, pecuniary advantages or benefits in kind may be supplied, offered or promised to such persons unless they are inexpensive and relevant to the practice of medicine or pharmacy. The European Court ([2]) stated that these requirements must be interpreted as not precluding financial incentives schemes implemented by the national public health authorities in order to reduce their public-health expenditure.

In the framework of the Process on Corporate Responsibility in the field of Pharmaceuticals, the Commission services facilitated the work of the Platform on Ethics and Transparency in the pharmaceutical sector. The Platform was based on voluntary participation and cooperation of interested stakeholders representing public authorities, payers, health professionals, patients and industry. In autumn 2012 they reached an agreement on a list of 'Guiding Principles promoting good governance in the pharmaceutical sector' which, although not legally binding, address various issues beyond bilateral relationships between stakeholders ([3]).

For the question whether the practice can be detrimental to competition, the Commission does not have sufficient details on the matter to be able to form an opinion on the issue.

([1]) Directive 2001/83/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 November 201 on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use, OJ L 311, 28.11.2001, p. 67.
([2]) ECJ C-62/09.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/healthcare/files/docs/outcomes_et_en.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005828/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Países Baixos — escassez de marcas de leite em pó

O governo dos Países Baixos anunciou que está a investigar a escassez de determinadas marcas de leite em pó, bem como a sua exportação ilegal para a China. Apesar de não se verificar uma falta global de leite em pó no país, as autoridades neerlandesas reconhecem que determinadas marcas têm faltado, o que levanta suspeitas sobre o destino desses produtos. Alegadamente, terá havido uma procura anormal deste tipo de produtos durante o corrente ano, circunstância que não corresponde ao número de nascimentos ocorridos no mesmo período, e um aumento significativo da procura deste tipo de produtos na China depois de se ter visto previamente confrontada com um escândalo de adulteração de uma fórmula de leite nacional.

Assim, pergunta-se à Comissão:

— Tem conhecimento desta situação?

— Existe, efetivamente, o risco de rutura de *stocks* de determinadas marcas de leite em pó nos Países Baixos?

— Confirma o destino para onde alegadamente estarão a ser remetidas as quantidades de leite em pó em falta no mercado neerlandês?

— Contactou as autoridades neerlandesas e chinesas a este respeito?

— Que respostas obteve?

— Por que formas poderão as autoridades dos Estados-Membros assegurar-se de que o leite em pó à venda nos respetivos mercados não é, desviado em quantidades insensatas para outros destinos?

Resposta dada por Dacian Cioloş em nome da Comissão
(17 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão não tem conhecimento da situação descrita pelo Senhor Deputado.

A Comissão não efetua o acompanhamento dos dados relativos a marcas específicas de leite em pó. De qualquer modo, a União Europeia é mais que autossuficiente no setor leiteiro; não só satisfaz as necessidades dos consumidores domésticos mas também a procura externa de produtos lácteos.

O tipo de intercâmbios a que o Senhor Deputado faz referência não se enquadra nas competências da Comissão. Convidamos o Senhor Deputado a dirigir as suas questões às autoridades dos Estados-Membros.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005828/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Shortage of brands of milk powder in the Netherlands

The Dutch Government has announced that it is investigating the shortage of certain brands of milk powder and their illegal export to China. Although the country is not experiencing a national milk powder shortage, Dutch authorities acknowledge that certain brands are hard to come by, raising suspicions about these products' whereabouts. There has allegedly been an unusually high demand for milk powder this year, although this demand does not correspond with the number of births during the same period, and a significant increase in demand for such products in China following a national scandal involving tainted milk formula.

— Is the Commission aware of this situation?

— Is there a real risk that the Netherlands might run out of stock of certain brands of milk powder?

— Can it confirm where the quantities of milk powder missing from the Dutch market are allegedly being sent?

— Has it contacted the Dutch and Chinese authorities in this regard?

— What answers has it received?

— How can the Member States' authorities ensure that unreasonable quantities of milk powder on sale in the respective markets are not diverted elsewhere?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(17 July 2013)

The Commission is aware of the situation described by the Honourable Member.

The Commission does not monitor figures on specific brands of milk powder. In any case, the European Union is more than self-sufficient in the milk sector; it does not only satisfy the needs of domestic consumers but is also meeting external demand for dairy products.

The kind of exchanges the Honourable Member might be referring to do not fall in the remit of the Commission. The Honourable Member is kindly asked to address the question to the Member States' authorities.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005829/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Eslovénia — plano de recuperação económica

O Governo da Eslovénia anunciou a apresentação de um plano de ação económica com o objetivo de evitar um resgate financeiro. O plano, que deverá ser apresentado à Comissão Europeia, deverá incluir o aumento de impostos, reformas no setor bancário e privatizações. A economia eslovena está em recessão desde 2011.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— A Eslovénia já lhe apresentou o seu plano de ação económica?

— Está em condições de fazer uma apreciação do mesmo?

— Quando tenciona fazê-lo?

— Quais os principais desafios que considera que se colocam à economia eslovena?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(27 de junho de 2013)

O Programa Nacional de Reforma da Eslovénia e a respetiva avaliação da Comissão podem ser consultados no seguinte endereço:
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/eu/countries/slovenia_en.htm

Estes documentos fornecem a base das recomendações específicas por país atualmente em debate no Conselho. A proposta de recomendação da Comissão pode ser consultada no seguinte endereço:
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_pt.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005829/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Slovenia's economic recovery plan

The Slovenian Government has announced that it is to present an economic action plan designed to avoid an international bailout. The plan, to be presented to the Commission, looks set to include tax increases, banking sector reforms and privatisations. The Slovenian economy has been in recession since 2011.

— Has Slovenia already presented its economic action plan to the Commission?

— Is the Commission able to evaluate it?

— When will it do so?

— What are the main challenges facing the Slovenian economy?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(27 June 2013)

National reform programme of Slovenia and the Commission's assessment of it can be found at:
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/eu/countries/slovenia_en.htm

These documents provide the basis to the Country-specific recommendations currently under discussion in the Council. The Commission's proposal for recommendation can be found at:
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005830/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Ameaça contra interesses franceses no mundo

A rede terrorista Al-Qaeda no Magrebe (Aqmi) apelou a ataques contra interesses franceses «em todo o mundo», em resposta à intervenção no Mali. O presidente francês reagiu imediatamente, ao afirmar que Paris encara com seriedade estas ameaças.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

— Tem conhecimento destas declarações?

— Contactou as autoridades francesas a este propósito? Que respostas obteve?

— Considera necessária a tomada de medidas de segurança adicionais a nível da União Europeia?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(25 de julho de 2013)

A Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente tem conhecimento das recentes ameaças contra a França e outros Estados-Membros de grupos terroristas como a rede terrorista Al-Qaeda no Magrebe (AQIM). Tais ameaças foram encaradas com seriedade e devem ter uma resposta adequada a nível da UE. A Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente continua a acompanhar de perto a situação e reagirá rapidamente a eventuais desenvolvimentos. Em 18 de fevereiro de 2013, a UE lançou uma missão de formação no Mali (EUTM Mali), com o objetivo de apoiar a formação e a reorganização das Forças Armadas do Mali.

As questões relacionadas com as ameaças provenientes da região foram objeto de debate com os Estados-Membros em numerosas ocasiões, nomeadamente no Conselho dos Negócios Estrangeiros, em janeiro e abril. Estas questões foram também discutidas em pormenor na recente Cimeira do G8, em Lough Erne. O SEAS trabalha em estreita colaboração com os seus homólogos nos Estados-Membros e mantém contactos regulares, especialmente no terreno, para assegurar que estão a ser tomadas as medidas de segurança adequadas.

A avaliação do nível de ameaça nos Estados-Membros, e a resposta a essa ameaça, é uma prerrogativa exclusiva de cada Estado-Membro. No entanto, a UE é pronta a responder a qualquer pedido de assistência dos Estados-Membros. A UE toma a proteção e a segurança do seu pessoal e das delegações da UE com muita seriedade e controla constantemente as ameaças, adotando medidas de segurança adicionais, se for caso disso. Esta tarefa é realizada em estreito contacto com os Estados-Membros, os países de acolhimento e outros parceiros a nível da segurança.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005830/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Threat to French interests around the world

The terrorist network al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has called for attacks on French interests 'around the world', in response to France's intervention in Mali. The French President reacted immediately by saying that Paris is taking these threats seriously.

— Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of these statements?

— Has she contacted the French authorities in this regard? What answers has she received?

— Does she believe it is necessary to take additional security measures at EU level?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(25 July 2013)

The HR/VP is aware of the recent threats against France, and other Member States, from terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM). Such threats are taken seriously, and need to be responded appropriately at the EU level. The HR/VP continues to monitor the situation closely, and will react swiftly to any developments. The EU launched a training mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) on 18 February 2013, the objective of which is to support the training and reorganisation of the Malian Armed Forces.

The issues concerning the threat from the region have been discussed with Member States on numerous occasions, including at the Foreign Affairs Council in January and April. These issues were also discussed in detail at the recent G8 Summit at Lough Erne. The EEAS works in close coordination with its counterparts in Member States and have regular contacts, especially in the field, to ensure that adequate security measures are being taken.

The threat level assessment in Member States, and the response to that threat, is the exclusive prerogative of each Member State. However, the EU stands ready to respond to any Member States' request for assistance as appropriate. The EU takes the security and safety of its staff and EU Delegations very seriously, and constantly monitors threats, using additional security measures where appropriate. This task is undertaken in close contact with Member States, host nations and other security partners.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005831/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Síria: alegada limpeza étnica de sunitas

O Ministro dos Negócios Estrangeiros da Turquia, Ahmet Davutoglu, acusou o presidente sírio de estar a fazer uma «limpeza étnica» dos sunitas do seu país semelhante à das forças sérvias contra os bósnios. «É como a tentativa de criar uma zona sérvia livre de bósnios, exatamente como foi feito com os massacres de Srebrenica e do leste da Bósnia», afirmou o chefe da diplomacia turca numa entrevista ao diário *Hurriyet*, citada pela agência EFE.

Davutoglu afirma que alertou o seu homólogo norte-americano, John Kerry, para a tentativa de Bashar al-Assad de abrir um corredor «limpo» de sunitas entre a cidade de Homs e o Líbano, de maneira a criar uma zona segura para os alauitas, grupo étnico-religioso a que pertence a família do presidente sírio.

«Se, no final deste processo, a Síria tiver regiões etnicamente limpas, a responsabilidade será da comunidade internacional», afirmou o ministro.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

— Tem conhecimento destas declarações?

— Confirma as acusações turcas quanto à eventual limpeza étnica em curso?

— Contactou as autoridades sírias e turcas a este propósito? Que respostas obteve?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(8 de julho de 2013)

A AR/VP está plenamente ciente da posição turca e mantém estreitos contactos com o Ministro dos Negócios Estrangeiros, Ahmet Davutoglu, para debater a situação política na Síria, incluindo os atos de violência sectária e a assistência às populações sírias, tanto no interior como no exterior da Síria.

As conclusões do Conselho dos Negócios Estrangeiros, bem como as diversas declarações em nome da AR/VP têm repetidamente condenado a violência sectária na Síria. A UE tomou nota das conclusões da Comissão de Inquérito independente, que dão conta de atos de violência em massa, indiscriminada, especialmente contra comunidades vulneráveis. As conclusões do Conselho dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 27 de maio condenaram os massacres sectários de Bayda, Baniyas e, ultimamente, Qusayr.

A UE continuará a apoiar os esforços da comunidade internacional no sentido de responsabilizar todos os que cometam atos de violência, sectária e de outro tipo, que não ficarão impunes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005831/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Alleged ethnic cleansing of Sunnis in Syria

The Turkish Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, has accused the Syrian President of 'ethnically cleansing' the country's Sunni population, drawing comparisons with the campaign conducted by Serbian forces against Bosniaks. In an interview with the newspaper *Hurriyet*, quoted by the EFE news agency, the head of Turkish diplomacy likened the situation in Syria to the massacres of Srebrenica and eastern Bosnia, which were designed to create a Serbian zone free of Bosniaks.

Davutoğlu says that he has alerted his US counterpart John Kerry to Bashar al-Assad's attempt to open a Sunni-free corridor between the city of Homs and Lebanon, to create a safe zone for Alawites, the ethno-religious group to which the Syrian President's family belongs.

The minister added that the international community will be to blame should there be 'ethnically clean' areas in Syria at the end of this process.

— Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of these remarks?

— Can she confirm Turkey's allegations regarding the possible ethnic cleansing which is taking place?

— Has she contacted the Syrian and Turkish authorities in this regard? What answers has she received?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(8 July 2013)

The HR/VP is well aware of the Turkish position and remains in regular close contact with Foreign Minister Davutoglu to discuss the political situation in Syria, including acts of sectarian violence and assistance to Syrians both inside and outside Syria.

The Foreign Affairs Council conclusions as well as various statements issued on behalf of the HR/VP have repeatedly condemned sectarian violence in Syria. The EU has welcomed the findings of the independent Commission of Inquiry, which document mass, indiscriminate violence particularlay against vulnerable communities. The conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council of 27 May have condemned sectarian massacres in Bayda, Baniyas and lately in Qusayr.

The EU will continue to support the efforts of the international community to hold accountable those who perpetrate acts of sectarian and other violence, for which there will be no impunity.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005832/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Grécia — Regresso aos mercados

O ministro das Finanças da Grécia afirmou recentemente que o país deverá voltar aos mercados financeiros no final de 2014.

1. Tem a Comissão conhecimento destas afirmações?

2. Dispõe a Comissão de dados que confirmem esta possibilidade?

3. Crê a Comissão que a Grécia estará em condições de regressar aos mercados no final de 2014, tal como pretende o seu governo?

4. Quais são os principais desafios que o país ainda enfrenta?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(21 de junho de 2013)

A Comissão não faz previsões acerca do calendário do regresso da Grécia aos mercados de capitais. A Comissão publicou recentemente, em colaboração com o BCE, um relatório que apresenta uma avaliação atualizada dos progressos realizados pela Grécia no âmbito do seu 2.° programa de ajustamento económico. O relatório refere que a Grécia continua a realizar progressos no contexto do programa. No que respeita à dinâmica da dívida, prevê-se que o rácio dívida/PIB retome a sua tendência descendente em 2014, devendo descer para menos de 120 % em 2021, desde que o programa de ajustamento económico continue a ser plenamente aplicado. As taxas de rendibilidade das obrigações de dívida pública registaram uma descida drástica de aproximadamente 25 % em agosto de 2012 para 10 % nas últimas semanas, evidenciando uma avaliação de mercado favorável. Podem encontrar-se mais informações no relatório (Segundo Programa de Ajustamento Económico para a Grécia — segunda revisão, maio de 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/op148_en.htm).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005832/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Greece's return to the markets

The Greek Finance Minister recently said that his country is likely to return to the financial markets in late 2014.

1. Is the Commission aware of this statement?

2. Does it have any data to back up this possibility?

3. Does it believe that Greece will be in a position to return to the markets in late 2014, as its government intends?

4. What are the main challenges still facing the country?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(21 June 2013)

The Commission does not make forecasts about the timing of Greece's re-entry into capital markets. It has recently published, in liaison with the ECB, a report which provides an up-to-date assessment of the progress made by Greece with respect to its 2nd Economic Adjustment Programme. The report states that Greece continues to make progress in the context of the programme. With regard to debt dynamics, the debt-to-GDP ratio is forecast to resume a declining path in 2014 and should become lower than 120% by 2021, provided that the economic adjustment programme continues to be fully implemented. Yields on government bonds have fallen steeply from approximately 25% in August 2012 to under 10% in recent weeks, suggesting an increasingly favourable market assessment. Further information can be found in the report (The Second Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece — Second Review May 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/op148_en.htm).

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005833/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Cash Trapping: risco para os consumidores

A empresa portuguesa SIBS — Sociedade Interbancária de Serviços alertou recentemente os consumidores para os riscos do furto através da técnica de «cash trapping», chamando a atenção dos utilizadores para irregularidades nas caixas automáticas de levantamento de dinheiro, tais como um sistema diferente de leitor de cartões, de ecrã ou de teclado, aspeto visual pouco habitual ou indícios de vandalização do equipamento.

A técnica de «cash trapping» consiste na colocação de um objeto no terminal de saída das notas, impedindo a sua saída, com a intenção de enganar quem pretende levantar dinheiro e que julga que o equipamento está avariado, levando os utilizadores a abandonarem o local; nessa altura, os suspeitos procedem à remoção do dispositivo e à consequente subtração do dinheiro retido.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Tem conhecimento destas situações?

— Dispõe de dados acerca deste tipo de ocorrências na União Europeia?

— Crê que as medidas de prevenção e controlo vigentes são adequadas para obstar à concretização da maioria das tentativas de furto por via do «cash trapping»?

— Existe uma troca de experiências a nível europeu quanto à prevenção deste tipo de crimes e à adoção de boas práticas por parte das entidades responsáveis pelas caixas automáticas de levantamento de dinheiro?

Resposta dada por Michel Barnier em nome da Comissão
(18 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão está consciente da técnica fraudulenta descrita pelo Senhor Deputado. Os dados relativos aos casos de fraude com cartões de pagamento indicam que as tentativas de roubo em caixas automáticas de levantamento de dinheiro mediante a técnica em causa («*cash trapping*») representam uma percentagem muito reduzida do número total de casos de fraude associada aos cartões de pagamento (menos de 1 % em termos de valor e de 0,5 % em termos de volume). Em Portugal, nomeadamente, a fraude nas caixas multibanco é a mais baixa na Europa, afetando menos de 0,0005 % da totalidade das transações efetuadas nas caixas automáticas de levantamento de dinheiro.

No caso da técnica de armadilhagem em apreço e de outras técnicas mecânicas semelhantes, a sensibilização e a vigilância dos consumidores são mecanismos de prevenção importantes. Dada a sua natureza, é difícil pôr termo a tais tentativas de roubo, que se aproveitam da falta de atenção e de reação adequada dos consumidores à tentativa de fraude. Os bancos e as associações de consumidores solicitam regularmente a vigilância dos titulares de cartões e a comunicação imediata de quaisquer anomalias no levantamento de dinheiro em caixas automáticas.

A troca de informações sobre a prevenção da fraude em matéria de pagamentos tem lugar em várias instâncias europeias. Para mais informações, remete-se a atenção do Senhor Deputado para a resposta da Comissão à pergunta E-003422/2013. Além disso, no setor de pagamentos, está previsto o intercâmbio de práticas de prevenção da fraude com cartões, nomeadamente no âmbito do grupo de trabalho para a prevenção da fraude com cartões de pagamento (*Card Fraud Prevention Task Force — CFPTF*) do Conselho Europeu de Pagamentos.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005833/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Cash trapping: risk to consumers

The Portuguese Interbank Cooperation Society (Sociedade Interbancária de Serviços — SIBS) recently warned consumers about the risks of theft through a technique known as 'cash trapping' and asked ATM users to look out for irregularities such as different card readers, screens or keypads, an unusual appearance or signs that the equipment has been tampered with.

'Cash trapping' involves placing an object inside the cash dispenser slot which stops money from coming out. The aim is to trick those trying to withdraw cash into thinking that the machine is faulty, causing them to go elsewhere. The perpetrators then remove the device along with the money that is trapped.

— Is the Commission aware of these situations?

— Does it have any data on such occurrences in the EU?

— Does it believe that the preventive and control measures in force are enough to prevent most attempted thefts through 'cash trapping' from being successful?

— Is an exchange of experience at European level under way to prevent such crimes and to ensure that the entities responsible for ATMs adopt best practice?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(18 July 2013)

The Commission is aware of the fraud technique described by the Honourable Member. Card payments fraud data clearly suggest that theft attempts at the ATMs through cash trapping constitute a very small percentage of all card-related fraud (below 1% in terms of value and 0.5% in terms of volume). In particular, the ATM fraud in Portugal is the lowest in Europe, affecting less than 0.0005% of all ATM transactions.

In the case of cash trapping and similar, mechanical fraud techniques consumer awareness and vigilance are among the principal preventive mechanisms. By its nature, such theft attempts are difficult to eradicate, as they count on consumer inadvertency and lack of a proper reaction to the fraud attempt. Banks and consumer organisation regularly ask cardholders to be vigilant and report immediately any anomalies regarding ATM withdrawals.

The exchange of information on fraud prevention in payments takes place at several European foras. Please see the Commission's answer to E-003422/2013 for further information. Furthermore, at the payments industry level, card fraud prevention practices are notably exchanged by the Card Fraud Prevention task force (CFPTF) of the European Payments Council.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005834/13
ao Conselho
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: União Europeia — superpopulação prisional

Segundo um relatório recentemente publicado pelo Conselho da Europa, quase metade dos países europeus enfrenta uma situação de superpopulação prisional e alguns deles ultrapassam os 150 prisioneiros para cada 100 vagas. Esta é uma situação obviamente preocupante e que merece uma reflexão acerca das efetivas capacidades dos sistemas, das taxas de criminalidade, da sua capacidade de promover a reinserção social e, obviamente, da forma como são punidos diversos tipos de crime julgados graves o bastante para motivar a condenação em penas de prisão.

Assim, pergunto ao Conselho:

— Tem conhecimento deste relatório?

— Que apreciação faz dos dados dele constantes?

— Como poderão a União Europeia e os Estados-Membros fazer face a esta situação sem pôr em causa o Estado de Direito e a segurança das populações?

Resposta
(11 de setembro de 2013)

Embora a política prisional seja da exclusiva competência dos Estados-Membros, as condições das prisões podem afetar domínios da competência da UE.

Para tal, na sua Resolução de 30 de novembro de 2009 sobre um Roteiro para o reforço dos direitos processuais dos suspeitos ou acusados em processos penais ([1]), o Conselho instou a Comissão a apresentar um livro verde sobre detenção antes da fase do julgamento.

Em junho de 2011, a Comissão apresentou um livro verde intitulado «Reforçar a confiança mútua no espaço judiciário europeu — Livro Verde sobre a aplicação da legislação penal da UE no domínio da detenção» ([2]), tendo fixado o prazo de 30 de novembro de 2011 para responder às questões constantes desse livro verde.

Convida-se o Senhor Deputado a contactar a Comissão sobre o seguimento dado a esse livro verde e sobre outras medidas relevantes a nível da UE.

([1]) JO C 295 de 4.12.2009, p. 1.
([2]) 11658/11.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005834/13
to the Council
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Prison overcrowding in the European Union

According to a report recently published by the Council of Europe, almost half of European countries suffer from prison overcrowding with some prisons holding more than 150 inmates per 100 places. This situation is obviously cause for concern and calls for thought to be given to the actual capacity of prison systems, crime rates, prison's ability to promote social reintegration and, undoubtedly, the way in which various types of crime deemed serious enough to warrant prison sentences are punished.

— Is the Council aware of this report?

— What is its assessment of the data it contains?

— How could the EU and the Member States tackle this situation without undermining the rule of law or jeopardising public safety?

Reply
(11 September 2013)

While policy in respect of prisons falls solely within the competence of the Member States, conditions in prisons may affect policy areas within the EU remit.

To this end, in its Resolution of 30 November 2009 on a Roadmap for strengthening the procedural rights of suspected and accused persons in criminal proceedings ([1]), the Council called upon the Commission to present a green paper on pre-trial detention.

In June 2011, the Commission presented a green paper titled 'Strengthening mutual trust in the European judicial area — A Green Paper on the application of EU criminal justice legislation in the field of detention' ([2]), setting a deadline of 30 November 2011 to respond to the questions contained in that green paper.

The Honourable Member is invited to contact the Commission regarding the follow-up of the green paper and any other relevant measures at EU level.

([1]) OJ C 295, 4.12.2009, p. 1.
([2]) 16658/11.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005835/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: União Europeia — superpopulação prisional

Segundo um relatório recentemente publicado pelo Conselho da Europa, quase metade dos países europeus enfrenta uma situação de superpopulação prisional e alguns deles ultrapassam os 150 prisioneiros para cada 100 vagas. Esta é uma situação obviamente preocupante e que merece uma reflexão acerca das efetivas capacidades dos sistemas, das taxas de criminalidade, da sua capacidade de promover a reinserção social e, obviamente, da forma como são punidos diversos tipos de crime julgados graves o bastante para motivar a condenação em penas de prisão.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Tem conhecimento deste relatório?

— Que apreciação faz dos dados dele constantes?

— Como poderão a União Europeia e os Estados-Membros fazer face a esta situação sem pôr em causa o Estado de Direito e a segurança das populações?

Resposta dada por Viviane Reding em nome da Comissão
(9 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão tem conhecimento das estatísticas do Conselho da Europa em matéria penal (SPACE I) de 2011, publicadas em 3 de maio de 2013.

A Comissão confere grande importância ao respeito dos direitos fundamentais das pessoas que se encontram detidas na União Europeia. Todavia, a gestão das prisões e as condições de detenção são domínios da competência dos Estados-Membros que estão vinculados pelas normas do Conselho da Europa sobre a matéria. Não obstante, a Comissão publicou, em maio de 2011, um Livro Verde sobre o reforço da confiança mútua no domínio da detenção ([1]). Foi publicado em linha um resumo das respostas recebidas ([2]).

Com base nos resultados do Livro Verde, a Comissão tenciona centrar-se na aplicação adequada dos instrumentos da UE de reconhecimento mútuo adotados no domínio da detenção ([3]). Neste contexto, publicará nos próximos meses um relatório sobre a aplicação dos instrumentos jurídicos da UE na matéria. A correta implementação e aplicação destes instrumentos contribuirá para o bom funcionamento do espaço europeu de justiça. A Comissão está convicta de que a aplicação adequada dos instrumentos da UE pode contribuir para a redução da sobrelotação das prisões, bem como para a realização de poupanças nos orçamentos dos Estados-Membros despendidos com os estabelecimentos prisionais e a sua gestão.

A Comissão também tem apoiado o trabalho desenvolvido por organizações como a Europris ([4]) e a CEP (organização europeia para a liberdade condicional) ([5]), as quais contribuem para melhorar a informação da Comissão neste domínio de ação.

([1]) Livro Verde intitulado «Reforçar a confiança mútua no espaço judiciário europeu — Livro Verde sobre a aplicação da legislação penal da UE no domínio da detenção», COM(2011) 0327 final.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/criminal/opinion/110614_en.htm

([3]) Decisão-Quadro 2008/909/JAI do Conselho, de 27 de novembro de 2008, relativa à aplicação do princípio do reconhecimento mútuo às sentenças em matéria penal que imponham penas ou outras medidas privativas de liberdade para efeitos da execução dessas sentenças na União Europeia, JO L 327 de 5.12.2008, p. 27, Decisão-Quadro 2008/947/JAI do Conselho, de 27 de novembro de 2008, respeitante à aplicação do princípio do reconhecimento mútuo às sentenças e decisões relativas à liberdade condicional para efeitos da fiscalização das medidas de vigilância e das sanções alternativas, JO L 337 de 16.12.2008, p. 102, e Decisão-Quadro 2009/829/JAI do Conselho, de 23 de outubro de 2009, relativa à aplicação, entre os Estados-Membros da União Europeia, do princípio do reconhecimento mútuo às decisões sobre medidas de controlo, em alternativa à prisão preventiva, JO L 294 de 11.11.2009, p. 20.

([4]) http://www.europris.org/

([5]) http://www.cep-probation.org/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005835/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 May 2013)

Subject: Prison overcrowding in the European Union

According to a report recently published by the Council of Europe, almost half of European countries suffer from prison overcrowding with some prisons holding more than 150 inmates per 100 places. This situation is obviously cause for concern and calls for thought to be given to the actual capacity of prison systems, crime rates, prison's ability to promote social reintegration and, undoubtedly, the way in which various types of crime deemed serious enough to warrant prison sentences are punished.

— Is the Commission aware of this report?

— What is its assessment of the data it contains?

— How could the EU and the Member States tackle this situation without undermining the rule of law or jeopardising public safety?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(9 July 2013)

The Commission is aware of the 2011 Council of Europe Penal Statistics (SPACE I) published on 3 May 2013.

The Commission attaches great importance to the respect of the fundamental rights of persons in detention in the EU. However, the management of prisons and detention conditions fall under the competence of Member States who are bound by Council of Europe standards on the matter. Nevertheless, the Commission has issued, in May 2011, a Green Paper on strengthening mutual trust in the field of detention ([1]). A summary of the replies has been published online ([2]).

Based on the outcome of the Green Paper, the Commission intends to focus on the proper implementation of the existing EU mutual recognition instruments adopted in the field of detention ([3]). In this context it will publish an implementation report on the relevant EU legal instruments in the coming months. A proper implementation and application of these instruments will contribute to a proper functioning of the European area of justice. The Commission is convinced that the proper implementation of the EU instruments may contribute to a reduction of prison overcrowding as well as allow for savings for the budgets spent by Member States on prisons and prison management.

The Commission has also been supporting the work of organisations such as Europris ([4]) and CEP — the European Organisation for Probation ([5]) which contribute to better inform the Commission's work in this field.

([1]) Green Paper Strengthening mutual trust in the European judicial area — A Green Paper on the application of EU criminal justice legislation in the field of detention, COM/2011/0327 final.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/criminal/opinion/110614_en.htm

([3]) The framework Decision 2008/909/JHA of 27 November 2008 on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to judgments in criminal matters imposing custodial sentences or measures involving deprivation of liberty for the purpose of their enforcement in the European Union, OJ 5.12.2008, L 327/27, the framework Decision 2008/947/JHA of 27 November 2008 on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to judgments and probation decisions with a view to the supervision of probation measures and alternative sanctions, OJ 16.12.2008, L 337/102, and the framework Decision 2009/829/JHA of 23 October 2009 on the application, between Member States of the European Union, of the principle of mutual recognition to decisions on supervision measures as an alternative to provisional detention, OJ 11.11.2009, L 294/20.

([4]) http://www.europris.org/.

([5]) http://www.cep-probation.org/.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005836/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(24 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Eritreia — Presos políticos

A Amnistia Internacional revelou que a Eritreia, desde que conseguiu a independência da Etiópia há 20 anos, tem «pelo menos 10 000 presos políticos».

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

— Tem conhecimento desta situação alarmante?

— Está em condições de confirmar o número indicado pela Amnistia Internacional?

— Contactou as autoridades da Eritreia a este propósito? Que respostas obteve?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(18 de julho de 2013)

A Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente tem conhecimento da situação dos direitos humanos na Eritreia, nomeadamente a situação dos presos políticos, e considera-a muito inquietante. A UE tem manifestado a sua preocupação no contexto de um diálogo político franco com o Governo da Eritreia, principalmente no quadro do artigo 8.° do Acordo de Cotonu. A UE e os seus Estados-Membros também estão empenhados na melhoria da situação em matéria de direitos humanos na Eritreia no âmbito do Conselho dos Direitos Humanos das Nações Unidas. Na sua sessão mais recente, a UE apoiou uma resolução sobre a Eritreia que prorrogou o mandato do Relator Especial sobre a situação dos direitos humanos neste país.

A Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente não pode confirmar os números avançados no relatório da Amnistia Internacional. A delegação da UE em Asmara tem instruções permanentes para se informar sobre a situação dos presos políticos junto das autoridades da Eritreia e de qualquer outra entidade que possa ter informações a esse respeito.

Há muito que a UE insta as autoridades da Eritreia a libertarem incondicionalmente todos os presos políticos, nomeadamente por razões humanitárias. Em 18 de setembro de 2012, a Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente proferiu a declaração anual sobre os presos políticos em nome da UE. A UE exorta igualmente o Governo do Estado da Eritreia a tornar públicas todas as informações sobre o paradeiro e o acesso desses presos aos cuidados de saúde, bem como a autorizá-los a contactar as respetivas famílias e advogados.

Apesar dos esforços da UE, as autoridades da Eritreia não têm mostrado disponibilidade para debater a situação dos presos políticos de forma construtiva.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005836/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(24 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Political prisoners in Eritrea

According to Amnesty International, since Eritrea gained its independence from Ethiopia 20 years ago, at least 10 000 people have been held as political prisoners.

— Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of this alarming situation?

— Can she confirm the figure claimed by Amnesty International?

— Has she contacted the Eritrean authorities about this matter? What answers has she received?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(18 July 2013)

The High Representative/Vice-President is well-aware and preoccupied with the human rights situation in Eritrea, including with the situation of political prisoners. The EU addresses its concern in the frank and principled political dialogue with the Eritrean government, primarily within the framework of Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement. The EU and its Member States are also engaged in the human rights situation in Eritrea through the United Nations Human Rights Council. In the Council's most recent session the EU supported a resolution on Eritrea which extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea.

The HR/VP cannot confirm the figure given in the report by Amnesty International. The EU Delegation in Asmara has a standing instruction to inquire from the Eritrean authorities and from any other party that might have information about the fate of political prisoners.

The EU has longstandingly urged the Eritrean authorities to release, unconditionally, all prisoners of conscience, not least on humanitarian grounds. The High Representative/Vice-President issued an annual declaration on political prisoners on behalf of the EU on 18 September 2012. The EU has also called on the Government of the State of Eritrea to make public all information on the whereabouts and the access to healthcare of these prisoners and to allow them access to their families and lawyers.

Despite EU's efforts the Eritrean authorities are reluctant to discuss the situation of political prisoners in a constructive manner.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005837/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(24 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Windows 7: Microsoft multada

A comunicação social noticiou que a Comissão teria imposto uma multa de 561 milhões de euros à Microsoft por comercializar uma versão do Windows 7 que não permitia aos utilizadores a escolha do navegador de internet.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Tem conhecimento de casos idênticos por parte de outras empresas do mesmo setor?

— A Microsoft já alterou a versão em falta do Windows 7 de modo a permitir aos consumidores uma maior liberdade de escolha? Dispõe de um prazo para o fazer? Quando é que esse prazo expira?

Resposta dada por Joaquín Almunia em nome da Comissão
(4 de julho de 2013)

Em 6 de março de 2013, a Comissão Europeia aplicou à Microsoft uma coima de 561 milhões de euros, por não ter respeitado os seus compromissos de disponibilizar aos utilizadores um ecrã de escolha de programas de navegação que lhes permita escolher facilmente o navegador web preferido. Por decisão de 16 de dezembro de 2009, a Comissão tornou os referidos compromissos juridicamente vinculativos para a Microsoft até 2014. Na decisão de 6 de março de 2013, a Comissão considerou que a Microsoft não tinha implantado o ecrã de escolha de programas de navegação no seu sistema operativo Windows 7 Service Pack 1 no período de maio de 2011 a julho de 2012, o que implicou que 15 milhões de utilizadores do Windows na UE não dispusessem do ecrã de escolha durante este período.

A Comissão faz um acompanhamento constante do cumprimento por parte das empresas dos compromissos que, por decisão da própria Comissão, foram tornados vinculativos, incluindo no setor das TI.

Em resultado da investigação da Comissão, em julho de 2012, a Microsoft disponibilizou uma atualização do Windows 7 Service Pack 1. Essa atualização facultou o ecrã de escolha de programas de navegação aos utilizadores que foram afetados pelo não cumprimento dos compromissos por parte da Microsoft.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005837/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(24 May 2013)

Subject: Microsoft fined over Windows 7

According to media reports, the Commission has imposed a fine of EUR 561 million on Microsoft for selling a version of Windows 7 that did not allow users to choose their Internet browser.

— Is the Commission aware of similar cases involving other companies in the same sector?

— Has Microsoft already changed the faulty version of Windows 7 so as to give consumers greater freedom of choice? Has the company been set a deadline by which to do so? When does this deadline expire?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(4 July 2013)

On 6 March 2013, the European Commission imposed a EUR 561 million fine on Microsoft for failing to comply with its commitments to offer users a browser choice screen enabling them to easily choose their preferred web browser. By decision of 16 December 2009, the Commission had made these commitments legally binding on Microsoft until 2014. In the decision of 6 March 2013, the Commission found that Microsoft failed to roll out the browser choice screen with its Windows 7 Service Pack 1 from May 2011 until July 2012. This meant that 15 million Windows users in the EU did not see the choice screen during this period.

The Commission is constantly monitoring the compliance of undertakings with commitments the Commission has made binding on them, including in the IT sector.

As a consequence of the Commission's investigation, in July 2012 Microsoft rolled out an update to Windows 7 Service Pack 1. That update distributed the browser choice screen to the users who were affected by Microsoft's failure to comply with the commitments.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005838/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(24 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Reconstrução de Moçambique — contributo da União Europeia

Em resposta à minha pergunta E-001591/2013, a senhora Comissária Kristalina Georgieva declarou, em nome da Comissão, que «a Comissão enviou uma missão técnica para Moçambique no início de fevereiro de 2013, a fim de avaliar as necessidades humanitárias que surgiram devido às inundações. Com base na presente avaliação, a Comissão lançou uma decisão de emergência no valor de 3 milhões de euros, que deverá ser adotada em breve, para financiar as operações humanitárias mais urgentes. Estes fundos serão canalizados através de organizações humanitárias já no terreno e com capacidade para executar operações rapidamente. Os possíveis setores de intervenção serão no domínio dos abrigos, da água e do saneamento, da logística, da ajuda alimentar e da proteção.»

Não obstante, a reedificação dos danos causados pela catástrofe que assolou Moçambique nos primeiros meses de 2013 poderá atingir os 517 milhões de dólares (cerca de 400 milhões de euros). Deste valor, 353 milhões de dólares (269 milhões de euros), serão atribuídos ao setor público e 164 milhões de dólares (125 milhões de euros) destinar-se-ão ao setor privado. De acordo com o Ministro da Planificação e Desenvolvimento Aiuba Cuereneia, o processo de reconstrução do país irá estender-se por um período de três anos. As inundações provocadas pelas chuvas em janeiro e fevereiro deste ano causaram cerca de 117 mortos e 170 mil desalojados.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Tem conhecimento desta estimativa?

— Para além dos 3 milhões de euros para financiar as operações humanitárias mais urgentes, em que medida poderá contribuir para o pagamento deste esforço?

— Está disponível para aumentar o seu empenho humano e material no processo de reconstrução de Moçambique?

— No quadro do processo de reconstrução de Moçambique, em que setores de intervenção atua efetivamente?

Resposta dada por Andris Piebalgs em nome da Comissão
(7 de agosto de 2013)

A Comissão tem vindo a acompanhar atentamente a estratégia geral de recuperação. Essa estratégia tem em conta a resposta consolidada da equipa humanitária para o país, em cooperação com o Governo de Moçambique, às necessidades identificadas nos diferentes setores de intervenção.

Para além dos 3 milhões de euros, a Comissão aceitou que se utilizassem os montantes de contingência previstos em projetos já em curso nas zonas afetadas pelas inundações para dar resposta aos diferentes tipos de necessidades, nomeadamente nos hospitais e centros de saúde.

A Comissão disponibilizou recentemente 41,3 milhões de euros para apoiar o orçamento geral do Estado de 2013. Além disso, para o setor rodoviário, desembolsou no final de 2012 uma primeira parcela do apoio orçamental setorial no valor de 5 milhões de euros e está a trabalhar com o Governo de Moçambique para autorizar a segunda parcela de 5 milhões de euros, com base em indicadores revistos que tenham em consideração o efeito das inundações. Espera-se que estes montantes sejam utilizados para reabilitações relacionadas com as inundações.

A Comissão está igualmente a apoiar iniciativas de redução dos riscos de catástrofes em Moçambique, incluindo os esforços do Programa das Nações Unidas para os Estabelecimentos Humanos (UN-Habitat) para melhorar os códigos de construção, de modo a aumentar a resistência nas zonas expostas a perigos.

A Comissão acompanha atentamente a situação humanitária no país e está empenhada, juntamente com as agências das Nações Unidas e da Cruz Vermelha, os Estados-Membros e outros parceiros, na coordenação da ajuda humanitária e nas atividades precoces de recuperação no terreno. Participa nas missões de avaliação conjuntas e nas instâncias de coordenação de emergência, cooperando estreitamente com a representação regional do OCHA ([1]) em Joanesburgo, a fim de garantir a coerência entre as abordagens e estratégias comuns de todos os intervenientes humanitários na região.

([1]) Gabinete de Coordenação dos Assuntos Humanitários das Nações Unidas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005838/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(24 May 2013)

Subject: The European Union's contribution to the reconstruction of Mozambique

In answer to my Question E-001591/2013, Commissioner Georgieva stated on behalf of the Commission that 'the Commission sent a technical mission to Mozambique at the beginning of February 2013 to assess the humanitarian needs that have arisen as a consequence of the floods. Based on this assessment, the Commission has launched a EUR 3 million emergency decision, expected to be adopted very soon, to fund humanitarian operations addressing urgent needs. These funds will be channelled through humanitarian organisations already on the ground and capable of implementing operations quickly. Possible sectors of intervention will be shelter, water and sanitation, logistics, food assistance and protection.'

Nonetheless, repairing the damage caused by the catastrophe that devastated Mozambique in early 2013 could cost up to USD 517 million (around EUR 400 million). Of this sum, USD 353 million (EUR 269 million) will be allocated to the public sector and USD 164 million (EUR 125 million) to the private sector. According to the Minister for Planning and Development, Aiuba Cuereneia, the process of rebuilding the country will take three years. The floods caused by the rains in January and February 2013 resulted in around 117 people being killed and 170 000 being displaced.

— Is the Commission aware of this estimate?

— In addition to the EUR 3 million to fund humanitarian operations addressing urgent needs, to what extent could the Commission help fund reconstruction efforts?

— Is the Commission prepared to commit more human and material resources to the rebuilding process in Mozambique?

— With regard to the rebuilding process in Mozambique, which sectors of intervention is the Commission actually taking action in?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2013)

The Commission has been closely following up on the overall recovery strategy. That strategy takes into account the consolidated response of the Humanitarian Country Team, in cooperation with the Government of Mozambique, to needs identified in the different sectors of intervention.

In addition to the EUR 3 million, the Commission accepted the use of contingency amounts foreseen in projects already ongoing in the areas affected by the floods to respond to different types of needs, namely in hospitals or medical centres.

The Commission disbursed recently EUR 41.3 million to support the 2013 general state budget. In addition, for the roads sector, the Commission disbursed end of 2012 a first tranche of sector budget support of EUR 5 million and is working with the Government of Mozambique to call the second tranche of EUR 5 million on the basis of reviewed indicators taking the flood effect into consideration. It is expected that these amounts are used for flood-related rehabilitations.

The Commission is also supporting Disaster Risk Reduction initiatives in Mozambique, including UN-Habitat efforts to improve construction codes that should improve resilience in the hazards-exposed areas.

The Commission is carefully monitoring the humanitarian situation in the country and is — together with UN Agencies, Red Cross Societies, Member States and other partners — engaged in the coordination of humanitarian and early recovery efforts on the ground. It takes part in joint assessment missions and participates in the emergency coordination fora, working closely with OCHA ([1]) Regional Office in Johannesburg in order to ensure coherent approaches and common strategies of all the humanitarian stakeholders in the region.

([1]) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005839/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(24 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Proibição dos solários na União Europeia

A Associação Portuguesa de Cancro Cutâneo quer proibir os solários e propôs hoje uma alteração da legislação nacional que aumente a «fiscalização efetiva» destes espaços e que gradualmente os encerre de vez. Lembrando que no Brasil, um dos países com mais experiência na área do cancro cutâneo, os solários já estão proibidos, a associação salienta que, a partir de 2014, os mesmos vão estar proibidos na maior parte dos Estados-Membros da União Europeia.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Tem conhecimento desta proposta?

— Confirma o encerramento deste tipo de espaços na maior parte da União Europeia a partir de 2014?

— Concorda com o seu encerramento total a nível europeu tendo em conta o seu caráter atentatório da saúde pública?

Resposta dada por Neven Mimica em nome da Comissão
(16 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão não foi informada da proposta da Associação Portuguesa de Cancro Cutâneo, ou de qualquer outra iniciativa, para alterar a legislação portuguesa com o objetivo de encerrar progressivamente os solários. A Comissão também não dispõe de informações sobre iniciativas noutros Estados-Membros que visem uma proibição total da utilização de solários. Não pode, por conseguinte, confirmar que os solários seriam obrigados a fechar a partir de 2014. No entanto, nos últimos anos, alguns Estados-Membros adotaram legislação nacional sobre a segurança dos serviços de bronzeamento, incluindo a proibição da utilização de solários por pessoas com menos de 18 anos de idade.

A Comissão está plenamente consciente das preocupações manifestadas pelas ligas europeias contra o cancro e está a examinar atentamente as provas médicas e científicas recentes relacionadas com o aumento do risco de desenvolver cancro após a exposição às radiações UV emitidas pelos solários.

A Comissão, em cooperação com os Estados-Membros, está atualmente a ponderar as próximas etapas, tendo nomeadamente em conta as informações recebidas na reunião da Rede de Segurança dos Consumidores, em 5 de fevereiro de 2013, com representantes dos Estados-Membros e outras partes interessadas relevantes, incluindo organizações de consumidores, peritos médicos e representantes dos operadores económicos. ([1])

Para mais informações sobre o quadro jurídico relacionado com a segurança dos solários, a Comissão remete o Senhor Deputado para as respostas às perguntas escritas E-4126/09 e E-4233/09 de Jim Higgins, E-4250/09 de Catherine Stihler, E-4657/09 de Iva Zanicchi, E-5338/09 de Proinsias de Rossa e E-10982/12 ([2]) de Kriton Arsenis, Christel Schaldemose e Aloz Peterle.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/committees/docs/sum_05022013_csn_en.pdf
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005839/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(24 May 2013)

Subject: Ban on solariums in the European Union

The Portuguese Skin Cancer Association is seeking a ban on solariums and today proposed that Portuguese legislation be amended to increase the effective monitoring of such establishments and gradually to close them down for good. While recalling that solariums have already been banned in Brazil, one of the countries with the most experience when it comes to skin cancer, the association points out that, as of 2014, solariums will be banned in most EU Member States.

— Is the Commission aware of this proposal?

— Can it confirm whether these kinds of establishments will close in most EU Member States from 2014?

— Does it think that all such establishments should be closed across the EU, considering the harm they do to public health?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(16 July 2013)

The Commission was not informed of the proposal of the Portuguese Skin Cancer Association, or of any other initiative, to amend the Portuguese law with the aim of gradual closing down of tanning salons. The Commission does not have information either of initiatives in other Member States aiming at an outright ban on the use of sunbeds. It cannot, therefore, confirm that tanning salons would be obliged to close as of 2014. However, over the last years, some Member States adopted national legislation on the safety of tanning services, including the ban on the use of sunbeds by persons under the age of 18.

The Commission is fully aware of the concerns raised by the European Cancer Leagues and is carefully examining recent scientific and medical evidence related to higher risk of developing cancer following exposure to UV radiation emitted by sunbeds.

The Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, is currently considering the next steps. It takes in particular into account the information received at the meeting of the Consumer Safety Network on 5 February 2013 with representatives from Member States and other relevant stakeholders including consumer organisations, medical experts and economic operator representatives ([1]).

For additional information about the legal framework related to the safety of sunbeds, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to written questions E-4126/09 and E-4233/09 by Mr Higgins, E-4250/09 by Ms Stihler, E-4657/09 by Ms Zanicchi, E-5338/09 by Mr Proinsias de Rossa and E-10982/12 ([2]) by Mr Arsenis, Ms Schaldemose and Mr Peterle.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/committees/docs/sum_05022013_csn_en.pdf
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005840/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(24 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Angola: fome no Sul do país

Segundo declarações à agência noticiosa portuguesa *Lusa* de Dom Pio Hipunyati, bispo de Ondjiva, capital da província do Cunene, cerca de um milhão de pessoas estão ameaçadas de fome no sul de Angola devido à seca que atinge a região, que considera «a mais severa dos últimos anos».

Para Dom Pio Hipunyati, a situação é alarmante: «Choveu pouquíssimo e não haverá colheita nenhuma. Este seria o mês das colheitas, mas não há água, nem para as pessoas nem para os animais».

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Tem conhecimento desta situação? Como a caracteriza?

— Está disponível para acorrer aos mais necessitados?

— Tomou ou prevê tomar alguma medida relativamente a este assunto?

Resposta dada por Kristalina Georgieva em nome da Comissão
(23 de julho de 2013)

1. A Comissão está plenamente ciente da seca que assola Angola. No ano passado, a seca atingiu severamente dez províncias centrais e costeiras, estimando-se que 500 000 crianças sofram de subnutrição aguda. Na altura, a Comissão, em parceria com a Unicef e a World Vision, prestou assistência a nível da deteção e tratamento da subnutrição infantil nas províncias mais gravemente afetadas. O montante atribuído a esta ajuda humanitária elevou-se a 4 milhões de euros. A atual seca que se faz sentir no sul de Angola levou a uma descida muito acentuada do nível dos lençóis freáticos, que é muito inferior à média, deixando pessoas e animais sem água. A produção de sorgo parece ter sido afetada. Se tal se verificar, a subnutrição será um problema central.

2. A delegação da UE em Angola participa em reuniões regulares de coordenação, organizadas pelos gabinetes da ONU a fim de acompanhar a situação, que contam também com o envolvimento de todas as agências, ONG e doadores. Em junho de 2013, a Comissão realizou uma missão de acompanhamento em áreas afetadas pela seca para se familiarizar com a situação no terreno e reunir-se com as autoridades e as comunidades afetadas.

3. De acordo com os relatórios de que dispomos, o governo de Angola já elaborou um pacote de resposta a esta situação, que inclui o envio para a província do Cunene de produtos alimentares de base e de outros recursos utilizados na produção agrícola como adubos, sementes, etc.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005840/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(24 May 2013)

Subject: Famine in southern Angola

According to statements made to the Portuguese news agency Lusa by Dom Pio Hipunyati, the Bishop of Ondjiva, capital of the Angolan province of Cunene, around 1 million people are at risk of starvation in Angola due to the drought affecting the region, considered to be the most severe of recent years.

According to Dom Pio Hipunyati, the situation is alarming: there has been very little rain and there will be no harvest at all. This should be the harvest month, but there is no water for people or for the animals.

— Is the Commission aware of this situation? What does it have to say about it?

— Is it prepared to help those most in need?

— What steps has it taken or does it plan to take in this regard?

Answer given by Ms Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(23 July 2013)

1. The Commission is fully aware of the drought situation that is plaguing Angola. Last year when the drought severely affected ten central and coastal provinces whereby an estimated 500 000 children were affected by acute malnutrition, the Commission, in partnership with the Unicef and World Vision, assisted in detection and treatment of child malnutrition in the most affected provinces. The amount allocated for this humanitarian support was EUR 4 million. The current drought in southern part of Angola has left the water-tables much lower than average, with consequent lack of water for people and animals. Sorghum crop production appears to have been negatively affected and malnutrition might be a key issue.

2. The EU Delegation to Angola participates in regular coordination meetings organised by the UN offices with all agencies, NGOs and donors in order to follow up the drought situation. The Commission has undertaken a field monitoring mission to the drought affected areas in June 2013 to inquire into situation on the ground and to meet with authorities and the affected communities.

3. According to available reports, the government of Angola has already prepared a response package — including basic food and agricultural inputs — that have been sent to Cunene.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005841/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(24 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Marrocos: Tráfico de bebés

A Guarda Civil espanhola anunciou recentemente a descoberta de uma rede que comprou pelo menos 28 bebés em Marrocos, destinados a famílias estéreis na Península Ibérica. Trinta e uma pessoas foram acusadas deste crime. Catorze das vítimas foram identificadas e desconheciam terem sido adotadas.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Tem conhecimento deste caso?

— Dispõe de informações sobre o tráfico de bebés e crianças na União?

— Considera que a União e os Estados-Membros se encontram dotados dos meios que permitam responder adequadamente a situações como a relatada?

Resposta dada por Cecilia Malmström em nome da Comissão
(19 de julho de 2013)

Através de informações veiculadas pelos meios de comunicação social, a Comissão tem conhecimento da questão levantada pelo Senhor Deputado.

Em abril de 2013, o Eurostat e a DG Assuntos Internos publicaram o primeiro relatório com dados estatísticos sobre o tráfico de seres humanos a nível da UE. Os Estados-Membros comunicaram um aumento de 18 % do número de vítimas identificadas durante o período de 2008 a 2010. De acordo com estes dados, 15 % das vítimas são crianças. A Comissão financiou vários projetos relacionados com o tráfico de crianças, cujos pormenores estão publicados no sítio Internet da Comissão:
http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking

Não existe um quadro legislativo específico a nível da UE que abranja a venda de crianças para adoção ilegal. Porém, os Estados-Membros são obrigados a tomar as medidas adequadas para impedir a venda de crianças ao abrigo do artigo 35.° da Convenção das Nações Unidas sobre os direitos da criança e o Protocolo Facultativo da Convenção ([1]). Cabe aos Estados-Membros assegurar o cumprimento das suas obrigações decorrentes de acordos internacionais.

Relativamente aos casos de adoção ilegal que se inserem na definição de tráfico de seres humanos ([2]), existe um claro e abrangente quadro jurídico e político em vigor na UE, ao abrigo da diretiva sobre a luta contra o tráfico (que prevê instrumentos para tratar de forma eficaz os aspetos de direito penal e da prevenção, bem como da assistência e da proteção das vítimas, em especial das crianças), e a respetiva estratégia da UE, que inclui 40 medidas específicas para lutar contra este fenómeno ([3]).

A Comissão e nove Estados-Membros (Bélgica, Alemanha, Espanha, França, Itália, Países Baixos, Portugal, Reino Unido e Suécia) assinaram recentemente uma parceria para a mobilidade com Marrocos, em que acordaram reforçar a cooperação a fim de combater o tráfico de seres humanos.

([1]) Protocolo Facultativo à Convenção sobre os Direitos da Criança relativo à Venda de Crianças, Prostituição Infantil e Pornografia Infantil.
([2]) Ver o considerando n.° 11 do preâmbulo da Diretiva da UE relativa à prevenção e luta contra o tráfico de seres humanos e à proteção das vítimas (2011/36/UE).
([3]) Estratégia da União Europeia para a erradicação do tráfico de seres humanos 2012-2016, adotada em junho de 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005841/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(24 May 2013)

Subject: Trafficking of babies in Morocco

The Spanish Civil Guard recently announced that it had uncovered a network that bought at least 28 babies in Morocco and sold them to childless couples in Spain. Thirty-one people have been charged in relation to this crime. Fourteen victims, unaware that they had been adopted, have been identified.

— Is the Commission aware of this case?

— Does it have any information on the trafficking of babies and children in the EU?

— Does it think that the EU and the Member States are suitably equipped to deal with situations like the one described above?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(19 July 2013)

On the basis of reports in the media, the Commission is aware of the issue raised by the Honourable Member.

In April 2013, Eurostat and DG Home Affairs published the first report on statistical data on trafficking in human beings at the EU level. Member States reported an increase in the number of identified victims of trafficking in human beings of 18% over the three years 2008- 2010. 15% of the victims are children, according to this data. The Commission has funded a number of projects related to child trafficking, details of which are published on the Commission's anti-trafficking website: http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking.

There is no specific EU legislative framework covering the issue of sale of children for illegal adoption. Member States are however obliged to take appropriate measures to prevent the sale of children under Article 35 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention's Optional Protocol ([1]). It is for Member States to ensure that their obligations resulting from international agreements are met.

For cases of illegal adoption that fall within the definition of trafficking in human beings ([2]), there is a clear and comprehensive EU legal and policy framework based on the anti-trafficking directive (which provides for instruments to effectively address the criminal law aspects, prevention, and assistance and protection of victims, in particular children) and the related EU strategy ([3]), which includes 40 specific actions to tackle the phenomenon.

The Commission and nine Member States (Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the UK) have recently signed a Mobility Partnership with Morocco, in which they have agreed to strengthen cooperation to counter trafficking in human beings.

([1]) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.
([2]) See the Preamble to the EU Anti-trafficking Directive (Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims — 2011/36/EU), Recital 11.
([3]) EU Strategy towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings 2012- 2016, adopted June 2012.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005843/13
ao Conselho
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(24 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: Anders Fogh Rasmussen: insuficiência do «soft power» europeu

O Secretário-Geral da NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, declarou durante uma audição na Comissão Parlamentar de Assuntos Externos do Parlamento Europeu, no dia 6 de maio de 2013, que «nós, europeus, temos que compreender que apenas "soft power" na realidade significa poder nenhum. Sem capacidades "duras" que apoiem a nossa diplomacia, a Europa carecerá de credibilidade e de influência». Rasmussen declarou também que, «se as nações europeias não fizerem um compromisso firme de investirem na segurança e na defesa, então toda a retórica acerca de uma política de segurança e de defesa fortalecida não passará de ar quente».

Assim, pergunto ao Conselho:

— Que apreciação faz destas declarações do Secretário-Geral da NATO?

— Concorda com elas? Nomeadamente, crê que a credibilidade e a influência europeias se ressentem da falta de argumentos militares que a sustentem?

— Que passos concretos devem ser dados no tocante a esta questão?

Resposta
(21 de outubro de 2013)

No mês de novembro de 2012, nas suas conclusões sobre o desenvolvimento de capacidades militares, o Conselho reiterou «o seu apelo a que sejam mantidas e desenvolvidas as capacidades militares necessárias para apoiar e reforçar a PCSD», nas quais «assenta a capacidade da UE para atuar como garante da segurança». Recordou também que é necessária uma indústria europeia de defesa forte e menos fragmentada para apoiar e reforçar as capacidades militares da Europa e a capacidade de atuação autónoma da UE.

O Conselho permanece empenhado em reforçar a cooperação europeia, nomeadamente através da mutualização e partilha de capacidades militares, de modo a maximizar a eficácia das despesas de defesa da Europa. Está a ser implementada uma abordagem dual que consiste em desenvolver projetos em colaboração (por exemplo, avançar em diversos domínios fundamentais de capacidades, incluindo o reabastecimento em voo, as comunicações por satélite e a assistência médica) tornando ao mesmo tempo a cooperação europeia em matéria de defesa mais sistemática e sustentável a longo prazo, com o apoio ativo da Agência Europeia de Defesa aos esforços dos Estados-Membros.

Reforçar as capacidades de defesa é uma das prioridades para o Conselho Europeu do próximo mês de dezembro no capítulo da segurança e defesa. Em dezembro de 2012, nas suas conclusões sobre a PCSD, o Conselho Europeu salientou que os Estados-Membros da UE teriam de estar prontos a fornecer capacidades orientadas para o futuro e colmatar as lacunas críticas, nomeadamente as identificadas em recentes operações. As propostas e medidas para reforçar a PCSD e melhorar a disponibilidade das capacidades militares necessárias serão aprofundadas no Relatório da Alta Representante sobre a PCSD a apresentar ao Conselho Europeu de dezembro. Em paralelo, a Comissão Europeia contribuiu igualmente, tendo preparado uma Comunicação intitulada «Para um setor da defesa e da segurança mais competitivo e eficiente» publicada em 24 de julho de 2013, que será um elemento-chave para o fortalecimento das capacidades europeias.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005843/13
to the Council
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(24 May 2013)

Subject: Anders Fogh Rasmussen: European 'soft power' is not enough

During a hearing in the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs on 6 May 2013, the Secretary-General of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, said that 'We Europeans must understand that soft power alone is really no power at all. Without hard capabilities to back up its diplomacy, Europe will lack credibility and influence'. He went on to say that 'If European nations do not make a firm commitment to invest in security and defence, then all talk about a strengthened European defence and security policy will just be hot air'.

— What is the Council's assessment of the NATO Secretary-General's remarks?

— Does it agree with them? In particular, does it believe that Europe's credibility and influence suffer due to a lack of military capabilities to back up its diplomacy?

— What tangible steps must be taken as far as this issue is concerned?

Reply
(21 October 2013)

In November 2012 in its Conclusions on Military Capability Development the Council reiterated 'its call to retain and further develop military capabilities for sustaining and enhancing the CSDP', which 'underpin the EU's ability to act as a security provider'. It also recalled the need for a strong and less fragmented European defence industry to enhance Europe's military capabilities and the EU's capacity for autonomous action.

The Council remains committed to enhancing European defence cooperation by means which will include the pooling and sharing of military capabilities, with the aim also of maximising the effectiveness of Europe's defence expenditure. A twin-track approach is being implemented for developing collaborative projects (e.g. progress in a number of key capability areas, including air-to-air refuelling, satellite communications and medical support) while making European defence cooperation more systematic and sustainable in the long run, with the active support of the European Defence Agency for Member States' efforts.

Enhancing defence capabilities is one of the priorities for the European Council on security and defence next December. In December 2012, in its Conclusions on CSDP, the European Council underlined that EU Member States had to be ready to provide future-oriented defence capabilities and fill the critical gaps, including those identified in recent operations. Proposals and actions to strengthen CSDP and improve the availability of the required military capabilities will be further developed in the High Representative's Report on CSDP in view of the December European Council. In parallel, the European Commission has also made a contribution by preparing the communication 'Towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector' published on 24 July, 2013, which will be key to the reinforcement of European capabilities.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-005846/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(24 de maio de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Montes Golã: sequestro de observadores das Nações Unidas

Uma porta-voz das Nações Unidas referiu recentemente que um grupo armado sequestrou quatro observadores filipinos da ONU nos montes Golã. Nos últimos meses, têm ocorrido ali diversos incidentes devido ao conflito na Síria. Os quatro homens, que integram a Força das Nações Unidas de Observação da Separação nos Golã (FNUOD), foram capturados quando patrulhavam a zona-tampão entre Israel e a Síria, perto da localidade de Al-Jamlah. No início de março, rebeldes sírios mantiveram sequestrados durante vários dias 21 capacetes azuis filipinos da FNUOD na mesma região.

A força da ONU, apenas equipada com pistolas defensivas, foi mandatada em 1974 para fazer respeitar um cessar-fogo no planalto dos Golã, uma região do sudoeste da Síria ocupada na sua quase totalidade por Israel.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

— Dispõe de informações acerca do sucedido?

— Não considera que o armamento à disposição da FNUOD é manifestamente desadequado para o tipo de ameaça que hoje enfrenta e que, por isso, aquela força deveria ser dotada de novos meios capazes de assegurar a segurança do contingente de observadores? E que, sem este reforço de capacidade bélica dissuasora, os observadores das Nações Unidas continuarão sujeitos a ações do tipo das relatadas, pondo crescentemente em causa o papel da ONU na região?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(15 de julho de 2013)

A AR/VP está satisfeita com o facto de o pessoal raptado ter sido libertado. Segundo os meios de comunicação social, os rebeldes Mártires Yarmouk anunciaram que capturaram as forças de manutenção da paz e, em seguida, libertaram-nas.

A UE continua a recear repercussões da escalada do conflito na Síria na sua vizinhança. A UE apelou a todas as partes para que se abstenham de lançar ataques transfronteiriços, respeitem a integridade territorial e a soberania de todos os países da região e apelou especificamente para que respeitem a liberdade de circulação e a integridade física do pessoal da UNDOF e da UNTSO.

A AR/VP não está em posição de comentar as necessidades das missões da ONU.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005846/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(24 May 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Kidnapping of United Nations (UN) observers in the Golan Heights

According to a United Nations spokesperson, an armed group has kidnapped four Philippine UN observers in the Golan Heights. In recent months, there have been several incidents in the area due to the conflict in Syria. The four men, members of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights, were captured while they were patrolling the ceasefire zone between Israel and Syria, close to the Al-Jamlah area. In early March, Syrian rebels held 21 Philippine UNDOF peacekeepers for several days in the same region.

The UN force, whose members only carry pistols for protection, was given the mandate in 1974 to ensure observance of a ceasefire on the Golan plateau, a region of southwest Syria almost completely occupied by Israel.

— Does the Vice-President/High Representative have any information about what happened?

— Does she not think that the UNDOF is clearly inadequately armed to deal with the kind of threat it now faces and that the force should therefore be armed with new weapons that can guarantee the safety of observers? Does she also not agree that unless they are more heavily armed to act as a deterrent, UN observers will continue to fall prey to incidents like this, putting the UN's role in the region increasingly at risk?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

The HR/VP is happy that the kidnapped personnel has been released. Based on media, the rebel Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade announced that it seized the peacekeepers and then released them.

The EU continues to worry about escalating spill over effects of the conflict in Syria in its neighbourhood. It has called on all sides to refrain from cross-border attacks, respect territorial integrity and sovereignty of all countries in the region and called specifically to respect the freedom of movement and physical integrity of UNDOF and UNTSO personnel.

The HR/VP is not in a position to comment on the needs of UN missions.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005848/13
to the Commission
Daniel Hannan (ECR)
(24 May 2013)

Subject: Liverpool cruise terminal update

The Commission has been investigating the provision of state aid to the Liverpool cruise terminal by the UK Government for over a year:

— Has the UK Government now formally notified the Commission in respect of the state aid provided?

— When will the Commission make a decision in respect of the state aid provided?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(4 July 2013)

The UK Government has not formally notified the measure in question.

The Commission is awaiting information from the UK authorities in order to finalise its assessment and cannot at this point give an indication of when it will adopt a decision on the measure in question.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005850/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(24 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Normativa dell'Unione in materia di welfare

Lo scorso marzo 2013, con il discorso del primo ministro David Cameron, il governo britannico ha comunicato la sua intenzione, a fronte della difficoltà di adottare tutti i provvedimenti necessari, di limitare l'accesso ai servizi di welfare per i cittadini dell'Unione non britannici. La posizione dell'esecutivo inglese è condivisa anche da Olanda, Germania e Austria che, come la Gran Bretagna, sono preoccupate per l'accesso alla libera circolazione, nel 2014, da parte dei cittadini rumeni e bulgari i quali, finita la moratoria sui loro trasferimenti, potranno cercare lavoro al di fuori dei rispettivi paesi.

Preso atto che il portavoce del commissario Andor, Jonathan Todd, parlando del problema del turismo del welfare, ha affermato lo scorso 12 marzo 2013 che, se il problema fosse portato all'attenzione della Commissione sarebbe valutato, verificando prima di tutto se l'attuale legislazione dell'UE, che è pensata per evitare proprio il turismo del welfare, sia stata applicata correttamente dagli Stati, e che, se vi fosse un problema che va al di là della legislazione dell'UE, esso sarebbe affrontato; considerata la crisi economica che mette a rischio nei bilanci statali la garanzia dei servizi minimi ai cittadini di ciascuno Stato membro, si chiede alla Commissione di rispondere ai quesiti di seguito elencati.

— È al corrente della situazione?

— Ritiene sufficiente la denuncia del problema da parte di quattro importanti governi degli Stati membri per attivare una seria indagine sul turismo del welfare in Europa?

— Considera che gli strumenti messi a disposizione degli Stati membri dal diritto dell'Unione, alla luce delle difficoltà introdotte dalla crisi economica e finanziaria, siano adeguati e sufficienti a contrastare il pericolo di un turismo del welfare?

— Data l'attuale situazione economica, non considera necessaria l'introduzione di misure volte a limitare l'impatto sui conti pubblici degli Stati membri dei servizi per romeni e bulgari che si verificheranno a partire dal prossimo gennaio?

— Ritiene ammissibile l'ipotesi che i singoli Stati membri possano riservarsi il diritto di adottare misure restrittive per i cittadini dell'Unione che non hanno mai lavorato o risieduto all'interno dei rispettivi territori nazionali?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(15 luglio 2013)

La Commissione è al corrente del dibattito in corso in alcuni Stati membri al quale fa riferimento l'onorevole parlamentare.

Stante la necessità di accertare i fatti, raccogliere i dati pertinenti e chiarire le questioni giuridiche connesse, la commissione amministrativa per il coordinamento dei sistemi di previdenza sociale ha ricevuto il mandato di fornire ulteriori indicazioni sui criteri sanciti dalla normativa europea nei casi in cui la residenza abituale di cittadini non attivi, che si spostano all'interno dell'UE, sia determinata ai fini dell'applicazione del regolamento (CE) n. 883/2004 ([1]) relativo al coordinamento dei sistemi di sicurezza sociale. La commissione amministrativa è tenuta a modificare di conseguenza, entro la fine di quest'anno, la Guida pratica: La legislazione applicabile ai lavoratori nell'Unione europea (UE), nello Spazio economico europeo (SEE) e in Svizzera entro la fine di quest'anno.

Nell'ultima riunione del Consiglio dei ministri della Giustizia e degli affari interni, inoltre, il Consiglio ha preso atto delle preoccupazioni espresse da quattro Stati membri, invitandoli a presentare dati e statistiche sulla natura e sulla portata delle questioni sollevate, in modo che la Commissione possa esaminarle ulteriormente in seno al gruppo di esperti sulla libera circolazione delle persone (FREEMO). La Commissione elaborerà un rapporto per il Consiglio GAI, eventualmente coinvolgendo il Consiglio riunito in formazione EPSCO.

([1]) Regolamento (CE) n. 883/2004 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 29 aprile 2004, relativo al coordinamento dei sistemi di sicurezza sociale, (GU L 166 del 30.4.2004.

La Commissione ritiene che non sia opportuno trarre conclusioni fintantoché i suddetti organismi non abbiano completato il loro lavoro.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005850/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(24 May 2013)

Subject: EU welfare legislation

In March 2013, the British Prime Minister David Cameron announced his government's intention of curbing access to welfare for non-British EU citizens, in view of the difficulties in providing benefits for all. The position of the British Government is shared by the Netherlands, Germany and Austria, which are also concerned at the situation which will arise once full freedom of movement is enjoyed by Romanian and Bulgarian citizens who will, at the end of the transitional period in 2014, be entitled to seek employment outside their own countries.

On 12 March 2013, Jonathan Todd, spokesperson for Commissioner Andor, indicated that, if the problem of health tourism were brought to the Commission's attention, it would receive careful consideration. First and foremost, it would be necessary to verify whether current EU legislation designed to prevent welfare tourism was being properly implemented in the Member States and that, if problems were arising which exceeded the scope of EU legislation, they would also be addressed. In view of the current financial crisis and the resulting risk to guaranteed minimum public services in each of the Member States:

— Is the Commission aware of this situation?

— Does it consider that the concerns expressed by four major EU Member State governments are sufficiently serious to launch an in-depth investigation into welfare tourism in Europe?

— Does it consider that the EU legal instruments available to the Member States are suitable and adequate to meet the danger of welfare tourism, particularly in view of the difficulties arising from the economic and financial crisis?

— In view of the current economic situation, does it not consider it necessary to adopt measures to limit the impact on public finances in the Member States of providing benefits for Romanian and Bulgarian citizens from next January?

— Does it consider it admissible for individual Member States to reserve the right to adopt restrictive measures in respect of EU citizens who have neither lived nor worked within their respective national borders?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(15 July 2013)

The Commission is aware of the debate referred to by the Honourable Member which is under way in some Member States.

Given the need to determine the facts, gather the data of relevance and clarify the legal issues involved, the Administrative Commission on the Coordination of Social Security Systems has been mandated to give more guidance on the criteria applying under European law when the habitual residence of non-active citizens who move within the EU is determined for the purposes of applying Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 ([1]) on the coordination of social security systems. The Administrative Commission is expected to amend the Practical Guide on 'The legislation that applies to workers in the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) and in Switzerland' accordingly by the end of this year.

Furthermore, at the latest Council meeting of Justice and Home Affairs Ministers, the Council took note of the concerns raised by four Member States and invited them to submit data and statistics about the nature and the scope of the issues raised so that the Commission, in the context of the FREEMO experts group, could examine this further. The Commission will prepare a report for the JHA Council, with the possible involvement of the EPSCO formation of the Council.

The Commission does not consider it appropriate to draw any conclusions before those committees have finalised their work.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the coordination of social security systems, OJ L 166, 30.4.2004.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005851/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(24 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Dismissione di termovalorizzatori e rifiuti in diminuzione, ma è davvero così?

In più occasioni durante i dibattiti pubblici e sul web diversi movimenti contrari alla termovalorizzazione hanno affermato che l'Europa sta dismettendo i propri impianti di termovalorizzazione, ma è davvero così? Alcuni dati (Ispra) dimostrano come, ad oggi, l'incenerimento con recupero energetico dei rifiuti non sia affatto un metodo in disuso; al contrario, il ricorso alla termovalorizzazione è notevolmente aumentato negli ultimi decenni. Di fatto, la termovalorizzazione dei rifiuti va riconosciuta come una fase essenziale di un sistema di gestione dei rifiuti corretto e integrato. A riprova di ciò: in Europa sono attivi più di 350 termovalorizzatori (cui se ne aggiungeranno oltre 100 entro il 2012) in 18 paesi diversi; tali impianti trattano ogni anno circa 40 milioni di tonnellate di rifiuti solidi urbani. Tutti i paesi europei più virtuosi nella gestione del ciclo integrato dei rifiuti ricorrono all'incenerimento con recupero energetico; si vedano ad esempio la Francia e la Germania, ma anche la Svezia, la Danimarca e l'Olanda (www.cewep.com). In particolare, la Francia con i suoi 123 termovalorizzatori è il paese europeo con il maggior numero di impianti; la Germania è invece quello che brucia la maggior quantità di rifiuti (12 milioni di tonnellate ogni anno), a fronte di 58 impianti operativi. A loro volta, Svezia e Danimarca bruciano rispettivamente il 55 % e il 50 % dei loro rifiuti. In Olanda, invece, sorgono alcuni fra i più grandi inceneritori d'Europa.

I termovalorizzatori moderni sono dotati di tutti i sistemi più avanzati di riduzione e controllo delle emissioni che li rendono sostenibili, perché compatibili con le esigenze di tutela ambientale; inoltre, come dimostrano numerosi esempi europei, questo tipo di impianti è integrato all'interno di contesti urbani sia da un punto di vista dell'accettazione da parte della comunità locale, sia da un punto di vista architettonico.

Può la Commissione far sapere se intende eseguire studi che valutino l'impatto dovuto agli accantonamenti già effettuati per la dismissione degli impianti e il relativo ripristino delle aree dismesse?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(1º luglio 2013)

La Commissione non è a conoscenza di una tendenza a disattivare gli impianti di termovalorizzazione nell'UE. Al contrario, alcuni Stati membri stanno costruendo nuovi termovalorizzatori in modo da evitare che i rifiuti vengano portati alle discariche e agli inceneritori senza recupero di energia, e riuscendo invece, in qualche caso, a disattivare questi ultimi.

La conformità con le norme in materia di tutela ambientale non rende i moderni termovalorizzatori sostenibili di per sé. Benché tali impianti possano costituire un elemento legittimo in una strategia di gestione dei rifiuti, e siano generalmente da preferire all'impiego delle discariche, la gerarchia dei rifiuti prevista nella direttiva quadro sui rifiuti indica chiaramente, fra i metodi preferiti, ove possibile, il riciclaggio, il riutilizzo e, infine, la riduzione dei rifiuti. Nel caso degli Stati membri che hanno investito somme ingenti in impianti di incenerimento, essi sono ora legati a tale modalità di smaltimento per parecchi anni, cosa che può impedir loro di passare a opzioni che figurano a livelli superiori nella gerarchia dei rifiuti.

La Commissione non prevede di realizzare studi volti a valutare l'impatto dei rifiuti ritirati in seguito a tali disattivazioni, né riguardanti il ripristino delle aree dismesse. In tali casi spetta agli Stati membri garantire che i rifiuti siano trattati conformemente al piano di gestione dei rifiuti e secondo la gerarchia dei rifiuti.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005851/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(24 May 2013)

Subject: Decommissioning of waste-to-energy (WTE) plants and reduction of waste — but is that really the case?

On several occasions during public debates and on the web, various anti-incineration movements have argued that Europe is decommissioning its waste-to-energy (WTE) plants, but is that really the case? According to some data (Ispra), to date, incineration with energy recovery is by no means a method that is no longer used; on the contrary, waste-to-energy has increased substantially in recent decades. Indeed, the conversion of waste to energy should be recognised as a vital phase of a system of proper integrated waste management. Evidence of this can be found in the fact that in Europe there are more than 350 active WTE plants (to which a further 100 will be added by the end of 2012) in 18 different countries. Every year these plants treat about 40 million tonnes of municipal solid waste. All the EU countries that are the most 'virtuous' as regards integrated waste management use incineration with energy recovery — for example France and Germany, but also Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands (www.cewep.com). France, in particular, with its 123 incinerators, is the European country with the largest number of plants, while Germany is the country that burns the largest amount of waste (12 million tonnes per year), with 58 operational plants. In turn, Sweden and Denmark burn respectively 55% and 50% of their waste. The Netherlands, meanwhile, has some of the largest incinerators in Europe.

Modern WTE plants are equipped with all the most advanced systems to reduce and control emissions, making them sustainable, because they are compatible with environmental protection requirements. Moreover, as shown in many cases in Europe, this type of plant is integrated within its urban environment, both architecturally and from the point of view of acceptance by the local community.

Does the Commission intend to conduct any studies to evaluate the impact of the waste that has already been set aside due to the decommissioning of plants and the relevant restoration of brownfield sites?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(1 July 2013)

The Commission is not aware of a trend in decommissioning Waste-to-Energy (WtE) plants in the EU. On the contrary, some Member States are building new WtE plants so as to divert waste from landfills and incinerators without energy recovery, thus leading to the decommissioning of the latter in some cases.

Compatibility with environmental protection requirements does not make modern WtE plants sustainable *per se*. Although such plants can be a legitimate element of a waste management strategy, and are generally preferable to landfilling, the waste hierarchy set out in the Waste Framework Directive clearly favours recycling, re-use and ultimately waste reduction as preferred approaches where possible. Where Member States have sunk large amounts of capital into incineration plants they are locked into this treatment option for many years which may inhibit them from moving to options that are higher in the waste hierarchy.

The Commission does not envisage conducting studies to evaluate the impact of the waste set aside following such decommissions and the restoration of brownfield sites. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the Member States to ensure that such waste is treated in compliance with the applicable waste management plan and in line with the waste hierarchy.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005852/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(24 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: L'ipilimumab: una possibile svolta nel trattamento dei melanomi e di altre gravi patologie oncologiche

Recentemente è iniziata la seconda parte di uno studio intrapreso da un network italiano operativo nel campo della ricerca sulla bioterapia dei tumori, che durerà fino al 2015, concernente l'utilizzo dell'ipilimumab, un anticorpo monoclonale sviluppato recentemente, nel trattamento della più grave tipologia di tumore della pelle: il melanoma. Il ruolo dell'ipilimumab è quello di andare a modificare il comportamento dei linfociti T citotossici (o Cytotoxic T Lymphocytes, CTLs), cioè quei fondamentali microrganismi che hanno la funzione di distruggere le cellule malate, le quali sono identificabili in virtù del fatto che producono i cosiddetti antigeni (antibody generators, generatori di anticorpi); i CTLs, infatti, vengono attivati quando le cellule dendritiche riconoscono un antigene, lo catturano ed in seguito lo «presentano» agli stessi CTLs nei linfonodi. Questo meccanismo, però, talvolta si arresta a causa di un recettore che è presente nei CTLs: l'antigene-4 associato ai CTLs (meglio conosciuto con l'acronimo CTLA-4, ovvero Cytotoxic T Lymphocyte-associated antigen 4). Quest'ultimo ha la capacità di inibire l'attività di distruzione delle cellule malate, comprese le cellule cancerose, favorendo così la loro proliferazione. L'ipilimumab agisce sul CTLA-4 mettendo i CTLs in grado di svolgere la loro funzione senza limitazione.

Considerato che la scoperta potrebbe avere dei risvolti estremamente positivi per l'efficacia delle cure per gravi patologie tumorali quale il melanoma, ma anche in altri casi, dato che l'ipilimumab può avere un ampio utilizzo; che la prima parte dello studio, svoltosi su 86 pazienti e conclusosi nel 2011, ha avuto risultati decisamente incoraggianti, come un tasso di riduzione dei melanomi del 46,5 % e un aumento della sopravvivenza dal 25 %, in caso di trattamento standard, al 52,6 %; che l'immunoterapia, cioè l'induzione clinica di un aumento delle prestazioni del proprio sistema immunitario, può avere notevoli vantaggi ma presentare anche diverse controindicazioni,

si chiede alla Commissione:

— Può esprimere la propria posizione sul trattamento oncologico in questione?

— Era a conoscenza dei progressi delle ricerche sull'ipilimumab e intende promuovere un ulteriore sviluppo anche con opportuni finanziamenti?

— Può mettere in luce gli eventuali effetti collaterali dovuti all'utilizzo del medicinale e le associazioni con altre sostanze che possono essere pericolose per i pazienti?

— Può valutare l'istituzione di una campagna informativa sulle potenzialità dell'ipilimumab?

Risposta di Máire Geoghegan-Quinn a nome della Commissione
(17 luglio 2013)

L'ipilimumab è la sostanza attiva del medicinale denominato Yervoy, utilizzato per curare il melanoma avanzato in soggetti adulti che hanno già ricevuto una precedente terapia. L'Unione europea ha accordato l'autorizzazione all'immissione in commercio nel 2011 ([1]). Il parere scientifico dell'Agenzia europea per i medicinali ha concluso che il rapporto rischi/benefici del Yervoy per l'indicazione di cui sopra è positivo ([2]).

La Commissione è a conoscenza dei progressi realizzati nelle ricerche sull'ipilimumab, compreso lo studio al quale fa riferimento l'onorevole parlamentare, condotto dal Network italiano per la bioterapia dei tumori (NIBIT) ([3]). Il 7° PQ ([4]) mette a disposizione finanziamenti per 123 milioni di euro (45 progetti) a favore della ricerca sugli approcci immunoterapici ai tumori, comprese le terapie basate sugli anticorpi come l'ipilimumab. La proposta della Commissione per Orizzonte 2020 — Programma quadro di ricerca e innovazione (2014-2020) ([5]) offrirà probabilmente ulteriori opportunità di ricerca sulle terapie tumorali.

([1]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/medicines/human/medicines/002213/human_med_001465.jsp&mid=WC0b01ac058001d124.
([2]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/EPAR_-_Public_assessment_report/human/002213/WC500109302.pdf
([3]) Di Giacomo et al. (2012) Lancet Oncol. 13: 879-86.
([4]) Settimo programma quadro per le attività di ricerca, sviluppo tecnologico e dimostrazione (2007-2013).
([5]) www.ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents.

Il farmaco Yervoy è generalmente associato a reazioni avverse, anche gravi, legate all'eccessiva attività del sistema immunitario. Le informazioni sulle reazioni avverse, le avvertenze speciali e le interazioni con altri medicinali sono disponibili nelle informazioni sul prodotto, approvate per pazienti e medici ([6]).

L'autorizzazione all'immissione in commercio stabilisce una condizione circa l'uso sicuro del prodotto: tutti i medici che prescrivono l'ipilimumab e i pazienti che lo assumono devono ricevere un opuscolo sulle gravi reazioni avverse menzionate. I pazienti ricevono inoltre una scheda contenente le principali informazioni per l'uso sicuro del medicinale.

Le autorizzazioni all'immissione in commercio concesse dalla Commissione attraverso la procedura centralizzata sono valide in tutti gli Stati membri. Non compete alla Commissione promuovere alcun medicinale specifico.

([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/documents/community-register/2012/20120621123567/anx_123567_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005852/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(24 May 2013)

Subject: Ipilimumab: a possible breakthrough in the treatment of melanoma and other serious forms of cancer

The second part of a study carried out by an Italian network which undertakes research into cancer biotherapy has recently begun. The study will last until 2015 and concerns the use of ipilimumab, a recently developed monoclonal antibody, in the treatment of the most serious type of skin cancer, melanoma. The role of ipilimumab is to change the behaviour of cytotoxic T lymphocytes — CTLs, i.e. those vital microorganisms that have the role of destroying diseased cells, which are identifiable due to the fact that they produce so-called antigens (antibody generators). CTLs, in fact, are activated when dendritic cells recognise an antigen, capture it and later 'present' it to the same CTLs in the lymph nodes. This mechanism, however, is sometimes halted by a receptor in the CTLs — the CTLA-4 antigen (cytotoxic T lymphocyte-associated antigen 4). The latter has the ability to inhibit the destruction of diseased cells, including cancer cells, thereby promoting their proliferation. Ipilimumab affects CTLA-4, enabling CTLs to perform their function without limitation.

Considering that this discovery could have extremely positive implications as regards the effectiveness of treatments for serious forms of cancer, such as melanoma, but also in other cases, given that ipilimumab can be widely used; given that the results of the first part of the study, involving 86 patients and completed in 2011, were very encouraging, such as a melanoma reduction rate of 46.5% and an increase in the survival rate ranging from 25% in the case of standard treatment, to 52.6%; given that immunotherapy, i.e. the clinical induction of immune response, can have significant benefits but also several drawbacks,

can the Commission answer the following questions:

— Can it express its views on the cancer treatment in question?

— Was it aware of the progress being made in the ipilimumab research and will it promote further development of that research, also by making appropriate funding available?

— Can it shed light on the possible side effects of the use of this medication and any associations with other substances that might be dangerous for patients?

— Will it consider launching an information campaign on the potential of ipilimumab?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(17 July 2013)

Ipilimumab is the active substance of the medicinal product Yervoy, which is used to treat advanced melanoma in adults who have received prior therapy. The European Union granted marketing authorisation in 2011 ([1]). The European Medicines Agency's scientific opinion concluded that the overall benefit/risk balance of Yervoy in the abovementioned indication is positive ([2]).

The Commission is aware of the progress made on ipilimumab, including the publication mentioned by the Honourable Member, conducted by the Italian Network for Tumour Biotherapy ([3]). FP7 ([4]) provides support in the amount of EUR 123 million (45 projects) to research on cancer immunotherapeutic approaches including antibody-based therapeutics like ipilimumab. The Commission's proposal for Horizon 2020, the framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) ([5]), is likely to offer further opportunities for research on cancer therapies.

Yervoy is commonly associated with adverse effects resulting from the excessive activity of the immune system, including severe reactions. Information on adverse reactions, special warnings and interactions with other medicinal products is provided in the approved product information for patients and physicians ([6]).

([1]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/medicines/human/medicines/002213/human_med_001465.jsp&mid=WC0b01ac058001d124
([2]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/EPAR_-_Public_assessment_report/human/002213/WC500109302.pdf
([3]) Di Giacomo et al. (2012) *Lancet Oncol.* 13: 879-86.
([4]) The Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7, 2007-2013).
([5]) www.ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/documents/community-register/2012/20120621123567/anx_123567_en.pdf

The marketing authorisation sets a condition with regard to the safe use of the product: all ipilimumab-prescribing physicians and patients are provided with a brochure addressing the severe adverse effects mentioned. Patients will also receive an alert card containing key safety information on the medicine.

Marketing authorisations granted by the Commission via the centralised procedure are valid in all EU Member States. It is not the role of the Commission to promote any specific medicinal product.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-005853/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(24 maggio 2013)

Oggetto: Prodotti OGM e celiachia: vi è il nesso di causalità

La celiachia costituisce oggi un rilevante problema nel sistema sanitario nazionale e mondiale, anche perché solo un caso su sette è diagnosticato. Si pensi che se fino a qualche anno fa si registrava un caso di celiachia ogni 1.000/2.000 persone, oggi invece se ne registra uno ogni 100/150 persone. Alla base della malattia vi è l'intolleranza al glutine, conosciuto come «colla» del grano, che l'uomo ha artificialmente amplificato nel corso dei secoli con incroci botanici ripetuti, sia naturali sia artificiali, fino a ottenere una spiga miniaturizzata che non si piega al vento e ricca di chicchi dorati, e quindi di glutine. Tali modifiche del frumento sono state rese possibili attraverso l'alterazione di una sua proteina, la gliadina, che è alla base del malassorbimento del glutine nei celiaci. Diversi centri di ricerca in Italia stanno analizzando la sussistenza del nesso causa-effetto fra modificazioni genetiche del frumento e celiachia, derivante dalla differenza della composizione degli amminoacidi della gliadina del frumento geneticamente modificato, rispetto al frumento originario.

I prodotti contenenti OGM devono essere sottoposti dall'Unione europea a una valutazione del rischio alimentare. L'Unione sembra pericolosamente andare verso la liberalizzazione di tali prodotti, senza però aver prima esaminato con studi e ricerche scientifiche mirate quali effetti produce l'assunzione di OGM sull'organismo umano. I casi di celiachia legati all'assunzione di glutine, contenuto in larga misura in alcuni prodotti con OGM, registrano un sensibile l'aumento e generano un problema al sistema sanitario nazionale e mondiale, sotto il profilo diagnostico e dei costi sociali da sostenere a livello nazionale. La ricerca scientifica ha iniziato a studiare la causalità tra OGM e celiachia.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione far sapere se intende:

— approfondire quanto ipotizzato da un gruppo di medici italiani sul nesso di causalità tra frumento geneticamente modificato e celiachia;

— sviluppare nuovi canali di ricerca sugli effetti dei prodotti geneticamente modificati, il cui uso è già fin troppo diffuso nei paesi dell'UE;

— promuovere campagne di sensibilizzazione del personale sanitario e dei cittadini al riguardo?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(24 luglio 2013)

1. L'uso di grano geneticamente modificato (GM) per la produzione di alimenti o mangimi non è autorizzato né a livello di Unione né a livello mondiale. Secondo la Commissione non è previsto che nel prossimo futuro siano presentate richieste di autorizzazione di grano geneticamente modificato; inoltre, nessuno degli OGM ([1]) autorizzati (o in corso di autorizzazione) nell'Unione contiene glutine. Al momento sono in corso alcune sperimentazioni sul grano GM ([2]) sotto la responsabilità degli Stati membri. L'impiego di OGM per la produzione di alimenti e mangimi viene autorizzato solo dopo una rigorosa valutazione dei rischi effettuata dall'EFSA ([3]), tesa a dimostrare la sicurezza per la salute umana ed animale nonché per l'ambiente. Ciò comprende un'analisi della composizione nonché una valutazione nutrizionale e dell'esposizione tra gli OGM e la loro versione convenzionale.

2. La ricerca sugli OGM rientra tra le priorità della Commissione da più di un decennio ([4]) e prosegue nell'ambito della proposta della Commissione «Orizzonte 2020». Il legame tra gli OGM e la celiachia può essere affrontato nel contesto della sfida relativa a «prodotti alimentari e regimi alimentari sani e sicuri», mediante ricerche relative all'impatto dell'alimentazione sulle funzioni fisiologiche, al legame tra dieta, disturbi e regimi alimentari nonché alla valutazione dei rischi e dell'esposizione agli OGM.

([1]) Organismi Geneticamente Modificati.
([2]) http://gmoinfo.jrc.ec.europa.eu/gmp_browse.aspx.
([3]) Autorità europea per la sicurezza alimentare.
([4]) A decade of EU-funded GMO research (2001-2010).

3. Per garantire che i consumatori (celiaci compresi) dispongano delle informazioni necessarie per prendere decisioni sicure ed informate, il regolamento (UE) n. 1169/2011 ([5]) prevede un'etichettatura obbligatoria per tutti gli alimenti su cui siano riportati gli ingredienti — inclusi quelli contenenti glutine — che provocano frequentemente allergie o intolleranze. Il regolamento (CE) n. 41/2009 ([6]) armonizza le condizioni per l'etichettatura degli alimenti «senza glutine» e «con contenuto di glutine molto basso». Ciò garantisce che i celiaci siano adeguatamente informati riguardo alla presenza sul mercato di diversi prodotti alimentari adatti alle loro esigenze e al loro livello di sensibilità ([7]).

([5]) GU L 304 del 22.11.2011, pag. 18.
([6]) GU L 16 del 21.1.2009, pag. 3.
([7]) Ai sensi del regolamento (UE) n. 609/2013 (GU L 181 del 29.6.2013, pag. 35), in futuro le disposizioni del regolamento (CE) n. 41/2009 saranno trasferite nell'ambito del regolamento (UE) n. 1169/2011 per motivi di chiarezza e di coerenza.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005853/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(24 May 2013)

Subject: Causal link between products containing GMOs and celiac disease

Celiac disease is a significant problem for national and global health systems today, particularly as only one in seven cases is diagnosed. Until only a few years ago, celiac disease was thought to affect one in every 1000-2000 people, whereas today the accepted figure is one in 100-150 people. The key factor in the disease is intolerance of gluten, which is often described as the 'glue' in wheat and wheat products. Over the course of the centuries man has artificially modified wheat, repeatedly cross-breeding both natural and artificial species to obtain a miniature version, which does not bend in the wind and has a head full of golden grains, and therefore also of gluten. These modifications have been made possible by alterations to the structure of one of the proteins in wheat, gliadin, which is at the root of celiac patients' inability to absorb gluten. A number of research centres in Italy are analysing whether there is a cause-and-effect link between genetically modified wheat and celiac disease stemming from the altered amino acid sequence found in the gliadin of GMO wheat.

Rather than stipulating that products containing GMOs must undergo stringent food-risk assessments, the EU instead seems to be on a dangerous course towards liberalising the marketing of such products without having first commissioned studies and scientific research into the effects on the human body of ingesting GMOs. The number of cases of celiac disease linked to the ingestion of gluten, which is found in large amounts in certain products containing GMOs, is increasing significantly, causing problems for national and global health systems, given the difficulty in diagnosing the disease, and generating social costs at national level. Scientific research into the link between GMOs and celiac disease has already started.

In view of the above, can the Commission say whether it intends to:

— explore the link between genetically modified wheat and celiac disease, as posited by a group of Italian doctors?

— develop new avenues of research into the effects of genetically modified products, which are already far too widely used throughout the EU?

— promote awareness-raising campaigns for healthcare professionals and the public concerning the link between GMO products and celiac disease?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(24 July 2013)

1. No Genetically modified (GM) wheat has been authorised for food and feed use in the EU and worlwide. It is the Commission's understanding that no application for authorisation of a GM wheat is expected to be made in the foreseeable future, and none of the GMOs ([1]) authorised in the EU, or in the authorisation pipeline, contain gluten. Some field trials with GM wheat are being performed ([2]), under the responsibility of the Member States. GMOs can be authorised for food and feed use only after having undergone a stringent risk assessment performed by EFSA ([3]) to demonstrate their safety for human and animal health and for the environment. This includes a compositional analysis and a nutritional and exposure assessment of the GMO compared to its conventional counterpart.

2. Research on GMOs has been a priority for the Commission for over a decade ([4]) and continues in the Commission's proposal of the Horizon 2020. GMOs and celiac disease may be addressed by the Challenge of healthy and safe foods and diets through research on the impact of food on physiological functions, links between diet, disorders and dietary patterns and risk and exposure assessment of GMOs.

([1]) Genetically Modified Organisms.
([2]) http://gmoinfo.jrc.ec.europa.eu/gmp_browse.aspx
([3]) European Food Safety Authority.
([4]) A decade of EU-funded GMO research (2001-2010).

3. To ensure that consumers, including celiacs, are provided with adequate information to make informed and safe choices, Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 ([5]) requires for all food a mandatory labelling of ingredients causing the most common allergies or intolerances, including gluten-containing ingredients. Regulation (EC) No 41/2009 ([6]) harmonises conditions for labelling a food as 'gluten-free' or 'very low gluten'. This ensures that celiacs are adequately informed on the presence on the market of different foods appropriate for their needs and level of sensitivity ([7])

([5]) OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p.18.
([6]) OJ L 16, 21.1.2009, p. 3.
([7]) Pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 609/2013 (OJ L 181, 29.6.2013, p. 35), the rules of Regulation (EC) No 41/2009 will in the future be transferred under Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 for the sake of clarity of consistency.

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