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Parlamento Europeo

PREGUNTAS ESCRITAS FORMULADAS CON SOLICITUD DE RESPUESTA ESCRITA

2014/C 208/01 Preguntas escritas formuladas por los diputados al Parlamento Europeo y las respuestas de una de las instituciones de la Unión Europea 1

(Véase el aviso al lector)

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Aviso al lector

La presente publicación contiene preguntas escritas formuladas por los diputados al Parlamento Europeo y las respuestas de una de las instituciones de la Unión Europea.

En el caso de cada una de las preguntas y respuestas se presenta, antes de una posible traducción, la versión original.

Es posible que, en algunos casos, la respuesta esté redactada en una lengua distinta a la de la pregunta. Esto depende de la lengua de trabajo de la comisión a la que se solicita la respuesta.

Las cuestiones y respuestas se publican de conformidad con los artículos 117 y 118 del Reglamento del Parlamento Europeo.

Se puede acceder a todas las preguntas y respuestas a través de la página web del Parlamento Europeo (Europarl) bajo el epígrafe «Preguntas parlamentarias»:

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

ABREVIATURAS UTILIZADAS PARA LOS GRUPOS POLÍTICOS

PPE	Grupo del Partido Popular Europeo (Demócrata-cristianos)
S&D	Grupo de la Alianza Progresista de Socialistas y Demócratas en el Parlamento Europeo
ALDE	Grupo de la Alianza de los Demócratas y Liberales por Europa
Verts/ALE	Grupo de los Verdes/Alianza Libre Europea
ECR	Conservadores y Reformistas Europeos
GUE/NGL	Grupo Confederal de la Izquierda Unitaria Europea/Izquierda Verde Nórdica
EFD	Europa de la Libertad y de la Democracia
NI	No inscritos

IV

(Informaciones)

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PARLAMENTO EUROPEO

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Preguntas escritas formuladas por los diputados al Parlamento Europeo y las respuestas de una de las instituciones de la Unión Europea

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(English version)

Question for written answer E-010904/13
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: Functioning of the energy market

Title XXI of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that Union policy on energy must aim to ensure the functioning of the energy market. In the opinion of the Commission, would price capping by a Member State be detrimental to the functioning of the energy market?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(14 November 2013)

A functioning energy market with effective competition between energy companies is the best guarantee for cost-reflective energy prices. However, such a market cannot be achieved without prices being based on supply and demand fundamentals. State intervention in the form of general caps for energy retail prices tend to have a detrimental effect on the functioning of the energy market as they deter new suppliers from market entry by reducing incentives for innovation and investment by both new entrants and incumbents, and holding back the development of stronger competition for the benefit of the consumer. While protection of vulnerable consumers remains paramount also in an integrated and competition-driven internal energy market, it can be more effectively provided through more targeted means than general price caps — e.g. through social policy programmes or targeted assistance measures addressing specific drivers of consumers' vulnerabilities.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010905/13
to the Commission
Giles Chichester (ECR) and Ashley Fox (ECR)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: The online gambling sector in Europe

The online gambling sector in the EU is inherently cross-border and has the potential to make a significant contribution to the success of the single market. However, the current fragmentation of the sector is putting a brake on its expansion. Certain Member States operate under different licensing policies, some of which are discriminatory or overly burdensome, making it hard for operators to expand their businesses across the EU. This has led to a highly piecemeal approach to regulating the sector, far from the single market ideal. Greater EU cooperation would both protect consumers and promote competition.

1. Is the Commission aware that the current fragmented regulatory treatment of online gambling within the EU constitutes a competitive opportunity for the United States in the e-commerce sector? What steps does the Commission believe are required to ensure that a more coherent approach is taken in order to prevent a further loss of competitive advantage for the EU?

2. Given the absence of consensus within the EU on the licensing and regulation of online gambling, what steps will the Commission take to ensure effective cooperation between Member States' regulators?

3. Is the Commission concerned that an unintended effect of the current fragmented regulatory framework for online gambling in the EU is that legitimate European operators are rendered less competitive than those outside the EU and that this is pushing consumers into jurisdictions where regulatory oversight and consumer protection are lower?

4. Given the intended application to the online gambling sector of the Fourth Money Laundering Directive, what measures will the Commission be taking to ensure that the sector is put on an equal footing with the broader e-commerce and financial services sectors (e.g. introducing a supranational anti-money laundering coordinator for the sector and reciprocal recognition of licenses and freedom to provide services)?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

1. The Commission is aware that online gambling is a growing service activity in the EU. The economic significance of the sector is demonstrated by the high level of innovation of the European industry. The Commission has stressed in its communication 'Towards a Comprehensive European Framework for Online Gambling' ([1]) that administrative cooperation also needs to result in a reduction of unnecessary administrative burdens, in particular in the authorisation process and the supervision of operators authorised in more than one jurisdiction, and it will work towards that aim. However, it would like to recall that it is currently for Member States, in accordance with the relevant case-law of the Court of Justice of the EU, to determine the organisation and control of the gambling offer together with how gambling is carried out and to set the objectives of their gambling policy.

2. In December 2012 the Commission has set up an expert group on gambling services composed of Member States' authorities responsible for regulating gambling services. The expert group brings about an exchange of experiences and good practices. The Commission works with the group on initiatives to ensure effective cooperation between Member States' regulators.

3. The Commission recognises the need for common efforts at EU level in the area of online gambling to properly protect European consumers. Therefore, the Commission is considering a number of initiatives, in particular recommendations on common consumer protection rules and responsible advertising. The implementation of these consumer protection measures remains primarily the responsibility of national authorities.

4. The Commission is not currently considering the measures proposed by the Honourable Member.

([1]) COM(2012) 596 final.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010906/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(25. September 2013)

Betrifft: Schwermetalle in Nahrungsmitteln

Schwermetalle wie etwa Zinn, Nickel, Eisen, Cadmium, Quecksilber, Blei oder auch Aluminium kommen durch industrielle Prozesse um einiges häufiger in der Luft, im Wasser, im Boden und somit auch in der Nahrung vor, als es von Natur aus der Fall ist. Diese Spurenelemente werden Nahrungsmitteln zugeführt und oft als Nahrungsergänzungsmittel eingenommen, wodurch es zusätzlich zu einer übermäßigen Aufnahme kommt; überschüssige Reste der Schwermetalle können sich in Knochen, Leber, Nieren und Gehirn ablagern. Erkrankungen, Störungen, Unverträglichkeiten und Allergien sind die Folge. Parallel dazu sind chronische Unverträglichkeiten und Allergien in den letzten Jahren extrem gestiegen: 2007 waren in der österreichischen Bevölkerung fast sieben Millionen Menschen (das entspricht über 80 %!) betroffen, die entweder unter Allergien, Unverträglichkeiten oder anderen chronischen Erkrankungen litten; die Tendenz ist steigend.

— Plant die Kommission Initiativen zur Erforschung von Zusammenhängen zwischen Schwermetallen und Nahrungsmittelunverträglichkeiten und wenn ja, welche?

— Welche Initiativen plant die Kommission im Hinblick auf Nahrungsmittelunverträglichkeiten und Gesundheitsförderung?

— Hat die Kommission geplant, strengere Auflagen für Schwermetallkonzentrationen in Nahrungsmitteln und der Umwelt vorzuschlagen? (Mit der Bitte um ausführliche Erläuterung)

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(21. November 2013)

In der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1881/2006 ([1]) sind Höchstgehalte für Zinn, Kadmium, Blei und Quecksilber in Lebensmitteln festgelegt. Diese Höchstgehalte basieren auf wissenschaftlichen Gutachten der Europäischen Behörde für Lebensmittelsicherheit (EFSA) und tragen den schädlichen Gesundheitsauswirkungen dieser Elemente Rechnung. Die zuständigen Behörden der Mitgliedstaaten überwachen diese Schwermetallgehalte laufend. Die so erhobenen Daten werden von der EFSA in thematischen Berichten zusammengefasst. Auf der Grundlage dieser Berichte wird die Lage fortlaufend beobachtet, damit die geltenden Höchstgehalte gegebenenfalls gesenkt werden können.

Chemische Elemente, die eine biologische Funktion im menschlichen Körper haben (sogenannte Spurenelemente), gelten nicht als Kontaminanten, da Lebensmittel im Hinblick auf eine normale Körperfunktion minimale Mengen von ihnen enthalten müssen. Falls in einem EFSA-Gutachten jedoch darauf hingewiesen wird, dass diese Elemente jedoch in großen Mengen über die Nahrung aufgenommen werden, werden Höchstgehalte für Nahrungsergänzungsmittel festgelegt.

([1]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1881/2006 der Kommission vom 19. Dezember 2006 zur Festsetzung der Höchstgehalte für bestimmte Kontaminanten in Lebensmitteln (ABl. L 364 vom 20.12.2006, S. 5).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010906/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: Heavy metals in food

Heavy metals, such as tin, nickel, iron, cadmium, mercury, lead or even aluminium, occur somewhat more frequently in the air, water, soil and therefore also in food as a result of industrial process than would naturally be the case. These trace elements are added to foodstuffs and are often taken as food supplements, thus resulting in further excessive intake; surplus heavy metals can be deposited in the bones, liver, kidneys and brain. This results in diseases, disorders, intolerances and allergies. At the same time, chronic intolerances and allergies have risen sharply in recent years: in 2007 nearly seven million people in Austria (more than 80% of the population) were suffering from allergies, intolerances or other chronic diseases. This is a rising trend.

— Is the Commission planning any initiatives for investigating the links between heavy metals and food intolerances? If so, what are they?

— What initiatives is it planning with regard to food intolerances and the promotion of health?

— Has the Commission had any plans to propose more stringent requirements for heavy metal concentrations in food and the environment (please provide detailed information)?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

Maximum levels (MLs) for tin, cadmium, lead and mercury in food are established in Regulation (EC) 1881/2006 ([1]). These MLs are based on scientific opinions of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) taking into account negative health effects of these elements. Monitoring of levels of these heavy metals by Member States' competent authorities is on-going. The resulting data are collected by EFSA and compiled into thematic reports. Based on the outcome of these reports, the situation is constantly monitored in view of further lowering existing maximum levels.

Chemical elements that have a biological function in the body (so-called trace elements) are not treated as contaminants as minimal quantities are needed in food for a normal body function. However, in cases where EFSA opinions point out that they are important contributors to dietary exposure, maximum levels are established for food supplements.

([1]) Commission Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006 of 19 December 2006 setting maximum levels for certain contaminants in foodstuffs (OJ L 364, 20.12.2006, p. 5).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010907/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(25. September 2013)

Betrifft: Frühzeitige Schulabgänger

Im Zuge der Strategie Europa 2020 soll das Bildungsniveau erheblich verbessert werden. Dennoch kann jede/-r fünfte Europäer/-in nicht richtig lesen und schreiben. Zusätzlich liegt die Zahl der frühzeitigen SchulabgängerInnen und -abbrecherInnen immer noch bei knapp 13 %, wobei die Zahl der Frauen wesentlich höher ist als die der Männer. Vor allem in Südeuropa ist dieses Problem sehr verbreitet.

1. Welche weiterführenden Maßnahmen hat die Kommission geplant, um Schulbildung attraktiver zu machen?

2. Welche Maßnahmen sind außerdem geplant, um die Bildungsstandards im gesamteuropäischen Raum weiter zu erhöhen?

3. Gibt es spezielle Maßnahmen zur Förderung von Aus- und Weiterbildung in den am stärksten betroffenen Ländern, vor allem um Bildung in diesen Ländern „leistbar" zu machen? Wenn ja, welche?

4. Welche langfristigen Strategien hat die Europäische Kommission entwickelt, um das nach wie vor herrschende Nord-Süd-Gefälle des europäischen Bildungsniveaus abzubauen?

Antwort von Frau Vassiliou im Namen der Kommission
(15. November 2013)

Gemäß Artikel 165 des Vertrags über die Arbeitsweise der Europäischen Union sind ausschließlich die Mitgliedstaaten für die Lehrinhalte und die Gestaltung der Bildungssysteme verantwortlich. Die Kommission unterstützt die Mitgliedstaaten bei ihren Bemühungen zur Verbesserung der Systeme der allgemeinen und beruflichen Bildung und fördert ihre Zusammenarbeit. Im Rahmen der offenen Methode der Koordinierung (OMK) in der allgemeinen und beruflichen Bildung konzentriert sich die Kommission hauptsächlich auf Themen wie niedriges Qualifikationsniveau, frühzeitigen Schulabgang, frühkindliche Betreuung, Bildung und Erziehung sowie Lehrkräfteausbildung. Eine neue OMK-Gruppe zur Schulbildung wird Ende 2013 oder Anfang 2014 ihre Arbeit aufnehmen und sich mit frühzeitigem Schulabgang und Lehrkräfteausbildung beschäftigen.

Der Rat setzt sich in seiner Empfehlung für politische Strategien zur Senkung der Schulabbrecherquote ([1]) aus dem Jahr 2011 für einen umfassenden Ansatz bezüglich des frühzeitigen Schulabgangs ein. Angesprochen werden Fragen der Gleichheit, Inklusion und Qualität der Schulbildung. Die Kommission untersucht in ihren Initiativen „Neue Denkansätze für die Bildung" und „Die Bildung öffnen" außerdem, wie die Attraktivität und Relevanz der europäischen Bildungs- und Ausbildungssysteme gesteigert werden kann. Die Kommission arbeitet außerdem eng mit der OECD in Fragen der Qualität und Effizienz der Schulbildung zusammen und unterstützt die PISA- ([2]) und die PIAAC ([3])-Studien.

Das neue Bildungsprogramm Erasmus+ und die europäischen Struktur- und Investitionsfonds, insbesondere der Europäische Sozialfonds, sind die wichtigsten EU-Instrumente zur Förderung von Investitionen und Reformen der nationalen Bildungs- und Ausbildungssysteme. Zu den Zielen dieser Programme zählt die Verringerung der regionalen Unterschiede in der allgemeinen und beruflichen Bildung.

([1]) ABl. C 191/2011.
([2]) Programm zur internationalen Schülerbewertung.
([3]) Internationale Vergleichsstudie der Kompetenzen Erwachsener.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010907/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: Early school leavers

One aim of the Europe 2020 strategy is to significantly improve the level of education. Nevertheless, one in five Europeans cannot read or write properly. Furthermore, the number of early school leavers remains close to 13%, with the number of women in this category being considerably higher than the number of men. This problem is particularly widespread in southern Europe.

1. What further steps does the Commission plan to take in order to make school education more attractive?

2. What measures does it also plan to take to further increase the standard of education throughout Europe?

3. Are any special measures being taken to promote training and further education in the countries that are most severely affected, in particular to make education 'affordable' in these countries? If so, what are they?

4. What long-term strategies has the Commission developed in order to reduce the north-south divide that still exists with regard to the level of education in Europe?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

According to Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems are under the exclusive responsibility of Member States. The role of the Commission is to support Member States in their efforts to improve their education and training systems and to support their cooperation. Within the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in education and training, the Commission focuses especially on issues related to low skills, early school leaving (ESL), early childhood education and care as well as teacher education. A new OMC group on School Education will start its work in late 2013 or early 2014 addressing the issues of ESL and teacher education.

The 2011 Council Recommendation on policies against ESL ([1]) advocates a comprehensive approach towards ESL. It addresses questions of equity, inclusiveness and quality in school education. With its initiatives on 'Rethinking Education' and 'Opening Up Education' the Commission also looks at how to increase the attractiveness and relevance of European education and training systems. In addition, the Commission closely cooperates with the OECD on questions of quality and efficiency in school education, supporting also the PISA ([2]) and PIAAC ([3]) studies.

The new education programme Erasmus+ and European Structural and Investment Funds, in particular European Social Fund, are the main tools at EU level to support investment and reforms in national education and training systems. Reducing regional disparities in education and training will be among the objectives of these programmes.

([1]) OJ C 191 1.7.2011.
([2]) Programme for International Student Assessment.
([3]) Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010908/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(25. September 2013)

Betrifft: Aluminium als Krankheitsverursacher

Immer mehr Studien belegen, dass ein Zusammenhang zwischen Aluminium und Krankheiten wie Krebs, Alzheimer und Demenz besteht. Aluminium ist ein Bestandteil von unzähligen Lebensmitteln, Medikamenten, Zahnpasten und Deodorants und wird oft zur Reinigung von Trinkwasser verwendet.

1. Welche Maßnahmen sind geplant, um die Verwendung von Aluminium und aluminiumhaltigen Produkten strenger zu kontrollieren und so die Gesundheit der EU-Bürger zu schützen?

2. Inwiefern hat die Kommission geplant, die Forschung, die sich mit den Auswirkungen von einem zu hohen Aluminiumanteil im Körper beschäftigt, intensiver zu unterstützen?

3. Welche Maßnahmen sind ergriffen und welche Ziele sind gesetzt worden, um die Verwendung von Aluminium zur Trinkwasserreinigung zu verringern?

4. Welche Maßnahmen hat die Kommission geplant, um die Verwendung von Alternativen zu Aluminium zu fördern?

5. Wie kann das Bewusstsein der europäischen Bevölkerung über die Gefahren von aluminiumhaltigen Produkten geschärft werden?

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(20. November 2013)

Die Europäische Behörde für Lebensmittelsicherheit (EFSA) ([1]) hat für Aluminium (Al) eine tolerierbare wöchentliche Aufnahme von 1 mg Aluminium/kg Körpergewicht/Woche festgelegt. Die EFSA wies darauf hin, dass die Bevölkerung hauptsächlich über Lebensmittel gegenüber Al exponiert ist. Al in Trinkwasser stelle eine weitere, weniger bedeutende Expositionsquelle dar. Zu einer zusätzlichen Exposition könne es durch die Verwendung von Aluminiumverbindungen in Arzneimitteln und Konsumgütern kommen.

Folglich hat die Kommission Maßnahmen zur Verminderung der Al-Aufnahme durch Lebensmittelzusatzstoffe ergriffen. Die Maßnahmen ([2]) betreffen die wichtigsten Al-Quellen und sollen zu einer Verminderung der Gesamtaufnahme führen. Derzeit werden einige Al enthaltende Lebensmittelzusatzstoffe verboten. Für alle anderen Al enthaltenden Lebensmittelzusatzstoffe werden Verwendung und Höchstgehalte deutlich eingeschränkt werden. Außerdem wird die EFSA bis 2018 eine vollständige Neubewertung aller Al enthaltenden Lebensmittelzusatzstoffe vornehmen ([3]).

In Impfstoffen wurden 70 Jahre lang Al-Adjuvantia verwendet und deren Sicherheitsprofil kann durch „mit geringem Potenzial, unerwünschte Reaktionen hervorzurufen" als angemessen beschrieben gelten. Bei Allergenen und Impfstoffen beträgt die Obergrenze 1,25 mg/Dosis ([4]). Die meisten in der EU zugelassenen Impfstoffe enthalten weniger als diese Höchstmenge.

Die Kommission hat den Wissenschaftlichen Ausschuss „Verbrauchersicherheit" (SCCS) ersucht, ein Gutachten zur Sicherheit von Al in kosmetischen Mitteln ([5]) zu erstellen und einen sicheren Konzentrationsgrenzwert für Al zu empfehlen, falls die geschätzte Exposition gegenüber Al als bedenklich erachtet wird. Das Gutachten des SCCS soll spätestens im zweiten Quartal 2014 vorliegen.

Die Kommission hat vor kurzem groß angelegte Forschungsprojekte wie PHIME ([6]) zur Rolle der Exposition gegenüber einer Reihe von Schwermetallen bei neurologischen Entwicklungsstörungen und neurodegenerativen Erkrankungen finanziert.

([1]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/de/efsajournal/pub/754.htm
([2]) Verordnungen (EU) Nr. 1130/2011, (EU) Nr. 231/2012 und (EU) Nr. 380/2012 der Kommission.
([3]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 257/2010 der Kommission (ABl. L 80 vom 26.3.2010, S. 19) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:080:0019:0027:EN:PDF
([4]) Europäisches Arzneibuch.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/sectors/cosmetics/files/pdf/aluminium_en.pdf
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/biosociety/inco/projects/0017_en.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010908/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: Aluminium as a cause of disease

More and more studies are demonstrating a link between aluminium and diseases like cancer, Alzheimer's and dementia. Aluminium is found in numerous foods, medicines, toothpastes and deodorants and is often used to purify drinking water.

1. What measures are planned in order to put stricter controls on the use of aluminium and aluminium-containing products and therefore to protect the health of EU citizens?

2. To what extent does the Commission plan to provide greater support for research into the effects of too high a concentration of aluminium in the body?

3. What measures have been taken and what objectives set in order to reduce the use of aluminium in the purification of drinking water?

4. What measures does the Commission have planned for promoting the use of alternatives to aluminium?

5. How can people's awareness of the dangers posed by aluminium-containing products be increased in Europe?

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

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) ([1]) has established a Tolerable Weekly Intake for Aluminium (Al) of 1 mg aluminium/kg bw/week. EFSA noted that the major route of exposure to Al for the general population is through food. Al in drinking water represents another, minor, source of exposure. Additional exposures may arise from the use of aluminium compounds in pharmaceuticals and consumer products.

Consequently, the Commission took measures to reduce Al intake from food additives. The measures ([2]) concern the most significant Al sources and are expected to result in a reduction of the total intake. Some Al containing food additives are being banned. The use and maximum limits for all other Al containing food additives will be significantly reduced. In addition, EFSA will carry out a complete re-evaluation of all Al containing food additives by 2018 ([3]).

Al adjuvants have been used in vaccines for 70 years and their safety profile can be considered as adequately characterised with a very small potential to cause adverse reactions. The upper limit for Al for allergens and vaccines is 1.25 mg per dose ([4]). Most licensed vaccines in the EU contain less than this maximum amount.

The Commission has asked to the Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety (SCCS) to provide a scientific opinion on the safety of Al in cosmetic products ([5]) and to recommend a safe concentration limit for the presence of Al, should the estimated exposure to Al be found to be of concern. The SCCS opinion is expected for the second quarter of 2014 at the latest.

The Commission has recently funded large-scale research projects such as PHIME ([6]) on the role of exposure to a number of heavy metals in neurodevelopmental and neurogenerative diseases.

([1]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/754.htm
([2]) Commission Regulations (EU) No 1130/2011, (EU) No 231/2012 and (EU) No 380/2012.
([3]) Commission Regulation (EU) No° 257/2010 (OJ L 80/19 26.3.2010). http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:080:0019:0027:EN:PDF
([4]) European Pharmacopoeia.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/sectors/cosmetics/files/pdf/aluminium_en.pdf
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/biosociety/inco/projects/0017_en.html

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010909/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(25. September 2013)

Betrifft: Alkoholbedingte Schäden und Unfälle

Noch immer ist die EU weltweit die Region mit dem höchsten Alkoholkonsum und den meisten alkoholbedingten Schäden und Unfällen. Laut Medienberichten gibt es sogar mehr Tote durch Alkoholkonsum als durch Verkehrsunfälle.

1. Welche Bilanz kann die Kommission ziehen, was die EU-Strategie zur Unterstützung der Mitgliedstaaten bei der Verringerung alkoholbedingter Schäden (2006-2012) betrifft? Welche positiven Ergebnisse kann die Kommission vorlegen?

2. Wie kann die Umsetzung des neuen Europäischen Aktionsplans zur Verringerung des schädlichen Alkoholkonsums (2012-2020) verbessert und im Zuge dessen der schädliche Alkoholkonsum verringert werden? Existieren zusätzlich zu diesem Plan weitere Ansatzpunkte?

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(15. November 2013)

Alkoholbedingte Schäden stellen EU-weit ein ernstes Gesundheitsproblem dar.

Die Europäische Kommission setzt sich für die Umsetzung der EU-Strategie gegen Alkoholmissbrauch ein ([1]). Laut den Schlussfolgerungen der unabhängigen Evaluierung sind alle Schwerpunkte der 2006 angenommenen EU-Alkoholstrategie nach wie vor aktuell. In diesem Zusammenhang prüft die Kommission derzeit, wie sie ihre künftigen Arbeiten weiter verbessern und zielgenau ausrichten kann, um alkoholbedingte Schäden, insbesondere im Hinblick auf chronische Krankheiten und Schäden, weiter zu verringern und spezielle Herausforderungen, wie Alkoholkonsum von Minderjährigen und Alkoholexzesse („Komasaufen"), erfolgreich anzugehen.

([1]) Mitteilung der Kommission vom 24. Oktober 2006, „Eine EU-Strategie zur Unterstützung der Mitgliedstaaten bei der Verringerung alkoholbedingter Schäden", KOM(2006)625 endg.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010909/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: Alcohol-related harm and accidents

The EU remains the region with the highest level of alcohol consumption worldwide and the most alcohol-related injuries and accidents. According to media reports, there are even more deaths caused by alcohol consumption than as a result of traffic accidents.

1. What is the Commission's evaluation of the progress made in respect of the EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm (2006-2012)? What positive results can it present?

2. How can the implementation of the new European action plan to reduce the harmful use of alcohol (2012-2020) be improved so as to actually reduce the harmful use of alcohol? Are any other steps being taken in addition to this plan?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

Alcohol-related harm is a major public health concern across the EU.

The Commission is committed to taking forward the EU Alcohol Strategy ([1]). The conclusions of the independent evaluation suggest that all the priority themes of the EU Alcohol Strategy adopted in 2006 are still valid today. In this context, the Commission is currently analysing how to further improve and focus its future work to contribute to reducing alcohol-related harm, in particular as regards its impact on chronic disease and injuries, and to address specific challenges, such as underage drinking and binge drinking.

([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.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010910/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(25. September 2013)

Betrifft: Fischereisubventionen: nicht für das allgemeine Wohl verwendet?

Einer aktuellen Studie zufolge beträgt seit dem Jahr 2000 die Gesamtsumme der EU-Fischereisubventionen mehr als 12 Mrd. EUR. Die von den Mitgliedstaaten überwiesenen 4,9 Mrd. EUR an Staatsbeihilfen an die Fischereisektoren hätten demnach zu einem sehr beträchtlichen Teil die Überfischung gefördert.

1. Davon ausgehend, dass der Kommission dieser Umstand bekannt ist: Wie beurteilt sie den Vorwurf, dass öffentliche Fördermittel zur Verschlechterung des Zustands der Fischbestände beitragen?

2. Wie rechtfertigt die Kommission, dass öffentliche Fördermittel womöglich zu einem großen Teil dazu verwendet werden, die marine Umwelt noch mehr zu zerstören?

3. Wie ist es zu erklären dass mehr als 30 % der deklarierten Fördermittel als „generelle Beihilfe" gekennzeichnet waren?

Antwort von Frau Damanaki im Namen der Kommission
(5. Dezember 2013)

Die von der Frau Abgeordneten angesprochene Studie trägt den Titel *„European Fisheries Subsidies — State Aid — The Hidden Subsidies" (Europäische Fördermittel für die Fischerei — staatliche Beihilfen — die verborgenen Fördermittel) und wurde von Oceana erstellt*. Nach Schätzungen der Kommission beliefen sich die Fördermittel für den Fischereisektor (einschließlich Aquakultur und Verarbeitung) im Zeitraum 1996-2012 auf 4,6 Mrd. EUR. Die Kommission weist darauf hin, dass die staatlichen Beihilfen seit 2007 schrittweise um 70 % gesenkt wurden.

Die Fischerei ist naturgemäß eine Tätigkeit, die Auswirkungen auf die Fischbestände und die marine Umwelt hat. Im Laufe der Zeit wurden Maßnahmen wie der Schiffbau und die Erhöhung des Fischereiaufwands von der Förderung ausgeschlossen, weil ausreichende Hinweise auf deren nachteilige Umweltauswirkungen vorlagen. Im Vorschlag der Kommission für den Europäischen Meeres- und Fischereifonds 2014-2020 rückt die Nachhaltigkeit der Bestände stärker in den Mittelpunkt, außerdem ist eine erhebliche Aufstockung der Mittel für Kontrolle und Datenerhebung vorgesehen. Ferner umfasst der Vorschlag Investitionen in die Selektivität, um das Verbot von Rückwürfen und die Umstellung auf den höchstmöglichen Dauerertrag zu unterstützen. Soll die endgültige Einstellung der Fischerei im Europäischen Meeres- und Fischereifonds verbleiben, so muss deren Förderung nach Auffassung der Kommission nach oben begrenzt und befristet werden. Diese Bedingungen sind notwendig, um verbliebene Überkapazitäten gezielt und zeitnah angehen zu können.

Der Begriff „generelle Beihilfe" wird in der Studie nicht definiert; es handelt sich auch nicht um ein Konzept des EU-Beihilferechts. Daher kann die Kommission diese Frage nicht beantworten. In jedem Fall muss eine Beihilfe jedoch den Zielen der Gemeinsamen Fischereipolitik (GFP) entsprechen und darf nicht wettbewerbsverzerrend sein.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010910/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: Fisheries subsidies: not being used in the general interest?

According to a current study, EU fisheries subsidies since 2000 total more than EUR 12 billion. The EUR 4.9 billion contributed by the Member States in state aid to the fisheries sector has, according to the study, played a considerable part in promoting overfishing.

1. Assuming that the Commission is aware of this situation: what is its view of the accusation that public aid is contributing to the degradation of fish stocks?

2. How can the Commission justify the use of public aid, possibly to a considerable extent, for the further destruction of the marine environment?

3. What is the explanation for the fact that more than 30% of the declared aid was described as 'general aid'?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2013)

The study referred to by the honourable MEP is 'European Fisheries Subsidies — State Aid — The Hidden Subsidies', by Oceana. The Commission estimates that in the period 1996-2012, subsidies to the fishing sector (including aquaculture and processing) amounted to EUR 4.6 billion. The Commission notes that state aid has gradually reduced, by 70% since 2007.

Fishing is by definition an activity that impacts fishing stocks and the marine environment. Over time, measures such as vessel construction and aid increasing fishing effort have been excluded from support when sufficient evidence became available on their negative environmental impacts. The Commission's proposal for the 2014-20 European Maritime and Fisheries Fund increases the focus on aid that will enhance sustainability of resources, and foresees a significant increase of funds for control and data collection. The proposal also covers investments in selectivity to support the discard ban and investments to support the transition to Maximum Sustainable Yield. The Commission considers that if permanent cessation has to be maintained in the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund it will have to be capped in terms of funding available and limited in time. These conditions are necessary for a precise and timely targeting of remaining pockets of overcapacity.

The notion of 'general aid' is neither defined in the study nor is a concept used in Union state aid legislation. The Commission is, thus, unable to reply. In any case, aid has to comply with the CFP objectives and not distort competition.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010911/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(25. September 2013)

Betrifft: Personal für die Bankenaufsicht

Wie Medienberichte melden, sucht die EZB Personal für die Bankenaufsicht und will die betreffenden Stellen möglicherweise auch durch Abwerben von Personal der Geschäftsbanken besetzen.

1. Mit welchen Mechanismen können die Integrität und die Glaubwürdigkeit der Bankenaufsicht gewährleistet werden, wenn ehemalige (oftmals langjährige) Mitarbeiter den eigenen vormaligen Arbeitgeber oder die ehemalige Konkurrenz überwachen sollen?

2. Kann die Kommission eine Stellungnahme dazu abgeben, wie sie das Gefahrenpotenzial für Lobbyismus durch diese Vorgehensweise einschätzt?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(29. November 2013)

Die Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1024/2013 des Rates zur Übertragung besonderer Aufgaben im Zusammenhang mit der Aufsicht über Kreditinstitute auf die Europäische Zentralbank ([1]), mit der ein einheitlicher Aufsichtsmechanismus als erster Schritt zur Schaffung einer Bankenunion eingerichtet wird, trat am 3. November 2013 in Kraft; der einheitliche Aufsichtsmechanismus wird in zwölf Monaten voll funktionsfähig sein. Die Europäische Zentralbank (EZB) hat zur Vorbereitung auf die Wahrnehmung ihrer Aufsichtsaufgaben und gemäß den Vorschriften der Verordnung über den einheitlichen Aufsichtsmechanismus eine umfassende Prüfung eingeleitet, die aus einer aufsichtsbehördlichen Risikobewertung, einer Überprüfung der Aktiva-Qualität und einem Stresstest besteht. Der Stresstest wird in enger Zusammenarbeit mit der Europäischen Bankenaufsichtsbehörde (EBA) durchgeführt werden.

Ein Element dieser Vorbereitungen ist die Einstellung von Personal für eine wirksame Ausübung der Aufsichtsfunktion der EZB. Die EZB rekrutiert Personal eigenständig auf der Grundlage ihrer internen Vorschriften und Verfahren.

Die Kommission ist angesichts der Beschäftigungsregeln der EZB und ihres Ethikrahmens zuversichtlich, dass die EZB bei ihrem Einstellungsverfahren die in den einschlägigen EU-Rechtsvorschriften enthaltenen Grundsätze der Integrität und Glaubwürdigkeit der Bankenaufsicht einhält und ferner angemessene interne Kontrollmechanismen anwendet, um die Unabhängigkeit und das ethische Verhalten ihres Personals zu gewährleisten. Die Kommission ist überzeugt, dass eine starke europäische Bankenaufsicht gut aufgestellt ist, um dem Druck von Lobbyisten standzuhalten.

([1]) Verordnung über den einheitlichen Aufsichtsmechanismus, ABl. L 287, S. 63.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010911/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: Staff for banking supervision

As reported in the media, the European Central Bank is recruiting banking supervision staff and intends, where possible, to fill the posts concerned by enticing staff away from commercial banks.

1. What mechanisms can be used to ensure the integrity and credibility of the banking supervision if former employees (often with many years' service) are to supervise their own former employers or former competitors?

2. Can the Commission provide a statement concerning its assessment of the potential risk of lobbying as a result of this approach?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2013)

Council Regulation (EU) No 1024/2013 conferring specific tasks on the ECB concerning policies relating to the prudential supervision of credit institutions ([1]) and establishing a Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM) which constitutes a first step of banking union, entered into force on 3 November 2013 and the SSM will be fully operational in 12 months. In preparation for carrying out its prudential tasks, and as required by the SSM Regulation, the European Central Bank launched a comprehensive assessment, consisting of a supervisory risk assessment, an asset quality review and a stress test. The stress test will be carried out in close cooperation with the EBA.

One element of these preparations is the recruitement of staff in order to effectively exercise the ECB's supervisory function. This is autonomously undertaken by the ECB on the basis of its internal rules and procedures on recruitement of staff.

Given the ECB's internal rules on employment and the ethics framework, the Commission is confident that in its recruitment process the ECB fully respects the principles of integrity and credibility of banking supervision, as set out in the relevant EC law and that it will also apply the appropriate internal control mechanisms in order to guarantee the independence and ethical conduct of its staff. The Commission is confident that a strong European banking supervisor is very well equiped to resist to lobbying pressures.

([1]) SSM Regulation, OJ L287 p. 63.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010912/13
alla Commissione
Fiorello Provera (EFD) e Charles Tannock (ECR)
(25 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Attacchi informatici provenienti della Cina

Il 17 settembre 2013 l'agenzia Reuters ha riferito che una società di sicurezza informatica americana aveva scoperto un gruppo di sofisticati hacker informatici basati in Cina. Il gruppo, noto come Hidden Lynx, è ritenuto uno dei più avanzati tecnicamente e opera come organizzazione che rende servizi a pagamento. La società americana di sicurezza informatica Symantec sostiene che Hidden Lynx potrebbe essere stato coinvolto negli attentati del 2009, noti come operazione Aurora, quando gli hacker hanno attaccato Google e decine di altre società. Nel 2010 Google ha ammesso che gli hacker avevano tentato di leggere la corrispondenza elettronica di attivisti dei diritti umani. La Symantec ritiene che il gruppo abbia sede in Cina, dal momento che il software impiegato per eseguire gli attacchi è stato scritto utilizzando strumenti e codici cinesi.

Hidden Lynx è anche sospettato di avere collegamenti con un'altra infame campagna di attacchi informatici, Voho, che ha colpito centinaia di organizzazioni, fra cui imprese finanziarie, tecnologiche, aziende sanitarie, operatori nel settore della difesa e agenzie governative. Stando alla Symantec, gli hacker sono un'«organizzazione professionale» composta da 50 a 100 persone.

1. Quali misure intende la Commissione adottare per collaborare con aziende di sicurezza informatica, come la Symantec, per valutare la minaccia rappresentata da gruppi come Hidden Lynx?

2. Quali azioni ha intrapreso in passato per discutere con le autorità cinesi la questione degli attacchi informatici provenienti dalla Cina?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(11 dicembre 2013)

La Commissione si impegna a fornire una risposta globale al fenomeno della criminalità informatica, come indicato anche nella sua Strategia dell'Unione europea per la cibersicurezza ([1]). Nello sviluppare la sua politica in materia essa tiene conto di tutte le informazioni disponibili, comprese le valutazioni delle minacce e le altre informazioni fornite dal settore privato, nonché da imprese di sicurezza privata come Symantec.

Inoltre la Commissione ha istituito il Centro europeo per la lotta contro la criminalità informatica (EC3) nei primi mesi del 2013 per fornire supporto e coordinamento alle investigazioni degli Stati membri. Questo Centro, tra gli altri compiti, si occupa anche dell'analisi e delle valutazioni delle minacce, comprese quelle provenienti da paesi al di fuori dell'UE. Tale quadro intende adottare un approccio collaborativo, grazie alla collaborazione con le parti interessate nelle comunità. Le imprese private sono invitate a partecipare ai gruppi consultivi del Centro europeo per la lotta contro la criminalità informatica e a fornire informazioni sulle minacce e sulle tendenze che possono poi essere utilizzate per informare gli Stati membri di minacce specifiche e modi operandi.

Durante il 14° vertice UE-Cina nel febbraio 2012 l'Unione europea e la Cina hanno deciso a livello politico che era necessario sviluppare un quadro per un dialogo sui problemi informatici. A tal fine hanno varato una task force informatica UE-Cina, che si è già riunita due volte e i cui obiettivi comprendono l'elaborazione di norme di comportamento degli Stati e la promozione dell'applicabilità del diritto internazionale vigente nel ciberspazio.

([1]) JOIN(2013) 1 del 7 febbraio 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010912/13
to the Commission
Fiorello Provera (EFD) and Charles Tannock (ECR)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: Cyber attacks emanating from China

On 17 September 2013, Reuters reported that a US computer security firm had uncovered a group of sophisticated computer hackers based in China. The hacker group, known as Hidden Lynx, is believed to be one of the most technically-advanced groups and is operating as a for-hire organisation. The US-based cyber security firm Symantec says that Hidden Lynx may have been involved in the 2009 attacks known as Operation Aurora, in which hackers attacked Google and dozens of other companies. In 2010, Google admitted that hackers had attempted to read the Gmail correspondence of human rights activists. Symantec believes the group is based in China because the software used to run the attacks was written using Chinese tools and code.

Hidden Lynx is also alleged to have connections with another infamous cyber-attack campaign, Voho, which targeted hundreds of organisations including financial and technology firms, healthcare companies, defence contractors and government agencies. According to Symantec, the hackers are a 'professional organisation', staffed by between 50 and 100 people.

1. What steps is the Commission prepared to take in order to work with cyber security firms, such as Symantec, to assess the threat posed by groups such as Hidden Lynx?

2. What steps has the Commission taken in the past to discuss with the country's authorities the issue of cyber attacks emanating from China?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(11 December 2013)

The Commission is committed to providing a comprehensive response to the phenomenon of cybercrime, as outlined also in its Cybersecurity Strategy of the European Union ([1]). In developing policy, it takes into account all available information, including threat assessments and other information provided by the private sector and including by private security firms such as Symantec.

In addition, the Commission created the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) in early 2013 to provide support and coordination for Member States' investigations. The EC3, among other tasks, also provides analysis and threat assessments, including on threats emanating from outside the EU. It is designed to take a collaborative approach, cooperating with stakeholders across communities. Private companies are invited to participate in the advisory groups to the EC3 and to provide information on threats and trends which can then be used to inform Member States of specific threats and modi operandi.

At the political level, the European Union and China decided at the 14th EU-China Summit in February 2012 that there was a need to develop a framework for a dialogue on cyber issues. To this end, they have launched an EU-China cyber taskforce, which has met twice to date and whose objectives include working on developing norms for state behaviour and promoting the applicability of existing international law in cyber space.

([1]) JOIN(2013) 1 of 7 February 2013.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010915/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(25 septembre 2013)

Objet: Soutien à Cécile Kyenge

Je soutiens la ministre italienne en charge de l'intégration, Cécile Kyenge, victime de propos racistes outranciers, et tiens à promouvoir la déclaration de Rome et la lutte contre la xénophobie et l'intolérance.

En effet, la xénophobie et l'intolérance sont encore trop présentes en Europe. Les partis populistes prennent de l'ampleur dans de nombreux pays européens et leurs messages sont empreints d'idées xénophobes, nationalistes et protectionnistes. Certains partis politiques au sein de l'Union européenne expriment ouvertement leur haine de «l'autre», qu'il soit rom, juif ou musulman, bref à l'égard de tout individu qui diffère de la norme.

La xénophobie et la haine de l'«autre» ont alimenté les guerres en Europe pendant des décennies, voire des siècles. Nous avons malheureusement pu en voir des signes avant-coureurs par le passé. Mais nous ne pouvons pas risquer de payer le prix de l'inaction. Ceux qui défendent l'ouverture d'esprit et la tolérance ne se font pas suffisamment entendre. En tant qu'Européens, en tant que démocrates, en tant qu'individus profondément engagés dans la sauvegarde des Droits de l'homme, nous avons le devoir de relever ce défi et de défendre les droits des individus et la démocratie. Chaque jour, nous devons promouvoir une société ouverte et tolérante, une société européenne de la diversité réussie.

La Commission nous rejoint-elle dans l'idée d'un pacte pour une Europe de la diversité, une Europe engagée dans la lutte contre le racisme?

Le plus grand danger pour une société n'est pas le mal commis par les personnes mal intentionnées. Le plus grand danger, c'est quand les citoyens honnêtes se taisent. C'est pourquoi nous nous associons à la ministre Cécile Kyenge pour militer ensemble contre la xénophobie et l'intolérance.

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Reding au nom de la Commission
(20 novembre 2013)

La Commission renvoie à sa déclaration au Parlement européen du 9 octobre 2013 sur la montée en puissance de l'extrême droite en Europe.

La Commission est profondément préoccupée par tous les actes racistes ou xénophobes signalés dans l'Union, y compris les attaques racistes dirigées contre la ministre italienne chargée de l'intégration, M^me^ Cécile Kyenge.

Conformément à la la décision-cadre 2008/913/JAI du Conseil sur la lutte contre le racisme et la xénophobie, les États membres sont tenus de sanctionner l'incitation publique intentionnelle à la violence ou à la haine fondée sur la race, la couleur, la religion, l'ascendance, l'origine nationale ou l'origine ethnique. La Commission publiera un rapport sur les mesures d'exécution prises par les États membres en décembre 2013.

Outre la législation, la Commission a recours à d'autres instruments pour lutter contre le racisme.

La Commission prête son soutien à des activités visant à prévenir les actes d'intolérance. Elle soutient les initiatives visant à sensibiliser le public sur les droits et les obligations des citoyens et fournit une assistance en matière de renforcement des capacités par l'intermédiaire des organismes nationaux chargés de la promotion de l'égalité. La Commission facilite en outre l'échange des bonnes pratiques et l'Agence des droits fondamentaux recueille et diffuse des données sur le racisme et la xénophobie.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010915/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: Support for Cécile Kyenge

I support Italian Minister for Integration Cécile Kyenge, the victim of extreme racist remarks, and am anxious to promote the Declaration of Rome and the fight against xenophobia and intolerance.

Indeed, xenophobia and intolerance are still all too common in Europe. Populist parties are on the rise in many European countries, and their messages are imbued with xenophobic, nationalist and protectionist ideas. Some political parties within the European Union openly express their hatred of 'the other', be it a Roma, Jew or Muslim, or basically anyone who differs from the norm.

Xenophobia and hatred of 'the other' have fuelled wars in Europe for decades, if not centuries. The warning signs were, unfortunately, visible in the past. However, we cannot risk paying the price of inaction. The voices of those who stand up for open-mindedness and tolerance are too quiet. As Europeans, as democrats, as people deeply committed to protecting human rights, we have a duty to meet this challenge and to stand up for the rights of individuals and democracy. Every day we must promote an open and tolerant society, a European society of successful diversity.

Does the Commission support our idea of creating a pact for a Europe of diversity and a Europe committed to combating racism?

The greatest threat to any society is not the harm caused by people with bad intentions. The greatest threat is when honest citizens stay silent. That is why we support Minister Kyenge in our common fight against xenophobia and intolerance.

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

The Commission refers to its statement of 9 October 2013 to the European Parliament about the rise of right-wing extremism in Europe.

The Commission is deeply concerned about any racist or xenophobic incidents emerging in the EU, including the racist attacks directed against Italian Minister of Integration, Mrs Cécile Kyenge.

According to Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating racism and xenophobia, Member States are obliged to penalise the intentional public incitement to violence or hatred on the basis of race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin. The Commission will publish a report on Member States' implementing measures in December 2013.

In addition to legislation, the Commission makes use of other instruments to combat racism.

The Commission lends its support to activities to prevent acts of intolerance. The Commission supports work aimed at raising awareness on the rights and obligations of citizens, and provides assistance for capacity building through national equality bodies. Furthermore, the Commission facilitates the exchange of good practices and the Fundamental Rights Agency collects and disseminates data on racism and xenophobia.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010916/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(25 septembre 2013)

Objet: Barroso solutionne la pauvreté

«Il est possible d'éradiquer la pauvreté d'ici une génération», a annoncé le Président Barroso.

À quelles conditions précisément le président Barroso pense-t-il pouvoir éradiquer la pauvreté?

Réponse donnée par M. Piebalgs au nom de la Commission
(21 novembre 2013)

Dans le cadre des discussions sur le futur Agenda pour le développement, qui succédera aux objectifs du millénaire pour le développement (OMD), l'une des principales questions est de déterminer le niveau d'ambition du cadre pour l'après 2015. Des données récentes donnent à penser qu'un certain nombre de transformations (par exemple le progrès technologique, la mutation de l'économie, l'augmentation des volumes d'échange) ont créé les conditions nécessaires à l'éradication de l'extrême pauvreté à l'échelle mondiale d'ici à 2030, si tous les pays restent déterminés à atteindre cet objectif.

Dans ce contexte, le président Barroso a exhorté la communauté internationale, lors de l'événement spécial des Nations unies consacré aux OMD qui a eu lieu le 25 septembre 2013, à faire cause commune autour de l'objectif de l'éradication de la pauvreté extrême en une génération, objectif auquel l'Honorable Parlementaire est sans aucun doute attaché.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010916/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: President Barroso solves poverty

President Barroso has announced that 'eradicating poverty within one generation is possible'.

Under what conditions exactly does President Barroso believe he can eradicate poverty?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

In the context of the discussions about the future development agenda after the Millennium Development Goals, one of the major questions is how ambitious a post-2015 framework should be. Recent evidence suggests that a number of transformational shifts (for example technological progress, economic transformation, increased trade volumes) have made it possible for global extreme poverty to be eradicated by 2030 — if all countries remain committed to achieving this goal.

Against this background, President Barroso urged the international community at the UN MDG Special Event that took place on 25 September 2013 to rally behind the objective of eradicating extreme poverty within one generation, which the Honourable Member certainly supports.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010917/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(25 septembre 2013)

Objet: Législation stricte sur les ressources naturelles

Le rapport «Rompre le lien entre ressources naturelles et conflits: les arguments en faveur d'un règlement européen» ([1]), publié la semaine dernière, énonce les éléments clés qui doivent être inclus dans la législation de l'Union afin de contraindre les entreprises européennes à exercer un «devoir de diligence» approfondi sur leurs chaînes d'approvisionnement. Il s'agit de contrôles pour permettre aux entreprises de s'assurer qu'elles n'utilisent pas ou ne font pas le commerce de ressources naturelles qui financent la violence.

1. La Commission va-t-elle mettre à profit la dynamique générée par des initiatives telles que la disposition américaine de la loi Dodd Frank relative aux minerais des conflits?

2. La Commission ne devrait-elle pas exiger que les entreprises basées dans l'Union appliquent des contrôles sur leurs chaînes d'approvisionnement qui répondent aux normes internationales de diligence raisonnable élaborées par l'Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques?

3. La Commission nous rejoint-elle dans l'idée d'une législation qui s'applique à toutes les ressources naturelles provenant de toute zone affectée par un conflit ou à haut risque?

4. Cette législation ne devrait-elle pas intégrer une approche basée sur le risque qui prenne en considération l'impact sur les personnes et les communautés?

5. La Commission ne devrait-elle pas mettre à jour sa législation afin de renforcer la gouvernance et d'encourager une réforme du secteur de la sécurité et de la législation minière dans les pays en développement riches en ressources naturelles?

6. Enfin, n'est-il pas urgent que la Commission adopte une législation stricte visant à empêcher les entreprises européennes d'alimenter les conflits et les violations des droits humains en achetant des ressources naturelles telles que l'étain, l'or et les diamants?

Réponse donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(7 novembre 2013)

La Commission prépare actuellement une initiative globale de l'Union européenne en faveur d'un approvisionnement responsable en minerais provenant de zones de conflit. Elle entend s'inspirer du «Guide OCDE sur le devoir de diligence pour des chaînes d'approvisionnement responsables en minerais provenant de zones de conflit ou à haut risque», y compris pour les zones géographiques et les produits (étain, tungstène, tantale et or) concernés, tout en tenant compte des résultats de la consultation publique menée du 27 mars au 26 juin 2013. La proposition viserait à étendre l'exercice du devoir de diligence fondé sur le risque, conformément aux recommandations du guide de l'Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques (OCDE). Les diamants relèvent du système de certification du processus de Kimberley et ne font pas encore partie des ressources visées dans le guide de l'OCDE. En outre, la Commission évalue avec attention les répercussions d'une telle initiative globale de l'Union européenne sur les zones de conflit concernées, y compris sur les communautés locales et les moyens d'existence des mineurs, examinant comment celle-ci favorisera un approvisionnement responsable à partir des zones de conflit et comment les facteurs dissuadant d'adopter une telle pratique qui sont liés aux initiatives législatives actuelles peuvent être contrés.

([1]) http://www.globalwitness.org/sites/default/files/library/BreakingtheLinks_FRpdf.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010917/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: Strong law on natural resources

The report 'Breaking the Links Between Natural Resources and Conflict: The Case for EU Regulation' ([1]), published last week, sets out the key elements that must be included in EU legislation to compel European businesses to carry through supply chain checks, known as due diligence. The checks allow companies to make sure they are not using or trading natural resources that are funding violence.

1. Will the Commission build on the momentum generated by initiatives such as the US Dodd Frank Act's conflict minerals provision?

2. Should it not require EU-based companies to carry out supply chain checks that meet international due diligence standards developed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development?

3. Does it agree with us that the legislation should apply to all natural resources originating in any conflict-affected or high-risk area?

4. Should the legislation not take a risk-based approach that considers impacts on individuals and communities?

5. Should the Commission not update its legislation in order to strengthen governance and encourage security sector and mining reform in natural resource-rich developing countries?

6. Lastly, should the Commission not urgently pass a strong law to prevent European businesses fuelling conflict and human rights abuses through their purchases of natural resources, such as tin, gold and diamonds?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(7 November 2013)

The Commission is currently preparing a comprehensive EU supply chain initiative for responsible sourcing of minerals originating from conflict-affected areas. Taking into account the outcome of the public consultation (conducted between 27 March and 26 June 2013), the Commission intends to build upon the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for responsible supply chains of minerals from conflict-affected and high-risk areas including in terms of geographical and product scope (tin, tungsten, tantalum and gold). The proposal would aim at further spreading the use of risk-based due diligence in accordance with the OECD Guidance. Diamonds are covered by the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and do not form part of the OECD Guidance yet. Moreover, the Commission is carefully assessing the impact of the comprehensive EU initiative on relevant conflict areas, including on local communities and the miners' livelihood, how the initiative will enable and promote responsible sourcing from conflict-affected areas and how the disincentive to engage in such sourcing that has been associated with existing legislative initiatives can be avoided.

([1]) http://www.globalwitness.org/sites/default/files/library/BreakingtheLinks_FR.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010918/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(25 septembre 2013)

Objet: 193 millions de perte dans la perception de la TVA

193 milliards d'euros de perte dans la perception de la TVA en 2011: c'est ce que révèle une étude commandée par la Commission publiée le 19 septembre. Un manque à gagner majeur et qui serait dû non seulement à la fraude mais aussi à des erreurs statistiques ou encore à l'insolvabilité des entreprises.

Si la Commission, qui fait de la lutte contre la fraude et l'évasion fiscale l'un de ses chevaux de bataille, se félicite de cette étude, les États membres, eux, et notamment les plus concernés (qui font partie de la «vieille» Europe), contestent la méthode utilisée. Des États qui reconnaissent cependant que le manque à gagner sur la TVA existe et n'est pas à minimiser. Les chiffres de la Commission semblent toutefois semer le trouble au sein des ministères des finances.

Il est vrai que l'étude est sans appel: ce fossé entre la TVA théorique et la TVA réellement perçue n'a cessé de s'agrandir depuis 2006 pour atteindre 1,5 % du PIB européen. Un phénomène qui n'est pas uniquement lié à la crise et qui prouve, pour la Commission, qu'une réforme des systèmes fiscaux des États membres est nécessaire.

1. Que répond la Commission sur la méthode de calcul, contestée par les États?

2. Quelles sont les conclusions de la Commission après lecture de ce rapport?

3. Quels sont, pour la Commission, les éléments qui font que son plan antifraude n'arrive pas à redresser la barre?

Réponse donnée par M. Šemeta au nom de la Commission
(21 novembre 2013)

La méthode utilisée pour l'étude s'apparente à celle appliquée par Reckon dans le rapport de 2009, mais avec certaines améliorations notables. Cette méthode est étayée par la littérature existant dans ce domaine, et elle a été utilisée par le Royaume-Uni, qui est l'État membre ayant le plus d'expérience dans le calcul des écarts fiscaux. En outre, pour s'assurer que les résultats soient aussi précis que possible, la Commission a consulté les États membres et leur a donné la possibilité de corriger toute imprécision dans les données utilisées pour les évaluations.

Le rapport confirme les disparités au niveau de la part de l'écart de TVA dans le PIB des différents États membres, ce qui indique que certains États membres ont encore beaucoup à faire pour remédier à ce problème important. Il confirme également que l'augmentation des taux de TVA entraîne une augmentation de l'écart de TVA, ce qui est contraire à l'objectif poursuivi par ce type mesure, à savoir générer des recettes supplémentaires.

Lorsque l'on analyse les dernières années de la période couverte par l'étude, on ne peut ignorer que celles-ci coïncident avec une grave crise économique et financière. On peut raisonnablement penser que l'augmentation des écarts de TVA aurait été encore plus forte si les différentes mesures antifraude mises en place sur la base de propositions de la Commission n'avaient pas été adoptées. Il convient également de souligner que l'écart de TVA, tel qu'il est mesuré dans l'étude, ne concerne pas uniquement la fraude et l'évasion fiscales, mais aussi les erreurs, les cas d'insolvabilité, etc. La Commission estime que les modifications de la législation relative à la TVA ainsi que les efforts continus déployés par les administrations fiscales nationales se traduiront par une réduction soutenue des écarts de TVA au cours de la période à venir.

Compte tenu de tous ces éléments, il semble prématuré de tirer des conclusions sur la nécessité d'une réforme des systèmes fiscaux des États membres sur la seule base des résultats de cette étude.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010918/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: EUR 193 million in VAT losses

A Commission-funded study published on 19 September 2013 has revealed that EUR 193 billion in VAT revenues was lost in 2011. This major revenue shortfall is apparently due not only to fraud, but also to statistical errors and business insolvencies.

While the Commission, for which the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion is a favourite theme, welcomes this study, the Member States, and particularly those most affected (which are part of the 'old' Europe), dispute the method used. Despite this, they recognise that the loss in VAT revenues is a reality and should not be played down. However, the Commission's figures seem to be creating confusion within the finance ministries.

The study's findings are, admittedly, indisputable: the gap between theoretical and actual VAT receipts has steadily increased since 2006, and now stands at 1.5% of European GDP. This is a phenomenon that is not linked solely to the crisis and which proves, as far as the Commission is concerned, that the Member States' tax systems need to be reformed.

1. What is the Commission's response regarding the calculation method disputed by the Member States?

2. What conclusions has it reached after reading this report?

3. In its opinion, what aspects are preventing its anti-fraud plan from rectifying the situation?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The methodology for the study follows the methodology used by Reckon in the report of 2009, but introduces some noticeable improvements. This methodology is supported by relevant literature and it has been used by the United Kingdom, which is the Member State with most experience in the calculation of tax gaps. Moreover, in order to make sure the results were as accurate as possible, the Commission consulted Member States and gave them the possibility to correct any imprecisions in the data used for the assessments.

The report confirms the disparities in the share of the VAT gap in the GDP of the different Member States, revealing that some Member States still have a lot to do to address this important problem. It also confirms that an increase in VAT rates leads to an increase in the VAT gap, thus hampering the aim of obtaining additional revenue intended by such tax rises.

When analysing the most recent years of the period covered by this study, it cannot be ignored that these coincided with a severe economic and financial crisis. It is natural to assume that the increase in the VAT gaps would have been even higher if it were not for the different anti-fraud measures introduced on the basis of proposals from the Commission. It should also be stressed that the VAT gap as measured in the study does not relate to tax fraud and evasion only, but also to errors, insolvencies, etc. The Commission believes that the changes in the VAT legislation together with continued efforts by national Tax Administrations will result in the sustained reduction of VAT gaps over the coming period.

Taking all these elements into account, it would seem premature to draw any conclusion about the need for reform of Member States' tax systems based solely on the results of this study.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010919/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(25 septembre 2013)

Objet: L'Union européenne trop indulgente avec les cartels

Une étude récente du *think tank* bruxellois Bruegel explique que les amendes infligées ces douze dernières années par la Commission européenne aux sociétés ayant conclu des ententes illicites sur les prix pratiqués n'étaient pas suffisamment élevées pour les en dissuader.

En effet, dans quatre cas sur cinq, il était avantageux pour les sociétés de conclure des accords sur les prix ou de se partager le marché entre elles, même si les sociétés concernées étaient par conséquent obligées de payer une amende équivalente à plusieurs millions d'euros.

Pour rappel, pendant la période indiquée, la Commission a infligé des amendes pour 18,4 milliards d'euros, alors que les ententes illicites ont coûté quelque 300 milliards aux consommateurs européens.

1. N'est-il pas clair que l'Union européenne est trop tendre avec les cartels de prix?

2. Quelle est la réaction de la Commission face à cette argumentation?

3. Comment la Commission estime-t-elle ces amendes?

4. Comment la Commission explique-t-elle cet écart entre petites amendes et gains faramineux liés à la fraude? Compte-t-elle repenser, à la lumière de ces chiffres, son modus operandi en la matière?

Réponse donnée par M. Almunia au nom de la Commission
(27 novembre 2013)

La lutte contre les ententes est clairement une priorité de la Commission, qui exige, de la part de la Commission et des autorités nationales de concurrence, un contrôle rigoureux de l'application des règles en la matière, ainsi que des sanctions proportionnées et suffisamment dissuasives.

Conformément au règlement 1/2003 du Conseil, le montant d'une amende doit prendre en considération à la fois la gravité et la durée de l'infraction et ne peut excéder 10 % du chiffre d'affaires total de l'entreprise. Les lignes directrices de la Commission pour le calcul des amendes ([1]) assurent la transparence des décisions en la matière; elles établissent un lien entre les amendes et le chiffre d'affaires concerné et tiennent compte de la participation individuelle de chaque entreprise (durée et circonstances qui justifieraient une augmentation ou une réduction).

Bien qu'il soit par nature difficile de mesurer les bénéfices réels par rapport aux amendes, la Commission dispose d'un certain nombre d'éléments indiquant que les amendes qu'elle inflige et les moyens de contrainte dont elle dispose ont un effet dissuasif significatif. Le succès du programme de clémence et l'augmentation constante des efforts avisés des entreprises pour se conformer aux règles en sont la preuve. De même, les décisions de la Commission en matière d'ententes sont souvent à l'origine d'actions civiles en réparation devant les juridictions nationales qui augmentent la note pour les entreprises en infraction et, par conséquent, renforcent l'effet dissuasif. Le Parlement européen examine actuellement une proposition législative en la matière ([2]). De manière générale, la pratique de fixation des amendes de la Commission est aussi confirmée par les juridictions européennes.

([1]) Lignes directrices pour le calcul des amendes infligées en application de l'article 23, paragraphe 2, sous a), du règlement (CE) n° 1/2003 (JO C 210 du 1.9.2006, p. 2). De plus amples informations sur le calcul des amendes et les statistiques relatives aux amendes infligées par la Commission sont disponibles aux adresses suivantes:
http://ec.europa.eu/competition/cartels/overview/index_en.html et http://ec.europa.eu/competition/cartels/statistics/statistics.pdf

([2]) Proposition de directive du Parlement européen et du Conseil relative à certaines règles régissant les actions en dommages et intérêts en droit interne pour les infractions aux dispositions du droit de la concurrence des États membres et de l'Union européenne [COM(2013) 404 du 11.6.2013:
http://ec.europa.eu/competition/antitrust/actionsdamages/documents.html]. Les autorités nationales de concurrence adoptent elles aussi chaque année un grand nombre de décisions en matière d'ententes.

Comme indiqué dans l'étude mentionnée par les Honorables Parlementaires, des procédures plus rapides pourraient encore renforcer l'effet dissuasif. Avec l'introduction de la «procédure de transaction» en 2010, la durée de la procédure administrative a été réduite. Simultanément, la situation des ressources de la Commission a un impact direct sur le taux de détection des ententes et la durée des procédures.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010919/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: The European Union too lenient towards cartels

According to a recent study by the Brussels-based think tank Bruegel, the fines imposed over the last 12 years by the Commission on companies concluding illegal price-fixing agreements were not high enough to deter them.

In four out of five cases, the companies concerned benefited from concluding price-fixing agreements or sharing the market between them, even if they were forced to pay a fine of several million euros as a result.

It should be remembered that the Commission imposed fines of EUR 18.4 billion during the period in question, whereas illegal cartels cost European consumers some EUR 300 billion.

1. Is it not clear that the European Union is too lenient towards price cartels?

2. What is the Commission's response to this claim?

3. How does the Commission determine the amount of these fines?

4. How does it explain the gap between small fines and huge profits gained by fraudulent means? Will it rethink its approach to this issue in the light of these figures?

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

The fight against cartels is a clear Commission priority which requires strong enforcement by the Commission and national competition authorities, as well as proportionate and sufficiently deterrent sanctions.

According to Council Regulation 1/2003, fines should take into account both the gravity and duration of the infringement and cannot exceed 10% of the undertaking's total turnover. The fining method is made transparent in the Commission Guidelines on Fines ([1]) which link the fines to the affected turnover and take into account each undertaking's individual involvement (duration and any circumstances that would justify an increase or a reduction).

Although it is inherently difficult to measure actual profits against fines the Commission has a number of indications that its fines and enforcement actions have a significant deterrent effect. This includes the successful leniency programme and the steady increase of sophisticated compliance efforts by companies. Also, Commission cartel decisions are often the basis for private damage actions before national courts which increases the costs of the cartel offenders and, hence, deterrence. The European Parliament is currently reviewing a legislative proposal in this regard ([2]). The Commission's fining practice is also, by and large, confirmed by the European Courts.

As noted in the study referred to by the Honourable Members, faster procedures could further strengthen deterrence. With the introduction of the so-called settlement procedure in 2010, the duration of the administrative proceedings has been reduced. At the same time, the Commission's resource situation has a direct impact on the cartel detection rate and the duration of procedures.

([1]) 2006 — Guidelines on the method of setting fines imposed pursuant to Article 23(2)(a) of Regulation No 1/2003, Official Journal C 210, 1.09.2006, p. 2-5. Further information on the method of setting fines and the Commission's fining statistic can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/competition/cartels/overview/index_en.html and http://ec.europa.eu/competition/cartels/statistics/statistics.pdf

([2]) Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on certain rules governing actions for damages under national law for infringements of the competition law provisions of the Member States and of the European Union. COM(2013) 404, 11.6.2013, http://ec.europa.eu/competition/antitrust/actionsdamages/documents.html National competition authorities also take a large number of cartel decisions each year.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010920/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(25 septembre 2013)

Objet: Israël — Union européenne et Horizon 2020

Le vendredi 13 septembre dernier, le site EU-Observer notait que les négociateurs européens et israéliens réunis la veille à Bruxelles n'avaient pas réussi à s'accorder sur les nouvelles règles de financement. Seules quelques possibilités, qui seraient plus faciles à accepter pour Israël, ont été recensées.

Les entretiens portaient sur la participation d'Israël au nouveau projet scientifique Horizon 2020 de l'Union européenne. Ce projet de 80 milliards d'euros couvre une période de sept années à dater du 1er janvier 2014. Israël a déclaré ne pas vouloir participer dans le cadre des nouvelles règles publiées en juillet, qui obligent les entreprises et les institutions à signer des documents attestant que l'argent de l'Union ne financera pas d'activités en territoire occupé.

L'ambassadeur de Grèce en Israël, Spiros Lampridis, a dit à titre personnel au quotidien israélien *The Jerusalem Post* qu'il comprend le pays qui l'accueille: «Si je me mets à la place d'Israël, je vois pourquoi ils ne sont pas en état de le signer. […] Notre mission en tant que pays européens est de trouver des alternatives pour rendre cette chose utilisable», a-t-il déclaré.

Israël a fait du lobbying auprès des ministères des affaires étrangères de l'Union et des États-Unis afin que la Commission reporte l'application des mesures. Israël dit ne pas pouvoir signer de documents relatifs à des subsides européens qui établissent notamment que Jérusalem-Est est une partie de la Palestine, alors qu'au même moment, des négociations sont en cours au sujet des frontières définitives avec la Palestine.

Quelle est la version de la Commission sur ces éléments?

Réponse donnée par Mme Geoghegan-Quinn au nom de la Commission
(3 décembre 2013)

Les négociations avec Israël en vue d'associer ce pays au programme Horizon 2020 ont débuté lors d'une réunion à Tel Aviv, le 14 août 2013. Une deuxième réunion s'est tenue à Bruxelles le 12 septembre 2013. D'autres réunions sont prévues. Les médias ont accordé une grande attention à la publication des «Lignes directrices relatives à l'éligibilité des entités israéliennes établies dans les territoires occupés par Israël depuis juin 1967 et des activités qu'elles y déploient aux subventions, prix et instruments financiers financés par l'Union européenne à partir de 2014» ([1]), ainsi qu'au fait que les négociations sont en cours. Les informations communiquées par les médias dans ce contexte ne sont pas toutes exactes.

Les lignes directrices visent à clarifier la position actuelle de l'UE et ne préjugent en rien du résultat des négociations de paix. L'Union européenne appuie sans réserve la reprise des négociations directes entre les parties, et elle reconnaîtra les modifications apportées au tracé des frontières une fois qu'elles auront été approuvées par les deux parties. L'application des lignes directrices sera transposée dans les accords associant Israël aux programmes de l'UE qui seront mis en place à partir de 2014. Le niveau élevé d'attention accordé par les médias illustre le fait que l'association d'Israël au programme Horizon 2020 est non seulement un accord très important, mais aussi le premier accord de ce type à être négocié en vue du cadre financier 2014-2020.

Étant donné que les négociations sont en cours, la Commission n'est pas en mesure de formuler des observations sur des points spécifiques.

([1]) JO C 205 du 19.7.2013, p. 9.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010920/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: Israel — European Union and Horizon 2020

On Friday 13 September 2013 the website EU-Observer reported that EU and Israeli negotiators meeting in Brussels the day before had failed to agree on new funding rules. Only a handful of options, which would be easier for Israel to accept, were identified.

The talks centred on Israel's participation in the European Union's new science project, Horizon 2020. This EUR 80 billion project will run from 1 January 2014 for seven years. Israel has said it will not take part under new rules, published in July 2013, which oblige its firms and institutions to sign documents saying that EU money will not fund activities on occupied land.

The Greek ambassador to Israel, Spiros Lampridis, told Israeli daily the *Jerusalem Post* that he sympathises with his host country. 'If I put myself in the Israelis' shoes, I can see why they are not able to sign it. […] Our task as EU Member States is to find alternatives to make this thing workable.' he said.

Israel has lobbied EU foreign ministries and the US State Department to make the Commission postpone the measures. Israel says it cannot sign EU grant papers saying that East Jerusalem, for example, is part of Palestine at the same time as negotiating final borders with Palestine in the talks that are currently taking place.

What is the Commission's version of the facts?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2013)

Negotiations with Israel on Association to Horizon 2020 began with a meeting in Tel Aviv on 14 August 2013 and there has been a subsequent meeting in Brussels on 12 September 2013. There will be further meeting(s). There has been significant media attention to both the publication of the 'Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards' ([1]), and of the fact that the negotiations are ongoing. Not all of the media reporting has been accurate.

The guidelines serve to clarify the existing EU position and in no way prejudge the outcome of peace negotiations. The EU fully supports the resumption of the direct negotiations between the parties and will recognise changes made to the borders once agreed by both parties. The application of the guidelines will be translated into the agreements on Israel's participation in EU programmes to be put in place from 2014. The high level of media attention reflects the fact that association of Israel to Horizon 2020 is both a high-profile agreement and also the first such agreement to be negotiated for the 2014-20 financial framework.

As negotiations are ongoing, the Commission is not able to comment on specific details.

([1]) Ref:OJ 2013 C 205 p9.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení P-010921/13
Komisi
Richard Falbr (S&D)
(25. září 2013)

Předmět: Úpravy národního schématu podpory obnovitelných zdrojů energie

Obracím se na Vás v případu notifikace českého Zákona o podporovaných zdrojích energie č. 165/2012 Sb. (POZE), respektive jeho případných dalších úprav.

Vysokou dotaci výkupních cen, která v letošním roce dosahuje částky 44,4 mld. Kč, pokrývá z 26% státní rozpočet a zbytek, tj. 32,8 mld. Kč, hradí všichni spotřebitelé jednotným poplatkem. Tento poplatek (cca23 €/MWh spotřebované elektřiny) navíc stále roste a zvyšuje se jeho podíl na koncové ceně elektřiny. Enormně vysoký poplatek zásadním způsobem ničí český trh s energiemi, stává se (makro)ekonomicky neudržitelným a představuje stále větší konkurenční nevýhodu výrazně exportně orientovaného českého průmyslu, zejména energeticky intenzivních komoditních oborů, a to nejen vůči mimoevropské konkurenci, ale již i v rámci Evropy.

Ve vyspělých státech EU s vysokou mírou podpory OZE (Německo, Francie, Holandsko, Belgie atd.) platí energeticky náročný průmysl snížené poplatky nebo nízký roční paušál. Ostatní „staré" členské země sice nemají snížené poplatky pro průmysl, ale míra podpory OZE je zde podstatně nižší. ČR je výjimkou v tom, že vysoce podporuje OZE (nejvyšší podíl podpory OZE na hlavu a jednotku HDP), ale přitom nechrání svou průmyslovou základnu.

Notifikace nového českého zákona 165/2012 Sb. měla proběhnout do března 2013, dosud se tak nestalo a nelze očekávat, že by k notifikaci došlo dříve, než na podzim 2013. Podobné zdržovací taktice čelily ze strany EK ve stejném období letošních prvních 6 měsíců i některé další, a zřejmě nikoliv náhodou menší členské země EU, ve své snaze obhájit úpravy své dosavadní podpory OZE (Slovinsko), či notifikovat zcela nové schéma podpory OZE (Rakousko). Zároveň bylo zahájeno šetření EK vůči Německu po 2 letech od zavedení diferencovaných plateb cen elektřiny pro velké spotřebitele v této členské zemi EU. Nicméně s minimálním časovým odstupem táž EK oficiálně sdělila, že na svém protekcionistickém systému nemusí Německo minimálně dalších 18 měsíců nic měnit. Šetření vůči Francii, jež rovněž chrání svůj průmysl před poplatky za OZE, nebylo dosud zahájeno vůbec.

Dovoluji si proto položit následující otázky:

1. Jak a kdy hodlá Komise (DG Competition) zajistit rovné podmínky pro zatížení spotřebitelů a průmyslu (velkých spotřebitelů) platbou na podporu OZE ve všech zemích EU?

2. Jak bude zajištěn nediskriminační přístup a rovnost podmínek do doby, než bude reálně zabezpečen bod 1?

Odpověď pana Almunii jménem Komise
(22. října 2013)

V rámci kontroly státní podpory ze strany EU mají členské státy široký prostor pro uvážení, jak do roku 2020 dosáhnout cílů v oblasti energie z obnovitelných zdrojů a jak navrhnout systémy podpory, například pokud jde o způsobilé náklady a příjemce podpory. Komise rovněž nemůže nařídit zavedení podpory pro odvětví s vysokou spotřebou energie v konkrétním členském státě či v celé EU. Komise však v současné době zvažuje vydání pokynů pro členské státy, jak reformovat a zlepšit režimy podpory získávání energie z obnovitelných zdrojů, a zároveň provádí revizi pokynů ke státní podpoře na ochranu životního prostředí. Cílem je dosáhnout toho, aby státní podpora byla účinnější a méně narušovala stabilitu systému, zejména aby nevedla k roztříštěnosti vnitřního trhu s energií.

Pokud jde o oznámení státní podpory stanovené českým zákonem č. 165/2012 Sb., o podporovaných zdrojích energie, české orgány byly požádány o dodatečné informace k doplnění uvedeného oznámení. Komise tedy režim stále posuzuje a očekává, že přijme rozhodnutí do konce roku 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010921/13
to the Commission
Richard Falbr (S&D)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: Modifications to the national scheme to support renewable energy sources (RES)

I am writing to you with regard to the notification of the Czech Act on supported energy source No 165/2012 Coll. (POZE), and specifically to the possibility of further changes being made thereto.

The national budget significantly subsidises purchase prices — which last year amounted to CZK 44.4 billion — to the tune of 26%. The remainder of CZK 32.8 billion is paid by all consumers in the form of a uniform payment. This charge of approximately EUR 23/MWh of electricity consumed is rising continuously, and its overall proportion of the end price of electricity is also increasing. Such a huge cost of payment is having a profoundly destructive effect on the Czech energy market; it is becoming (macro-) economically unsustainable and represents an ever-increasing competitive disadvantage to the Czech Republic's overwhelmingly export-oriented industrial sector, especially in the energy-intensive commodity branches. This not only affects competitiveness outside Europe, but also within the EU.

In older EU Member States with high levels of support for renewable energy sources (Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, etc.), energy-intensive industries pay reduced fees or a low fixed annual payment. The other older EU Member States have not reduced charges for industry; however, in such countries the level of support for renewable energy sources is much lower. The Czech Republic is an exception in this regard, as it provides a high degree of support for RES (highest proportion of RES per capita and per unit of GDP) but does not protect its industrial base.

The notification of Czech Act No 165/2012 Coll. should have taken place by March 2013. However, this has not occurred and is not expected to happen earlier than autumn 2013. Some other Member States — not coincidentally, these were smaller Member States — encountered similar delaying tactics from the Commission in the first six months of 2012 as they attempted to defend their existing RES support schemes (Slovenia) or to notify an entirely new RES support scheme (Austria). The Commission also launched an investigation into Germany two years after that Member State introduced differentiated electricity prices for large consumers. However, after a minimal amount of time had passed, the Commission stated that Germany must not make any changes to its protectionist system for at least the next 18 months. So far no investigation has even been launched into France, which also protects its industry from having to pay RES charges.

I therefore put the following questions to the Commission:

1. How and when does the Commission (DG Competition) intend to ensure that the financial burden imposed on consumers and industry (major consumers) to support RES is the same in all EU Member States?

2. How will a non-discriminatory approach and equal conditions be guaranteed until such a time as point 1 is truly achieved?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(22 October 2013)

Within the framework of EU State aid control, Member States have wide discretion as to how to achieve the 2020 renewables targets and how to design support systems, for example with respect to eligible costs and beneficiaries. Likewise, the Commission cannot prescribe the introduction of support for energy intensive industries within a particular Member State or across the EU. The Commission is, however, currently reflecting on guidance to be addressed to the Member States on how to reform and improve their renewables support schemes and is in the process of revising the Environmental state aid Guidelines. The objective is to make state aid more efficient and less distortive, in particular avoiding the fragmentation of the internal energy market.

As regards the state aid notification of the Czech Act No 165/2012 concerning support to renewable sources of energy, additional information was required from the Czech authorities to complete the notification. Therefore, the Commission is still at the stage of assessing the scheme and expects to take a decision before the end of 2013.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-010922/13
προς την Επιτροπή (Αντιπρόεδρος/Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος)
Maria Eleni Koppa (S&D)
(25 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: VP/HR — Βίαιες ενέργειες εις βάρος Ευρωπαίων διπλωματών εκ μέρους του Ισραήλ

Την Παρασκευή, 20 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013, στο Κιρμπέτ Αλ-Μαχούλ της Δυτικής Όχθης, Ισραηλινοί στρατιώτες προέβησαν σε βίαιες ενέργειες εις βάρος Ευρωπαίων διπλωματών και κατάσχεσαν υλικό ανθρωπιστικής βοήθειας που προοριζόταν για Παλαιστίνιους, των οποίων οι οικισμοί έχουν καταστραφεί. Σύμφωνα με αυτόπτες μάρτυρες, οι ισραηλινές δυνάμεις χρησιμοποίησαν χειροβομβίδες κρότου και απομάκρυναν με τη βία τους Ευρωπαίους διπλωμάτες.

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση πάντα τόνιζε την σημασία της ανεμπόδιστης διανομής ανθρωπιστικής βοήθειας και της προστασίας, σύμφωνα με τη Συνθήκη της Γενεύης, των ανθρώπων που βρίσκονται στα κατεχόμενα εδάφη, κάτι που προφανώς δεν τηρεί η κυβέρνηση του Ισραήλ στην περίπτωση της Παλαιστίνης.

Η επανέναρξη των συνομιλιών για την ειρηνευτική διαδικασία χαιρετίζεται από την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, όμως τέτοιου είδους περιστατικά υπονομεύουν τις διαπραγματεύσεις και δημιουργούν σοβαρές αμφιβολίες για την δέσμευση και την πρόθεση του Ισραήλ να βρεθεί επιτέλους μία λύση. Ανεξάρτητα όμως από την έκβαση των διαπραγματεύσεων, οι αρχές της χώρας οφείλουν να σέβονται το Διεθνές Δίκαιο, μέρος του οποίου αποτελεί και η διπλωματική ασυλία, αλλά και το Διεθνές Ανθρωπιστικό Δίκαιο. Αξίζει να σημειωθεί ότι ο οικισμός στο Κιρμπέτ Αλ-Μαχούλ είναι ο τρίτος παλαιστινιακός οικισμός που γκρεμίζεται από τον περασμένο Αύγουστο.

Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, και με βάση το άρθρο 2 της Συμφωνίας Σύνδεσης ΕΕ-Ισραήλ, που ορίζει ότι οι σχέσεις ανάμεσα στις δύο πλευρές θα βασίζονται στον αμοιβαίο σεβασμό για τα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα και τις δημοκρατικές αρχές, ερωτάται η Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος αν προτίθεται να επιβάλει οικονομικές κυρώσεις;

Και ακόμη, σε τι ενέργειες σκοπεύει να προβεί προκειμένου να διασφαλιστεί η ασφαλής παροχή ανθρωπιστικής βοήθειας στην Παλαιστίνη, αλλά και η συμμόρφωση του Ισραήλ με το Διεθνές Ανθρωπιστικό Δίκαιο;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(7 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Η ΕΕ παρακολούθησε εκ του σύνεγγυς το περιστατικό.

Σε δήλωση που εξέδωσε η εκπρόσωπος της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου και Μέλος της Επιτροπής Georgieva στις 21 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013, η ΕΕ αποδοκίμασε την κατάσχεση της ανθρωπιστικής βοήθειας από Ισραηλινούς στρατιώτες στο Κιρμπέτ Αλ-Μαχούλ και υπογράμμισε την υποχρέωση εφαρμογής του διεθνούς ανθρωπιστικού δικαίου στα Κατεχόμενα Παλαιστινιακά εδάφη. Αξιωματούχοι της ΕΕ ήταν σε επαφή με τις αρχές του Ισραήλ κατά τη διάρκεια των επεισοδίων.

Όπως υπογραμμίζεται στα συμπεράσματα του Συμβουλίου Εξωτερικών Υποθέσεων του Μαΐου 2012, η ΕΕ ζητεί επανειλημμένως να δοθεί τέλος στην καταστροφή οικισμών και τη μεταφορά του πληθυσμού στη Ζώνη Γ. Η ΕΕ δίνει ιδιαίτερη σημασία και θα εξακολουθήσει να εμμένει στην αρχή της ανεμπόδιστης ανθρωπιστικής πρόσβασης, όπως καταδεικνύεται από την παρουσία διπλωματών της ΕΕ επί τόπου. Πρέπει να διασφαλίζεται η ασφάλεια των μελών των ανθρωπιστικών οργανώσεων κατά την παράδοση της βοήθειας.

Η ΕΕ χαιρετίζει την απόφαση του Ανώτατου Δικαστηρίου του Ισραήλ που αποτρέπει την εκδίωξη της κοινότητας και την περαιτέρω καταστροφή σκηνών, υποστηρίζοντας την άποψη ότι η ανθρωπιστική βοήθεια όπως χορηγείται από την ΕΕ πρέπει να συνεχιστεί ανεμπόδιστα.

Η ΕΕ δεν προωθεί την εφαρμογή εμπορικών κυρώσεων στο πλαίσιο των σχέσεων ΕΕ-Ισραήλ. Η συμφωνία σύνδεσης αποτελεί τη νομική βάση του τρέχοντος διαλόγου μας με τις ισραηλινές αρχές. Η ΕΕ θα συνεχίσει να κάνει χρήση όλων των ευκαιριών που προσφέρονται από τον διάλογο που διεξάγεται σε +διάφορα επίπεδα στο πλαίσιο της συμφωνίας σύνδεσης για να θίγει ζητήματα που προκαλούν ανησυχία. Η ΕΕ θα συνεχίσει επίσης να παρακολουθεί στενά τις εξελίξεις, μεταξύ άλλων, επιβλέποντας συνεχώς την παράδοση ανθρωπιστικής βοήθειας και παρακολουθώντας τις κοινότητες που απειλούνται με εκδίωξη μέσω της αντιπροσωπείας της στην Ανατολική Ιερουσαλήμ.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010922/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Maria Eleni Koppa (S&D)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — European diplomats manhandled by Israelis

On 20 September 2013, Israeli forces forcibly stopped European diplomats travelling to Khirbet Al-Makhul on the West Bank and seized a consignment of humanitarian aid intended for Palestinians whose homes had been demolished. According to witnesses, the soldiers hurled sonic grenades before converging on the European diplomats and hauling them away.

The European Union has always firmly stressed the importance of ensuring the unimpeded passage of humanitarian aid and compliance with the Geneva Convention regarding protection of the inhabitants of occupied territories, a principle clearly being flouted by the Israeli Government in its dealings with Palestine.

While the European Union welcomes the reopening of peace negotiations, incidents such as the above merely serve to undermine the process and raise serious doubts as to the depth of Israeli commitment to finding a solution. Regardless of the outcome of the talks, however, Israeli authorities have an obligation to comply with the provisions of international law, including those relating to diplomatic immunity and human rights. Moreover, Khirbet Al-Makhul is the third Palestinian community to be demolished since August.

In view of this and given that Article 2 of the Association Agreement between the EU and Ismael stipulates that relations between the parties shall be based on respect for human rights and democratic principles, does the High Representative intend to impose economic sanctions?

What action does the High Representative intend to take to ensure the safe passage of humanitarian aid for Palestine and compliance by Israel with international humanitarian law?

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

The EU has followed closely the incidents.

In a statement issued by the spokespersons of HR/VP and Commissioner Georgieva on 21 September 2013, the EU deplored the confiscation of humanitarian assistance by Israeli forces in Khirbet al-Makhul and underlined the applicability of international humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territory. EU officials were in contact with the Israeli authorities throughout the incident.

As oulined in the conclusions of its Foreign Affairs Council of May 2012, the EUcontinues to call for a halt of demolitions and forced transfers of the population in Area C. The EU attaches great importance and will continue to insist on the principle of unimpeded humanitarian access as demonstrated by the presence of EU diplomats at the scene. The safety of humanitarian workers in delivering aid must be safeguarded.

The EU welcomes the decision by the Israeli High Court preventing the community's eviction and the further destruction of tents, supporting the view that humanitarian assistance such as the EU is providing should continue unhindered.

The EU does not promote the use of trade sanctions in the context of EU-Israel relations. The Association Agreement (AA) is the legal basis of our ongoing dialogue with the Israeli authorities. The EU will continue to use all opportunities afforded by the dialogue that takes place at different levels within the framework of the AA to raise issues of concern. The EU will also continue to monitor developments closely, including through continued observation of humanitarian assistance delivery and monitoring of communities threatened by eviction through its delegation in East Jerusalem.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010923/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(26 septembre 2013)

Objet: Objectifs énergétiques 2030 en berne

Selon un document officieux de la Commission, les États membres affichent aujourd'hui des divergences importantes en matière de politique énergétique future, à l'exception de l'objectif de réduction de CO_2 à hauteur de 40 %. Les États membres s'inquièteraient de la tournure que prend le débat pour 2030. «Un large accord règne sur la nécessité d'un nouvel objectif de réduction des émissions de CO2 pour 2030», a expliqué la Commission lors d'une conférence de presse à l'issue d'une réunion informelle des ministres de l'énergie à Vilnius, le 20 septembre. «Certains sont contre et d'autres pour la mise en place d'un nouvel objectif d'énergies renouvelables. Un désaccord porte sur la forme qu'il doit prendre», a-t-elle ajouté.

En matière d'économies d'énergie, l'UE dispose d'ores et déjà d'une directive sur l'efficacité énergétique, laquelle devrait faire l'objet d'une révision l'année prochaine.

1. Selon certaines informations sérieuses, de hauts fonctionnaires s'inquiètent en privé que les modèles actuels de réduction de gaz à effet de serre à hauteur de 35-45 % ne limitent les politiques d'efficacité énergétique et d'énergie renouvelable. Quelle est la position de la Commission à ce sujet?

2. Une analyse d'impact sur les objectifs pour 2030 sera publiée cette année. Mais les fonctionnaires craignent qu'elle ne prenne en compte qu'une seule politique visant à atteindre une réduction de CO_2 de 40 % dans le cadre du système européen d'échange de quotas d'émission (ETS). Qu'en est-il?

3. La Commission confirme-t-elle que le modèle économétrique européen sur l'énergie «PRIMES» omettrait les effets des réductions de coûts ayant trait aux économies d'énergie et aux politiques renouvelables, comme l'augmentation de la valeur des propriétés (due aux rénovations des bâtiments) ainsi qu'une diminution des factures de soins de santé et des coûts liés au climat?

4. Un objectif de 40 % de gaz à effet de serre pour 2030 reviendrait-il à dire, dans de telles conditions, que l'UE a abandonné son engagement visant à limiter le réchauffement de la planète à des niveaux sans danger?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Hedegaard au nom de la Commission
(15 novembre 2013)

Comme annoncé dans son programme de travail pour 2014, la Commission publiera des propositions concrètes pour un cadre d'action pour le climat et l'énergie à l'horizon 2030 au début de l'année 2014. En règle générale, la Commission ne commente pas les détails d'une initiative, notamment les aspects relatifs à l'étude qui sous-tend l'analyse d'impact qui l'accompagne, avant la publication de ladite initiative.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010923/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: 2030 energy targets in bad shape

According to a Commission non-paper, there is currently little consensus among the Member States on future energy policy, with the exception of the 40% CO_2 reduction target. The Member States are said to be concerned about the direction the 2030 debate is taking. At a press conference after the informal energy council in Vilnius on 20 September 2013, the Commission said: 'There was wide agreement that a new CO2 emissions reductions goal is needed for 2030.' It added: 'There were opinions for and against developing a new goal for renewable energies and also some disagreement about what form this should take.'

As far as energy savings are concerned, the EU already has an energy efficiency directive, which is due to be reviewed next year.

1. According to reliable sources, senior officials are privately concerned that the current models for a greenhouse gas savings target ranging between 35% and 45% would constrain energy efficiency and renewables policies. What is the Commission's position on this matter?

2. An impact assessment on 2030 targets will be published later this year. However, officials worry that it will only consider policy for achieving a 40% CO_2 reduction under the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS). What is the current situation with regard to this point?

3. Can the Commission confirm that the European econometric energy model PRIMES omitted to show the cost-saving effects of energy savings and renewables policies, such as increased property values (from building renovations), and lower healthcare bills and climate-related costs?

4. Would a 40% greenhouse gas target for 2030 be a declaration, in such circumstances, that the EU has given up on its commitment to limit global warming to safe levels?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

As announced in the Commission's recent work programme for 2014, the Commission will publish concrete proposals for a 2030 Climate and Energy Framework in the beginning of 2014. As a general rule, the Commission does not comment on details of initiatives, including on aspects relating to the analysis underpinning the accompanying Impact Assessment, until the initiative has been published.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010924/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(26 septembre 2013)

Objet: Modification des règles de tarification des surcharges

Plusieurs compagnies aériennes, et non des moindres, ont indiqué à leurs clients que les surcharges carburant et sûreté allaient désormais s'appliquer au poids taxable et non plus au poids brut des expéditions.

1. La Commission est-elle d'avis que la sûreté et le volume sont autant liés et que cette hausse se justifie? Quant à la surcharge carburant, n'était-il pas plus logique qu'elle soit corrélée au poids?

2. La Commission possède-t-elle des chiffres sur les impacts de ce nouveau mode de calcul? Selon certaines estimations, il entraîne une augmentation des coûts de transport qui peut atteindre 15 à 20 %, et même jusqu'à plus de 60 % en Italie.

3. La Commission ne s'étonne-t-elle pas de la concomitance des décisions prises par les compagnies aériennes dans un laps de temps très court? Emirates et Lufthansa, ainsi que plusieurs compagnies asiatiques, ont fait savoir au mois d'août qu'elles appliqueraient la nouvelle tarification, respectivement à partir du 1er septembre et du 27 octobre. Le groupe Air France-KLM a de son côté informé ses clients, par une lettre du 12 septembre, que la mesure entrerait en vigueur le 4 novembre 2013. Y aurait-il eu une action concertée, en violation des règles de concurrence européennes?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(19 novembre 2013)

L'article 2 du règlement (CE) nº 1008/2008 définit le «tarif de fret» comme étant le prix à payer pour le transport de fret ainsi que les conditions d'application de ce prix.

L'article 22 du même règlement établit la liberté de tarification, tandis que son article 23 oblige les transporteurs de fret à inclure les conditions applicables dans leurs informations sur les tarifs de fret. Le prix définitif à payer doit être précisé à tout moment et inclure le tarif de fret, les taxes, les redevances, les suppléments et les droits applicables inévitables et prévisibles à la date de publication. Les suppléments de prix optionnels sont communiqués de façon claire, transparente et non équivoque au début de toute procédure de réservation.

Aussi les transporteurs de fret ont-ils la liberté de fixer la structure des prix. Le contrat relève, par nature, du droit civil national.

En conséquence, si les règles en matière de transparence, de sûreté et de sécurité sont appliquées, la Commission ne voit aucune nécessité d'intervenir et ne surveille pas non plus l'évolution des prix. Les parties qui constatent que le règlement n'est pas correctement appliqué sont invitées à contacter les autorités nationales chargées de veiller à l'application de la législation.

En ce qui concerne les règles de concurrence, selon la jurisprudence des juridictions européennes, les concurrents ne sont pas autorisés à coordonner entre eux leur comportement sur le marché d'une manière qui risquerait d'altérer les conditions normales de concurrence. Ils ont toutefois le droit de s'adapter intelligemment au comportement constaté ou à escompter de leurs concurrents (voir, par exemple, l'affaire T-588/08, *Dole Food Company/Commission*, point 61). Ainsi, le simple fait que les compagnies aériennes ont pris leurs décisions l'une à la suite de l'autre dans un laps de temps relativement bref n'indique pas en soi que les règles de concurrence de l'UE ont été violées, sans compter que l'utilisation du «poids taxable» pour le calcul des tarifs de base constituait déjà la norme dans ce secteur.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010924/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Changes to surcharge rules

Several airlines, including the major carriers, have informed their customers that fuel and security surcharges will no longer be based on the gross weight of shipments, but on the chargeable weight instead.

1. Does the Commission believe that there is such a close link between security and volume and that this increase is justified? As for the fuel surcharge, did it not make more sense for it to be correlated with weight?

2. Does the Commission have any figures concerning the impacts of this new calculation method? According to some estimates, it increases transport costs by up to 15-20% and by more than 60% in Italy.

3. Does it not surprise the Commission that the airlines took their decisions one after another in a very short space of time? Emirates and Lufthansa, along with several Asian carriers, announced in August 2013 that they would be applying the new charging system from 1 September 2013 and 27 October 2013 respectively. Air France-KLM, for its part, informed its customers, in a letter sent on 12 September 2013, that the measure would come into force on 4 November 2013. Could this be an example of concerted action, in violation of EU competition rules?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

Article 2 of Regulation (EC) 1008/2008 says that 'air rate' is the price to be paid for the carriage of cargo and the conditions under which those prices apply.

Article 22 of the same Regulation sets pricing freedom and Article 23 obliges cargo carriers that air rates include the applicable conditions. The final price shall at all times be indicated and shall include the applicable air rate, taxes, charges, surcharges and fees which are unavoidable and foreseeable at the time of publication. Optional price supplements shall be communicated in a clear, transparent and unambiguous way at the start of any booking process.

Thus, cargo carriers have the liberty to set the price structure. The contract is by nature subject to national civil law.

Consequently, if the price transparency, safety and security rules are applied, the Commission does not see any intervention needed, nor does the Commission monitor price developments. Parties, that find that the regulation is not correctly applied, are advised to contact the relevant national enforcement authorities.

As for competition rules, according to the case law of the European courts, competitors are not allowed to coordinate between themselves the conduct on the market in a way that might interfere with the normal conditions of competition. They have however the right to adapt themselves intelligently to the existing or anticipated conduct of their competitors (e.g. see Case T-588/08 *Dole Food Company v Commission*, §61). Thus, the mere fact that airlines took their decisions one after another in a relatively short space of time does not suggest by itself a violation of EU competition rules, notably since the use of 'chargeable weight' for the calculation of the base rates was already the industry standard.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010925/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(26 septembre 2013)

Objet: OpenupED et Iversity

Les partenaires de onze pays ont uni leurs forces pour lancer la première initiative paneuropéenne de cours en ligne massifs et ouverts (MOOC), avec l'aide de la Commission européenne. C'est ce que précisait le communiqué de presse de l'Association européenne des universités d'enseignement à distance, sur le site de l'Union européenne fin avril pour le lancement «d'OpenupED». Mais à la différence «d'Iversity», OpenupED ne met pas à disposition une technologie permettant aux établissements de diffuser leur MOOC, mais ne fait que renvoyer vers diverses universités ouvertes partenaires. En somme, c'est une sorte d'annuaire. Les premiers cours seront présentés prochainement.

1. Que pense la Commission de ce projet?

2. Quels sont les objectifs chiffrés de cette initiative?

3. La Commission préconise-t-elle à terme un mélange entre OpenupED et Iversity? Quelles sont les perspectives d'avenir?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Vassiliou au nom de la Commission
(15 novembre 2013)

Les deux projets mentionnés par l'Honorable Parlementaire poursuivent des objectifs différents. «Iversity» est une plateforme technique d'hébergement de cours en ligne ouverts et massifs (MOOC) qui permet aux établissements de diffuser leurs cours. Quant au projet «OpenupEdu», il vise à accroître l'offre de MOOC en favorisant des partenariats entre les universités d'enseignement à distance et entre celles-ci et les universités traditionnelles. La Commission se félicite de cette diversité d'approches dans la mesure où il n'existe pas de solution unique pour répondre à l'ensemble des besoins des établissements européens qui proposent déjà des MOOC.

La Commission n'est pas propriétaire des projets financés dans le cadre du programme pour l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie en cours et du futur programme Erasmus+. Elle n'a pas non plus à intervenir dans les stratégies organisationnelles et pédagogiques d'établissements d'enseignement supérieur autonomes.

La Commission a récemment publié une communication intitulée «Ouvrir l'éducation» ([1]), estimant qu'il était essentiel que les établissements d'enseignement et de formation européens tirent parti du potentiel des nouvelles technologies afin d'innover, d'accroître leur efficacité et de garantir un accès équitable à la connaissance et aux différentes possibilités d'apprentissage. Les priorités et les actions annoncées dans cette communication seront financées par les programmes Erasmus+ et «Horizon 2020». De plus, dans le cadre de cette initiative, la Commission a lancé le portail «Open Éducation Europa» ([2]) pour assurer la visibilité des ressources éducatives libres et des MOOC conçus en Europe. Les MOOC hébergés sur «Iversity» tout comme ceux hébergés sur «OpenupEdu» sont accessibles depuis ce portail.

([1]) COM(2013) 654 — http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/20130925_fr.htm
([2]) http://openeducationeuropa.eu (disponible en anglais seulement).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010925/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: OpenupED and Iversity

Partners in 11 countries have joined forces to launch the first pan-European 'MOOCs' (Massive Open Online Courses) initiative, with the support of the Commission. That is what the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities said in its press release, posted on the EU website at the end of April to mark the launch of 'OpenupED'. Unlike 'Iversity', however, OpenupED does not provide the technology for institutions to disseminate their MOOCs, but merely refers users to various partner open universities. In short, it is a kind of directory. The first courses will be offered soon.

1. What does the Commission think of this project?

2. What performance targets have been set for this initiative?

3. Does the Commission recommend that OpenupED and Iversity be combined in the long run? What are their future prospects?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

The two projects mentioned by the Honourable Member serve different goals: while Iversity is a technical platform for the provision of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) through which institutions can offer their courses, OpenupEdu is a project that aims at increasing the offer of MOOCs by way of fostering partnerships among distance teaching universities and between distance teaching and traditional universities. The Commission welcomes this diversity of approaches as there is no single approach which could cater for all the different needs of the European institutions already delivering (MOOCs).

The Commission has no ownership over the projects funded under the current Lifelong Learning and the future Erasmus+ programme, nor is it the Commission's role to interfere with organisational and educational strategies of autonomous higher education institutions.

The Commission has recently published the communication 'Opening up Education' ([1]) as it considers it essential that European education and training institutions exploit the potential of the new technologies in order to innovate, to enhance efficiency and to ensure equity in the access to knowledge and learning opportunities. The priorities and actions announced in the communication will be supported through the Erasmus+ and the Horizon 2020 programme. Also, as part of the initiative, the Open Education Europa portal ([2]) was launched to provide visibility for Open Educational Resources and MOOCs created in Europe. MOOCs from both Iversity and OpenupEdu are accessible via the portal.

([1]) Comm(2013)654 — http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/20130925_en.htm
([2]) http://openeducationeuropa.eu

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010927/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Maria Eleni Koppa (S&D)
(26 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Βιασμοί γυναικών και ανηλίκων στο Πακιστάν

Με αφορμή την πρόσφατη υπόθεση ομαδικού βιασμού 5χρονου κοριτσιού, στις 14 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013, στην επαρχία Πουντζάμπ του Πακιστάν, το αποτρόπαιο αυτό ζήτημα επανήλθε στο προσκήνιο. Το περιστατικό προκάλεσε μαζικές διαδηλώσεις σε όλο το Πακιστάν, με κύριο αίτημα την βελτίωση του συστήματος απονομής δικαιοσύνης για τα θύματα βιασμών.

Σύμφωνα με την Επιτροπή Ανθρωπίνων Δικαιωμάτων του Πακιστάν, μόνο στην επαρχία Πουντζάμπ, το 2012 υπήρξαν περίπου 450 επίσημες καταγγελίες για υποθέσεις βιασμού ανηλίκων. Σύμφωνα με τις αρχές όμως, ο πραγματικός αριθμός είναι πολύ υψηλότερος, καθώς η πλειοψηφία των θυμάτων δεν καταγγέλλει τον βιασμό.

Παρά τις νομοθετικές αλλαγές το 2006 σχετικά με την δικαστική αντιμετώπιση των υποθέσεων βιασμού και την μετάθεση της εκδίκασης τέτοιων υποθέσεων στα ποινικά δικαστήρια, το βάρος της απόδειξης πέφτει ακόμα στο θύμα. Σε συνδυασμό με την διαφαινόμενη ανικανότητα της αστυνομίας να επιληφθεί των σχετικών ερευνών και την περιβόητη βραδύτητα της Πακιστανικής δικαιοσύνης, καθώς και τον φόβο πολλών θυμάτων να προσφύγουν στη δικαιοσύνη λόγω των δολοφονιών τιμής (άνω των 900 το 2012), το ποσοστό των καταδικαστικών αποφάσεων για υποθέσεις βιασμού φτάνει μόλις το 3-4%.

Παρά την κινητοποίηση του πληθυσμού και τις προσπάθειες των αρχών το φαινόμενο βρίσκεται σε έξαρση.

Η ΕΕ, σύμφωνα με το Έγγραφο Στρατηγικής για το Πακιστάν, καθώς και με το 5ετές πρόγραμμα δέσμευσης, καλεί την κυβέρνηση του Πακιστάν να προβεί στην μεταρρύθμιση του δικαστικού συστήματος, να διευκολύνει την πρόσβαση στη δικαιοσύνη για γυναίκες και ανήλικους και να συνεργαστεί με τους εθνικούς θεσμούς για την προώθηση των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων.

Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή αν σκοπεύει να θέσει πιο επιτακτικά την ανάγκη νομοθετικής μεταρρύθμισης επί του θέματος αυτού στις διαπραγματεύσεις με την νεοεκλεγείσα πακιστανική κυβέρνηση και αν, στο πλαίσιο της στρατηγικής συνεργασίας σκοπεύει να ενισχύσει την κοινωνία των πολιτών και να προωθήσει προγράμματα ενημέρωσης και ευαισθητοποίησης για τα δικαιώματα των γυναικών και των ανηλίκων;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(12 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Τα δικαιώματα των γυναικών και των παιδιών αποτελούν προτεραιότητες στον διάλογο της ΕΕ με το Πακιστάν για τα δικαιώματα του ανθρώπου. Η ΕΕ δεσμεύεται πλήρως όσον αφορά την καταπολέμηση του προβλήματος της σεξουαλικής κακοποίησης γυναικών και παιδιών στις εξωτερικές της σχέσεις και ενθαρρύνει την πακιστανική κυβέρνηση να λάβει επειγόντως μέτρα για την ασφάλεια και την προστασία των δικαιωμάτων και των δύο.

Η θέση της ΕΕ είναι να συνεργαστεί με το Πακιστάν σε όλα τα επίπεδα, μεταξύ άλλων για τη βελτίωση της ευαισθητοποίησης και της προστασίας των δικαιωμάτων του ανθρώπου, την ενίσχυση της κοινωνίας των πολιτών, τη στήριξη προγραμμάτων που συνδέονται με την εκπαίδευση και την ισορροπία μεταξύ των δύο φύλων και προγραμμάτων για το κράτος δικαίου, καθώς και τη στήριξη της πρόσβασης στη δικαιοσύνη για τις ευάλωτες ομάδες. Ειδικότερα, η ΕΕ υποστηρίζει επί του παρόντος συγκεκριμένες δράσεις μέσω της ευρωπαϊκής πρωτοβουλίας για τη δημοκρατία και τα δικαιώματα του ανθρώπου (ΕΜΔΔΑ), η οποία επιδιώκει την αντιμετώπιση συγκεκριμένων πτυχών της κατάστασης που επικρατεί στο Πακιστάν όσον αφορά τα δικαιώματα του ανθρώπου, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της βίας κατά γυναικών και παιδιών, και υποστηρίζει την κοινωνία των πολιτών σε δράσεις ευαισθητοποίησης και ενημερωτικές εκστρατείες.

Το Πακιστάν έχει υπογράψει τη διεθνή σύμβαση για την εξάλειψη όλων των μορφών διακρίσεων κατά των γυναικών (CEDAW), και τη σύμβαση για τα δικαιώματα του παιδιού (CRC). Τα συμπεράσματα του Συμβουλίου Εξωτερικών Υποθέσεων του Μαρτίου 2013 υπογραμμίζουν τα σχέδια της ΕΕ να αρχίσει αμέσως να συνεργάζεται με την νεοεκλεγείσα κυβέρνηση του Πακιστάν για ζητήματα προτεραιότητας, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των δικαιωμάτων του ανθρώπου. Η εφαρμογή της CEDAW και CRC, καθώς και άλλων συμβάσεων θα εξεταστούν στο πλαίσιο του εν λόγω διαλόγου.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010927/13
to the Commission
Maria Eleni Koppa (S&D)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Rapes of women and minors in Pakistan

The recent gang rape of a five-year old girl in the Punjab province of Pakistan on 14 September 2013 has brought this horrific issue back under the spotlight. The incident provoked mass demonstrations across Pakistan, demanding mainly that the justice system be improved for rape victims.

According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, almost 450 rapes of minors were formally reported in the Punjab province in 2012 alone. According to the authorities, however, the real number is much higher, as the majority of victims do not report the rapes.

In spite of legal reforms in 2006 addressing the judicial handling of rape cases and the transfer of trials of such cases to criminal courts, the burden of proof still falls on the victim. In combination with the obvious inability of the police to handle the relevant investigations, and the notorious slowness of the Pakistani justice system, as well as the fear of seeking justice felt by many victims due to honour killings (of which there were more than 900 in 2012), the conviction rate for rape cases amounts to just 3-4%.

In spite of the mobilisation of the population and the efforts of the authorities, the problem is increasing.

In accordance with the strategy Paper on Pakistan, and in the spirit of the five-year engagement programme, the EU is calling on the Pakistani Government to proceed with judicial reform in order to facilitate access to justice for women and minors, and to cooperate with national institutions for the promotion of human rights.

Within this framework, will the Commission say whether it aims to press the case for legislative reform on this matter more urgently in negotiations with the newly-elected Pakistani Government and whether it intends, within the framework of strategic cooperation, to strengthen civil society and to promote information and awareness-raising campaigns focusing on the rights of women and minors?

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

The rights of women and children are priorities in the EU's human rights dialogue with Pakistan. The EU is fully committed to combating the problem of sexual abuse of women and children in its external relations and encourages the Government of Pakistan to take urgent measures to ensure the physical security and protect the rights of both.

The EU's position is to engage with Pakistan across the board, including through improving awareness and protection of human rights, strengthening civil society organisations, supporting programmes related to education and gender balance, and programmes on the rule of law as well as support for access to justice for vulnerable groups. More specifically, the EU currently supports specific actions through the European initiative for democracy and human rights (EIDHR) which seek to address specific aspects of Pakistan's human rights performance, including violence against women and children, and supporting civil society in awareness raising and information campaigns.

Pakistan is a signatory to the international Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The March 2013 Foreign Affairs Council conclusions underline EU plans to engage promptly with the newly elected Pakistani government on priority issues including human rights. The implementation of the CEDAW and CRC as well as other conventions will be addressed in the course of that dialogue.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010928/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Criteria for allocating new EU rural development funding

Can the Commission detail the criterion that will be used to distribute rural development funding to each Member State and outline the mechanisms that will be employed to make this process objective?

In addition, can the Commission outline in detail the specific objective criterion and indicators of past performance that will be used to allocate rural development funding for the 2014-2020 period to the following Member States: Austria, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Portugal, Cyprus, Spain, Belgium, Slovenia, Finland and the United Kingdom?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(8 November 2013)

An overall political agreement on the CAP reform was reached among the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission in the trilogue meeting on 24 September 2013.

As part of this overall agreement, it was decided to set out the allocation among Member States of the Union support for rural development in an annex to the new Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The figures in that annex reflect the Member States' envelopes seen and agreed by the Heads of State and Government during the European Council of 7-8 February 2013.

Therefore, with the CAP reform agreement, Article 64(4) of the draft basic act on rural development does not include a reference to objective criteria and past performance, as initially proposed by the Commission.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010929/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Dimensional mapping systems

What plans, if any, does the Commission have under the new Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) to recognise the need for three-dimensional mapping systems, which would make it possible to ascertain the actual size of a given land parcel?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(5 November 2013)

The Commission does not have any plans under the new Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) to recognise the need for three dimensional mapping systems. GIS-techniques used in the context of the CAP implementation sufficiently tackle the projection of a three-dimensional reality into a two-dimensional mapping through the process of ortho-rectification.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010930/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Tackling sexual crimes against women in Asia

Almost one quarter of men surveyed in a UN report looking at violence against women in parts of Asia have admitted to committing at least one rape. In Papua New Guinea, more than 6 out of 10 men surveyed admitted to forcing a woman to have sex.

Is the Commission aware of this report? What measures can be taken by the EU to bring about a reduction in the incidence of this terrible crime?

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

The EU is aware of the UN survey's appalling conclusions. It is clear that violence against women cannot be justified whatsoever. The EU is aware that Papua New Guinea faces serious problems with regard to violence against women, including rape, domestic violence, and violence based on sorcery. These dramatic problems need to be tackled urgently and combatting violence against women is among the top priorities of the EU in Papua New Guinea and in the whole region. On their side, the Pacific leaders committed to intensify their efforts to eradicate Sexual and Gender Based Violence as it is underlined in their communiqué issued at the Summit of the Pacific Islands Forum in 2011.

The EU has urged the authorities of Papua New Guinea to combat these abuses and take action in terms of education/awareness raising, legislative and policy initiatives. Recently, the parliament of Papua New Guinea passed legislation making any form of domestic violence an offence. This can be considered as a serious progress.

The EU contributes in various ways to combatting violence against women in Papua New Guinea. Under the EIDHR's 10% preparations allocation, the EU is co-sponsoring the conference 'A Comprehensive Response to Family and Sexual Violence in Papua New Guinea' with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) on 21 and 22 November 2013. The aim of this conference is the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive response to family and sexual violence, which also addresses the victim's immediate and long term needs. Besides, the second phase of the Rural Economic Development Programme of the EU aims to support women's empowerment in remote rural areas in order to improve their protection against violence and abuse.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010931/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: EU Anti-Trafficking Day

It is estimated that there are approximately 880 000 victims of forced labour and sexual exploitation in the European Union. In order to raise awareness of the prevalence of this horrific crime, can the Commission outline what plans it has to mark the EU Anti-Trafficking Day on 18 October 2013?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(7 November 2013)

The Commission shares the concerns of the Honourable Member on the ILO estimates on forced labour. The Commission welcomed the opportunity of the 7th EU Anti-Trafficking Day on 18 October 2013 to raise awareness on this priority area for the EU.

To mark the 7th EU Anti-Trafficking Day, the Commission organised in Brussels a screening of the film 'Not my life' by Robert Bilheimer, a documentary depicting the horrifying and dangerous practices of trafficking in human beings on a global scale, filmed on five continents over a period of four years. The Member of the Commission responsible for Home Affairs, Belgian Interior Minister Joëlle Milquet and the film makers addressed the audience after the screening.

The Commission also co-organised with the Lithuanian Council Presidency a conference in Vilnius on 'Exploring the Links between the Internet and Trafficking in Human Beings: Cyberspace for Prevention, not Recruitment'. Experts from governments, law enforcement, national rapporteurs, civil society organisations and academics, as well as the private sector met to explore and raise awareness on the links between the Internet and trafficking in human beings and to improving cooperation between Member States, working together with different stakeholders in this context.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010932/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Privatised speed-detection systems in the EU

Can the Commission detail which Member States currently have in place privatised speed-detection systems for motorists?

In addition, can the Commission confirm whether it has carried out an impact assessment of the effectiveness of this method? If so, can it provide the results of this analysis?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(31 October 2013)

The Commission does not have information on which, and to what extent, Member States use the services of private companies to manage speed-detection devices.

The Commission has not performed an impact assessment for the use of speed-detection devices.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010933/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Transfrontier shipment of waste across the EU

European Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006 sets out the required procedures and protocols for the shipment of waste across the EU.

In this context, can the Commission clarify the notification process for transporting amber-listed waste, such as mixed dry recyclables, between Member States? In doing so, can the Commission detail the level of flexibility that each Member State affords between the notified date of shipment and the actual date of shipment?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(7 November 2013)

The shipment within the EU of mixtures of wastes that are not listed in Annex IIIA to Regulation (EC) No 1013/2013 on shipments of waste ([1]) is subject to the procedure of prior written notification and consent as laid down in Article 4 of the regulation.

According to Article 9(6) of the regulation, all shipments must take place within the validity period of the written or tacit consents of all competent authorities concerned. This period is shown in the notification document (Annex IA) and normally does not exceed the period of one year. According to the regulation, the actual date of a shipment, which is the date when a shipment actually begins and which is shown in block 6 of the movement document (Annex IB), shall be within the validity period of the granted consent(s). In this regard, the regulation does not provide room for flexibility.

([1]) OJ L 190, 12.7.2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010934/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Action on persecution of Christians in Syria

Syrian rebels led by al-Qaeda-linked fighters recently seized control of a predominantly Christian village north-east of Damascus, sweeping into a mountainside sanctuary amid heavy fighting overnight and forcing hundreds of residents to flee.

This battle, which took place in Maaloula, an ancient village that is home to two of the oldest surviving monasteries in Syria, has thrown a spotlight on the deep-seated fears harboured by many of Syria's religious minorities over the growing role of Islamic extremists on the side of the rebels in the civil war against President Bashar Assad's regime. In the light of reports that militants are forcing some Christian residents to convert to Islam, what action is the Commission taking in relation to this situation?

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

The EU remains deeply concerned about the increasingly deteriorating situation and militarisation of the conflict in Syria as well as its spill over effects within the region. In this regard, the EU has reiterated the urgent need for a political solution of the conflict and welcomed the call of UN Secretary Genral Ban Ki-Moon for a peace conference in Geneva before the end of November 2013. It urges all sides to the conflict to respond positively to this call and to adhere publicly to a credible political transition based on the full implementation of the Geneva communiqué of 30.6.2012. Only a political solution that results in a united, inclusive and democratic Syria can end the terrible bloodshed and grave violations of human rights.

The issue of the respect and protection of minorities in Syria is another subject of major concern. The EU has stated on many occasions the need for all parties in the conflict to respect the rights of religious and ethnic minorities. The recent events in the town of Maaloula are of particular concern for the symbolic dimension of this town for the Christian community in Syria.

The EU has also condemned the continuing widespread and systematic violations of international humanitarian law and human rights in Syria, including increasing attacks on religious and ethnic communities. These crimes must be investigated, and perpetrators and those ordering these crimes must be held accountable. The EU reaffirms that there should be no impunity for any such violations and recalls that either the International Criminal (ICC) Prosecutor could initiate an investigation on the basis of Article 15 of the Rome Statute or the UN Security Council could refer the situation in Syria to the ICC at any time.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010935/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: EU research on violence against women

For the first time, a new UN study on men and violence includes data, across a number of countries, from men themselves telling us why some men use violence against women and how this can be prevented. What similar research, if any, has been carried out by the Commission in this area?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

The Commission would like to draw the attention of the Honourable Member to a report finalised in 2012 for the Commission, 'The Role of Men in Gender Equality — European Strategies and Insights' ([1]), which examines in one of its chapters the role of men in gender-based violence. It provides available data, explores men's attitudes towards women and explains why men may commit violence against women. It offers recommendations that include promoting non-violent masculinities, encouraging the development and improvement of programmes to rehabilitate perpetrators of violence against women, raising public awareness and improving research.

The Commission has also funded several projects through the Daphne programme that engage men in violence prevention.

The European Institute for Gender Equality commissioned a study on the role of men in gender equality in 2011 ([2]) and an online discussion on Men and Gender Equality ([3]). In the first quarter of 2014, the Fundamental Rights Agency will publish its survey of women's experiences of violence ([4]) containing comparable figures on violence against women in the 28 Member States that can also provide further information about violent men's attitudes towards women in the EU.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender_pay_gap/130424_final_report_role_of_men_en.pdf
([2]) See http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/the-involvement-of-men-in-gender-equality-initiatives-in-the-european-union
([3]) See http://eurogender.eige.europa.eu
([4]) Information on the ongoing FRA survey can be found at: http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2012/fra-survey-womens-well-being-and-safety-europe

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010936/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Tackling domestic violence against men

Statistics continue to show that domestic abuse of men is increasing in the UK. Recent figures from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) show that almost 4 000 women were prosecuted successfully in the past year, compared with 1 500 women in 2005, which equates to an increase of 169%.

In this context, what mechanisms have been put in place at EU level to raise awareness of domestic violence against men, and to tackle the stigma surrounding this crime?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

The Commission is committed to a strong policy response to combat all forms of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, that disproportionately affect women. However, gender-based violence can also affect men. The Commission refers the Honourable Member to the recent studies commissioned by the Commission ([1]) and the European Institute for Gender Equality ([2]) mentioned in its answers to Question E-010935/2013 as they also cover men's own perspectives, realities and needs in order to achieve gender equality.

Moreover, the exchanges of good practices organised by the Commission in February 2012 and April 2013 to discuss Members States' experiences related to, on the one hand, awareness-raising campaigns on gender-based violence and, on the other hand, support services for victims and treatment programmes for perpetrators of gender-based violence, gave the opportunity to discuss initiatives targeting women's violence against men ([3]).

([1]) Report on 'The Role of Men in Gender Equality — European Strategies and Insights' http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender_pay_gap/130424_final_report_role_of_men_en.pdf
([2]) See http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/the-involvement-of-men-in-gender-equality-initiatives-in-the-european-union
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/other-institutions/good-practices/review-seminars/seminars_2012/violence_en.htm and http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/other-institutions/good-practices/review-seminars/seminars_2013/vaw_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010938/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Rise in wholesale gas prices

Several energy providers have confirmed recently that gas prices are set to rise by up to 15% for customers living in certain parts of my constituency (Northern Ireland, UK). The rise, it is claimed, comes after the extreme weather experienced in spring 2013, which saw the coldest March in many decades, and which has depleted the UK's gas reserves.

In this context, can the Commission give an assessment of wholesale gas prices across the EU, and detail whether the latest rise in Northern Ireland is consistent with a European-wide trend of increased demand in the past six to eight months?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The Commission publishes quarterly reports on European gas and electricity markets, including analysis of wholesale and retail prices ([1]). Across the EU significant price differentials persist at wholesale and retail levels. Countries with diverse portfolios of gas suppliers and supply routes, sufficient infrastructure connections and developed gas markets, tend to have lower wholesale gas prices. At retail level taxation is an important component.

Northern Ireland gas suppliers sell to consumers by purchasing gas from producers or wholesalers at prices set with reference to the UK trading hub, the National Balancing Point (NBP). Traditionally NBP is among the lowest priced hubs in the EU and our estimates show that the UK benefits from competitive prices for Norwegian imports.

The cold snap in March 2013 led to a significant increase in demand for gas putting pressure on gas supplies in the UK. Demand in March was higher than average winter days' demand and 40% higher than the seasonal average.

Twice per year Member States report retail prices by consumer category for electricity and gas to Eurostat ([2]). Average retail gas prices in the first half of 2013 for the EU were 4.14 cEUR/kWh for industrial consumers (ex. VAT) and 6.58 cEUR/kWh for households (incl. all taxes) ([3]). At 3.5 cEUR/kWh (ex. VAT) industrial retail gas prices in the UK were below the EU average. At 5.31 cEUR/kWh for households (incl. all taxes) household retail prices in the UK were below EU average. Household retail prices in the EU and in the UK went down in comparison to the second half of 2012; in contrast industrial retail prices for gas went up both on average in the EU and in the UK.

([1]) See http://ec.europa.eu/energy/observatory/gas/gas_en.htm with maps of wholesale and retail prices. Further to this, the Commission will present an analysis of the composition and drivers of energy prices and costs in Member States,, in the context of the discussion scheduled for the February 2014 European Council on industrial competitiveness and policy.

([2]) See http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/energy/data/database.Note that no price data are published for Northern Ireland specifically, hence we use the retail price data as reported by the UK.

([3]) EU prices experienced an average increase of +6.9% for industry and +9.6% for households from the second half of 2011 to the second half of 2012. However, on average EU household prices declined -7.2% in the first half of 2013. *Source:* Eurostat — medium-sized consumers (consumption bands D2 and I3, see Eurostat for details on consumption bands).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010939/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Deadly attacks in Kenya and Pakistan

Last week's double suicide bombing at a church in Peshawar by militants linked to the Taliban is estimated to be the deadliest-ever attack on Christians in Pakistan. The brutal attack by members of the Somali al-Shabab movement at the Westgate Shopping Centre in Nairobi, Kenya, has also highlighted the prevalence of Islamic extremism in parts of Africa.

In this context, what action has the Commission taken to assist the authorities in Kenya and Pakistan in the light of the latest round of attacks? Moreover, what strategy, if any, is in place at EU level to combat the threat posed by Islamic extremism both to EU citizens and to Christians throughout the world?

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

The HR/VP issued statements condemning the two attacks, called for the perpetrators to be brought to justice, and offered condolences to the bereaved families.

The EU is continuing to support Pakistan in its efforts to tackle the threat from terrorism. In June 2013, the Foreign Affairs Council noted with concern the continuing terrorist attacks in Pakistan, and reiterated the EU's unequivocal commitment to working with Pakistan to address the shared threat from terrorism both inside and outside its borders, including bringing perpetrators to justice.

The EU is also supporting efforts to tackle the threat of terrorism in the Horn of Africa (including Kenya) and Yemen. In January 2013, the Foreign Affairs Council endorsed a Counter-Terrorism (CT) Action Plan for the Horn of Africa and Yemen, implementing the counter-terrorism strand of the EU Strategic Framework for the region from November 2011. As part of the action plan, the EU has committed itself to helping build regional capacities to tackle the threat of terrorism, supporting regional law enforcement cooperation, and countering violent extremism.

CT work is framed by the EU CT Strategy, adopted in 2005. A central element of that strategy is to prevent people turning to terrorism by tackling the factors or root causes which can lead to radicalisation and recruitment, in Europe and internationally.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010940/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Support for older motorists

The Royal Automobile Club (RAC) Foundation for Motoring recently confirmed that over four million people aged over 70 in the United Kingdom hold full UK driving licenses. The research stated that while licence holders over 70 years of age have to submit a declaration every three years saying that they are fit to drive, the constituent group in fact has a very positive safety record on our roads.

In this context, can the Commission detail what efforts are being made at EU level to ensure that older people across Europe have the confidence to use our roads so that they can continue to participate in society?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(5 November 2013)

The Commission considers that the safe mobility of elderly people, including elderly drivers deserves particular attention and specific measures due to the ageing of the European population.

Following the entry into force of the third driving license directive (Directive 2006/126/EC ([1])), Member States may require an examination applying the minimum standards of physical and mental fitness to drive when renewing the driving license.

Technology is another area where progress is expected to help elderly drivers. Driver assistance systems are now being developed and some of them are already commercially available in certain vehicles. These systems can help elderly drivers to compensate for the functional limitations due to age. The Commission intends to promote the deployment of those technologies that improve safety.

The Commission has financed actions related to elderly road users, including elderly drivers, like for example the projects GOAL ([2]), SAMERU ([3]) and CONSOL ([4]). They are aimed at improving knowledge, disseminate best practices and make recommendations concerning the mobility of elderly people. Moreover, the Commission intends to provide funding for research on this topic under the Horizon 2020 framework programme.

The Commission will also encourage Member States to take the mobility of elderly people into account in the framework of its upcoming package on urban mobility.

([1]) OJ L 403, 30.12.2006.
([2]) http://www.goal-project.eu/index.html
([3]) http://www.southend.gov.uk/SaMERU
([4]) http://consolproject.eu/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010941/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Timeline for EU legislation on legal highs

On 17 September 2013, the Commission announced plans to strengthen EU legislation tackling harmful legal highs. The proposals would allow for the immediate removal of harmful substances on a temporary basis, as well as reducing the time taken to ban a legal high from the market completely from 24 months to 10 months.

In this context, can the Commission detail whether an impact assessment has been, or will be, carried out in relation to these proposals, and outline the timeline it envisages for progressing this piece of legislation?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(11 November 2013)

The Impact Assessment accompanying the Commission's legislative proposals on new psychoactive substances ([1]) was published at the same time as the adoption of the proposals, on 17 September 2013. The Impact Assessment is available on the Europa website ([2]).

The two legislative proposals will need to be adopted by the European Parliament and by the Council of the European Union, in co-decision, in order to become law. The Council started the examination of the proposals in October 2013. There is no precise timeline for the adoption of the proposals by the European Parliament and by Council.

([1]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on new psychoactive substances (COM(2013)619) and Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Framework Decision 2004/757/JHA of 25 October 2004 laying down minimum provisions on the constituent elements of criminal acts and penalties in the field of illicit drug trafficking, as regards the definition of drug (COM(2013)618).

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/ia_carried_out/cia_2013_en.htm#just

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010943/13
aan de Commissie
Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE)
(26 september 2013)

Betreft: Wijzigingen aan de methodologie om de structurele tekorten van de lidstaten te berekenen

Op 19 september 2013 hebben de *Wall Street Journal* en verschillende andere nieuwsbronnen gemeld dat EU-ambtenaren van de werkgroep Output Gaps van de Commissie bij wijze van proef een wijziging hebben goedgekeurd aan de methodologie om de structurele tekorten van de lidstaten te berekenen. ([1]) In de *Wall Street Journal* werd eveneens gemeld dat de nieuwe methodologie naar verwachting een zeer grote invloed zal hebben op de tekorten van sommige lidstaten, bijvoorbeeld het geschatte structurele tekort van Spanje voor dit jaar zou worden gehalveerd en dat voor 2014 zou met twee derden worden verminderd.

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van dit artikel in de *Wall Street Journal*?

2. Is de Commissie het ermee eens dat technische wijzigingen met een potentieel aanzienlijke impact aan de methodologieën die de basis vormen voor het stabiliteits- en groeipact (SGP) niet alleen de betrokkenheid van ambtenaren van de lidstaten vereisen, maar ook van het Europees Parlement als medewetgever van het herziene SGP („sixpack")? Zo nee, waarom niet?

3. Is de Commissie het ermee eens dat technische wijzigingen op deze schaal een risico vormen voor de geloofwaardigheid van het herziene SGP?

4. Kan de Commissie verduidelijken waarom de huidige methodologie wordt herzien?

5. Kan de Commissie details openbaar maken van de geschatte impact van de herziene methodologie voor de huidige output gaps en tekorten van alle lidstaten?

6. Kan de Commissie de verwachte impact verduidelijken van de herziene methodologie voor de beleidsaanbevelingen die verschillende lidstaten in het kader van de procedure bij buitensporige tekorten hebben ontvangen?

Antwoord van de heer Rehn namens de Commissie
(20 november 2013)

Er zijn tot dusver geen wijzigingen „bij wijze van proef goedgekeurd" van de methode voor de berekening van de structurele tekorten van de lidstaten — de bestaande methodologie is niet gewijzigd.

De diensten van de Commissie en de comités van de Raad verrichten regelmatig technische werkzaamheden ter ondersteuning van de SGP-evaluatiemethode. Wijzigingen van de bestaande methoden worden overwogen om ervoor te zorgen dat de uitvoering van het SGP de structurele en conjuncturele economische situatie in de lidstaten accuraat weerspiegelt, en om een doeltreffend toezicht op de uitvoering te bevorderen. Gewoonlijk gaat dit gepaard met bestudering van recente economische literatuur over betrokken kwesties, simulatie- en gevoeligheidsanalyses en andere technische werkzaamheden die ervoor moeten zorgen dat de goedgekeurde wijzigingen effectief leiden tot een correctere weergave van de conjunctuur in de lidstaten. Één voorbeeld waar de huidige methode kan worden verbeterd, betreft de procycliciteit ervan waar het gaat om de meting van de structurele werkloosheid in de lidstaten.

Hoewel ook de comités van de Raad bij de technische werkzaamheden worden betrokken, is alleen de Europese Commissie verantwoordelijk voor het up-to-date en accuraat houden van de SGP-beoordelingsmethodologie. Deze technische werkzaamheden doen absoluut geen afbreuk aan de rol van het Europees Parlement en de Raad als medewetgevers inzake het economische governance.

([1]) „Austerity Seen Easing With Change to EU Budget Policy", Wall Street Journal, 19 september 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010943/13
to the Commission
Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Changes to the methodology for calculating Member States' structural deficits

On 19 September 2013, the *Wall Street Journal* and several other news sources reported that EU officials in the Commission's Output Gaps Working Group had tentatively approved a change in the methodology used to calculate Member States' structural deficits ([1]). The *Wall Street Journal* also reported that the new methodology was expected to have a very substantial impact on the deficits of some Member States, for example halving Spain's estimated structural deficit for this year and cutting it by two thirds in 2014.

1. Is the Commission aware of the *Wall Street Journal* article?

2. Does the Commission agree that technical changes to the methodologies underpinning the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) which could have a significant impact require the full involvement not only of Member State officials, but also of the European Parliament in its capacity as co-legislator of the revised SGP ('six-pack')? If not, why not?

3. Does the Commission agree that technical changes on this scale are a risk to the credibility of the revised SGP?

4. Can the Commission clarify the reasons for the revision of the current methodology?

5. Can the Commission publish details of the estimated impact of the revised methodology on the current output gaps and deficits of all Member States?

6. Can the Commission clarify the expected impact of the revised methodology on the policy recommendations that various Member States have received under the Excessive Deficit Procedure?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

To date, no changes were 'tentatively approved' to revise the methodology for calculating Member State's structural deficits — the existing methodology has not been changed.

Commission services and Council committees regularly carry out technical work that underpins the SGP assessment methodology. Changes to existing methods are considered to ensure that implementation of the SGP accurately reflects the structural and cyclical economic situation in the Member States, and to facilitate effective monitoring of the implementation. Usually, this involves reviews of the recent economic literature on relevant issues, dry-runs and sensitivity analyses and other technical work to ensure that the changes adopted would indeed result in a more accurate reflection of the cyclical positions of Member States. One example where the current methodology could be improved is the method's pro-cyclicality, most notably with respect to how the method measures structural unemployment rates in the Member States.

While the Council committees are associated with the technical work, the European Commission is solely responsible to ensure that the SGP assessment methodology is up-to-date and robust. This technical work absolutely does not undermine the role of the European Parliament and the Council as co-legislators on economic governance.

([1]) 'Austerity Seen Easing With Change to EU Budget Policy', Wall Street Journal, 19 September 2013.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010944/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Prospecciones petrolíferas próximas a Canarias autorizadas por Marruecos en posibles aguas del Sáhara Occidental

Debido a las prospecciones petrolíferas que la empresa española REPSOL está realizando en aguas territoriales de las Islas Canarias, se han comenzado a realizar prospecciones petrolíferas también en las vecinas aguas territoriales del Reino de Marruecos.

Dichas prospecciones, autorizadas por el Gobierno marroquí, se producen en las cercanías de las aguas territoriales pertenecientes al Sáhara Occidental. La orientación tradicional del Reino de Marruecos de desoír a la comunidad internacional y a las Naciones Unidas y de apropiarse ilegalmente del territorio del Sáhara Occidental, así como de su espacio marítimo, hace sospechar que exceda su soberanía en caso de un yacimiento en aguas cercanas.

Dichas prospecciones, en caso de considerarse viables y de que comenzara la explotación de los yacimientos, supondrían una serie de riesgos ambientales para los ecosistemas marítimos de las Islas Canarias. Estos ecosistemas de una gran importancia se encontrarían gravemente amenazados, puesto que la legislación ambiental marroquí, así como su aplicación, no garantizan los mismos estándares de seguridad que ofrece la legislación europea.

¿Conoce la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante las citadas prospecciones realizadas en dicha zona?

¿Puede asegurar que ninguna de las prospecciones petrolíferas que se están realizando con la autorización de Marruecos se encuentra el espacio marítimo del Sáhara Occidental?

En caso de existir prospecciones en el espacio marítimo del Sáhara Occidental, ¿qué medidas planteará para que Marruecos detenga dichas prospecciones ilegales?

En caso de desarrollarse explotaciones en dicho espacio marítimo, ¿qué medidas planteará para que Marruecos detenga la explotación de unos recursos naturales que no le pertenecen?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010945/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Prospecciones petrolíferas próximas a Canarias autorizadas por Marruecos: aspectos ambientales

Debido a las prospecciones petrolíferas que la empresa española REPSOL está realizando en aguas territoriales de las Islas Canarias, se han comenzado a realizar prospecciones petrolíferas también en las vecinas aguas territoriales del Reino de Marruecos.

Dichas prospecciones, autorizadas por el Gobierno marroquí, se producen en las cercanías de las aguas territoriales pertenecientes al Sáhara Occidental. La orientación tradicional del Reino de Marruecos de desoír a la comunidad internacional y las Naciones Unidas y de apropiarse ilegalmente del territorio del Sáhara Occidental, así como su espacio marítimo, hace sospechar que exceda su soberanía en caso de que se halle un yacimiento en aguas cercanas.

Dichas prospecciones, en caso de considerarse viables y de que comenzara la explotación de los yacimientos, conllevarían una serie de riesgos ambientales para los ecosistemas marítimos de las Islas Canarias. Estos ecosistemas de una gran importancia se encontrarían gravemente amenazados puesto que la legislación ambiental marroquí, así como su implementación, no garantiza los mismos niveles de seguridad que prevé la legislación europea.

Ante lo expuesto, ¿está al tanto la Comisión de las citadas prospecciones realizadas en dicha zona?

¿Posee información la Comisión sobre la ubicación de dichas prospecciones por Marruecos, y puede afirmar que estas no se extenderán ilegalmente a aguas territoriales del Sáhara Occidental?

¿Posee elementos la Comisión como para afirmar que, en caso de iniciarse las explotaciones, la legislación ambiental de Marruecos en el ámbito petrolífero protegería suficientemente al ecosistema marino, evitando que los riesgos potenciales que acarrea dicha actividad se extendieran también a las Islas Canarias?

Respuesta conjunta de la alta representante y vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(20 de noviembre de 2013)

La UE está al corriente de las actividades de prospección petrolífera mencionadas por Su Señoría.

Según las Naciones Unidas, el Sáhara Occidental es un territorio no autónomo objeto de disputa administrado *de facto* por Marruecos. La prospección de recursos minerales en el mar frente a las costas del Sáhara Occidental no está prohibida como tal por la Carta de las Naciones Unidas (véase el documento S/2002/161 de 12 de febrero de 2002).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010944/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Oil exploration near the Canary Islands, authorised by Morocco, possibly encroaching on Western Sahara waters

As a result of the oil exploration that the Spanish company REPSOL is conducting in territorial waters of the Canary Islands, oil exploration has also begun in the adjacent territorial waters of the Kingdom of Morocco.

This exploration, authorised by the Moroccan Government, is occurring in the vicinity of the territorial waters of the Western Sahara. The Kingdom of Morocco's long-standing habit of turning a deaf ear to the international community and the United Nations, and of illegally appropriating the territory and the maritime space of the Western Sahara, leads to the suspicion that it would exceed the bounds of its sovereignty if an oilfield were discovered in nearby waters.

This exploration, if it is deemed feasible and exploitation of the oilfields begins, would pose a series of environmental risks to the maritime ecosystems of the Canary Islands. These very important ecosystems would be seriously threatened, since Moroccan environmental legislation and its enforcement do not ensure the same safety standards that EU legislation offers.

Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the abovementioned exploration being conducted in this area?

Can she confirm that none of the oil exploration that is being conducted with Morocco's authorisation is occurring in the maritime space of the Western Sahara?

If exploration is occurring in the maritime space of the Western Sahara, what measures will she put forward to force Morocco to halt such illegal exploration?

If exploitation is occurring in this maritime space, what measures will she put forward to force Morocco to halt the exploitation of natural resources that do not belong to it?

Question for written answer E-010945/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Oil exploration near the Canary Islands authorised by Morocco: environmental aspects

As a result of the oil exploration that the Spanish company REPSOL is conducting in territorial waters of the Canary Islands, oil exploration has also begun in the adjacent territorial waters of the Kingdom of Morocco.

This exploration, authorised by the Moroccan Government, is occurring in the vicinity of the territorial waters of the Western Sahara. The Kingdom of Morocco's long-standing habit of turning a deaf ear to the international community and the United Nations, and of illegally appropriating the territory and the maritime space of the Western Sahara, leads to the suspicion that it would exceed the bounds of its sovereignty if an oilfield were found in nearby waters.

This exploration, if it is deemed feasible and exploitation of the oilfields begins, would present a series of environmental risks to the maritime ecosystems of the Canary Islands. These very important ecosystems would be seriously threatened, since Moroccan environmental legislation and its implementation do not ensure the same levels of safety provided for in EU legislation.

In view of this information, is the Commission keeping abreast of the abovementioned exploration being conducted in this area?

Does the Commission have information about the location of this exploration by Morocco, and can it confirm that it will not extend illegally into the territorial waters of the Western Sahara?

Does the Commission have a basis to confirm that, if exploitation is begun, Morocco's environmental legislation on oil will sufficiently protect the marine ecosystem, preventing the potential risks that such exploitation entails from threatening the Canary Islands as well?

Joint answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

The EU is aware of the oil exploration activities mentioned by the Honourable Member of the EP.

According to United Nations, the Western Sahara is a disputed Non-Self- Governing Territory under de facto Moroccan administration. The exploration of mineral resources in areas offshore Western Sahara is not as such forbidden by the UN Charter (see document S/2002/161 of February 12, 2002).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010946/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(26. September 2013)

Betrifft: Chinesische Investoren am europäischen Energiemarkt

1. Wie bewertet die Kommission das Bestreben des größten chinesischen Energiekonzerns State Grid, offenbar umfangreiche Investitionen auf dem deutschen Energiemarkt zu tätigen?

2. Welche Auswirkungen kann es nach Ansicht der Kommission auf Wirtschaft, Arbeitsplätze, Versorgungssicherheit und in politischer Hinsicht haben, wenn beispielsweise die State Grid tatsächlich Stromnetz-Betreiber in Deutschland wird und dieser Trend sich fortsetzt?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(19. November 2013)

Der Kommission ist bekannt, dass in jüngsten Presseartikeln von einem möglichen Interesse des chinesischen Unternehmens „State Grid of China" an Investitionen in den deutschen Energiesektor die Rede ist, ihr liegen jedoch keine Informationen über konkrete Investitionspläne vor. Es sei daran erinnert, dass das Unternehmen „State Grid of China" bereits einen Anteil von 25 % an dem portugiesischen Unternehmen REN-Redes Energéticas Nacionais SA hält. Ausländische Investitionen in den europäischen Energiesektor, auch in den Übertragungs- und Verteilungssektor, sind rechtlich möglich und werden begrüßt, sofern bestimmte Bedingungen eingehalten werden. So sehen die EU-Rechtsvorschriften für den Energiebinnenmarkt vor, dass in Fällen, in denen ein Investor aus einem Drittland die Kontrolle über ein Übertragungsnetz oder einen Übertragungsnetzbetreiber in der EU erwirbt, der betreffende Mitgliedstaat in Zusammenarbeit mit der Kommission dafür Sorge tragen muss, dass die Energieversorgungssicherheit der EU nicht gefährdet wird.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010946/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Chinese investors on the European energy market

1. What is the Commission's view of the apparent attempt by the largest Chinese energy company State Grid to make extensive investments on the German energy market?

2. In its opinion, what impact might it have on commerce, jobs and the security of supply, and also politically, if, for example, the State Grid actually became an electricity network operator in Germany and this trend continued?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

The Commission noted that recent press articles mentioned a possible interest of the Chinese company 'State Grid of China' to invest in the energy sector in Germany, but does not have information about specific investment plans. It is recalled that 'State Grid of China' already owns a 25% stake in the Portuguese company REN-Redes Energéticas Nacionais SA. Foreign investments in the European energy sector, including in the electricity transmission and distribution sectors, are legally possible and welcome provided they respect certain conditions For instance, the EU internal energy market legislation foresees that, where a third country investor acquires control over an electricity transmission system or a transmission system operator in the EU, the Member State concerned in cooperation with the Commission shall ensure that it will not put at risk security of energy supply to the EU.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010947/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(26. September 2013)

Betrifft: Handelsbeziehungen mit China

China kauft oder pachtet mehr und mehr Produktionsflächen in vielen verschiedenen Ländern der Erde, um den eigenen Bedarf zu decken, zuletzt in Osteuropa. Währenddessen setzen sich EU-Abgeordnete weiter für faire Handelsbeziehungen mit China ein.

1. Wie weit ist die Reform der Handelsbeziehungen zwischen der EU und China, wie sie in einer im Mai 2012 angenommenen Entschließung gefordert wurde, mittlerweile fortgeschritten?

1.1. Welche konkreten Maßnahmen sind hinsichtlich der Verbesserung der Transparenz ergriffen worden?

1.2. Wie wurde oder wird der Stand ausländischer Unternehmen am chinesischen Markt bewertet, und wie kann er verbessert werden?

1.3. Auf welchen Ebenen und wie wurden die komplexen Tarifstrukturen in der Wirtschaft bis jetzt aufgearbeitet und optimiert?

2. Wie wird die Europäische Union mit dem zunehmenden Konflikt zwischen der Sorge der Bürgerinnen und Bürger über den steigenden Einfluss der chinesischen Wirtschaft in Europa und den tiefgreifenden Handelsbeziehungen zwischen beiden Partnern umgehen? Kann die Kommission konkrete Strategien benennen?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(25. November 2013)

Die EU hat sich zu offenen Handelsbeziehungen mit China verpflichtet. Die Strategie, den fairen Wettbewerb zu unterstützen, aber gleichzeitig darauf zu beharren, dass China gemäß international vereinbarten Regeln Handel treibt, die Rechte an geistigem Eigentum (IPR) respektiert und seine Verpflichtungen gegenüber der Welthandelsorganisation (WTO) erfüllt, ist das Leitprinzip der Handelspolitik der EU gegenüber China.

In puncto Transparenz hat sich die Bilanz Chinas verbessert. Aber die EU drängt weiterhin darauf, dass China die Interessenträger über alle Entwürfe von Gesetzen und Regelungen mit Auswirkungen auf den Handel vor deren Annahme unterrichtet und diesbezüglich konsultiert. Diese Themen wurden zuletzt am 24. Oktober 2013 beim Wirtschafts- und Handelsdialog auf hoher Ebene angeschnitten. Im Rahmen der WTO hat die EU China ebenfalls aufgefordert, seinen Verpflichtungen zur Notifizierung von Subventionen nachzukommen.

Bei der Festlegung ihrer Handelspolitik konsultiert die Kommission alle beteiligten Akteure, darunter die in China tätigen europäischen Unternehmen ([1]).

Die Zolltarifstruktur Chinas steht im Einklang mit den Verpflichtungen, die das Land bei seinem Beitritt zur WTO eingegangen ist. In Ermangelung eines multilateralen Handelsabkommens wären etwaige Änderungen des Zolltarifs das Ergebnis einseitiger Entscheidungen Chinas. Die EU kann sich zwar dafür aussprechen, hat jedoch hier keine Handhabe.

Mehr Wettbewerb mit China kann viele Herausforderungen mit sich bringen. Aber der Markt Chinas und die dortige rasche Entwicklung der Volkswirtschaft bieten nach wie vor Chancen und erhebliches Potenzial für eine weitere Ausweitung des Handels und der Investitionstätigkeit. Die Entscheidung, während des Gipfeltreffens zwischen der EU und China im November 2013 Verhandlungen über ein bilaterales Investitionsabkommen einzuleiten, ist eine wichtige Initiative zur Förderung bilateraler Investitionen durch Transparenz, Rechtssicherheit und Marktzugang für Investoren beider Seiten. Dies beinhaltet auch die Botschaft, dass eine stärkere Beteiligung und gegenseitige Öffnung im Interesse beider Seiten liegt.

([1]) www.europeanchamber.com.cn

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010947/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Trade relations with China

China is buying and leasing more and more production facilities in a number of different countries, most recently in Eastern Europe, in order to meet its own demand. In the meanwhile, MEPs remain committed to establishing fair trade relations with China.

1. What progress has been made on reforming trade relations between the EU and China, as called for in a resolution adopted in May 2012?

1.1. What specific measures have been taken to increase transparency?

1.2. What was or is the assessment of the position of foreign companies on the Chinese market and how can it be improved?

1.3. On what levels and in what ways have the complex tariff structures in the economy been revised and optimised to date?

2. How will the European Union handle the growing conflict between the citizens' concern about the increasing influence of the Chinese economy in Europe and the far-reaching trade relations between the two partners? Can the Commission point to any specific strategies in this area?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

The EU is committed to open trade relations with China. This strategy of supporting fair competition while being firm that China trades in accordance with internationally agreed rules, respects Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and meets its World Trade Organisation (WTO) obligations has been the guiding principle of the EU's trade policy with China.

China's track record on transparency is improving. But the EU continues to urge China to notify and consult stakeholders on all drafts laws and regulations that have an impact on trade before their adoption. Most recently, these issues were raised at the High Level Economic and Trade Dialogue on 24 October 2013. In the WTO the EU has also urged China to comply with its subsidy notification commitments.

In setting out trade policy the Commission consults all stakeholders involved, including European business present in China ([1]).

China's tariff structure is in accordance with the commitments it undertook upon accession to the WTO. In the absence of a multilateral trade agreement, any tariffs changes would be the result of unilateral decisions by China. Whilst the EU can encourage this, it has no leverage.

Increased competition with China may pose many challenges. But China's market and rapid development continues to offer opportunities, with significant potential for further expanding trade and investment. The decision to launch negotiations on a bilateral investment agreement during the EU-China Summit in November 2013 is an important initiative that aims to promote bilateral investment by providing transparency, legal certainty, and market access to investors from both sides. It will also send a message that closer engagement and reciprocal opening is in the best interest for both sides.

([1]) www.europeanchamber.com.cn

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010948/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(26 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Διαβούλευση Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής και Ελλάδας για τις ναυτιλιακές εταιρείες

Σύμφωνα με πληροφορίες υπάρχει αλληλογραφία μεταξύ της Γενικής Διεύθυνσης Ανταγωνισμού της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής και των ελληνικών αρχών σχετικά με το φορολογικό καθεστώς των ναυτιλιακών εταιρειών που εδρεύουν στην Ελλάδα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Διεξάγει έρευνες η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή και, αν ναι, ποιο είναι το αντικείμενό τους; Υπάρχουν «ενδείξεις» για προνομιακή μεταχείριση των ναυτιλιακών εταιρειών που δραστηριοποιούνται στην Ελλάδα;

2. Ποια είναι η πορεία των ερευνών που τυχόν διεξάγει η Επιτροπή για το φορολογικό καθεστώς των ναυτιλιακών εταιρειών στην Ελλάδα;

Απάντηση του κ. Almunia εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(22 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή έχει ανταλλάξει αλληλογραφία με τις ελληνικές αρχές σχετικά με τους κανόνες φορολόγησης που εφαρμόζονται στις ελληνικές ναυτιλιακές εταιρείες.

Ωστόσο, στο παρόν στάδιο, δεν έχει λάβει θέση όσον αφορά τη συμμόρφωση των εν λόγω φορολογικών κανόνων με τους κανόνες της ΕΕ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010948/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Consultation between European Commission and Greece on shipping companies

I understand that correspondence has been exchanged between the European Commission Directorate General for Competition and the Greek authorities concerning the tax status of shipping companies registered in Greece.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Is the European Commission conducting enquiries and, if so, what is their subject matter? Are there any 'signs' of preferential treatment for shipping companies trading in Greece?

2. What progress has been made in any enquiries being conducted by the Commission into the tax status of shipping companies in Greece?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2013)

The Commission has exchanged correspondence with the Greek authorities regarding the taxation rules applicable to the Greek shipping companies.

Nevertheless, at this stage, no position has been taken regarding the compliance of these taxation rules with EU rules.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010949/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(26 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ενιαίος Εποπτικός Μηχανισμός στην Ευρωζώνη

Σύμφωνα με ανακοίνωση της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής στις 12.9.2012 (Memo — Commission proposes a package for banking supervision in the Eurozone) για την Τραπεζική Ένωση, ο Ενιαίος Εποπτικός Μηχανισμός «θα καλύπτει όλες τις τράπεζες (περίπου 6 000) της ζώνης του Ευρώ. Παρόλο που οι μεγάλες συστημικές τράπεζες βρίσκονται στην καρδιά του ευρωπαϊκού εποπτικού πλαισίου, η πρόσφατη εμπειρία δείχνει ότι οι σχετικά μικρότερες τράπεζες μπορούν επίσης να απειλήσουν τη σταθερότητα του χρηματοοικονομικού συστήματος». Ωστόσο, λίγους μήνες αργότερα, σε παρόμοια ανακοίνωσή της η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή (10.7.2013, A Comprehensive EU Response to the Financial Crisis), δηλώνει ότι πλέον ο Ενιαίος Εποπτικός Μηχανισμός θα αναλάβει όσες τράπεζες έχουν ενεργητικό άνω των 30 δις ευρώ ή αποτελούν το 20% του ΑΕΠ της χώρας στην οποία ανήκουν.

Με δεδομένα τα παραπάνω, αλλά και τις «πρόσφατες εμπειρίες» της χρηματοπιστωτικής κρίσης, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Για ποιους λόγους άλλαξε το εύρος της εποπτείας που θα αναλάβει η ΕΚΤ μέσω του Ενιαίου Εποπτικού Μηχανισμού; Υπήρξαν διαφωνίες από κράτη μέλη που εκφράστηκαν στο Συμβούλιο της ΕΕ; Αν ναι, από ποιες χώρες;

2. Μπορεί να αναφέρει ποια τραπεζικά ιδρύματα της Γερμανίας εξαιρούνται από την εποπτική ομπρέλα της ΕΚΤ;

3. Οι έλεγχοι ποιότητας των στοιχείων του ενεργητικού (Asset Quality Review) που θα διενεργήσει η ΕΚΤ κατά το προσεχές διάστημα θα αφορούν όλες τις τράπεζες της Ευρωζώνης, ανεξάρτητα από το μέγεθός τους; Τι προβλέπεται σε περίπτωση που ο έλεγχος της ΕΚΤ δείξει ότι μια τράπεζα είναι υπο-κεφαλαιοποιημένη;

Απάντηση του κ. Barnier εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(28 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Ο κανονισμός (ΕΕ) αριθ. 1024/2013 του Συμβουλίου για την ανάθεση ειδικών καθηκόντων στην ΕΚΤ σχετικά με τις πολιτικές που αφορούν την προληπτική εποπτεία των πιστωτικών ιδρυμάτων ([1]) αναθέτει στην ΕΚΤ σημαντικά εποπτικά καθήκοντα όσον αφορά όλα τα πιστωτικά ιδρύματα της ζώνης του ευρώ και τα συμμετέχοντα κράτη μέλη. Η ΕΚΤ θα είναι ιδιαιτέρως υπεύθυνη για την άμεση εποπτεία των τραπεζών με περιουσιακά στοιχεία άνω των 30 δισεκατομμυρίων ευρώ ή που αντιπροσωπεύουν τουλάχιστον το 20% του ΑΕΠ της χώρας καταγωγής τους. Οι εθνικές εποπτικές αρχές θα είναι υπεύθυνες για την εποπτεία λιγότερο σημαντικών τραπεζών. Η ΕΚΤ δύναται ανά πάσα στιγμή να αποφασίσει την άμεση εποπτεία ενός ή περισσότερων πιστωτικών ιδρυμάτων για να διασφαλιστεί η συνεπής εφαρμογή των εποπτικών προτύπων. Το έργο των εθνικών εποπτικών αρχών ενσωματώνεται στον ενιαίο εποπτικό μηχανισμό: δηλαδή η ΕΚΤ θα απευθύνει γενικές οδηγίες στις εθνικές εποπτικές αρχές, και οι αρχές αυτές θα έχουν την υποχρέωση να κοινοποιούν στην ΕΚΤ τις αποφάσεις που λαμβάνουν οι οποίες έχουν σημαντικό αντίκτυπο.

Ο κανονισμός για τον ενιαίο εποπτικό μηχανισμό απαιτεί από την ΕΚΤ να αναπτύξει ένα πλαίσιο για τις πρακτικές ρυθμίσεις του μηχανισμού αυτού. Η ΕΚΤ καταρτίζει, επί του παρόντος, το εν λόγω πλαίσιο.

Στις 23 Οκτωβρίου 2013, η ΕΚΤ παρέσχε λεπτομερείς πληροφορίες σχετικά με τη συνολική αξιολόγηση που πρέπει να πραγματοποιήσει σύμφωνα με τον κανονισμό για τον ενιαίο εποπτικό μηχανισμό. Η συνολική αξιολόγηση θα περιλαμβάνει αξιολόγηση κινδύνου από άποψη εποπτείας, έλεγχο της ποιότητας των στοιχείων του ενεργητικού (AQR) και έλεγχο προσομοίωσης ακραίων καταστάσεων. Θα καλύψει 128 τράπεζες που πιθανότατα να υπόκειται στην άμεση εποπτεία της ΕΚΤ. Ο οριστικοποιημένος κατάλογος των τραπεζών θα δημοσιευθεί το 2014.

Αν μετά τον έλεγχο της ποιότητας των στοιχείων του ενεργητικού διαπιστωθούν ελλείψεις, αυτές θα πρέπει σε πρώτο στάδιο να καλυφθούν από ιδιωτικά κεφάλαια, όπως μέσω μηχανισμού διάσωσης με ίδια μέσα/επιμερισμού επιβαρύνσεων, πριν γίνει προσφυγή σε (εθνικά και ευρωπαϊκά) δίκτυα ασφαλείας σύμφωνα με τις επικαιροποιημένες κατευθυντήριες γραμμές για τις κρατικές ενισχύσεις.

([1]) Κανονισμός για τον ενιαίο εποπτικό μηχανισμό, ΕΕ L 287, σ. 63.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010949/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Single supervisory mechanism in the euro area

On 12 September 2012, the Commission issued a statement regarding the Banking Union (Memo — Commission proposes a package for banking supervision in the euro area) to the effect that 'the single supervisory mechanism will cover all (approximately 6,000) banks in the euro area. Although large banks of systemic importance are at the heart of the European supervisory framework, recent experience shows that relatively smaller banks can also pose a threat to financial stability'. However, a few months later, it issued a further statement dated 10 July 2013 and entitled 'A Comprehensive EU Response to the Financial Crisis', indicating that the single supervisory mechanism will apply to banks having assets of more than EUR 30 billion or constituting at least 20% of their home country's GDP.

In view of this and given 'recent experiences' of the financial crisis:

1. What made the Commission decide to modify the scope of the ECB's remit under the single supervisory mechanism? Did any Member States express objections to this in Council and, if so, which?

2. Which German banks fall outside the scope of ECB supervision?

3. Will the forthcoming ECB asset quality review cover all banks in the euro area irrespective of size? What action will be taken should it emerge from ECB investigations that a bank is undercapitalised?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

Council Regulation (EU) No 1024/2013 conferring specific tasks on the ECB concerning policies relating to the prudential supervision of credit institutions ([1]) entrusts the ECB with key supervisory tasks for all credit institutions in the Euro area and in participating Member States. The ECB will particularly be responsible for the direct supervision of banks with assets of more than EUR 30 billion or constituting at least 20% of their home country's GDP. National supervisors will have responsibilities for less significant banks. The ECB may at any moment decide to directly supervise one or more credit institutions to ensure consistent application of supervisory standards. The work of national supervisors is integrated into the SSM: e.g, the ECB will send general instructions to national supervisors, and national supervisors have a duty to notify the ECB of supervisory decisions of material consequence.

The SSM Regulation requires the ECB to develop a framework for the practical arrangements of the SSM. The ECB is currently developing this framework.

On 23 October 2013 the ECB provided detailed information on the comprehensive assessment that it has to carry out according to the SSM regulation. The comprehensive assessment will consist of a supervisory risk assessment, an Asset Quality Review (AQR) and a stress test. It will cover 128 banks that will most likely be subject to direct ECB supervision. A finalised list of banks will be published in 2014.

Should the AQR reveal capital shortcomings, these will need to be closed in first instance by private funds, including bail-in/burden sharing, before having recourse to (national and European) backstops in line with the updated state aid guidelines.

([1]) SSM Regulation, OJ L287 p. 63.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010950/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(26 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Θεσμικές παρεμβάσεις σε συνδικαλιστικές ενώσεις στην Ελλάδα

Σύμφωνα με πληροφορίες, η τρόικα (Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, Ευρωπαϊκή Κεντρική Τράπεζα και Διεθνές Νομισματικό Ταμείο) έχει απαιτήσει από την ελληνική κυβέρνηση συγκεκριμένες αλλαγές στον εργασιακό και συνδικαλιστικό νόμο. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, η τρόικα και η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή φαίνονται να ζητούν από τις ελληνικές αρχές τον περιορισμό του ρόλου που διαδραματίζουν τα ελληνικά συνδικάτα, καθώς επίσης την εισαγωγή συγκεκριμένης ρύθμισης με την οποία μια απεργία θα κρίνεται παράνομη εάν δεν έχει συμφωνήσει το 51% του συνόλου των εργαζομένων.

Με δεδομένα τα παραπάνω, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Υπάρχουν απαιτήσεις από την πλευρά της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής και της τρόικα προς την ελληνική κυβέρνηση για αλλαγές στο θεσμικό και νομικό πλαίσιο του συνδικαλισμού στην Ελλάδα; Έχει τεθεί το θέμα θεσμικών παρεμβάσεων σχετικά με τις εκλογές στους εργασιακούς χώρους και στις συνδικαλιστικές ενώσεις;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(12 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή, μαζί με την ΕΚΤ και το ΔΝΤ, συμμετέχει σε τακτικό διάλογο πολιτικής με τις ελληνικές αρχές σχετικά με ευρύ φάσμα θεμάτων που αφορούν την αγορά εργασίας. Ωστόσο, τα ζητήματα που ανέφερε το Αξιότιμο Μέλος δεν αποτελούν μέρος των όρων πολιτικής που συμφωνήθηκαν μεταξύ της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης, του ΔΝΤ, της ΕΚΤ και της Επιτροπής εκ μέρους των κρατών μελών της ζώνης του ευρώ στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010950/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Institutional intervention in trades union in Greece

I understand that the Troika (European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund) has demanded that the Greek Government make specific amendments to labour and trade union legislation. The Troika and the European Commission appear to be asking for the Greek authorities to limit the role played by Greek trades union and to adopt a specific regulation banning strikes, unless they are agreed by 51% of all workers.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

Have the European Commission and Troika demanded that the Greek Government amend the institutional and legal framework governing trades union in Greece? Has the question of institutional intervention in elections in the workplace and in trades union been raised?

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

The Commission together with the ECB and the IMF is engaged in a regular policy dialogue with the Greek authorities on a broad range of labour market issues. However, the subjects mentioned by the Honourable Member are not part of the policy conditionality agreed between the Greek Government, the IMF, the ECB and the Commission on behalf of the euro area Member States in the context of the economic adjustment programme for Greece.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-010951/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Krzysztof Lisek (PPE) oraz Paweł Zalewski (PPE)
(26 września 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – stosunki z Iranem – przyszłość?

Ponieważ kwestia Iranu to od lat jedna z najtrudniejszych kwestii politycznych, z jakimi boryka się UE, pragnę dowiedzieć się, jaka jest strategia ESDZ w odniesieniu do tego kraju.

Iran ma bez wątpienia kluczowe znaczenie w regionie, zarówno pod względem politycznym, jak i gospodarczym. Państwo to było również źródłem poważnych problemów, czego dowodzi jego agresywna polityka zagraniczna, program jądrowy, nieustanne naruszanie praw człowieka w tym kraju, a także przemyt narkotyków. Aby móc wywrzeć pozytywny wpływ na politykę Iranu oraz jego „zachowanie" w tej ważnej części świata, potrzebujemy skutecznego instrumentu, organu operacyjnego, który mógłby składać sprawozdania, pełnić funkcje doradcze, a być może nawet wywierać wpływ na miejscu. Mając na uwadze, że większość państw członkowskich UE posiada misje dyplomatyczne w Teheranie oraz że w Islamskiej Republice Iranu nie ma już delegacji UE, wskazane i godne polecenia wydaje się być nawiązanie jakichś stosunków dyplomatycznych z tym krajem. Nie powinno się ich postrzegać jako nagrodę powiązaną z działaniami aktualnie podejmowanymi przez reżim irański, ale jako narzędzie dyplomatyczne, z którego można korzystać zawsze wówczas, gdy pojawiają się ważne kwestie, w celu kształtowania rozwoju sytuacji. Stałe przedstawicielstwo w tym kraju znacznie pomogłoby UE wywierać pozytywny wpływ na kluczowe dziedziny będące źródłem niepokoju, takie jak irański program jądrowy, jego polityka zagraniczna w regionie, a także poszanowanie praw człowieka.

Czy ESDZ planuje zatem podjąć w najbliższej przyszłości działania w kierunku stworzenia stałego przedstawicielstwa w Teheranie, które posiadałoby jasno określony mandat umożliwiający mu reakcję na pojawiające się problemy? Jakie narzędzia planuje podjąć ESDZ lub jakie działania zastosować, aby zapewnić wspólną europejską obecność w Iranie?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel i Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton
w imieniu Komisji
(21 listopada 2013 r.)

Jak szanowni Panowie Posłowie zauważyli, Islamska Republika Iranu odgrywa istotną rolę w regionie, a Unia Europejska bardzo dobrze zdaje sobie sprawę zarówno z regionalnego znaczenia kraju, jak i z potencjału dalszego rozwoju stosunków pomiędzy Unią Europejską a Iranem.

W 2001 r. rozpoczęto wysiłki na rzecz pogłębienia stosunków, obejmujące negocjacje w sprawie kompleksowej umowy o handlu i współpracy, stworzenia ram dialogu politycznego, a także ewentualnego otwarcia delegatury UE. Starania te jednak wstrzymano w 2003 r. ze względu na kwestie jądrowe.

Decyzja w sprawie otwarcia delegatury UE w Teheranie zostanie podjęta przy uwzględnieniu oceny politycznej, obejmującej w szczególności postęp w negocjacjach jądrowych grupy E3 + 3 z Iranem i, jak zawsze w takich przypadkach, ocenę ograniczeń budżetowych Europejskiej Służby Działań Zewnętrznych (ESDZ).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010951/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Krzysztof Lisek (PPE) and Paweł Zalewski (PPE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Relations with Iran — what future?

Since Iran has for years been one of the most difficult EU foreign policy issues, I wish to ask about the EEAS's strategy regarding that country.

Iran is undoubtedly one of the key players, both in political and economic terms, in its region. It has also been a source of major problems, as illustrated by its aggressive foreign policy, nuclear programme, ongoing human rights violations and drug trafficking. In order to be able to positively influence Iran's policy and 'behaviour' in that crucial part of the world, we need an effective instrument, an operating body that can report, advise and possibly influence 'on site'. Given that most EU Member States have diplomatic missions in Tehran and there is no longer any EU delegation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, it would seem advisable and recommendable to establish diplomatic relations of some sort with the country. It should in no way be seen as a reward, linked to the action currently being taken by the Iranian regime, but as a diplomatic tool that can be used whenever important issues arise in order to help shape developments. A permanent representation there would significantly help the EU to exert a positive influence on crucial areas of concern such as Iran's nuclear programme, its foreign policy in the region and respect for human rights.

In the light of the above, does the EEAS plan to take any action in the very near future to establish a permanent representation in Tehran with a clearly defined mandate which would enable it to address the current problems? What are the tools/steps that the EEAS plans to implement/take in order to establish our common European presence in Iran?

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

As noted by the Honourable Members, the Islamic Republic of Iran is an important regional actor, and the European Union is very much aware of both the regional significance of the country and of the potential of further developing relations between the European Union and Iran.

Due to the nuclear issue, however, the efforts to deepen relations that began in 2001, and which included the negotiation of a comprehensive Trade and Cooperation Agreement, a framework for political dialogue and possibly the opening of an EU Delegation, have been on halt since 2003.

A decision on the opening of an EU Delegation in Tehran will be taken in the light of a political evaluation, notably including progress in the E3+3 nuclear negotiations with Iran, and as is always the case, an assessment of the budgetary constraints of the European External Action Service (EEAS).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010953/13
a la Comisión
Eider Gardiazábal Rubial (S&D)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: 2013, Año Europeo de los Ciudadanos: «aprender» a ser ciudadanos

Dado que 2013 es el Año Europeo de los Ciudadanos y como tal se dedica a los derechos que otorga la ciudadanía europea, una gran parte de las actividades organizadas pretende educar a los ciudadanos en sus derechos y responsabilidades, incluida la idea de que la participación democrática y la ciudadanía activa son procesos de aprendizaje que se prolongan a lo largo y ancho de la vida.

Los jóvenes especialmente necesitan poder ejercer los derechos y obligaciones de carácter civil y político que les reconoce la sociedad democrática, y necesitan que se los anime a ello. Partiendo de este supuesto, ¿qué acciones tiene previstas la Comisión para llegar a todos los jóvenes europeos y asegurarse de que todos y cada uno de sus ciudadanos conocen los derechos que les otorga la ciudadanía europea? ¿Qué medidas deben adoptarse, en la opinión experta de la Comisión, en relación con la educación para la ciudadanía?

Respuesta de la Sra. Vassiliou en nombre de la Comisión
(25 de noviembre de 2013)

Las competencias cívicas son una prioridad del marco estratégico «Educación y Formación 2020». En 2012, Eurydice ([1]), red de información sobre la educación en Europa, publicó el informe *La educación para la ciudadanía en Europa*, y el Centro de Investigación sobre el Aprendizaje Permanente de la Comisión publicó el informe *Civic Competence Composite Indicator* («indicador combinado sobre competencia cívica») ([2]).

Asimismo, la Comisión, en el marco del programa Jean Monnet, apoya la enseñanza y la investigación en estudios sobre la integración europea en centros de enseñanza superior dentro y fuera de la UE. Desde 2011, este programa ha apoyado también la actividad «Conocer la UE en la escuela», con proyectos que transmiten conocimientos de la UE a estudiantes de secundaria.

La Comisión coopera con el Consejo de Europa en un proyecto educativo sobre ciudadanía y derechos humanos, que promueve la cooperación entre iniciativas regionales e internacionales. Estas instituciones también han puesto en marcha conjuntamente un proyecto experimental sobre educación para la ciudadanía democrática y el respeto de los derechos humanos.

En su campaña de información del Año Europeo de los Ciudadanos 2013, la Comisión también se ha dirigido a los jóvenes de toda la UE utilizando diversos instrumentos y canales. Entre ellos se incluyen las redes sociales, principalmente Facebook, un kit de información sobre los derechos de los jóvenes europeos en la EU ([3]), el concurso «generations@school» ([4]) y la participación en los actos de «Juventud en Movimiento» ([5]) en toda la UE para aumentar la sensibilización sobre cómo los jóvenes pueden sacar partido de sus derechos en la EU.

Por último, el programa «La Juventud en Acción» apoya cada año miles de proyectos dirigidos a los jóvenes a través de actividades cívicas informales.

([1]) http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php
([2]) http://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/111111111/24227
([3]) http://europa.eu/citizens-2013/es/press-and-campaign-toolbox/campaign-toolbox
([4]) http://www.generationsatschool.eu/es/
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/youthonthemove/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010953/13
to the Commission
Eider Gardiazábal Rubial (S&D)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: European Year of Citizens 2013 — 'learning' citizenship

Given that 2013 is the European Year of Citizens, which focuses on the rights conferred by EU citizenship, a large proportion of the activities organised are aimed at educating citizens about their rights and responsibilities, including the idea that democratic participation and active citizenship are lifelong and multifaceted learning processes.

Young people in particular need access to, and encouragement to exercise, the civil and political rights and duties recognised by democratic society. With that in mind, what is the Commission doing to comprehensively reach out to all young Europeans in order to ensure that every single citizen is educated about the rights that come with EU citizenship? What steps should be taken, in the Commission's expert opinion, with regard to citizenship education?

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

Civic competences are a priority in the 'Education and Training 2020' strategic framework. In 2012, Eurydice ([1]), the European education information network, released a report on 'Citizenship education at schools in Europe', and the Commission's Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning published the 'Active citizenship competence composite indicator' report ([2]).

Moreover, the Commission, under the Jean Monnet programme, supports teaching and research in European integration studies at higher education institutions inside and outside the EU. Since 2011 this programme has also supported the activity 'Learning EU at School', involving projects that provide EU knowledge to students in secondary education.

The Commission cooperates with the Council of Europe on a citizenship and human rights education project, which promotes cooperation among regional and international initiatives. These institutions also jointly launched a Pilot Project Scheme on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

In its communication campaign for the European Year of Citizens 2013, the Commission has also targeted young people across the EU using different tools and channels. These have included the social media, especially Facebook, a toolkit with information about EU rights for young Europeans ([3]), a competition 'generations@school' ([4]) and participation in 'Youth on the Move' events ([5]) across the EU to raise awareness about how young people can benefit from their EU rights.

Finally, the Youth in Action programme annually supports thousands of projects that target youths through non-formal citizenship activities.

([1]) http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php
([2]) http://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/111111111/24227
([3]) http://europa.eu/citizens-2013/en/press-and-campaign-toolbox/campaign-toolbox
([4]) http://www.generationsatschool.eu/en/
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/youthonthemove/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010954/13
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Gender equality and protection of rape victims in Greece

In my capacity as Women's Rights Spokesperson for the ECR Group, I frequently receive letters from women who have been victims of ill-treatment, abuse or direct discrimination within the EU.

I recently received a troubling letter from two Canadian women who were living in Glyfada (Athens, Greece) last year. They contacted me to express their concern at the way they were treated after informing the local police that they had been drugged and then gang-raped. The women, who are in their early 20s, claim that the police dismissed their allegations, implied that they were to blame and had perhaps had too much to drink, and then suggested that they return the next day to complete the paperwork. No medical examination was carried out, and nor were the women advised as to how to go about finding healthcare.

Could the Commission offer some reassurance that the Greek Government is in the process of implementing Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime?

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

The Commission has no legal competence to intervene in individual criminal proceedings in cases of individual victims in Member States.

Indeed Directive 2012/29/EU provides for obligations for Member States to ensure that victims have 'effective access to information' and that this right applies from the first contact with the competent authority together with a guarantee that victims receive at least a written acknowledgment of their complaint. The directive also requires that, at a later stage of proceedings, specific protection measures based on individual assessments are in place for such vulnerable victims.

Since October 2012, when the Victims' Directive was adopted, the Commission has been developing a targeted strategy to assist Member States with the implementation.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010956/13
à la Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(26 septembre 2013)

Objet: Aide européenne pour la «transition démocratique» de la Tunisie

Le mardi 17 septembre 2013 à Tunis, Bernardino León, représentant spécial de l'Union européenne pour la région du Sud de la Méditerranée, a pressé les différentes forces politiques tunisiennes à conclure rapidement un accord politique avec l'Europe afin d'attirer les investissements et les partenariats en provenance de l'Europe.

Ces deux dernières années, l'Union européenne a octroyé 400 millions d'euros à la Tunisie pour l'aider dans sa «transition démocratique».

1. Quelles ont été les garanties échangées avec la Tunisie lors du versement des 400 millions d'euros par la Commission?

2. Ces garanties ont-elles été respectées?

Réponse donnée par M. Füle au nom de la Commission
(20 novembre 2013)

Entre 2011 et 2013, l'Union européenne a soutenu différents programmes en Tunisie et le montant global de toutes les interventions dépasse 400 millions d'euros.

Les principaux objectifs des programmes de l'Union européenne pendant cette période consistaient à: 1) promouvoir des réformes socio-économiques favorisant la mise en place de conditions propices à une croissance inclusive, 2) soutenir la transition démocratique, 3) renforcer les capacités des institutions et 4) renforcer le rôle de la société civile.

Ces programmes visent différents objectifs et résultats et comportent des conditions différentes en fonction des secteurs et des stratégies.

Par principe, les fonds sont attribués au moyen de procédures de mise en concurrence. Pendant la phase de mise en œuvre, la Commission examine en permanence les actions et évalue si les normes et critères pertinents sont respectés. Les fonds sont mis à disposition uniquement si les conditions correspondantes sont remplies. En outre, tous les projets font l'objet d'exercices de suivi annuels.

Le bon usage des fonds pour chaque contrat est garanti par des audits réguliers effectués par des sociétés d'audit certifiées. En outre, la Commission commande des évaluations indépendantes qui portent sur les résultats de chaque programme.

L'Honorable Parlementaire trouvera des informations plus détaillées sur les programmes de coopération à la page indiquée ci-dessous ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/country-cooperation/tunisia/tunisia_fr.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010956/13
to the Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: EU aid for Tunisia's 'democratic transition'

On Tuesday 17 September 2013 in Tunis, the EU's Special Representative for the Southern Mediterranean region, Bernardino León, urged Tunisia's various political powers to swiftly conclude a political agreement with the EU with the aim of attracting European investment and partnerships.

Over the last two years the European Union has granted Tunisia EUR 400 million to assist it in its 'democratic transition'.

1. What guarantees were exchanged with Tunisia when the EUR 400 million payment was made by the Commission?

2. Have those guarantees been upheld?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

Between 2011 and 2013, the European Union supported different programmes in Tunisia and the global amount of all different interventions accounted for over EUR 400 million.

The main objectives of the EU programmes for the period were to 1) promote socioeconomic reforms boosting conditions for inclusive growth, 2) support the democratic transition, 3) strenghten the capacities of institutions and 4) reinforce the role of the civil society.

Programmes foresee diverse objectives and results, and different conditionalities are attached to programmes depending on sectors and strategies.

As a matter of principle, funds are contracted through competitive procedures. In the implementation phase the Commission constantly examines the actions and evaluates if the standards and criteria have been met. Funds are released only if conditionalities are met. Furthermore, all projects are subject to annual monitoring exercices.

The correct use of funds for each contract is ensured through regular audits by certified auditing companies. In addition, the Commission contracts independent evaluations of the performance of each programme.

The Honourable Member will find more detailed information on the cooperation programmes at the page indicated below. ([1])

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/country-cooperation/tunisia/tunisia_fr.htm

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-010957/13
adresată Comisiei
Minodora Cliveti (S&D)
(26 septembrie 2013)

Subiect: Strategiile naționale de integrare a romilor

În calitate de europarlamentar român și de raportor din umbră al raportului „Aspecte de gen ale cadrului UE pentru strategiile naționale de integrare a romilor", vă solicit punctul de vedere cu privire la recentele declarații ale ministrului de interne francez, Manuel Valls, cu privire la romii din România care se găsesc pe teritoriul Franței.

Acesta a declarat recent: „este o iluzie să credem că problema romilor poate fi rezolvată numai prin integrarea lor" și că nu există altă soluție decât evacuarea taberelor și conducerea romilor la graniță. În fine, același ministru a declarat că „populațiile de romi au vocația să rămână în România sau să se întoarcă acolo".

Având în vedere faptul că în 2011 Comisia a adoptat strategia europeană de integrare a romilor, iar în 2012 toate statele membre și-au prezentat programele naționale, Franța fiind unul dintre statele membre care și-a declarat susținerea și deschiderea față de acest demers, demarând o serie de proiecte vizând mai ales romii din România, este de neînțeles modul în care o autoritate franceză se exprimă față de acești cetățeni europeni.

Raportul francez subliniază caracterul transnațional al proiectelor de integrare a romilor, ceea ce duce, în mod direct, la necesitatea consultării Comisiei.

Răspuns dat de dna Reding în numele Comisiei
(20 noiembrie 2013)

Poziția oficială a guvernului francez, definită în orientările strategice convenite la reuniunea interministerială din 24 august 2012, în urma căreia a fost redactat documentul „Circulară cu privire la anticiparea și asistarea operațiunilor de evacuare a taberelor ilegale" din 26 august 2012, este în conformitate cu abordarea Comisiei. Această abordare are la bază două principii: pe de o parte, respectul față de cadrul legal european și național și, pe de altă parte, măsurile sociale proactive luate pentru a accelera integrarea romilor și pentru a îmbunătăți situația acestora în ceea ce privește educația, locul de muncă, sănătatea și locuința.

Comisia se află în dialog permanent cu punctul național de contact pentru integrarea romilor din Franța, desemnat oficial de către guvern ca fiind responsabil de coordonarea punerii în aplicare a strategiei naționale de integrare a romilor în Franța.

Cooperarea transnațională constituie un pas înainte promițător pentru a răspunde provocărilor legate de integrarea romilor la nivel local. În propunerea sa de recomandare a Consiliului cu privire la măsurile de integrare efectivă a romilor în statele membre, din 26 iunie 2013 ([1]), Comisia a făcut apel la statele membre să dezvolte și să participe la cooperarea transnațională la nivel național, regional sau local, pentru a oferi soluții la probleme legate de mobilitatea transfrontalieră a romilor în cadrul UE și pentru a sprijini învățarea reciprocă și multiplicarea bunelor practici.

([1]) Com(2013)460.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010957/13
to the Commission
Minodora Cliveti (S&D)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: National strategies for Roma integration

As a Romanian MEP and shadow rapporteur for the report 'Gender Aspects of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies,' I am requesting your opinion on the recent statements from the French Interior Minister, Manuel Valls, concerning the Roma on French territory.

Manuel Valls recently said, 'It is illusory to think that the Roma issue can be solved solely via their integration' and that the only solution is to empty the camps and repatriate the Roma population. The Minister also said that 'the Roma population is meant to stay in Romania or go back there.'

In view of the fact that the Commission adopted the EU Strategy for Roma Integration in 2011, and that all Member States introduced their national programmes in 2012 launching a series of projects focusing on the Roma in Romania in particular, with France being one of the Member States to declare their support and openness to this approach, the manner in which a French authority figure is expressing himself towards these European citizens is incomprehensible.

The French report highlights the transnational nature of Roma integration projects, which leads directly to the need to consult the Commission.

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

The official position of the French Government defined in the strategic orientations agreed upon at the inter-ministerial meeting on 24 August 2012, of which the 'Circulaire sur l'anticipation et l'accompagnement des opérations d'évacutation des campements illicites' of 26 August 2012 is a direct follow-up, is in line with the Commission's approach. This approach lies on two pillars: on the one hand, respect for the European and national legal framework, on the other hand, proactive social measures to step up Roma integration and their situation regarding education, employment, health and housing.

The Commission is in permanent dialogue with the French national Roma contact point officially nominated by the government as being in charge of coordinating the implementation of the national Roma integration strategy in France.

Transnational cooperation is a promising way forward to meet the challenges of Roma integration at the local level. In its Proposal for a Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States of 26 June 2013 ([1]), the Commission has called on Member States to develop and participate in transnational cooperation at national, regional or local levels in order to provide solutions to problems related to cross-border mobility of Roma within the EU, and support mutual learning and multiplication of good practices.

([1]) Com(2013) 460.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-010958/13
adresată Comisiei
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(26 septembrie 2013)

Subiect: Presa locală

Criza cu care se confruntă Europa afectează puternic presa locală și regională din statele membre.

Un număr semnificativ de ziare locale sau posturi de radio și televiziune locale și regionale se confruntă cu dificultăți financiare serioase care le afectează activitatea și le îngreunează misiunea — cea de a informa publicul larg în legătură cu diferite aspecte ale măsurilor administrației locale, regionale, despre probleme ale cetățenilor și soluții la aceste probleme propuse de administrația locală și națională, precum și în legătură cu problematica europeană și politicile Uniunii din diverse domenii.

În plus, în perspectiva alegerilor pentru Parlamentul European de anul viitor, este nevoie de o informare permanentă și corectă a cetățenilor, cu precădere a celor din zona rurală, în legătură cu politicile europene și maniera în care reprezentanții cetățenilor — deputații europeni — acționează în interesul acestora.

Cum poate sprijini Comisia activitatea presei locale și regionale din statele membre pentru a permite respectarea principiului accesului liber al tuturor cetățenilor la informare corectă, mai ales în perspectiva alegerilor din 2014 pentru Parlamentul European?

Răspuns dat de dna Kroes în numele Comisiei
(31 octombrie 2013)

Diversitatea, libertatea și pluralismul mijloacelor de informare în masă regionale și locale sunt esențiale pentru drepturile cetățenilor, în special în contextul exercitării de către aceștia a dreptului la vot pentru alegerile europene. Angajamentul Uniunii Europene de a respecta libertatea și pluralismul mijloacelor de informare în masă, precum și dreptul la informare și libertatea de exprimare este consacrat în articolul 11 din Carta drepturilor fundamentale. Cu toate acestea, în conformitate cu articolul 51 alineatul (1) din Cartă, aceasta se aplică statelor membre numai atunci când acestea pun în aplicare dreptul Uniunii Europene.

Prin urmare, Comisia nu are competențe generală de a interveni în ceea ce privește mijloacele de informare în masă locale și regionale. Cu toate acestea, în scopul de a aduce politicile și evenimentele UE mai aproape de cetățeni, Comisia finanțează din decembrie 2012 rețelele de radio Euranet Plus. Această rețea paneuropeană reunește 13 posturi radio internaționale, naționale și regionale din 12 state membre ale UE. Euranet Plus difuzează programe în 12 limbi oficiale ale UE, abordând activitatea UE dintr-o perspectivă europeană, în condiții de independență editorială deplină. În prezent, Euronet Plus s-a angajat, printre altele, să asigure un spațiu important în programele sale pentru următoarele alegeri parlamentare.

În același timp, Comisia încearcă să asigure respectul pentru libertatea și pluralismul mijloacelor de informare în masă, în limitele competențelor sale. Aceasta reflectează în prezent asupra unor acțiuni posibile în urma consultării publice cu privire la raportul Grupului la nivel înalt pentru libertatea și pluralismul mijloacelor de informare în masă.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010958/13
to the Commission
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Local media

The crisis facing Europe is having a major impact upon local and regional media in Member States.

A significant number of local newspapers and local and regional radio and television stations are facing serious financial difficulties. This is affecting their activity and hindering them in their mandate to inform the general public about the various aspects of local and regional government measures, problems affecting citizens and the solutions that local and national government proposes, as well as European issues and EU policies across various domains.

Furthermore, with the prospect of European Parliament elections next year, citizens require ongoing and accurate information, especially those in rural areas, regarding European policies and the way in which the citizens' representatives, the Members of the European Parliament, are acting in their interests.

How can the Commission support the activity of local and regional media in Member States so as to respect the principle of free access by all citizens to accurate information, particularly in the context of the European Parliament elections in 2014?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(31 October 2013)

Diversity, freedom and pluralism of regional and local media are crucial to citizens' rights, especially in the context of exercising their right to vote for the European elections. The European Union's commitment to respect freedom and pluralism of the media, as well as the right to information and freedom of expression is enshrined in Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. However, according to its Article 51(1), the Charter applies to Member States only when they are implementing European Union law.

The Commission does therefore not have overall competence regarding local and regional media. Nevertheless, and with the aim of bringing EU policies and events closer to citizens, the Commission is funding since December 2012 the European radio networks Euranet Plus. This pan-European network brings together 13 international, national and regional radio stations from 12 EU Member States. Broadcasting in 12 official EU languages, Euranet Plus takes on EU affairs from a European perspective with full editorial independence. At present, it is committed, among other things, to providing an in-depth coverage of the next Parliamentary elections.

At the same time the Commission seeks to ensure respect for media freedom and pluralism within its competences. It is currently reflecting possible follow up to the public consultation on the report of the independent High Level Group on Media Freedom and Pluralism.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010959/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Proyecto de Plan Hidrológico de Cuenca del Júcar

La comarca de la Ribera del Júcar viene padeciendo desde hace más de veinte años problemas de excesos de nitratos y contaminación con plaguicidas de las aguas subterráneas que se captan para beber. Para paliar el problema, desde hace años se reclama una asignación de agua superficial del Júcar para uso de boca, primera prioridad que establece la Directiva Marco del Agua. Sin embargo, el artículo 28, apartado 1, del proyecto de Plan Hidrológico de Cuenca (en fase de exposición al público) no establece una asignación directa para la comarca sino una sustitución de recursos hídricos que corre a cargo de los ciudadanos a los que se les ha contaminado el agua. A otras zonas urbanas más alejadas de la cuenca, y sin contaminación, se les aumentan los recursos hídricos sin que hayan de pagar por dicha agua. En la actualidad se está presionando a los ayuntamientos para que firmen un convenio de intercambio de agua con los regantes, convenio gravoso para el contribuyente.

¿Considera la Comisión que la solución de pagar a los regantes los costes de sustitución en vez de conceder una asignación directa de agua respeta las prioridades de uso de la Directiva Marco del Agua?

¿Considera la Comisión que hacer que los afectados por la contaminación paguen dicha sustitución respeta el principio de «quien contamina paga»?

¿Va a tomar la Comisión alguna medida al respecto?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de noviembre de 2013)

El artículo 9 de la Directiva Marco del Agua ([1]) dispone que los Estados miembros —teniendo en cuenta el principio de que quien contamina paga— garanticen una contribución adecuada de los diversos usos del agua a la recuperación de los costes de los servicios que se relacionen con ella.

La evaluación de los planes hidrológicos de cuenca realizada y publicada por la Comisión en 2012 ([2]) confirmó que es frecuente en la EU que no se recuperen los costes derivados de la contaminación difusa procedente de la agricultura. Es habitual, en su lugar, que esos costes sean trasladados por los suministradores de agua a los hogares y que estos deban pagar por la potabilización del agua. La Comisión está de acuerdo en que, cuando esto ocurre, es verdad que no se tiene debidamente en cuenta el principio de que quien contamina paga.

La Comisión está celebrando reuniones bilaterales con los Estados miembros para analizar juntos la evaluación a la que sometió sus planes en 2012 y para conocer cómo prevén responder a las recomendaciones que les hizo para que mejoraran la aplicación de la Directiva Marco del Agua, en general, y la de su artículo 9, en particular. A tal efecto, tal y como se anunció en el Plan del Agua de 2012, la Comisión está trabajando con los Estados miembros y con los interesados para elaborar en el marco de la Estrategia Común de Aplicación de esa Directiva un documento de orientación relativo a la recuperación de costes.

Hay que señalar, por último, que, en lo tocante al Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional y al Fondo de Cohesión dentro del marco financiero 2014-2020, el respeto de los requisitos que dispone el artículo 9 constituye una condición previa indispensable para que puedan ponerse a disposición del sector del agua los fondos necesarios.

La política de precios del agua tiene que ser comunicada en el contexto de los planes hidrológicos de cuenca. El Tribunal condenó a España (asunto C-403/11) por no haber adoptado ni comunicado a tiempo esos planes. La Comisión procederá a evaluar el plan del Júcar y los demás planes hidrológicos españoles tan pronto como sean adoptados y comunicados.

([1]) Directiva 2000/60/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de octubre de 2000, por la que se establece un marco comunitario de actuación en el ámbito de la política de aguas (DO L 327 de 22.12.2000).

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/implrep2007/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010959/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Draft Júcar Basin Hydrological Plan

For more than twenty years, the Ribera del Júcar region has suffered from problems with excessive nitrates and pesticide contamination in the ground water used for drinking. To alleviate the problem, calls have been made for years for an allocation of surface water from the Júcar for drinking, the first priority established in the Water Framework Directive. However, Article 28(1) of the draft Júcar Basin Hydrological Plan (in the public comment phase) does not establish a direct allocation for the region. Instead, it provides for a replacement of water resources, with the replacement cost borne by the citizens whose water has been contaminated. Water resources for other urban areas that are farther from the basin, and that have not been contaminated, are increased, without those areas being required to pay for the additional water resources. The municipalities are currently being pressured to sign a water exchange agreement — an agreement that is burdensome to taxpayers — with the irrigators.

Does the Commission take the view that the solution of paying replacement costs to the irrigators, instead of granting a direct allocation of water, respects the use priorities established in the Water Framework Directive?

Does the Commission take the view that making those affected by the contamination pay for such replacement respects the 'polluter pays' principle?

Will the Commission take any action in this regard?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(13 November 2013)

Art. 9 of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) ([1]) states that Member States shall ensure an adequate contribution of different water uses to the recovery of the costs of water services taking into account the polluter pays principle (PPP).

The assessment of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) performed by the Commission in 2012 confirmed that costs related to diffuse pollution from agriculture are often not recovered across the EU. These costs are instead often shifted by water providers to households which are charged for drinking water purification. The Commission agrees that, when this happens, the PPP is not adequately taken into account.

The Commission is holding bilateral meetings with Member States to discuss its assessment of their plans published in 2012 ([2]) and to check how they plan to address its recommendations to improve WFD implementation including in relation to Article 9. To this end, the Commission, as announced in the 2012 Water Blueprint, is working with Member States and stakeholders to develop a guidance document on cost recovery under the Common Implementation Strategy of the WFD.

Finally, under the European Regional Development and Cohesion Funds for the financial framework 2014-2020, the fulfilment of Art. 9 requirements constitutes an *ex-ante* conditionality for funds to be available in the water sector.

The water pricing policy needs to be reported in the context of the RBMP. The Court has condemned Spain (Case C-403/11) for not having adopted and reported RBMPs on time. The Commission will assess the Júcar and other Spanish RBMPs as soon as they are adopted and reported.

([1]) Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000).

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/implrep2007/index_en.htm

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-010960/13
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(26. september 2013)

Om: Tilgængelige ulovligt producerede fødevarer

En række EU-lande har stadig ikke efterlevet krav om dyrevelfærd og lignende vedrørende burhøns og svin. Det vil sige, at der findes en række produkter på det indre marked, som reelt er ulovlige, fordi de ikke efterlever EU's regler.

Mit spørgsmål til Kommissionen er derfor:

Vil Kommissionen bede medlemslandene om at sikre, at produkter produceret under ulovlige vilkår ikke gøres tilgængelige på EU's indre marked?

Det er uretfærdigt over for de producenter, som producerer efter reglerne, og det er urimeligt over for forbrugerne, at de ikke kan stole på, at deres indkøbte mad er fremstillet på lovlig vis.

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Tonio Borg
(21. november 2013)

Kommissionen er enig med det ærede medlem i, at efterlevelse af EU's dyrevelfærdsbestemmelser er afgørende for at sikre ikke blot dyrs velfærd, men også lige konkurrencevilkår for de erhvervsdrivende i EU.

Med hensyn til de konkrete foranstaltninger, Kommissionen har truffet for at sikre efterlevelse af de bestemmelser, det ærede medlem omtaler, skal Kommissionen henvise til svar på skriftlig forespørgsel E-004047/2013, E-004763/2013, E-006291/2013, E-007401/2013, E-009599/2013, E-009698/2013, E-009822/2013 og E-010593/2013 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010960/13
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Available illegally produced foodstuffs

A number of EU Member States have not yet complied with animal welfare and similar requirements relating to battery hens and pigs. In other words, there are a number of products on the internal market that are in fact illegal because they do not comply with EU rules.

Will the Commission ask the Member States to ensure that products produced under illegal conditions are not made available on the EU's internal market?

It is not fair to those producers who do comply with the rules, and it is unfair to consumers that they cannot be sure that the food they buy is produced in a lawful manner.

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The Commission agrees with the Honourable Member that compliance with Union-wide animal welfare rules is critical in order to ensure not only the welfare of animals, but also a level playing field for economic operators in the EU.

Regarding the concrete measures taken by the Commission in order to ensure compliance with the rules referred to by the Honourable Member, the Commission would refer to its answers to Written Question E-004047/2013, E-004763/2013, E-006291/2013, E-007401/2013, E-009599/2013, E-009698/2013, E-009822/2013, and E-010593/2013 ([1]).

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010962/13
alla Commissione
Susy De Martini (ECR) e Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(26 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Obbligo di segnalazione oltre boa per i bagnanti

Ad oggi, in Italia, non c'è una legge quadro che regoli le attività dei bagnanti oltre boa come avviene per le attività della subacquea. Il mese scorso, infatti, vi sono stati casi di annegamento, nei litorali italiani, dovuti ad incidenti in mare per mancata segnalazione a imbarcazioni private. Mentre è in vigore l'obbligo per i subacquei di munirsi di un galleggiante, che può essere di varia natura purché munito di «bandiera rossa con striscia diagonale bianca», visibile da almeno 300 metri, non vi sono gli stessi obblighi per i bagnanti oltre boa.

Può la Commissione:

1. informare gli onorevoli deputati sulla legislazione esistente nei diversi Stati membri;

2. far sapere se vi è una direttiva europea che regola l'attività della subacquea;

3. indicare se ritiene opportuno regolamentare anche l'attività dei bagnanti oltre boa per evitare possibili incidenti in mare?

Risposta di Neven Mimica a nome della Commissione
(14 novembre 2013)

La competenza di regolamentare il nuoto in mare aperto appartiene agli Stati membri. Non vi è nessuna legislazione a livello unionale che disciplini le attività di nuoto o di immersione in mare aperto condotte a fini non lavorativi. La Commissione non dispone di un quadro di insieme delle regolamentazioni degli Stati membri in merito al nuoto in mare aperto.

Per quanto concerne le immersioni, esistono norme volontarie europee che stabiliscono i requisiti per la formazione sia del subacqueo che dell'istruttore. Per ulteriori dettagli la Commissione rinvia gli onorevoli deputati alla propria risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-006564/2011 ([1]).

La maggior parte delle attrezzature usate per le immersioni è soggetta alle disposizioni della direttiva 89/686/CEE sui dispositivi di protezione individuale ([2]). La direttiva stabilisce i requisiti per la progettazione e la fabbricazione di tali dispositivi e le regole per la loro libera circolazione nell'Unione. Norme armonizzate volontarie che corroborano i requisiti della direttiva sugli aspetti della salute e della sicurezza sono state prodotte dalle organizzazioni europee di normazione. Si noti che la direttiva disciplina soltanto i prodotti, ma non il loro uso.

Inoltre, la direttiva 89/391/CEE ([3]) stabilisce misure per incoraggiare miglioramenti nel campo della salute e della sicurezza dei lavoratori durante il lavoro. Conformemente all'articolo 6 il datore di lavoro prende le misure necessarie per evitare i rischi, valutarli e combatterli. Inoltre, la direttiva fa obbligo ai datori di lavoro di effettuare e documentare una valutazione dei rischi. La direttiva si applica a tutti i settori di attività, compresi il nuoto e l'immersione a fini lavorativi.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) GU L 399 del 30.12.1989, pagg. 18-38.
([3]) GU L 183 del 29.6.1989, pagg. 1-8.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010962/13
to the Commission
Susy De Martini (ECR) and Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Requirement for open sea swimmers to signal their presence

Italy currently has no framework law regulating the activities of swimmers in the open sea, while it does for diving. Last month there were cases of people drowning in accidents off the Italian coast due to swimmers' failure to signal their presence to private craft. While divers are required to use a marker which may vary in type provided it has a 'red flag with a white diagonal stripe', visible from a distance of at least 300 metres, open sea swimmers are not subject to the same requirements.

1. Can the Commission say what the existing legislation is in the various Member States?

2. Is there a European directive which regulates diving?

3. Does it think it should also regulate swimming in the open sea to prevent accidents at sea?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(14 November 2013)

The competence to regulate swimming in the open sea as such rests with the Member States. There is no legislation at EU level that would regulate non-occupational sea swimming or diving activities. The Commission has no comprehensive overview of Member States' rules regarding swimming in the open sea.

Regarding diving, there are voluntary European standards in place which lay down requirements for the training of both the diver and the instructor. For further details, the Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-006564/2011 ([1]).

Most of the equipment used for diving is subject to Directive 89/686/EEC on personal protective equipment ([2]). The directive lays down requirements for the design and manufacture of such equipment and rules on its free movement in the Union. Voluntary harmonised standards to support the directive's health and safety requirements are available from the European Standardisation Organisations. It should be noted that the directive only regulates the products, but not their usage.

In addition, Directive 89/391/EEC ([3]) lays down measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work. According to its Article 6, the employer shall take the necessary measures for avoiding, evaluating and combating risks. Furthermore, the directive obliges employers to carry out and document a risk assessment. The directive applies to all sectors of activity, including occupational swimming and diving.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) OJ L 399, 30.12.1989, p. 18-38.
([3]) OJ L 183, 29.6.1989, p. 1-8.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010963/13
aan de Commissie
Esther de Lange (PPE) en Ivo Belet (PPE)
(26 september 2013)

Betreft: Residulimieten voor wijn

De Franse consumentenbond Que Choisir heeft na onderzoek bekend gemaakt in alle 92 door hen onderzochte flessen wijn sporen van bestrijdingsmiddelen gevonden te hebben. Het ging om 33 verschillende middelen, waarvan er 7 bekend staan als kankerverwekkend. Australië en de Verenigde Staten kennen wetgeving op dit gebied, de Europese Unie niet.

Sinds 2008 zijn boeren in Frankrijk 5 % meer bestrijdingsmiddelen gaan spuiten bij de teelt van druiven, terwijl de ambitie is om het gebruik van gevaarlijke stoffen te verminderen.

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van de onderzoeksresultaten?

2. Welke maatregelen denkt de Commissie te nemen om het gebruik van bestrijdingsmiddelen ook in de wijnbouw te verminderen, zoals in vrijwel alle andere sectoren in de Europese landbouw wel gebeurt? Indien de Commissie geen maatregelen neemt, waarom niet?

3. Waarom heeft de Unie geen wetgeving voor residulimieten in wijn, terwijl landen als Australië en de Verenigde Staten dit wel hebben?

4. Wat zijn de regels voor residulimieten van pesticiden in wijn? Is de Commissie voornemens voorstellen te doen deze wetgeving aan te passen? Zo nee, waarom niet?

5. Vindt de Commissie ook dat het belang van de consument en de volksgezondheid voorrang heeft op het belang van de wijnsector?

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011147/13
aan de Commissie
Mark Demesmaeker (Verts/ALE)
(1 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Pesticiden in Franse wijnen

Franse wijnen zijn op grote schaal verontreinigd met landbouwgif. Dit bleek onlangs uit een onderzoek van de Franse consumentenbond *Que Choisir* die een selectie van 92 flessen wijn — rood, wit en rosé — uit alle Franse wijnstreken, waaronder Bordeaux en Bourgogne, liet onderzoeken in een laboratorium op de aanwezigheid van bestrijdingsmiddelen.

Gemiddeld zijn per fles vier soorten gif te traceren. Het gaat onder meer om stoffen die als kankerverwekkend bekend staan. In alle 92 flessen bleken pesticiden te zitten. Zelfs twee verboden substanties, het giftige bromopropylate en het bestrijdingsmiddel carbendazim, werden aangetroffen. Eén Bordeaux-wijn (Mouton Cadet) bleek maar liefst 14 soorten landbouwgif te bevatten.

In deze context rijst de vraag naar de afdoendheid van de Europese wetgeving op vlak van voedselveiligheid en de mate van consumentenbescherming. De Franse consumentenbond zegt zelf zich grote zorgen te maken, omdat regelgeving vrijwel geheel ontbreekt. Voor wijnen bestaan er, in tegenstelling tot voor veel voedsel en dranken, geen wettelijke maxima voor de hoeveelheid bestrijdingsmiddelen die er in mogen zitten.

Beaamt de Commissie de bezorgdheid van de vernoemde organisatie?

Zal de Commissie de Franse autoriteiten en de wijnsector contacteren om de resultaten te evalueren en hen aan te sporen verbeteringen aan te brengen?

Is de Commissie van mening dat er maatregelen moeten worden genomen of voorstellen moeten komen om dergelijke resultaten te voorkomen? Zo ja, welke maatregelen is ze van plan te nemen of welke voorstellen? Of vindt de Commissie de huidige Europese wetgeving afdoende?

Antwoord van de heer Borg namens de Commissie
(8 november 2013)

De Commissie is op de hoogte van de publicatie van de Franse consumentenbond. In de EU worden maximumresidugehalten (MRL's) voor onbewerkte landbouwproducten vastgesteld op basis van goede landbouwpraktijken (GLP) en de laagste blootstelling van consumenten die noodzakelijk is met het oog op de bescherming van kwetsbare consumenten ([1]). Dat betekent dat zowel voor druiven bestemd voor de productie van wijn als voor tafeldruiven een MRL wordt vastgesteld. De lidstaten zijn verantwoordelijk voor de controles op wijndruiven, waarbij wordt nagegaan of de MRL's in acht worden genomen, zodat zij veilig zijn voor de consument.

Deze controles worden verricht op het onbewerkte product, zodat in geval van een overtreding dienaangaande dadelijk handhavingsmaatregelen kunnen worden genomen. De lidstaten kunnen echter nog steeds de eindproducten controleren, in voorkomend geval rekening houdend met de specifieke verwerkingsfactoren voor wijn, of in het slechtste geval ervan uitgaande dat de niveaus in wijn dezelfde zijn als die in druiven. Zoals bekend leiden de oenologische praktijken echter tot een aanzienlijk lager gehalte aan de meeste bestrijdingsmiddelen. Voor een volledig overzicht van de blootstelling van de consument, met inbegrip van de cumulatieve blootstelling aan diverse residuen, is wijn in het gecoördineerde programma van de EU opgenomen als een levensmiddel dat in 2013 zal worden geanalyseerd.

Bovendien heeft Frankrijk overeenkomstig artikel 4 van Richtlijn 2009/128/EG een nationaal actieplan ingediend voor de vermindering van de risico's en de effecten van pesticidengebruik op de menselijke gezondheid en het milieu en ter bevordering van de ontwikkeling van geïntegreerde plaagbestrijding en alternatieve benaderingswijzen of technieken om de afhankelijkheid van het gebruik van pesticiden te verminderen. De Commissie zal uiterlijk op 26 november 2014 aan het Europees Parlement en de Raad een verslag voorleggen over de informatie die de lidstaten in verband met de nationale actieplannen hebben verstrekt.

([1]) Verordening (EG) nr. 396/2005 van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 23 februari 2005 tot vaststelling van maximumgehalten aan bestrijdingsmiddelenresiduen in of op levensmiddelen en diervoeders van plantaardige en dierlijke oorsprong en houdende wijziging van Richtlijn 91/414/EEG van de Raad.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010963/13
to the Commission
Esther de Lange (PPE) and Ivo Belet (PPE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Residue limits for wine

An investigation performed by *Que Choisir*, the French consumer organisation, found pesticide traces in all 92 of the wines analysed. 33 different pesticides were detected, 7 of which are known to be carcinogenic. Australia and the United States have introduced legislation in this area, but the European Union has not.

Wine-growers in France now use 5% more pesticide than in 2008, even though the stated aim is to reduce the use of hazardous substances.

1. Is the Commission aware of the results of this research?

2. What measures does the Commission intend to introduce to reduce the use of pesticides in viticulture, as is happening in almost all other sectors of European agriculture? If the Commission is not planning to introduce such measures, why not?

3. Why has the European Union not introduced any legislation on residue limits in wine, whereas countries such as Australia and the United States have done so?

4. What are the rules on pesticide residue levels in wine? Does the Commission intend to present proposals to amend this legislation? If not, why not?

5. Does the Commission agree that the interests of consumers and public health take precedence over the interests of the wine industry?

Question for written answer E-011147/13
to the Commission
Mark Demesmaeker (Verts/ALE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Pesticides in French wines

There is large-scale contamination of French wines with agricultural toxins. This fact was discovered in an investigation by the French consumer organisation *Que Choisir*, which had a selection of 92 bottles of wine — red, white and rosé — from French growing areas, including Bordeaux and Bourgogne, laboratory tested for the presence of pesticides.

On average, four different kinds of toxin could be detected per bottle, and these included known carcinogens. Pesticides were found in all 92 bottles. Two prohibited substances — the toxic bromopropylate and the pesticide carbendazim — were even found. One Bordeaux wine (Mouton Cadet) was found to contain at least 14 different varieties of agricultural toxin.

In this context, the question arises as to the adequacy of European legislation in relation to food safety and the level of consumer protection. The French consumer organisation in question says that it has major concerns because there is an almost total lack of regulation. In contrast to food and drinks, there are no statutory maximum levels for pesticide content in wines.

Does the Commission share *Que Choisir*'s concern?

Will the Commission contact the French authorities and the wine industry in order to assess the results and urge them to bring about improvements?

Does the Commission believe that measures need to be put in place or proposals brought forward in order to prevent the recurrence of results of this kind? If so, what measures or proposals is it planning? Or does the Commission believe that the current European legislation is sufficient?

Joint answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(8 November 2013)

The Commission is well aware of the publication by the French consumer organisation. In the EU maximum residue levels (MRLs) are established for raw agricultural products based on good agricultural practice (GAP) and the lowest consumer exposure necessary to protect vulnerable consumers ([1]). This includes the setting of MRLs for grapes intended for wine production as well as for table grapes. Member States are responsible for controls on wine grapes to check compliance with MRLs which makes sure that they are safe for consumers.

These controls take place on the raw product for which enforcement measures can then directly be taken in case of non-compliances. Still, the Member States can control final products taking into account specific processing factors for wine where available, or assuming as a worst case that the levels in wine are the same as those in grapes. It is however well known that oenological practices lead to considerable decreases of most pesticides. In order to get a complete overview on consumer exposure, including cumulative exposure to multiple residues, the EU coordinated programme schedules wine as a food commodity to be analysed in 2013.

Furthermore, in compliance with Article 4 of Directive 2009/128/EC, France has submitted a National Action Plan for the reduction of risks and impacts of pesticide use on human health and environment and to encourage the development of integrated pest management and of alternative approaches or techniques in order to reduce dependency on the use of pesticides. The Commission shall report to the European Parliament and Council on the information communicated by the Member States in relation to the National Action Plans by 26 November 2014.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 February 2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin and amending Council Directive 91/414/EC.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-010964/13
aan de Commissie
Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE)
(1 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Aanbesteding hogesnelheidsspoor Nederland

Uit berichtgeving van het dagblad De Telegraaf van 25 september blijkt dat de NS (Nederlandse Spoorwegen) zijn contractuele verplichtingen voor het hogesnelheidsspoor van Amsterdam naar de Belgische grens niet wil nakomen. Wegens de technische problemen rond de Fyra wil de NS afzien van de aankoop van nieuwe hogesnelheidstreinen en slechts intercity's gaat inzetten op dit traject. Als deze plannen door de Nederlandse regering zouden worden goedgekeurd, blijft een groot deel van de capaciteit van het hogesnelheidsspoor onderbenut. In de Nederlandse media hebben echter berichten gecirculeerd dat andere partijen hebben aangegeven de exploitatie van hogesnelheidstreinen op dit traject te willen overnemen, zodat er in de toekomst wel hogesnelheidstreinen kunnen rijden.

1. Kan de Nederlandse regering, in strijd met de Europese aanbestedingsnormen, eenzijdig besluiten de NS toestemming te geven om intercity's in plaats van hogesnelheidstreinen te laten rijden over het hogesnelheidslijntraject?

2. Is het bij de Commissie bekend dat er partijen zijn die mogelijk wel hogesnelheidstreinen willen laten rijden op dit traject?

3. Is de Nederlandse regering conform Verordening (EG) nr. 1370/2007 verplicht om deze partijen een kans te geven zodat zij kunnen meedingen naar de aanbesteding en hun treindienst kunnen aanbieden? Dit teneinde de reiziger een hogesnelheidsverbinding met steden als Brussel, Londen of Parijs te verzekeren.

4. In het algemeen, hoe beoordeelt de Commissie de wijze waarop de Nederlandse staat met de aanbesteding van de HSL is omgegaan? De aanbesteding is in de afgelopen jaren meerdere keren aangepast; is dit wel eerlijk naar andere partijen die destijds buiten de boot vielen?

Antwoord van de heer Kallas namens de Commissie
(30 oktober 2013)

De hsl-concessie voor de exploitatie van internationale hogesnelheidstreinen tussen Amsterdam en Brussel is gegund op basis van een concurrentiegerichte aanbestedingsprocedure op grond van Verordening (EG) nr. 1370/2007 ([1]). De Commissie is van mening dat een vervanging van rollend materieel voor hogesnelheidstreinen door conventioneel rollend materieel een aanzienlijke wijziging van het concessiecontract zal vormen. Volgens het Hof van Justitie vereisen aanzienlijke wijzigingen van essentiële bepalingen van een concessieovereenkomst voor diensten de gunning van een nieuw contract ([2]) om transparantie van de procedures en van de gelijke behandeling van inschrijvers te verzekeren.

Uit berichten in de pers blijkt dat tenminste twee spoorwegondernemingen concrete plannen zouden hebben voor de exploitatie van hogesnelheidsdiensten op de lijn Brussel-Amsterdam als voortzetting van diensten uit Londen.

Overeenkomstig Verordening (EG) nr. 1370/2007 zal de Nederlandse, bevoegde autoriteit de keuze hebben ofwel opnieuw een hogesnelheidsconcessie te gunnen op basis van een openbare aanbestedingsprocedure ofwel rechtstreeks de concessieovereenkomst te gunnen.

De Commissie beschikt niet over gedetailleerde informatie over wijzigingen van de voorwaarden inzake de hsl-concessie. Indien de wijzigingen van essentiële bepalingen echter van aanzienlijke aard waren geweest, kon de gunning van een nieuw contract noodzakelijk zijn geweest.

([1]) Verordening (EG) nr. 1370/2007 van het Europees Parlement en van de Raad van 23 oktober 2007 betreffende het openbaar personenvervoer per spoor en over de weg en tot intrekking van Verordening (EEG) nr. 1191/69 van de Raad en Verordening (EEG) nr. 1107/70 van de Raad, PB L 315 van 3.12.2007, blz. 1.

([2]) Zaak C — 337/98 Commissie tegen Franse Republiek, Jurispr. 2000, blz. I-8377, punten 44 en 46, Zaak C-454/06 Pressetext Nachrichtenagentur, Jurispr. 2008 blz. I-4401, punt 34 Wall AG, Jurispr. 2010, blz. I-02815, punten 37 en 38.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010964/13
to the Commission
Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: The tender for the Dutch high-speed rail network

A report in the Dutch daily newspaper, *De Telegraaf*, from 25 September, has revealed how *Nederlandse Spoorwegen* (Dutch Railways) is ducking its contractual obligations for the high-speed rail-link from Amsterdam to the Belgian border. Because of the technical problems surrounding the Fyra high-speed train, *Nederlandse Spoorwegen* wants to abandon the purchase of new high-speed trains and just use intercity trains on this route. If these plans are approved by the Dutch Government, a large proportion of the high-speed rail network's capacity will be underused. Reports have been circulating in the Dutch media about other parties who have indicated that they would be willing to take over running high-speed trains on this route, so that high-speed trains could indeed operate on the route in the future.

1. Can the Dutch Government unilaterally decide to grant *Nederlandse Spoorwegen* authorisation to operate intercity trains on the high-speed rail network, instead of high-speed trains, contrary to EU public procurement regulations?

2. Is the Commission aware that there are parties who may wish to operate high-speed trains on this route?

3. Is the Dutch Government required to provide the said parties with an opportunity to be able to compete in the tender and offer their train services, as specified under Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007, thereby offering passengers a high-speed rail connection to cities such as Brussels, London and Paris?

4. In general, what is the Commission's assessment of the manner in which the Dutch State has tackled tendering for the high-speed rail line? The terms of the tender have been modified several times in recent years — is this fair towards other parties who were sidelined at the time?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(30 October 2013)

The High Speed Line-(HSL) concession for operating international high-speed rail services between Amsterdam and Brussels has been awarded based on a competitive award procedure pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 ([1]). The Commission considers that a replacement of high-speed rolling stock by conventional rolling stock would constitute a substantial amendment to the concession contract. According to the Court of Justice, in order to ensure transparency of procedures and equal treatment of tenderers, substantial amendments to essential provisions of a service concession contract require the award of a new contract ([2]).

Information from the press indicates that at least two railway undertakings would have concrete plans to operate high-speed services on the Brussels-Amsterdam route as a continuation of services originating in London.

According to Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 the Dutch competent authority would have the choice of either re-awarding the high-speed concession based on a public tender procedure or directly awarding the concession contract.

The Commission has no substantiated information about modifications of the terms of the HSL-concession. However, if modifications to essential provisions had been of a substantial nature, the award of a new contract might have been necessary.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on public passenger transport services by rail and by road and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) Nos 1191/69 and 1107/70, OJ L 315, 3.12.2007.

([2]) Case C-337/98 Commission v France [2000] ECR I-8377, paragraphs 44 and 46, Case C-454/06 Pressetext Nachrichtenagentur [2008] ECR I-4401, paragraph 34) and Case C-91/08 Wall AG [2010] ECR I- 02815, paragraph 37 and 38.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-010965/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Investigación de la masacre en el campo de refugiados iraníes de Ashraf (Irak)

El pasado 1 de septiembre el campo de refugiados iraníes de Ashraf fue atacado por fuerzas iraquíes que acabaron con la vida de cincuenta y dos personas y secuestraron a otras siete. El ataque fue dirigido contra un centenar de miembros del grupo Muyahidín Jalq, organización contraria al régimen de Teherán protegido por la Cuarta Convención de Ginebra.

Aunque el ataque fue condenado desde un primer momento por la comunidad internacional, ni la Alta Representante de la Unión para Asuntos Exteriores y Política de Seguridad ni otros responsables occidentales han pedido que se lleve a cabo una investigación exhaustiva e independiente por parte de la ONU y se ofrezca mayor protección a los supervivientes de este suceso y al resto de miembros de este grupo. La Unión Europea se ha limitado a pedir a las autoridades iraquíes que aclaren las circunstancias de esta matanza; la ONU, a pedir al gobierno de Bagdad una investigación imparcial y sin demora.

1. ¿No cree conveniente la Comisión insistir ante la ONU para que sea ella quien lleve a cabo una investigación exhaustiva e independiente sobre la masacre ocurrida en el campo de Ashraf?

2. ¿Le parece oportuno a la Comisión pedir a la ONU que sus cascos azules ofrezcan una protección especial a los refugiados miembros de Muyahidín Jalq que viven en el campo de Liberty en Irak?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de octubre de 2013)

La AR/VP sigue muy de cerca la situación de Irak, incluida la cuestión de los refugiados de los campos de Ashraf y Hurriya.

El Gobierno de Irak ha sido responsable de la seguridad del campo de Ashraf desde 2009, cuando las fuerzas de los Estados Unidos en Irak le transfirieron su control. De acuerdo con los términos del Memorando de Acuerdo entre las NU y el Gobierno de Irak, este también era responsable de garantizar la seguridad del traslado de los refugiados al campo de Hurriya y de la seguridad del propio campo.

La AR/VP condenó públicamente el ataque el 1 de septiembre de 2013 y pidió que se hiciera rendir cuentas a los responsables. También acogió positivamente en ese momento la decisión del Gobierno de Irak de iniciar la investigación de los hechos ocurridos. Desde entonces ha reclamado a las autoridades iraquíes que cumplan con sus responsabilidades y realicen una investigación exhaustiva e imparcial de los actos violentos. También planteó la cuestión al entrevistarse con el Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores de Irak Hoshyar Zebari los días 11 y 24 de septiembre de 2013.

En el marco de su mandato, la Misión de Asistencia de las NU para Iraq (UNAMI) efectuó en el pasado visitas regulares de control de los derechos humanos al campo de Ashraf. Tras el ataque, la UNAMI visitó los lugares de los hechos para evaluar la situación del campo de Ashraf, confirmando los actos violentos y la necesidad de que el Gobierno de Irak realice una investigación pública e imparcial.

La AR/VP seguirá insistiendo en que el Gobierno de Irak realice una investigación completa del ataque del 1 de septiembre de 2013. Seguirá reclamando al Gobierno de Irak que cumpla sus obligaciones y garantice la seguridad de los refugiados del campo de Hurriya.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010965/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Investigation into the massacre of Iranian refugees at Camp Ashraf in Iraq

On 1 September 2013, Iraqi forces carried out an attack on Camp Ashraf, which houses Iranian refugees. Fifty-two people were killed and seven others abducted. The attack was directed against a hundred members of the Mojahedin-e-Khalq (MEK) group, an organisation which opposes the regime in Tehran and is protected under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Although the attack was immediately condemned by the international community, neither the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy nor other Western officials have called for a thorough and independent UN investigation and for more protection for the survivors of the attack and other members of the group. The European Union has merely asked the Iraqi authorities to clarify the circumstances surrounding the killings; and the UN has only asked the Government in Baghdad to carry out an impartial investigation without delay.

1. Does the Commission not think it should urge the UN to conduct a thorough and independent investigation into the massacre at Camp Ashraf?

2. Does the Commission think it appropriate to call for UN peacekeepers to provide special protection for MEK refugees living in Camp Liberty in Iraq?

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

The HR/VP follows the situation in Iraq very closely, including the question of the residents of Camps Ashraf and Hurriya.

The Government of Iraq (GoI) has had responsibility over the security of Camp Ashraf since 2009, when the United States Forces in Iraq transferred control of the camp to them. Under the terms of the 2011 Memorandum of Understanding between the UN and the GoI, the latter was also responsible for ensuring the safe transportation of residents to Camp Hurriya and the security of Camp Hurriya itself.

The HR/VP publicly condemned the attack on 1 September 2013 and called for those responsible to be held accountable. At the time she also welcomed the Government of Iraq's decision to open an enquiry into the events. Since then, she has repeatedly called on the Iraqi authorities to fulfil their responsibility and to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into the violence. She also raised the issue when speaking with Iraq's Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari on 11 and 24 September 2013.

Acting within its mandate, the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) had in the past conducted regular human rights monitoring visits to Camp Ashraf. Following the attack, UNAMI conducted an on-site visit to assess the situation in Camp Ashraf, which confirmed the violence and the need for the GoI to conduct a public and impartial enquiry.

The HR/VP will continue to insist that the Government of Iraq conducts a full investigation into to the attack of 1 September 2013. She will also continue to call on the Government of Iraq to fulfil its obligations by ensuring the safety of the residents of Camp Hurriya.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010966/13
a la Comisión
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Discapacidad y educación

Considerando que la educación es la vía de entrada a una participación plena en la sociedad y que sin ella los ciudadanos verán minada su capacidad para disfrutar de plenos derechos y asumir funciones importantes en la sociedad, principalmente por medio del empleo productivo,

Considerando el artículo 24 de la Convención de las Naciones Unidas sobre los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad,

Considerando el artículo 5 de la Estrategia Europea sobre Discapacidad 2010-2020, en el que la Comisión se comprometió a respaldar una educación y una formación inclusivas,

Considerando la respuesta de la Comisión Europea, con fecha 4 de septiembre del 2013 (código E-008753/2013), a mi pregunta parlamentaria, donde se hace referencia a la futura publicación por parte de la Comisión Europea de unos documentos sobre educación en materia de emprendimiento a finales del 2013,

1. ¿Podría indicar la Comisión en qué estado se encuentran actualmente dichos documentos y en qué fecha tiene prevista la Comisión Europea su publicación?

2. ¿En qué medida tienen en consideración estos documentos la educación y formación inclusivas?

3. ¿En qué temas considera la Comisión que la información contenida en dichos documentos puede aportar una contribución a la ya existente Comunicación de la Comisión Europea «Un nuevo concepto de educación»?

Respuesta de la Sra. Vassiliou en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de noviembre de 2013)

La Comunicación «Un nuevo concepto de educación» ([1]), de noviembre de 2012, anunció una serie de acciones sobre la educación para el emprendimiento, una de las cuales es la recopilación de los datos pertinentes de que se dispone en los Estados miembros. El informe correspondiente será elaborado por el Grupo de Trabajo Temático sobre la Educación para el Emprendimiento, en el que participan la Comisión, expertos gubernamentales nacionales y otras partes interesadas pertinentes, y se publicará a principios de 2014.

En él se informará sobre los factores de éxito a escala política, entre ellos el desarrollo de los educadores, los resultados del aprendizaje, el compromiso de las partes interesadas, así como los planes de estudios y la pedagogía en relación con la educación para el emprendimiento. El Grupo ha adoptado un enfoque inclusivo a fin de garantizar que su trabajo sea pertinente para todos los alumnos de todos los sectores de la educación y la formación. A pesar de que el informe no abordará específicamente la educación de alumnos con necesidades especiales, deberá ser de utilidad para la misma.

En «Un nuevo concepto de educación» también se menciona la colaboración con la OCDE en un marco de orientación destinado a los centros de educación para el emprendimiento. En noviembre de 2013 deberá publicarse la versión que trata sobre la enseñanza superior, mientras que la versión sobre los centros de educación y formación profesionales se elaborará a lo largo de 2014.

([1]) COM(2012) 669 http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010966/13
to the Commission
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Disability and education

Considering that education is the gateway towards full participation in society and without it citizens' capacity to enjoy their full rights and take on important responsibilities in society is diminished, primarily via productive employment,

Considering Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;

Considering that in Article 5 of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, the Commission undertook to support inclusive education and training,

Considering the Commission's reply to my Parliamentary Question, dated 4 September 2013 (reference E-008753/2013), which refers to the future publication by the Commission towards the end of 2013 of some documents on entrepreneurship education,

1. Could the Commission indicate what stage the publication of said documents has reached, and what is the Commission's expected publication date?

2. To what extent do these documents take into account inclusive education and training?

3. In what areas does the Commission consider that the information contained in these documents can contribute to the Commission's previous Communication entitled 'A new concept of education'?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The Rethinking Education communication of November 2012 ([1]) announced a series of actions on entrepreneurship education, one of which being the collection of relevant data available in Member States. This report will be a product of the Thematic Working Group on Entrepreneurship Education – composed of the Commission, national governmental experts and other relevant stakeholders — and will be published in early 2014.

It will report on policy-level success factors including educator development, learning outcomes, stakeholder commitment as well as curricula and pedagogies related to entrepreneurship education. The Group has taken an inclusive approach to ensure that its work is relevant to all learners and across all sectors of education and training. While the report will not address special needs education specifically, it will nevertheless be of relevance to it.

The Rethinking Education communication also mentions collaborating with the OECD on a guidance framework for entrepreneurial education institutions. The version addressing higher education is due to be published in November 2013, while the version dealing with schools and vocational education and training will be developed in the course of 2014.

([1]) COM(2012) 669 http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010967/13
a la Comisión
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Acta Europea de Accesibilidad

Por «accesibilidad» se entiende el acceso de las personas con discapacidad, en las mismas condiciones que el resto de la población, al entorno físico, al transporte, a las tecnologías y los sistemas de la información y las comunicaciones (TIC), y a otras instalaciones y servicios.

Desde que en mayo de 2000 se publicara la Comunicación de la Comisión «Hacia una Europa sin barreras para las personas con discapacidad», la accesibilidad universal y el enfoque «diseño para todos» se han convertido en uno de los principales retos de la UE.

El artículo 3 de la Convención de Naciones Unidas sobre los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad reconoce la accesibilidad como uno de sus principios generales.

La accesibilidad es una de las prioridades de la Estrategia 2010-2020.

Hechos como la presentación de la propuesta de Directiva sobre la accesibilidad de los sitios web de los organismos del sector público llevada a cabo por la Comisión Europea, la preparación por parte de la Comisión Europea de un informe sobre los primeros años de aplicación de la Estrategia Europea sobre Discapacidad 2010-2020, así como la publicación de un informe de la Comisión Europea sobre la aplicación de la Directiva 2000/78/CE este mismo año, evidencian un claro avance en el ámbito de la Estrategia Europea sobre Discapacidad 2010-2020.

A la vista de todo lo anterior, ¿podría indicar la Comisión en qué estado se encuentra la publicación del Acta Europea de Accesibilidad y qué fecha tiene prevista para la misma?

¿Considera la Comisión oportuno conceder carácter vinculante a las disposiciones del Acta?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de noviembre de 2013)

La Comisión ha llevado a cabo trabajos preparatorios para evaluar el impacto de las posibles medidas de mejora de la accesibilidad de bienes y servicios en el mercado interior.

Un estudio ha sido contratado para apoyar la recogida de datos socioeconómicos sobre posibles medidas de mejora de la accesibilidad. Los resultados del estudio se han utilizado para la preparación de la mencionada evaluación de impacto.

Con el fin de documentar en mayor medida el proceso, una reunión de alto nivel está prevista para diciembre de 2013 con la vicepresidenta Reding y el vicepresidente Tajani y algunos presidentes de empresas europeas que operan en ámbitos clave de la accesibilidad, principalmente en relación con la construcción, los transportes y las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación.

Las conclusiones de esta reunión servirán de complemento a los trabajos preparatorios de los servicios de la Comisión y permitirán identificar las medidas más adecuadas para mejorar la accesibilidad de bienes y servicios en la Unión Europea. El objetivo es presentar una propuesta de medidas vinculantes que combine tanto la mejora de la accesibilidad como el potencial de crecimiento para las empresas de la UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010967/13
to the Commission
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: European Accessibility Act

'Accessibility' is understood to mean the same conditions of access for people with disabilities as for the rest of the population, with regard to the physical environment, transport, technology, information and communications (ITC) systems and other installations and services.

Accessibility for all and the 'design for all' focus have become key challenges for the EU since the publication in May 2000 of the Commission Communication 'Towards a barrier-free Europe for people with disabilities',

Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognises accessibility as one of its general principles.

Accessibility is one of the priorities of the 2010-2020 Strategy.

The progress made under the 2010-2020 European Disability Strategy is clearly shown by the Commission's presentation of its proposal for a directive on accessibility on the websites of public sector bodies, by its preparation of a report on the first years of implementation of the 2010-2020 European Disability Strategy, and by the publication, this year, of its report on implementation of Directive 2000/78/EC.

In view of the above, could the Commission indicate what stage the publication of the European Accessibility Act has reached, and what is its expected publication date?

Does the Commission think it a good idea to make the Act's provisions binding in nature?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(11 November 2013)

The Commission has carried out preparatory work to assess the impact of possible measures to improve the accessibility of goods and services in the internal market.

A study has been contracted to support the gathering of socio economic data of possible measures to improve accessibility. The outcome of the study has been used for the preparation of the related Impact Assessment.

In order to further inform the process a high level meeting is planned for December 2013 with Vice-Presidents Reding and Tajani and a number of CEOs of European companies active in key areas for accessibility, mainly related to the built environment, transport, and information and communication technologies.

The conclusions of this meeting will complement the preparatory work of the Commission services and would allow the identification of the most appropriate measures for improving the accessibility of goods and services in the European Union. The objective is to present a proposal for binding measures that would combine both, improvement of accessibility and growth potential for EU companies.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010968/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Desequilibrio en la inversión del sector privado en I+D+i en los diferentes Estados miembros — El caso de España

La UE apuesta desde hace años por la investigación y el desarrollo tecnológico como motor para lograr un crecimiento inteligente, sostenible e integrador. La Estrategia de Lisboa en el año 2000, Europa 2020 y el Proyecto Europa 2030 han apostado por que la Unión destine el 3 % de su PIB a I+D+i y que el sector privado financie dos terceras partes de ese gasto. Ese objetivo solo podrá ser alcanzado si los Estados miembros muestran un compromiso firme.

El programa Horizonte 2020 se ocupará, a partir del 1 de enero de 2014 y hasta el 31 de diciembre de 2020, de guiar los pasos de la UE en materia de investigación e innovación. Con este instrumento se persigue aumentar la coordinación de políticas y estimular la investigación en Europa. Impulsar el compromiso político de los Estados miembros debe ser también una prioridad para la Unión. Sus instituciones deben mantenerse alerta y con los medios a su alcance «convencer» a los Estados miembros de lo importante de alcanzar el objetivo económico fijado en materia de I+D+i.

En España la situación es preocupante. Los recortes en el gasto público están dando lugar a la paralización de proyectos y a la «fuga» de cerebros. Los investigadores piden desesperadamente que el Estado dé un paso atrás y aumente de nuevo el gasto público destinado a I+D+i. La situación se ve agravada porque en España es el sector público el que sostiene y financia en gran medida la investigación llevada a cabo tanto por instituciones públicas como privadas. El sector privado no financia las dos terceras partes del gasto en I+D+i como pide Europa, ni se sirve de todos los fondos puestos a su disposición por el sector público para desarrollar nuevos proyectos, como ha quedado patente en el año 2012. Ese esfuerzo empresarial nulo debe ser también contemplado como causa del descalabro del sector de I+D+i en España y de la difícil situación en la que se encuentran sus investigadores.

¿Tiene conocimiento la Comisión de la escasa contribución del sector privado a la financiación del gasto en I+D+i en España? ¿Le parece que la realidad descrita acerca a la UE al éxito en la consecución de su objetivo de gasto en I+D+i contemplado en la Estrategia de Lisboa y Europa 2020? ¿Sabe si esta situación se repite en otros Estados miembros? ¿No le parece imprescindible fomentar el compromiso en los distintos Estados miembros para emprender acciones que multipliquen el esfuerzo empresarial en materia de I+D+i?

Respuesta de la Sra. Geoghegan-Quinn en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de noviembre de 2013)

El informe de resultados en materia de investigación e innovación en los Estados miembros de la UE y los países asociados ([1]) publicado por la Comisión presenta los últimos datos disponibles sobre investigación e innovación, incluidas las inversiones de las empresas en I+D. Durante el período 2000-2011, las empresas españolas aumentaron sus inversiones en I+D de un 0,49 a un 0,70 % del PIB, lo cual, no obstante, sigue estando muy por debajo de la media de la UE del 1,26 % del PIB en 2011. Aunque las empresas españolas duplicaron con creces su gasto en I+D en términos reales durante el período 2000-2008, la crisis económica y los problemas de liquidez han invertido esta tendencia: el gasto de las empresas en I+D alcanzó su valor máximo en términos reales en 2008, pero disminuyó un 6,27 % en 2009 y otro 0,81 % en 2010. Las empresas de los sectores de la alimentación, el automóvil y la construcción aplicaron los recortes más fuertes.

A nivel de la UE, el gasto de las empresas en I+D ha seguido aumentando durante la crisis, hasta alcanzar un nivel del 1,26 % del PIB en 2011 en comparación con el 1,18 % de 2007. Sin embargo, es evidente que si se limita a mantener la actual tendencia, Europa no alcanzará para el año 2020 el objetivo de intensidad en I+D (pública y privada) del 3 % establecido en la estrategia Europa 2020. Por este motivo, en su Estudio Prospectivo Anual sobre el Crecimiento ([2]), la Comisión hizo hincapié en la necesidad de redoblar esfuerzos y mejorar las condiciones marco a nivel nacional con el fin de aumentar los niveles de inversión privada en I+D y de impulsar la innovación, y muchos países así lo hacen, por ejemplo, mediante el uso de incentivos fiscales y de los Fondos Estructurales. En el marco del Semestre Europeo, la Comisión seguirá supervisando los esfuerzos realizados por los Estados miembros en este sentido y dirigiéndoles recomendaciones según convenga.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/state-of-the-union/2012/innovation_union_progress_at_country_level_2013.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/annual-growth-surveys/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010968/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Imbalance in private sector investment in R+D+i in the various Member States — The situation in Spain

For years, the EU has favoured research and technological development as an engine of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The Lisbon strategy in 2000, EU 2020 and Project Europe 2030 have aimed for the EU to allocate 3% of its GDP to R+D+i, and for the private sector to fund two-thirds of that spending. That objective can only be achieved if the Member States demonstrate a firm commitment.

Beginning on 1 January 2014 and continuing until 31 December 2020, the Horizon 2020 initiative will aim to guide the EU's actions in regard to research and innovation. This initiative seeks to increase policy coordination and stimulate research in Europe. Encouraging the political commitment of the Member States must also be a priority for the EU. Its institutions must remain alert and be prepared to 'convince' Member States of the importance of achieving the economic target for R+D+i.

In Spain, the situation is worrisome. Cuts in public spending are resulting in projects being halted, as well as a brain 'drain'. Researchers are desperately asking the State to take a step back and again increase public spending allocated to R+D+i. The situation is worsened by the fact that in Spain, the public sector largely sustains and funds the research conducted by both public and private institutions. The private sector does not fund two-thirds of R+D+i spending, as Europe asks it to do. It does not even make use of all of the funds that the public sector places at its disposal to develop new projects, as was made evident in 2012. This lack of enterprise effort must be considered as an additional cause of the chaos in the R+D+i sector in Spain and the difficult situation in which Spanish researchers find themselves.

Is the Commission aware of the private sector's paltry contribution to the funding of R+D+i spending in Spain? Does it think that this state of affairs brings the EU closer to achieving its R+D+i spending target established in the Lisbon strategy and EU 2020? Does it know whether this situation also exists in other Member States? Does it not think it essential to encourage the various Member States' commitment to undertake actions that multiply enterprise effort in regard to R+D+i?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(13 November 2013)

The Commission report 'Research and Innovation performance in EU Member States and Associated countries' ([1]) presents the latest available data on research and innovation including business investment in R&D. Over the period 2000-2011, Spanish enterprises increased their R&D investment from 0.49% to 0.70% of GDP, which, however, remains significantly below the EU average of 1.26% of GDP in 2011. While Spanish firms more than doubled their R&D expenditure in real terms over the period 2000-2008, the economic crisis and liquidity constraints have reversed this trend: business R&D expenditure reached a peak in real terms in 2008 but fell by 6.27% in 2009 and by another 0.81% in 2010. Firms in the food, automobiles and construction sectors made the strongest cuts.

At the level of the EU, business expenditure on R&D has continued to increase during the crisis, reaching a level of 1.26% of GDP in 2011 compared to 1.18% in 2007. However, it is clear that by merely continuing the current trend Europe will not reach by 2020 the Europe 2020 R&D (public and private) intensity target of 3%. This is why, in its Annual Growth Survey, ([2]) the Commission stressed the need to intensify efforts and to improve framework conditions at the national level to raise levels of private R&D investment and to drive innovation and many countries do so, for instance through the use of fiscal incentives and the Structural Funds. In the context of the European Semester, the Commission will continue to monitor the efforts the Member States make in this direction and to propose recommendations to them as appropriate.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/state-of-the-union/2012/innovation_union_progress_at_country_level_2013.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/annual-growth-surveys/index_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010969/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Sostenibilidad económica de algunos proyectos de estaciones de AVE en Zamora, una de ellas en un pueblo de 28 habitantes — orientaciones RTE-T y artículo 4, apartado 1, del Reglamento (UE) n° 473/2013

El Ministerio de Fomento planea dos estaciones de AVE en Zamora, una de ellas en un pueblo de 28 habitantes. El Ministerio de Ana Pastor estudia ahora la viabilidad de la terminal de alta velocidad diseñada para la minúscula pedanía de Otero de Sanabria, prevista desde 2009. En la zona de Sanabria se han suprimido líneas con trenes que circulaban sin viajeros ([1]).

Según la redacción del trazado del futuro AVE Madrid-Galicia, la provincia de Zamora (190 000 habitantes) contará con dos estaciones de alta velocidad. Una, prevista para 2012 y todavía sin abrir, estará en la capital zamorana (65 000 habitantes). La otra se pensó para 2014 en un lugar más furtivo aún, el municipio de 28 habitantes de Otero de Sanabria. El Ministerio acaba de pedir un estudio de viabilidad de una siempre costosísima estación en la pedanía minúscula de la comarca sanabresa (menos de 7 000 habitantes).

El articulo 4, apartado, 1 del Reglamento (EU) n° 473/2013 afirma que «[…] Los planes fiscales nacionales a medio plazo o los programas nacionales de reforma incluirán indicaciones sobre el rendimiento económico esperado de los proyectos de inversiones públicas fuera del ámbito de la defensa que tengan importantes repercusiones presupuestarias […]».

¿Tiene la Comisión conocimiento de estos proyectos de AVE?

¿Considera la Comisión que el dispendio dedicado a la alta velocidad en España, en particular estos últimos proyectos de estación de AVE, respetan las nuevas normas RTE-T y el principio de coste-beneficio?

¿Ha recibido la Comisión un estudio sobre los retornos económicos de esta infraestructura y, en particular, se han implicado fondos de financiación europeos?

¿No cree la Comisión que el gasto de partida no está de acuerdo con los objetivos ligados al protocolo de déficit excesivo?

Respuesta del Sr. Kallas en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de noviembre de 2013)

La Comisión es consciente de la red ferroviaria existente y planificada en España, una parte importante de la cual está diseñada para la alta velocidad, incluida la línea que une Madrid-Valladolid con Galicia a través de Zamora.

La Comisión reconoce que la red de alta velocidad actual en España es muy amplia y ambiciosa, aunque los costes unitarios en ella están bastante por debajo de la media de la UE.

Es preciso evaluar el valor que tienen los proyectos ferroviarios compatibles con la alta velocidad de la península Ibérica para proporcionar interoperabilidad en términos del ancho UIC y del sistema de señalización y control ERTMS; teniendo presente lo anterior, una parte de estas líneas se utilizarán para el transporte ferroviario de carga y pasajeros, en una combinación de alta velocidad y ferrocarril convencional.

La Comisión no dispone de los datos relativos a las estaciones de ferrocarril en Zamora, para las que no se ha proporcionado financiación de la RTE-T y, por lo tanto, no puede emitir un dictamen detallado sobre su coherencia con la estabilidad macroeconómica.

Sobre la citada línea de Galicia, no obstante, vale la pena señalar que, recientemente, el Ministro español de Fomento anunció una revisión del proyecto, que incluía una significativa reducción de costes.

([1]) http://vozpopuli.com/economia-y-finanzas/32152-fomento-planea-dos-estaciones-de-ave-en-zamora-una-en-un-pueblo-de-28-habitantes

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010969/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Economic sustainability of some high-speed train (HST) station projects in Zamora, one in a town of 28 residents — Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) guidelines and Article 4(1) of Regulation (EU) No 473/2013

The Ministry of Public Works is planning two HST stations in Zamora, one in a town of 28 residents. The Ministry, headed by Ana Pastor, is currently studying the feasibility of the high-speed train station intended for the tiny hamlet of Otero de Sanabria, planned since 2009. Around Sanabria, train lines that were running without passengers have been eliminated ([1]).

According to the planned design of the future Madrid-Galicia HST route, the province of Zamora (with a population of 190 000) will have two high-speed train stations. One, planned for 2012 but not yet opened, will be in Zamora's capital (with a population of 65 000). The other is planned for 2014 in an even more remote location — the town of 28 residents, Otero de Sanabria. The Ministry has just requested a feasibility study of the station, which is sure to be extremely expensive, in the tiny hamlet in the Sanabrian region (with a population of less than 7 000).

Article 4(1) of Regulation (EU) No 473/2013 states that '[…] national medium-term fiscal plans or national reform programmes shall include indications on the expected economic returns on non-defence public investment projects that have a significant budgetary impact.[…]'.

Is the Commission aware of these HST projects?

Does the Commission take the view that the excessive sums spent on high speed in Spain, particularly these latest HST station projects, respect the new TEN-T guidelines and the cost-benefit principle?

Has the Commission received a study on the economic returns of this infrastructure and, in particular, have EU funds been involved?

Does the Commission not believe that the spending is *prima facie* in discord with the objectives related to the protocol on the excessive deficit procedure?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(4 November 2013)

The Commisison is aware of the existing and planned rail network in Spain, a large part of which is designed for high-speed, including the line connecting Madrid-Valladolid to Galicia via Zamora.

The Commission acknowledges that the current high-speed network in Spain is very wide and ambitious, although unit costs in Spain are considerably lower than the EU average.

Railway projects compatible with high-speed in the Iberian peninsula have to be assessed for their value in bringing about interoperability in terms of UIC gauge and ERTMS signalling and control system; bearing that in mind, part of these lines will be used for freight and passenger rail transport, combining high speed and conventional rail.

The Commission does not dispose of the detail concerning railway stations in Zamora, for which no TEN-T funding has been provided, and therefore cannot express a detailed opinion on its consistency with macroeconomic stability.

Concerning the abovementioned line to Galicia, however, it is worth pointing out that recently a project revision including a significant cost reduction has been announced by the Spanish Minister for Fomento.

([1]) http://vozpopuli.com/economia-y-finanzas/32152-fomento-planea-dos-estaciones-de-ave-en-zamora-una-en-un-pueblo-de-28-habitantes

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010970/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Asesinato fascista en Grecia

La Unión Europea defiende valores democráticos que se extienden al conjunto de su territorio, valores comunes en el marco del cumplimiento del acervo de la Unión y del respeto a los derechos fundamentales.

Desgraciadamente, acontecimientos como el asesinato del joven artista Pavlos Fyssas en Grecia, a manos de miembros del partido fascista y ultraderechista Amanecer Dorado, empañan la democracia, la paz y el respeto a la vida.

Grecia, en su compleja situación económica y social, sufre la existencia de esa organización política que, a juicio de los partidos políticos que represento, contraviene el respeto a la democracia. Por eso, la Comisión Europea debe solicitar a Grecia la ilegalización inmediata de la organización fascista Amanecer Dorado, por incitación a la violencia y a la comisión de delitos contra la vida humana, contra la pluralidad y contra el respeto de los derechos. La Comisaria Reding declaraba hace unas semanas que la Unión Europea no sería cómplice de que en sus fronteras existieran organizaciones que inciten al fascismo o al nazismo.

Por ello, en el respeto de los valores del Estado de Derecho y de la democracia, el Ejecutivo de la Unión debe instar a que se prohíba esa organización fascista.

¿Conoce la Comisión el asesinato del artista Pavlos Fyssas?

Teniendo en cuenta las declaraciones de la Comisaria Reding, ¿va a tomar la Comisión alguna iniciativa al respecto?

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

La Comisión se remite a su declaración del 9 de octubre de 2013 ante el Parlamento Europeo sobre el aumento del extremismo de derechas en Europa.

La Comisión es consciente del hecho de que un joven músico, Pavlos Fyssas, fue asesinado en las calles en Grecia. La Comisión condena toda forma y manifestación de racismo y xenofobia, independientemente de su procedencia, ya que estos fenómenos son incompatibles con los valores y principios en los que se basa la Unión Europea.

La Comisión no escatima esfuerzos, dentro de los límites de sus competencias, para garantizar que la legislación de la Unión se ajuste plenamente a la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea.

Con arreglo al artículo 51, apartado 1, de dicha Carta, sus disposiciones están dirigidas a los Estados miembros únicamente cuando estos apliquen el Derecho de la Unión. El marco jurídico de la organización de los partidos políticos nacionales no es un asunto que se aborde en el ámbito de la UE.

La Decisión Marco 2008/913/JAI(1) del Consejo obliga a todos los Estados miembros a prohibir 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. Los Estados miembros deberán garantizar que las personas jurídicas son responsables de dichas conductas. La Comisión supervisa actualmente las medidas de aplicación de los Estados miembros y elaborará un informe al respecto en los próximos meses.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010970/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Fascist assassination in Greece

The European Union defends democratic values which extend to the entire territory of the Union, common values within the framework of the implementation of the Union *acquis* and the respect for fundamental rights.

Unfortunately, events such as the murder of the young artist Pavlos Fyssas in Greece, killed by members of the fascist far-right party Golden Dawn, tarnish democracy, peace and the respect for human life.

Greece, with its complicated economic and social situation, is negatively affected by the existence of this organisation which, in the opinion of the political parties that I represent, contravenes the respect for democracy. For this reason, the Commission should ask Greece to immediately outlaw the fascist organisation Golden Dawn for incitement to violence and crimes committed against human life, plurality and the respect for human rights. A few weeks ago Commissioner Reding said that the European Union would not be complicit in the existence of organisations within its borders which incite fascism or Nazism.

On this basis, in respect for the rule of law and democracy, the Union's Executive should require that this fascist organisation be outlawed.

Is the Commission aware of the murder of the artist Pavlos Fyssas?

Taking into account the statements made by Commissioner Reding, will the Commission take any initiative with regard to this?

Answer given by Ms Reding on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The Commission refers to its statement of 9 October 2013 to the European Parliament about the rise of right-wing extremism in Europe.

The Commission is aware of the fact that a young musician, Pavlos Fyssas, was killed in the street in Greece. The Commission strongly condemns all forms and manifestations of racism and xenophobia, regardless from whom they come, as they are incompatible with the values and principles on which the European Union is founded.

The Commission is fully committed within the boundaries of its competences to ensure that Union legislation fully complies with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

According to its Article 51(1), the provisions of the Charter are addressed to the Member States only when they are implementing Union law. The legal framework for the organisation of national political parties is not a matter dealt with at EU level.

Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA(1) obliges all Member States to make punishable the intentional public incitement to violence or hatred targeted against a group of people or a member of such ground defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent, or ethnic or national origin. Member States must ensure that also legal persons are liable for such conduct. The Commission is currently monitoring Member State's implementing measures and will draw up a report on this issue in the coming months.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-010971/13
til Kommissionen
Søren Bo Søndergaard (GUE/NGL)
(26. september 2013)

Om: ILO's underkendelse af dens venske Laval-lov

I forlængelse af Kommissionens besvarelse P-006104/2013 ang ILO's underkendelse af den svenske Laval-lov bedes Kommissionen oplyse følgende:

1. I sin udtalelse gør ILO opmærksom på, at der ikke kan stilles krav om, at arbejdsmarkedets parter skal inddrage og vægte hensynet til retten til fri bevægelighed for tjenesteydelser i forbindelse med en proportionalitetsbedømmelse af de i øvrigt lovligt iværksatte kollektive kampskridt. Retten til at iværksætte kollektive kampskridt er en grundlæggende rettighed. Kommissionen bedes derfor venligst oplyse, hvor i fællesskabslovgivningen det fremgår, at når konfliktretten kolliderer med retten til fri bevægelighed for tjenesteydelser, skal det vurderes, om der tale om en restriktion for den fri bevægelighed?

2. Hvoraf fremgår det, at der i så fald skal foretages en proportionalitetsbedømmelse af de i øvrigt lovligt iværksatte kampskridt?

3. Hvordan forholder Kommissionen sig til ILO's kritik af, at EU stiller krav om inddragelse af retten til fri bevægelighed i forbindelse med en proportionalitetsbedømmelse af de i øvrigt lovligt iværksatte kollektive kampskridt?

4. Hvordan forholder Kommissionen sig til ILO's kritik af, at udstationeringsdirektivets artikel 3 reelt forhindrer de faglige organisationer i at varetage medlemmernes rettigheder og interesser fuldt ud? Det drejer sig både om forhandling af mere fordelagtige løn- og arbejdsvilkår end, hvad der følger af direktivet og den lovgivning, der implementerer direktivet (minimumvilkår), og om repræsentationen af udenlandske udstationerede medarbejdere (medlemmer).

5. Hvordan vil Kommissionen sikre, at udstationeringsdirektivet ikke forhindrer de faglige organisationer i at iværksætte lovlige kollektive kampskridt i forbindelse med varetagelsen af deres medlemmers interesser?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af László Andor
(19. november 2013)

Ifølge Domstolens praksis ([1]) kan det blive nødvendigt at forene udøvelsen af retten til at iværksætte kollektive skridt med kravene og rettighederne forbundet med de økonomiske friheder nedfældet i traktaten i overensstemmelse med proportionalitetsprincippet.

Endvidere bør det bemærkes, at inklusion af såkaldte »Monti-klausuler« i afledt ret ([2]), forudsat at sidstnævnte ikke på nogen måde påvirker udøvelsen af de grundlæggende rettigheder, herunder retten eller friheden til at strejke eller iværksætte kollektive skridt, sikrer, at fagforeninger ikke forhindres i at iværksætte faglige aktioner med henblik på at beskytte deres medlemmers interesser i overensstemmelse med national lovgivning og praksis, forudsat at den gældende EU-lovgivning respekteres.

Hvad angår de bekymringer ILO's Komité for Gennemførelse af Konventioner og Henstillinger har givet udtryk for, afholder Kommissionen sig fra at afgive en detaljeret udtalelse, indtil den svenske regering har imødekommet komitéens anmodning om at vurdere sagen i samarbejde med arbejdsmarkedets parter.

([1]) Domme af 11.12.2007 i sag C-438/05, Viking Line (præmis 46), af 18.12.2007 i sag C-341/05, Laval (præmis 94), og af 15.7.2010 i sag C-271/08, Kommissionen mod Forbundsrepublikken Tyskland (præmis 44). Jf. forslag til afgørelse fra generaladvokat Cruz Villalón i sag C-515/08, dos Santos Palhota m.fl. (præmis 53). Jf. forslag til Rådets forordning om udøvelse af retten til kollektive skridt inden for rammerne af etableringsfriheden og den frie udveksling af tjenesteydelser (KOM(2012) 130 final af 21.3.2012).

([2]) Jf. f.eks. artikel 2 i Rådets forordning nr. 2679/98 af 7. december 1998 om det indre markeds funktion med hensyn til fri bevægelighed for varer mellem medlemsstaterne (EFT L 337/8 af 12.12.98), artikel 1, stk. 7, i direktiv 2006/123 (»tjenesteydelsesdirektivet«) (EUT L 376/36 af 27.12.2006) og artikel 1, stk. 3, sidste punktum, i forordning (EU) nr. 1176/2011 af 16. november 2011 om forebyggelse og korrektion af makroøkonomiske ubalancer (EUT L 306/25 af 23.11.2011). Jf. betragtning 22 i direktiv 96/71/EF om udstationering af arbejdstagere som led i udveksling af tjenesteydelser samt artikel 1, stk. 2, i forslaget til et direktiv om håndhævelse af direktiv 96/71/EF (KOM(2012) 131 final af 21.3.2013).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010971/13
to the Commission
Søren Bo Søndergaard (GUE/NGL)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: ILO finding concerning the incompatibility of the Swedish Laval legislation

Further to the Commission's answer P-006104/2013 regarding the ILO's finding concerning the incompatibility of the Swedish Laval legislation with its conventions, could the Commission provide the following information:

1. In its opinion, the ILO notes that the social partners cannot be required to include and weigh up the interests of the right to free movement of services when assessing the proportionality of otherwise lawfully initiated industrial action. The right to initiate industrial action is a fundamental right. Therefore, can the Commission say where in Community legislation it states that when the law relating to industrial disputes conflicts with the right to free movement of services, it must be assessed whether free movement is being restricted?

2. Where does it state that, in this case, an assessment of the proportionality of the otherwise lawfully initiated industrial action shall be carried out?

3. What is the Commission's position with regard to the ILO's criticism of the fact that the EU requires the right to free movement to be included in an assessment of the proportionality of otherwise lawfully initiated industrial action?

4. What is its view of the ILO's criticism that Article 3 of the Posting of Workers Directive actually prevents trade associations from fully protecting their members' rights and interests? This includes both the negotiation of more favourable rates of pay and working conditions than those specified in the directive and the legislation implementing the directive (minimum conditions) and the representation of foreign posted workers (members).

5. How will the Commission ensure that the Posting of Workers Directive does not prevent trade associations from initiating lawful industrial action in connection with the protection of their members' interests?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

According to the case law of the Court of Justice ([1]) the exercise of the right to take collective action may have to be reconciled with the requirements and rights relating to the economic freedoms enshrined in the Treaty in accordance with the principle of proportionality.

Furthermore, it should be recalled that the inclusion of so called 'Monti clauses' in secondary legislation ([2]) providing that the latter shall not affect in any way the exercise of fundamental rights, including the right or freedom to strike or take collective action, ensure that trade unions are not prevented from initiating industrial action in view of the protection of their members' interests in accordance with national law and practices, provided prevailing Union law obligations are respected.

With respect to the concerns expressed by the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Convention and Recommendations, the Commission refrains from commenting in detail pending the Committee's request to the Swedish Government for reviewing the matter with the social partners.

([1]) Judgments of 11.12.2007, Case C-438/05, Viking-Line (point 46), of 18.12.2007, Case C-341/05, Laval (point 94) and of 15.7.2010, Case C-271/08, Commission v Germany (point 44). Cf. Opinion AG Cruz Villalon, Case C-515/08, dos Santos Palhota e.a. (point 53). See also the proposal for a Council Regulation on the exercise of the right to take collective action within the context of the freedom of establishment and the freedom to provide services, COM(2012) 130 final, 21.3.2012.

([2]) See for instance Article 2 of Council Regulation No 2679/98 of 7 December 1998 on the functioning of the internal market in relation to the free movement of goods among Member States, OJ L337/8, 12.12.98, Article 1(7) of Directive 2006/123 ('Services Directive'), OJ L 376/36, 27.12.2006 and Article 1(3), last sentence, Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011 of 16 November 2011 on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances, OJ L 306/25 of 23.11.2011. Cf. Recital 22 of Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services, as well as Article 1 (2) of the proposal for a directive on the enforcement of Directive 96/71/EC, COM(2012) 131 final, 21.3.2013.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010973/13
an die Kommission
Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(26. September 2013)

Betrifft: Ausbeutung von Arbeitnehmern der Firma Foxconn in der Tschechischen Republik

Die Zuliefererfirma Foxconn geriet durch ihre menschenunwürdigen Arbeitsbedingungen in ihren Produktionsstätten in China weltweit unter massive Kritik. Der Apple-Zulieferer gilt seitdem als Beispiel für moderne Sklavenarbeit. Neueste Berichte zeigen nun, dass dieses Ausbeutungssystem nicht nur in Asien, sondern auch in Europa um sich greift.

Im tschechischen Pardubice stellt Foxconn Computer für HP her. Um die Produktion möglichst profitabel zu gestalten, herrscht ein extrem hoher Arbeitsdruck bei geringer Bezahlung. Die Arbeitszeit ist derart getaktet, dass die Beschäftigten weder miteinander sprechen noch trinken oder sitzen können. An der Montagelinie selbst arbeiten Wanderarbeitnehmer aus ärmeren Drittländern wie Vietnam, aber auch aus EU-Mitgliedstaaten wie Bulgarien oder Rumänien Tag und Nacht in 12-Stunden-Schichten.

Laut einem in Deutschland veröffentlichten Artikel könnten Arbeiter durch Boni und Überstunden maximal bis zu 550 EUR im Monat verdienen. Allerdings dient selbst dieses Bonussystem nur der Kontrolle und Disziplinierung der Belegschaft. Bei einzelnen Fehlern oder Nichterreichen der vorgegebenen Stückzahlen bekommen alle Arbeiter einer Montagelinie den vermeintlichen Bonus abgezogen. Noch dramatischer steht es um sogenannte „Just-in-Time-Arbeitskräfte", welche über Subunternehmer eingestellt sind. Diese unterlaufen viele tschechische Bestimmungen und nutzen Gesetzeslücken aus, durch die die Entlohnung auf 120 EUR im Monat herabgesenkt wird.

1. Ist der Kommission dieses Problem bekannt?

2. Welche konkreten Maßnahmen gedenkt die Kommission zu ergreifen, um diese katastrophalen Arbeitsverhältnisse auf europäischer Ebene zu bekämpfen?

3. Welche Maßnahmen wird die Kommission ergreifen, um kurz- und langfristig die Einhaltung von sozialen und arbeitsrechtlichen Mindeststandards auf nationaler Ebene sicherzustellen?

4. Erwägt die Kommission, bei Sozial- und Lohndumping von Unternehmen Strafzahlungen einzuführen, wie es sie bereits bei Kartellverstößen gibt?

5. Was gedenkt die Kommission zu unternehmen, um die Rechte von Arbeitnehmern aus Drittländern stärker zu schützen?

Antwort von Herrn Andor im Namen der Kommission
(25. November 2013)

1. Der Kommission liegen bisher keine Informationen hierzu vor.

2.,3.,5. Die EU-Vorschriften zum Arbeitsrecht enthalten gemeinsame Mindeststandards für die Arbeitsbedingungen. Diese Standards durchzusetzen ist Aufgabe der Mitgliedstaaten. Staatsangehörigen von Drittstaaten, die ihren rechtmäßigen Wohnsitz in einem EU-Mitgliedstaat haben, wird in bestimmten Bereichen die gleiche Behandlung zuteil wie EU-Bürgern, dazu gehören Entlohnung, Kündigungsschutz sowie Gesundheitsschutz und Sicherheit am Arbeitsplatz.

Nach der Arbeitszeitrichtlinie ([1]) haben alle Arbeitnehmer ungeachtet ihrer Staatsangehörigkeit Anspruch auf Ruhezeiten von mindestens 11 je 24 Stunden, auf eine Pause, sofern der Arbeitstag länger als sechs Stunden dauert, und auf eine Begrenzung der wöchentlichen Arbeitszeit (durchschnittlich höchstens 48 Stunden) ([2]). Nachtarbeit darf nicht länger als durchschnittlich 8 Stunden pro Nacht dauern, doch sind hier Ausnahmen möglich.

Die Kommission erwartet außerdem von allen Unternehmen mit Sitz in der EU, dass sie sich an die Bestimmungen der internationalen Leitlinien für die soziale Verantwortung von Unternehmen ([3]) halten.

([1]) Richtlinie 2003/88/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 4. November 2003 über bestimmte Aspekte der Arbeitszeitgestaltung, ABl. L 299 vom 18.11.2003.

([2]) Nach den der Kommission vorliegenden Informationen lässt die Tschechische Republik die Opt-out-Möglichkeit gemäß Artikel 22 Absatz 1 der Arbeitszeitrichtlinie nicht zu, außer bei 24-stündigen Gesundheitsversorgungs- und Rettungsdiensten.

([3]) Beispielsweise die Trilaterale Grundsatzerklärung der ILO zu multinationalen Unternehmen und zur Sozialpolitik, die VN-Leitprinzipien für Wirtschaft und Menschenrechte, die Initiative „Global Compact" der Vereinten Nationen, ISO 2600 und die OECD-Leitsätze für multinationale

4. Vorschriften für die Entlohnung liegen in der Zuständigkeit der Mitgliedstaaten, nicht aber der EU. Das EU-Recht verbietet Lohndiskriminierung aufgrund der Staatsangehörigkeit und schreibt vor, dass entsandte Arbeitnehmer die Mindestlohnsätze (einschließlich Überstundenvergütung) erhalten, die in den Mitgliedstaaten gelten, in welchen die Arbeit durchgeführt wird ([4]).

Außerdem hat die Kommission eine Richtlinie vorgeschlagen ([5]), mit der die Durchsetzung der Richtlinie über die Entsendung von Arbeitnehmern ([6]) verbessert werden soll, um unter anderem die Umgehung von Vorschriften zu bekämpfen. Darin wird beispielsweise die Problematik der „Briefkastenfirmen" angegangen und ein begrenztes System gesamtschuldnerischer Haftung eingeführt. Darüber hinaus hat die Kommission eine Richtlinie ([7]) vorgeschlagen, mit der die Durchsetzung der Rechte von Wanderarbeitnehmern in der EU verbessert werden soll. Danach müssten die Mitgliedstaaten diese Arbeitnehmer über ihre Rechte in Kenntnis setzen und ihnen helfen, diese durchzusetzen. Beide Vorschläge werden derzeit im Europäischen Parlament und im Rat erörtert.

Unternehmen.

([4]) Richtlinie 96/71/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 16. Dezember 1996 über die Entsendung von Arbeitnehmern im Rahmen der Erbringung von Dienstleistungen, ABl. L 18 vom 21.1.1997.

([5]) Vorschlag für eine Richtlinie des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates zur Durchsetzung der Richtlinie 96/71/EG über die Entsendung von Arbeitnehmern im Rahmen der Erbringung von Dienstleistungen (KOM(2012)131 endg. vom 21. März 2012).

([6]) Richtlinie 96/71/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 16. Dezember 1996 über die Entsendung von Arbeitnehmern im Rahmen der Erbringung von Dienstleistungen, ABl. L 18 vom 21.1.1997.

([7]) Vorschlag für eine Richtlinie des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates über Maßnahmen zur Erleichterung der Ausübung der Rechte, die Arbeitnehmern im Rahmen der Freizügigkeit zustehen (KOM(2013)236 endg. vom 26. April 2013).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010973/13
to the Commission
Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Exploitation of workers in the company Foxconn in the Czech Republic

The component manufacturer Foxconn has come under substantial criticism around the world as a result of the inhumane working conditions at its production sites in China. The Apple supplier is now seen as an example of modern-day slavery. The latest reports now show that this system of exploitation is not only found in Asia, but is also spreading through Europe.

In Pardubice in the Czech Republic, Foxconn produces computers for HP. In order to make the production as profitable as possible, there is an extremely high productivity pressure and low pay. The working hours are timed in such a way that the workers are not able to speak to each other or drink or sit together. On the assembly line itself, migrant workers from poorer third countries such as Vietnam, but also from EU Member States like Bulgaria or Romania, work 12-hour shifts night and day.

According to an article published in Germany, workers can earn up to a maximum of EUR 550 per month from bonuses and overtime. However, this bonus system itself serves only to control and discipline the workforce. In the event of individual errors or the failure to achieve the specified number of units, all workers on an assembly line have their putative bonus deducted. The situation is even more dramatic with regard to so-called 'just-in-time' workers, which are employed via subcontractors. These subcontractors circumvent many Czech regulations and exploit legal loopholes to reduce wages to EUR 120 per month.

1. Is the Commission aware of this problem?

2. What specific measures does it intend to take to tackle these horrendous working conditions at European level?

3. What steps will it take in order to ensure compliance in the short and long term with minimum social and labour standards at national level?

4. Is it considering introducing penalties for social and wage dumping by companies, like those already in place for anti-trust violations?

5. What does it intend to do to better protect the rights of workers from third countries?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

1. The Commission has not received any information about this case so far.

2, 3, and 5. EU labour law lays down minimum common standards regarding working conditions. Enforcing those standards is the responsibility of the Member States (MS). Third-country nationals legally residing in an EU MS are granted treatment equal with that of EU nationals in certain matters, including pay, dismissal and health and safety at work.

Under the Working Time Directive ([1]), all workers, irrespective of nationality, are entitled to at least 11 hours rest per 24 hours, to a break once the working day exceeds six hours, and to a limit to weekly working time (maximum 48 hours on average) ([2]). Night workers should not work more than 8 hours per night on average, although derogations are possible.

The Commission also expects all companies with a base in the EU to abide by international corporate social responsibility (CSR) guidelines ([3]).

([1]) Directive 2003/88/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 November 2003 concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time, OJ L 299, 18.11.2003.

([2]) According to the information available to the Commission services, CZ does not allow use of the 'opt-out' under Article 22.1 of the Working Time Directive, except within 24-hour healthcare and rescue services.

([3]) For example, the ILO Tripartite Declaration on Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, the UN Guiding Principles on business and human rights, the UN Global Compact, ISO 2600 and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

4. Regulation of rates of pay is in the competence of MS, not the EU. EC law prohibits pay discrimination based on nationality and requires that posted workers receive the minimum rates of pay (including overtime rates) applicable in the MS where the work is carried out ([4]).

The Commission has also proposed ([5]) a directive to improve the enforcement of the Posting of Workers Directive ([6]), *inter alia* to combat circumventions of the rules, for example by addressing the issue of 'letter-box companies' and by introducing a limited system of joint and several liability. The Commission has also proposed a directive ([7]) to improve enforcement of EU migrant workers' rights, which would require MS to inform such workers about their rights and help them to assert them. Both proposals are currently being considered by the Parliament and Council.

([4]) 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 18, 21.1.1997.

([5]) Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the enforcement of Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of service (COM(2012) 131 final of 21 March 2012).

([6]) 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 18, 21.1.1997.

([7]) Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers in the context of freedom of movement for workers (COM(2013) 236 final of 26 April 2013).

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010975/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(26 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Αξιοποίηση κοιτασμάτων υδρογονανθράκων εντός της κυπριακής ΑΟΖ

Οι έρευνες που διεξάγονται εντός της κυπριακής ΑΟΖ έχουν ήδη καταδείξει ότι υπάρχουν μεγάλα αποθέματα υδρογονανθράκων, τα οποία ενδέχεται να επαρκούν για την ενεργειακή αυτάρκεια και απεξάρτηση της ΕΕ από μη ευρωπαϊκές πηγές τροφοδότησης. Σύμφωνα με εκτιμήσεις του Προέδρου της Κρατικής Εταιρείας Υδρογονανθράκων Κύπρου (ΚΡΕΤΥΚ), τα αποθέματα φυσικού αερίου στην κυπριακή ΑΟΖ κυμαίνονται γύρω στα 40 τρις κυβικά πόδια, ενώ υπάρχουν και πολύ καλές ενδείξεις για την ύπαρξη σημαντικών κοιτασμάτων πετρελαίου.

Ερωτάται η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή:

1. Λαμβάνονται, και σε ποιο βαθμό, υπόψη τα κυπριακά αποθέματα στον μακροχρόνιο στρατηγικό σχεδιασμό των ευρωπαϊκών πολιτικών για την ενεργειακή ασφάλεια και επάρκεια;

2. Τι μπορεί και τι προτίθεται να πράξει για την προστασία των ευρωπαϊκών αυτών κοιτασμάτων από την απειλή μη ευρωπαϊκών κρατών, όπως π.χ. της Τουρκίας, που αμφισβητούν το νόμιμο δικαίωμα της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας να αξιοποιήσει τον ορυκτό πλούτο εντός της ΑΟΖ της;

3. Έχει η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση τρόπους να βοηθήσει την Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία στη χρηματοδότηση των τεράστιων επενδύσεων που πρέπει να γίνουν για την ανόρυξη και διάθεση των κοιτασμάτων αυτών στην ευρωπαϊκή αγορά, δεδομένης μάλιστα και της σοβαρής οικονομικής κρίσης που μαστίζει τη χώρα;

Απάντηση του κ. Oettinger εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(9 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Τα υπεράκτια αποθέματα υδρογονανθράκων νοτίως της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας μπορούν να συμβάλουν στη διαφοροποίηση του ενεργειακού εφοδιασμού της ΕΕ. Ωστόσο, για να εκτιμηθεί ο πιθανός αντίκτυπος των εν λόγω αποθεμάτων στην ασφάλεια του ενεργειακού εφοδιασμού της Ένωσης απαιτείται εύλογη εκτίμηση των αποθεμάτων που μπορούν να αξιοποιηθούν με εμπορικά αποδοτικό τρόπο.

Η θέση της ΕΕ όσον αφορά τις διμερείς σχέσεις μεταξύ της Δημοκρατίας της Κύπρου και της Τουρκίας στο πλαίσιο της αναζήτησης υδρογονανθράκων αναφέρεται στην απάντηση της Επιτροπής σε προηγούμενες ερωτήσεις ([1]).

Οι δραστηριότητες εξερεύνησης και εξόρυξης/παραγωγής υδρογονανθράκων, καθώς και η εξαγωγική δραστηριότητα προς την ΕΕ και άλλες περιοχές του κόσμου θα βασιστεί κατά μεγάλο μέρος στις ιδιωτικές επενδύσεις. Πράγματι, διάφορες διεθνείς εταιρίες πετρελαιοειδών και φυσικού αερίου έχουν ήδη αποκτήσει άδειες και επενδύουν σε δραστηριότητες εξερεύνησης και εξαγωγών.

Η κυπριακή κυβέρνηση εξετάζει διάφορες επιλογές για τις εξαγωγές φυσικού αερίου ([2]), καθώς και τρόπους για τη χρηματοδότησή τους ([3]). Εν προκειμένω πρέπει να εξεταστούν και να αξιολογηθούν όλες οι εφικτές επιλογές, τόσο από πλευράς ενεργειακής ασφάλειας, όσο και από πλευράς σχετικού οικονομικού κόστους και οφέλους.

Μία εξαγωγική δυνατότητα για φυσικό αέριο περιλαμβάνεται στον πρόσφατα εγκεκριμένο κατάλογο έργων κοινού ενδιαφέροντος που προβλέπει ο κανονισμός (ΕΕ) αριθ. 347/2013 σχετικά με τις κατευθυντήριες γραμμές για τις διευρωπαϊκές ενεργειακές υποδομές ([4]). Κατ' αυτόν τον τρόπο παρέχονται δυνατότητες συγχρηματοδότησης με χρηματοδοτική βοήθεια της ΕΕ στο πλαίσιο της διευκόλυνσης «Συνδέοντας την Ευρώπη», υπό την προϋπόθεση συμμόρφωσης με τους όρους που περιγράφονται στον κανονισμό. Η Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία έχει επίσης τη δυνατότητα να ζητήσει στήριξη από την ΕΤΕπ.

([1]) Γραπτές ερωτήσεις E-007674/2013 και E-001320/2013 http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Συμπεριλαμβανομένων διαδρομών αγωγών, καθώς και εξαγωγών υπό μορφή ΥΦΑ, για τις οποίες απαιτείται μονάδα υγροποίησης.
([3]) Μείγμα δημόσιων και ιδιωτικών κεφαλαίων.
([4]) ΕΕ L 115 της 25.4.2013, σ. 39.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010975/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Exploitation of hydrocarbon reserves within Cyprus's EEZ

Exploratory drilling inside Cyprus's EEZ has already identified large hydrocarbon reserves which may be sufficient to make the EU energy independent of non-European sources. According to estimates by the chairman of the Cyprus National Hydrocarbons Company, reserves in Cyprus's EEZ contain around 40 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and there is every indication that there are large oil fields.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Are Cypriot reserves included and, if so, to what extent, in long-term strategic planning under European policies on energy security and sufficiency?

2. What can and what does it intend to do to protect these European reserves from the threat posed by non-European states, such as Turkey, which contest the Republic of Cyprus's legal right to exploit the mineral resources within its EEZ?

3. Does the European Union have ways of helping the Republic of Cyprus to finance the huge investments that will be needed in order to drill for and channel these reserves to the European market, especially given the serious economic crisis which is gripping the country?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(9 December 2013)

The offshore hydrocarbon reserves in the south of the Republic of Cyprus can contribute to the EU's diversification of energy supply. However, assessing the potential impact of these reserves on Europe's security of energy supply requires a reasonable estimate of the reserves which can be exploited in a commercially viable manner.

The EU position with respect to the bilateral relations between the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey in the context of the exploration of hydrocarbons is stated in the Commission's answer to previous questions ([1]).

Hydrocarbons exploration and production activities as well as export activities to the EU and other regions of the world will be largely based on private investments. In fact, several international oil & gas companies have already obtained licenses and are investing in exploration and export activities; their contracts with the Republic of Cyprus also indicate they will bear the costs of offshore infrastructure.

The Cypriot government considers various gas export options ([2]) and ways to finance them ([3]). In this regard, all feasible options should be considered and assessed both from an energy security point of view and from the point of view of their relative economic costs and benefits.

One gas export option is placed on the recently adopted list of Projects of Common Interest under the regulation (EU) No 347/2013 on the Guidelines for the Trans-European Energy Networks ([4]). This allows for potential co-funding with EU financial assistance under the Connecting Europe Facility, provided it complies with the conditions described in the regulation. The Republic of Cyprus also has the possibility to seek support from the EIB.

([1]) Written Questions E-007674/2013 and E-001320/2013 http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Including pipeline routes and export by LNG requiring a LNG liquefaction plant.
([3]) Mix of public and private capital.
([4]) OJ L 115, 25.4.2013, p.39.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010976/13
to the Commission
William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Travel assistance and business start-up funds for EU nationals

1. Do EU Member States have access to EU funding for the purposes of a) business start-ups and b) travel assistance for their own nationals?

2. What is the amount available to each Member State in the categories of a) start-up funding and b) travel assistance?

3. What is the amount available per EU national for a) start-up funding and b) travel assistance?

4. What are the criteria for a) start-up funding and b) travel assistance?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

The ESF ([1]) and the ERDF ([2]) provide support in the context of national and regional programmes and more than EUR 3 billion has been provided over the 2007-13 period. Supporting new businesses is a key ESF priority and the majority of Member States have included this kind of action in their programmes. Overall, this priority is receiving EUR 2.75 billion of ESF funding. ERDF support for innovation and SMEs may also be used to provide support to start-ups. The attached table provides the breakdown by Member State.

The manner of distribution and the volume of support to individuals and companies is determined by national, regional or local agencies. This includes targeting and selection procedures. Contact information for ERDF/ESF managing authorities is available on the Commission's websites ([3]) .

It is not clear what is meant by 'travel assistance for EU nationals', although such assistance may be eligible for support from the European Structural and Investment Funds provided that it is relevant for the project concerned and that it is in line with all relevant rules.

Concerning start-ups and mobility, an EU programme ([4]) supports cross-border exchanges between new and experienced entrepreneurs. Exchanges last from 1 to 6 months. New entrepreneurs receive a stipend (from EUR 530 to EUR 1100) to pay for expenses.

In 2014-20, the ESF will continue to promote employment and labour mobility through supporting self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation.

([1]) European Social Fund.
([2]) European Regional and Development Fund.
([3]) ERDF: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authority_en.cfm
ESF: http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=45&langId=en
([4]) 'Erasmus for young entrepreneurs' http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/page.php?cid=2

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-010977/13
Komisi
Jan Březina (PPE)
(26. září 2013)

Předmět: Geneticky modifikované organismy

Francouzský nejvyšší soud před nedávnem zrušil zákaz pěstování geneticky modifikované kukuřice v této zemi v reakci na květnové rozhodnutí Evropského úřadu pro bezpečnost potravin, že hrozba pro životní prostředí není natolik vážná, aby takový zákaz odůvodňovala.

Jak se k tomuto výnosu staví Komise? Zachová, s ohledem na rozhodnutí Evropského úřadu pro bezpečnost potravin, svůj návrh umožnit členským státům vydávat zákazy na vnitrostátní úrovni, nebo je nyní vhodná chvíle uznat, že odmítání geneticky modifikovaných organismů není založeno na vědeckých poznatcích, ale vede k tomu, že z Evropy odcházejí firmy z oboru rostlinné produkce?

Odpověď Tonia Borga jménem Komise
(20. listopadu 2013)

Komise vzala na vědomí rozhodnutí francouzské Conseil d'Etat (Státní rada), v němž se uvádí, že francouzské moratorium uvalené na pěstování geneticky modifikované kukuřice řady MON810 není v souladu s právními předpisy Evropské unie. Komise připomíná, že zákazy pěstování stanovené členskými státy prostřednictvím ochranných doložek a/nebo mimořádných opatření musí být v souladu s článkem 23 směrnice 2001/18/ES ([1]) a článkem 34 nařízení (ES) č.1829/2003 ([2]) založeny na vědeckých důvodech.

Komise uznala, že by členské státy měly mít při rozhodování, zda budou na svém území pěstovat geneticky modifikované organismy (GMO) schválené EU, větší svobodu, a to prostřednictvím legislativního návrhu z července 2010 ([3]), který se týká možnosti členských států omezit nebo zakázat pěstování GMO na svém území a který představuje konkrétní a po právní stránce řádně podloženou odpověď na předloženou otázku, přičemž zachovává fungování evropského postupu pro schvalování GMO na základě vědeckého hodnocení rizika prováděného Evropským úřadem pro bezpečnost potravin ve spolupráci se členskými státy. Komise se domnívá, že nedávné rozhodnutí francouzské Conseil d'Etat potvrzuje potřebu, aby se v souvislosti s tímto legislativním návrhem pokračovalo v rámci postupu spolurozhodování.

([1]) Úř. věst. L 106, 17.4.2001, s. 1.
([2]) Úř. věst. L 268, 18.10.2003, s. 1.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/gmo/legislation/docs/proposal_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010977/13
to the Commission
Jan Březina (PPE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Genetically modified organisms (GMOs)

France's highest court recently lifted the country's ban on growing genetically modified maize following the decision by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in May that the environmental threat was not serious enough to justify a ban.

What is the Commission's response to this ruling? In the light of the EFSA decision, will the Commission maintain its proposal to allow Member States to enact national bans or is this the right time to acknowledge that the opposition to GMOs is not based on scientific evidence, but is causing crop science companies to withdraw from Europe?

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

The Commission has taken note of the ruling by the French Conseil d'Etat stating that the French moratorium imposed on growing of the genetically modified maize MON810 failed to uphold European Union law. The Commission reminds that cultivation bans enacted by Member States through safeguard clauses and/or emergency measures must be based on scientific reasons, in accordance with Article 23 of Directive 2001/18/EC ([1]) and Article 34 of Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 ([2]).

The Commission has acknowledged that Member States should be given more freedom on the decision to cultivate EU authorised GMOs on their territory by making in July 2010 ([3]) a legislative proposal as regards the possibility for the Member States to restrict or prohibit the cultivation of GMOs in their territory, which provides a concrete and legally sound response to this request, while preserving the functioning of the European GMO authorisation procedure based on a scientific risk assessment by the European Food Safety Authority in collaboration with Member States. The Commission considers that the recent ruling by the French Conseil d'Etat confirms the need to make progress on this legislative proposal in the co-decision procedure.

([1]) OJ L 106, 17.4.2001.
([2]) OJ L 268, 18.10.2003.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/gmo/legislation/docs/proposal_en.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010978/13
alla Commissione
Roberto Gualtieri (S&D), Alfredo Pallone (PPE), Alfredo Antoniozzi (PPE), Roberta Angelilli (PPE), Paolo Bartolozzi (PPE), Silvia Costa (S&D), Francesco De Angelis (S&D), Leonardo Domenici (S&D), Guido Milana (S&D), Claudio Morganti (EFD), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE), Potito Salatto (PPE), David-Maria Sassoli (S&D) e Marco Scurria (PPE)
(26 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Acciaierie di Terni

La Acciai Speciali Terni (AST) è uno dei principali produttori al mondo di laminati piani di acciaio inossidabile. Il 7 novembre 2012 la Commissione ha approvato l'acquisizione di Inoxum da parte di Outokumpu a condizione che alcuni assett tra cui AST fossero ceduti a soggetti terzi. Il disinvestimento doveva avvenire, nell'ambito delle procedure di cui al regolamento (CE) n. 139/2004, entro il mese di maggio 2013. Lo scopo della cessione richiesta dalla Commissione è quello di assicurare condizioni di concorrenza effettiva all'interno del mercato europeo degli acciai piani laminati a freddo. A tutt'oggi la procedura non si è chiusa e AST permane nel perimetro industriale di Outokumpu.

Tale situazione rischia di ripercuotersi negativamente sulla competitività del sito di Terni destando forti preoccupazioni tra i lavoratori e le autorità locali e nazionali, in considerazione anche del rischio di riduzione dei volumi produttivi, con ricadute sul posizionamento di mercato di AST e delle maggiori pressioni concorrenziali per via dei mancati investimenti tecnologici nonché sull'organizzazione commerciale. La Commissione ha assicurato attenzione rispetto ai temi della sostenibilità economica e della competitività di AST anche durante la fase di transizione.

Da recenti notizie di stampa sembra tuttavia che la Commissione abbia concesso ad Outokumpu fino al primo trimestre 2014 per completare la cessione delle Acciaierie di Terni.

Può la Commissione far sapere:

1. quali sono le ragioni che l'avrebbero indotta a concedere questa ulteriore proroga, mentre appare necessaria una rapida chiusura della procedura di disinvestimento che preservi il valore dell'azienda e le condizioni per lo sviluppo futuro;

2. quali garanzie può fornire rispetto al fatto che l'acquirente sia un investitore industriale europeo del settore con un adeguato business plan in grado di garantire il mantenimento dei livelli produttivi ed occupazionali del sito;

3. quali sono le iniziative che intende assumere affinché questa situazione d'incertezza sul futuro di AST possa essere risolta a breve in modo da consentire il rilancio della produzione;

4. se gli obiettivi della Commissione relativi alla politica industriale europea esposti nella Comunicazione del 12 ottobre 2012 ed il piano acciaio presentato l'11 giugno 2013 individuano un ruolo essenziale per la siderurgia e l'industria dell'acciaio;

5. quali assicurazioni può fornire sul fatto che la produzione di acciaio speciale a Terni continuerà a rimanere centrale nel contesto dell'industria comunitaria e che AST non sarà acquisita con scopi diversi rispetto alla prospettiva di valorizzazione e sviluppo del sito da un eventuale acquirente extraeuropeo?

Risposta di Joaquín Almunia a nome della Commissione
(6 dicembre 2013)

Per garantire il regolare svolgimento della procedura di disinvestimento, la Commissione non può pronunciarsi sui dettagli relativi a tale procedura o al suo calendario previsto. Gli aspetti essenziali delle procedure e le principali tappe del processo di disinvestimento sono ripresi nella versione non riservata degli impegni relativi al caso M.6471 Outokumpu/Inoxum ([1]) e nella Comunicazione della Commissione concernente le misure correttive ([2]).

([1]) Accessibile sul sito della DGCOMP, all'indirizzo: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/elojade/isef/index.cfm?fuseaction=dsp_result&policy_area_id=2&case_number=6471.

([2]) Comunicazione della Commissione concernente le misure correttive considerate adeguate a norma del regolamento (CE) n. 139/2004 del Consiglio e del regolamento (CE) n. 802/2004 della Commissione, GU C 267, del 22.10.2008, pagg. 1-27, disponibile all'indirizzo: http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52008XC1022(01):IT:NOT.

La Commissione verifica l'adeguatezza dei potenziali acquirenti utilizzando i seguenti criteri ([3]):

— l'acquirente deve essere indipendente e non essere collegato alle parti,

— l'acquirente deve possedere i mezzi finanziari, la comprovata competenza pertinente nonché l'incentivo e la capacità di mantenere e sviluppare l'attività ceduta come forza competitiva redditizia ed attiva in concorrenza e

— l'acquisizione dell'attività ceduta da parte di un acquirente proposto non deve *prima facie* creare nuovi problemi per la concorrenza.

I servizi della Commissione seguono attentamente la procedura di disinvestimento, anche tramite contatti periodici con Outokumpu, con il fiduciario responsabile del controllo (*Monitoring Trustee)* ([4]), il gestore incaricato di garantire la separazione dell'attività (*Hold Separate Manager)* ([5]) ed altre parti interessate. Oltre alle attuali garanzie che sono state chieste a Outokumpu ed attuate nel 2012 e nel 2013, la Commissione continuerà ad adottare tutte le misure necessarie per proteggere la redditività e la competitività di Acciai Speciali Terni.

La Commissione ritiene che l'industria siderurgica svolga un ruolo cruciale nell'economia complessiva dell'Unione europea, essendo un settore strategico di primo ordine, in grado di esercitare un impatto diretto sullo sviluppo economico, sociale e ambientale di tutti gli Stati membri dell'Unione europea. Secondo la Commissione, l'esistenza di un'industria siderurgica competitiva e redditizia è allo stesso tempo una condizione irrinunciabile e un fattore chiave del rilancio dell'economia in tutta l'Europa.

([3]) Cfr. Comunicazione della Commissione concernente le misure correttive, punti 48 e 49; cfr. inoltre punti 15 e 16 degli impegni relativi al caso M.6471 Outokumpu/Inoxum.

([4]) La Commissione ha nominato un fiduciario responsabile del controllo incaricato di verificare il rispetto degli impegni da parte di Outokumpu; cfr. http://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/additional_data/m6471_13512_3.pdf

([5]) Il gestore incaricato di garantire la separazione dell'attività è responsabile della gestione dell'attività e dell'esecuzione degli obblighi di delimitare e mantenere separata l'attività oggetto della cessione; cfr. Comunicazione della Commissione concernente le misure correttive, punto 112. Cfr. inoltre il punto 9 degli impegni relativi al caso M.6471 Outokumpu/Inoxum.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010978/13
to the Commission
Roberto Gualtieri (S&D), Alfredo Pallone (PPE), Alfredo Antoniozzi (PPE), Roberta Angelilli (PPE), Paolo Bartolozzi (PPE), Silvia Costa (S&D), Francesco De Angelis (S&D), Leonardo Domenici (S&D), Guido Milana (S&D), Claudio Morganti (EFD), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE), Potito Salatto (PPE), David-Maria Sassoli (S&D) and Marco Scurria (PPE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Terni steelworks

Acciai Speciali Terni (AST) is a leading global manufacturer of rolled stainless steel plate. On 7 November 2012, the Commission approved Outokumpu's acquisition of Inoxum provided that certain assets, including AST, were sold to third parties. The divestment should have taken place, in accordance with the procedures laid down in Regulation (EC) No 139/2004, by May 2013. The purpose of the divestment requested by the Commission is to ensure that there is effective competition on the European cold-rolled steel plate market. To date, the procedure has still not been completed and AST remains one of Outokumpu's industrial assets.

This situation is in danger of harming the competitiveness of the Terni site, which is causing serious concern to workers as well as national and local authorities, not least given the risk of reduced production volumes which will affect AST's market positioning, and given increased competition pressure owing to a lack of investment in technology and in the business organisation. The Commission pledged to be attentive to AST's economic sustainability and competitiveness, including during the transition phase.

According to recent press reports, however, the Commission has given Outokumpu until the first quarter of 2014 to finalise the divestment of the Terni steelworks.

1. What are the reasons behind the Commission granting this additional extension when it is necessary to complete the divestment procedure rapidly in order to safeguard the value of the company and the conditions for its future development?

2. What guarantees can the Commission provide that the buyer will be a European industrial investor in the sector, with a suitable business plan capable of ensuring that the site's production and employment levels will be maintained?

3. What action will it take to ensure that this uncertainty over AST's future will be resolved quickly to enable production to start again?

4. Do the Commission's EU industrial policy objectives, set out in its communication of 12 October 2012 and the action plan for the European Steel Industry presented on 11 June 2013, identify an essential role for steel production and the steel industry?

5. What assurances can it provide that special steel production in Terni will continue to remain a key part of EU industry and that AST will not be bought by a non-European buyer for purposes other than the prospect of enhancing and developing the site?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2013)

In the interest of an orderly divestiture process, the Commission cannot comment on the details of the divestment procedure or its specific timeline. An overview of the procedures and main steps of the divestiture process can be found in the non-confidential version of the commitments in case M.6471 Outokumpu/Inoxum ([1]) and in the Commission notice on remedies ([2]).

The Commission assesses the suitability of potential purchasers in light of the following criteria ([3]):

— the purchaser is required to be independent of and unconnected to the merging parties,

([1]) Available on DG COMP's website: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/elojade/isef/index.cfm?fuseaction=dsp_result&policy_area_id=2&case_number=6471

([2]) Commission notice on remedies acceptable under Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 and under Commission Regulation (EC) No 802/2004, OJ C 267, 22.10.2008, p. 1-27, available on http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52008XC1022(01):EN:NOT

([3]) See Commission notice on remedies, paragraphs 48 and 49. See also clauses 15 and 16 of the commitments in case M.6471 Outokumpu/Inoxum.

— the purchaser must possess the resources, relevant expertise and have the incentive and ability to maintain and develop the divested business as a viable and active competitive force, and

— the acquisition of the business by the purchaser must not prima facie create new competition concerns.

The Commission services are closely monitoring the divestment process, *inter alia* through regular contacts meetings and with Outokumpu, the Monitoring Trustee ([4]), the Hold Separate Manager ([5]) and other stakeholders. Beyond existing safeguards requested from Outokumpu and implemented in 2012 and 2013, the Commission will continue to take all necessary measures to protect Acciai Speciali Terni's viability and competitiveness.

The Commission considers the steel industry to play an instrumental role in the overall economy of the European Union and to be a strategic sector of the highest order, with a direct impact on the economic, social and environmental development of all EU Member States. The Commission believes that a competitive and sustainable steel industry is both a condition for and a key factor in the economic recovery across Europe.

([4]) The Commission has appointed a Monitoring Trustee to oversee Outokumpu's compliance with its commitments, see http://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/additional_data/m6471_13512_3.pdf

([5]) The Hold Separate Manager is responsible for the management of the business and the implementation of hold-separate and ring-fencing obligations, see Commission notice on remedies, paragraph 112. See also clause 9 of the commitments in case M.6471 Outokumpu/Inoxum.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010979/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(26 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Legge anti-blogger in Cina: arrestato un ragazzo di sedici anni

Il 9 settembre scorso la Corte suprema del popolo e l'Ufficio centrale dei procuratori di Stato della Repubblica popolare cinese hanno fornito un'interpretazione giuridica che permette alle forze dell'ordine di mettere in stato di arresto chiunque pubblichi su Internet notizie false o atte a provocare proteste, scontri etnici o religiosi oppure che danneggino l'immagine del paese.

In base a questa interpretazione è stato posto in stato di arresto un ragazzo di 16 anni nella provincia del Gansu. L'accusa è quella di aver pubblicato su un blog notizie non corrette in merito ad un caso di cronaca sostenendo che le forze dell'ordine non fossero in grado svolgere indagini puntuali.

Può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se è al corrente dei fatti descritti;

2. se non ritiene che l'applicazione di questa norma e l'arresto di un ragazzo di 16 anni per il semplice fatto di aver espresso una propria opinione su un blog rappresentino una violazione dei diritti dell'uomo e in particolare del diritto alla libera espressione così come sancito anche nell'articolo 11 della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea;

3. se, nell'ambito della recente visita ufficiale in Cina di una rappresentanza dell'UE col compito di affrontare la delicata questione del rispetto dei diritti umani nel paese, è stata discussa anche la questione sopra esposta e, in caso affermativo, con quali risultati?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(11 novembre 2013)

In occasione della recente visita in Cina (9-18 settembre), il Rappresentante speciale dell'UE per i diritti umani ha sollevato la questione della nuova interpretazione giuridica fornita dalla Corte suprema del popolo ed è stato informato del fatto che, a differenza della libertà di espressione, la diffusione di notizie incontrollate non è protetta dalla Costituzione poiché si tratta di montature che possono violare i diritti di altre persone. L'RSUE ha ribadito che la libertà di espressione, sancita dall'articolo 19 della Dichiarazione universale dei diritti dell'uomo, deve essere protetta sia online che offline.

La Commissione è inoltre al corrente dell'arresto di un ragazzo di 16 anni nella provincia del Gansu, il cui successivo rilascio sembra essere il risultato della pressione esercitata dall'opinione pubblica.

La situazione generale dei diritti umani in Cina, compreso l'esercizio della libertà di espressione, sarà oggetto di discussione durante l'imminente esame periodico universale del Consiglio dei diritti dell'uomo dell'ONU, che avrà luogo il 22 ottobre a Ginevra.

Da parte sua, la Commissione continuerà a monitorare la situazione, a esprimere le proprie preoccupazioni alle autorità cinesi e a promuovere l'osservanza delle norme internazionali sui diritti umani.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010979/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Anti-blogger law in China: 16-year-old boy arrested

On 9 September 2013, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate of the People's Republic of China provided a legal interpretation giving police the power to arrest anyone who publishes news that is false or likely to incite protests, ethnic or religious clashes or which harms the country's image.

Based on this interpretation, a 16-year-old boy has been arrested in Gansu province. He is accused of blogging incorrect information about a news story, stating that the police were not capable of carrying out proper investigations.

1. Is the Commission aware of these facts?

2. Does it believe that the application of this law and the arrest of a 16-year-old boy merely for expressing his opinion on a blog is a violation of human rights, in particular the right to freedom of expression as enshrined in Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union?

3. During the recent official visit to China of an EU delegation tasked with addressing the sensitive issue of respect for human rights in the country, was the above issue also discussed and, if so, what was the outcome?

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

During his recent visit to China (9-18 September), the EU Special Representative for Human Rights raised the issue of the new interpretation of the law applying to rumours with the Supreme People's Court and was told that, whilst freedom of speech is protected in the framework of the Constitution, spreading of rumours is not protected by the law because it is fabrication that can infringe on other people's rights. The EUSR insisted that freedom of expression, as enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, should be protected online as well as off-line.

The Commission is also aware of the arrest of a sixteen-year old boy in Gansu province. His subsequent release appears to have been the result of public pressure.

The overall Human Rights situation in China, including the exercise of freedom of expression, will be addressed by the UN Human Rights Council during the upcoming Universal Periodic Review, which will take place in Geneva on 22 October.

For its part, the Commission will continue to monitor the situation and raise its concern with the Chinese authorities and continue to promote the implementation of International Human Rights Law.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010980/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(26 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Attacco terroristico in un centro commerciale a Nairobi

Un commando di terroristi islamici di al Shebaab ha assaltato, il 22 settembre, a Nairobi il centro commerciale Westgate, il più grande della città e frequentato prevalentemente da stranieri, con l'obiettivo di fare il maggior numero possibile di vittime fra cristiani ed ebrei. I terroristi hanno tenuto in ostaggio i civili per più di 48 ore, sino all'intervento delle forze speciali, mentre il bilancio delle vittime, ancora da confermare, è di 62 morti, 63 dispersi e oltre 200 feriti.

Può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se è informata dei fatti;

2. se è in grado di fornire notizie più puntuali sul numero delle vittime, soprattutto fra i cittadini europei;

3. come intende agire per garantire la sicurezza dei propri cittadini che si trovano in questo Paese;

4. considerate le dichiarazioni dell'Alto Rappresentante per gli affari esteri dell'Unione europea sull'accaduto, come intende agire per supportare il governo del Paese affinché tali attacchi vengano in futuro impediti?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(12 novembre 2013)

In base alle ultime informazioni ricevute il bilancio totale delle vittime nell'attacco al Westgate Mall è di 67 persone, tra le quali nove cittadini europei (sei di nazionalità britannica, uno di nazionalità olandese e due di nazionalità francese).

Immediatamente dopo l'attacco l'AR/VP ha chiesto ad un funzionario di alto livello di recarsi in Kenya per valutare l'opportunità di un sostegno futuro unitamente alle autorità locali. L'UE sta attualmente considerando diverse opzioni. Poiché la sicurezza del Kenya è intrinsecamente legata alla sicurezza dei paesi vicini si rende necessario un impegno costante per stabilizzare la regione, in particolare la Somalia. Tale impegno comprende un sostegno all'AMISON e alla missione di addestramento dell'UE per le forze di sicurezza somale. La conferenza di Bruxelles su un «new deal» per la Somalia del 16 settembre ha rappresentato un passo importantissimo per affrontare i problemi più urgenti nel paese. Inoltre, l'UE continuerà a promuovere l'attuazione del Piano d'azione dell'Unione europea contro il terrorismo nel Corno d'Africa/Yemen. Uguale importanza rivestono i progetti che contrastano i finanziamenti al terrorismo e agli estremismi violenti e rafforzano la capacità dell'autorità kenyota di prevenire e reagire a tali crisi.

Affinché tali proposte siano sostenibili saranno create sinergie con il sostegno alla gestione e in particolare alla promozione della trasparenza e della lotta all'impunità. Esse dovrebbero inoltre essere considerate nel contesto del sostegno generale dell'UE alla promozione dello sviluppo sostenibile, che consente di affrontare le cause alla radice del terrorismo contrastandolo nella maniera più efficace.

Su scala più ampia il Forum globale contro il terrorismo fornisce una buona base per coordinare le misure antiterrorismo in conseguenza dell'attacco. L'Unione europea si sta impegnando a fondo per mantenere la copresidenza del gruppo di lavoro del Forum globale contro il terrorismo per il Corno d'Africa insieme alla Turchia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010980/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Terrorist attack on a shopping centre in Nairobi

On 22 September 2013, a group of Islamist al-Shabaab terrorists stormed the Westgate shopping centre — the largest in Nairobi and mainly frequented by foreigners — with the aim of killing as many Christians and Jews as possible. The terrorists held civilians hostage for more than 48 hours until the special forces intervened, while the number of victims, as yet unconfirmed, stands at 62 dead, 63 missing and over 200 injured.

1. Is the Commission aware of these facts?

2. Is it able to provide more precise information on the number of victims, especially Europeans?

3. How does it plan to ensure the safety of its citizens who are in Kenya?

4. In view of the statements by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs on this matter, how will the Commission support the country's government to prevent such attacks in the future?

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

According to the latest information received the total death toll of the attack on the Westgate Mall is 67 people, among them 9 European Citizens (6 British, 1 Dutch, and 2 French nationals).

Immediately after the attack the HR/VP asked a high-level official to visit Kenya to explore future support together with local authorities. The EU is now considering different options. As Kenya's security is intrinsically linked to that of its neighbours continued efforts to stabilise the region and in particular Somalia are important. This includes support to Amisom and the EU training mission for the Somalian security forces. The Brussels Conference on a New Deal for Somalia of 16 September was a milestone for addressing the most critical priorities in Somalia. In addition, the EU will continue to promote the implementation of the EU Counter Terrorism Action Plan on Horn of Africa/Yemen. Equally important are projects to counter the financing of terrorism and violent extremism, and to strengthen the capacity of Kenyan authorities to prevent and to respond to such crises.

For these specific proposals to be sustainable, synergies will be created with the support to the governance area, and in particular to promote transparency and counter impunity. They should also be seen in the context of general EU support to promote sustainable development, which allows for the addressing of the root causes of terrorism, the most effective way to counter terrorism.

At a wider level, the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) provides a good forum to coordinate counterterrorism measures in the aftermath of the attack. The EU is fully committed to continue the co-chairmanship of the GCTF Horn of Africa working group together with Turkey.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010981/13
aan de Commissie
Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE)
(26 september 2013)

Betreft: Lekkend radioactief afval in Dessel en Doel in België

Is de Commissie op de hoogte van het lekkende radioactieve afval in de gemeentes Dessel en Doel in België?

Ziet de Commissie nauwlettend toe op de juiste toepassing Richtlijn 2011/70/Euratom van 19 juli 2011?

Heeft België, zoals vereist, deze richtlijn correct omgezet in nationale wetgeving voor 23 augustus 2013?

Heeft de Commissie België gevraagd om een analyse van het gevaar wat betreft het lekkende radioactieve afval? Zo ja, hoe groot is het gevaar? Zo nee, waarom niet?

Antwoord van de heer Oettinger namens de Commissie
(18 november 2013)

1. De Commissie is ervan op de hoogte dat begin 2013 bij een visuele inspectie een anomalie is gevonden in verschillende opslagvaten voor geconditioneerd afval bij Belgaprocess, zoals gerapporteerd door het federaal agentschap voor nucleaire controle (FANC) ([1]).

2-3. Momenteel onderzoekt de Commissie de omzetting van de richtlijn in de nationale wetgeving van de lidstaten. Indien uit het onderzoek blijkt dat een lidstaat haar verplichtingen niet naleeft om Richtlijn 2011/70/Euratom correct om te zetten, zal de Commissie gepaste actie ondernemen.

4. De Commissie heeft geen bijzondere risicoanalyse gevraagd. Het toezicht op de veiligheid van nucleaire installaties en het beheer van radioactief afval is een nationale bevoegdheid. Zowel controle, inspectie als dwingende maatregelen zijn taken van de nationale bevoegde autoriteiten.

De Commissie kan de werking en de doeltreffendheid van de installaties nagaan die de lidstaten oprichtten om een voortdurende controle uit te oefenen op de radioactiviteit van de lucht, het water en de bodem ([2]). In dit geval leidt alle door het FANC beschikbare gestelde informatie tot het besluit dat er geen radiologische impact is op de bevolking of het milieu.

([1]) http://www.fanc.fgov.be/nl/page/homepage-agence-federale-de-controle-nucleaire-afcn/1.aspx.
([2]) Artikel 35 van het Euratom-Verdrag.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010981/13
to the Commission
Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Leaking radioactive waste at Dessel and Doel in Belgium

Is the Commission aware of the leaking radioactive waste in the municipalities of Dessel and Doel in Belgium?

Is the Commission closely monitoring the correct application of Council Directive 2011/70/Euratom of 19 July 2011?

Did Belgium correctly transpose this directive, as required, into its national legislation by 23 August 2013?

Has the Commission asked Belgium for a risk analysis with respect to the leaking radioactive waste? If so, how great is the risk? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

1. The Commission is aware that during a visual inspection conducted in early 2013 an abnormality was found in several concrete casks of conditioned waste stored at Belgoprocess, as reported by FANC (federaal agentschap voor nucleaire controle) ([1]).

2-3. The Commission is in the process of examining the implementation in every Member State. If this examination indicates that a MS is not meeting its obligation under EC law to correctly transpose Directive 2011/70/Euratom, the Commission will take appropriate action.

4. No specific risk analysis has been requested by the Commission. Supervision of the safety of nuclear installations and radioactive waste management is a national competence. Regulatory control and inspections, as well as enforcement actions, are the tasks of the national competent authorities.

The Commission has the right to verify the operation and efficiency of the systems in the Member States which monitor the level of radioactivity in air, water and soil ([2]). However, in this case, all information made available at this point by FANC leads to the conclusion that there is no radiological impact on the population or the environment.

([1]) http://www.fanc.fgov.be/fr/page/homepage-agence-federale-de-controle-nucleaire-afcn/1.aspx
([2]) Article 35 of the Euratom Treaty.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010982/13
aan de Commissie
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)
(26 september 2013)

Betreft: Maatregelen i.v.m. nationale doelstellingen op het vlak van hernieuwbare energie tegen 2020

Op basis van Richtlijn 2009/28/EG leggen de EU en de lidstaten zichzelf doelstellingen op voor het bevorderen van hernieuwbare energie met bindende nationale streefcijfers van 20 % hernieuwbare energie in het eindenergieverbruik en 10 % in het verkeer tegen 2020. In haar voortgangsrapport inzake duurzame energie dat begin dit jaar verscheen, toont de Commissie duidelijk aan dat met het huidige beleid deze doelstellingen in vele lidstaten niet gehaald zullen worden. De Commissie engageert zich in het voortgangsrapport om richtsnoeren op te stellen en inbreukprocedures op te starten wanneer lidstaten hun verplichtingen niet nagaan.

1. Wanneer zal de Commissie deze richtsnoeren uitbrengen?

2. In welke vorm zal dit gebeuren, hoe zal de Commissie ervoor zorgen dat de lidstaten de richtsnoeren opvolgen?

3. Kan de Commissie nog andere maatregelen ondernemen?

4. In mei 2013 startte de Commissie een inbreukprocedure tegen België en riep het land op om aan de EU-regels voor hernieuwbare energie te voldoen. Heeft België hierop gereageerd en zo ja, hoe?

Antwoord van de heer Oettinger namens de Commissie
(15 november 2013)

1. Op 5 november heeft de Commissie het richtsnoer inzake steunregelingen voor hernieuwbare energiebronnen uitgebracht om ervoor te zorgen dat hernieuwbare energie in de lidstaten op de meest kosteneffectieve wijze wordt ontwikkeld door de energieproductie uit hernieuwbare bronnen te integreren in de energiemarkt, en door steunregelingen stabiel en geloofwaardig te maken en zich tegelijkertijd flexibel te blijven aanpassen aan de veranderende technologische ontwikkeling.

2. Het richtsnoer van de Commissie is een werkdocument van de diensten van de Commissie dat gevoegd is bij een mededeling over het zo goed mogelijk inzetten van overheidsinterventies op de elektriciteitsmarkt. Het werkdocument bevat de belangrijkste beginselen die de Commissie zal toepassen bij de beoordeling van staatstussenkomsten inzake steunregelingen, capaciteitsmechanismen of maatregelen die de respons op de vraag van de consumenten verzekeren. Het pakket omvat ook richtsnoeren voor het gebruik van samenwerkingsmechanismen inzake hernieuwbare energie. Deze documenten zijn niet-bindende maatregelen. Dit pakket zal worden gepresenteerd en besproken tijdens de volgende Energieraad in december dit jaar.

3. De Commissie ziet echter in alle lidstaten van dichtbij toe op de trajecten van de aandelen hernieuwbare energie en zal maatregelen treffen als de lidstaten niet hun verplichtingen niet nakomen. Tegen eind 2014 is de Commissie voornemens om in haar volgende voortgangsverslag inzake hernieuwbare energie te beoordelen welke vooruitgang de lidstaten hebben geboekt inzake de tussentijdse 2011/2012-doelstellingen te beoordelen.

4. De Commissie heeft de Belgische autoriteiten in mei 2013 inderdaad op grond van Richtlijn 2009/28/EG een met redenen omkleed advies toegezonden aan de Belgische autoriteiten wegens de niet-mededeling van omzettingsmaatregelen ([1]). De antwoorden van de Belgische autoriteiten worden momenteel door de Commissie beoordeeld.

([1]) Richtlijn 2009/28/EG van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 23 april 2009: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:140:0016:0062:NL:PDF .

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010982/13
to the Commission
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Measures relating to national targets on renewable energy by 2020

Under Directive 2009/28/EC, the EU and the Member States set themselves targets for the promotion of renewable energy, with mandatory national targets of at least a 20% share of energy from renewable sources in the gross final consumption of energy in 2020 and at least 10% of the final consumption of energy in transport. In the Commission's progress report on renewable energy, which was published at the start of this year, the Commission stresses that these targets will not be met in many Member States without policy changes. In the progress report, the Commission undertakes to compile guidelines and open infringement proceedings if Member States do not comply with their obligations.

1. When is the Commission going to issue those guidelines?

2. In what form will this happen and how will the Commission ensure that Member States comply with the guidelines?

3. Can the Commission take other measures?

4. In May 2013, the Commission opened infringement proceedings against Belgium and called on that country to comply with EU regulations on renewable energy. Has Belgium responded and, if so, how?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

1. On 5 November the Commission issued the guidance on renewables' support schemes to ensure that Member States' development of renewable energy is done in the most cost-effective way by integrating renewable energy production in the energy market, and making support schemes stable and credible while remaining flexible to adapt to changing technological evolution.

2. The guidance from the Commission is in the form of a staff working document attached to a communication on making the most of public intervention in the electricity market which sets out the main principles which the Commission will apply when assessing state interventions relating to renewable support schemes, capacity mechanisms or measures to ensure consumer demand response. The package includes also Guidance on the use of renewable energy cooperation mechanisms. These documents are non-binding measures. This package will be presented and discussed in the next Energy Council in December this year.

3. The Commission is however following closely the trajectories of the renewables shares in all Member States and will take action should Member States not fulfil their obligations. By the end of 2014 the Commission intends to issue its next Renewable energy progress report assessing progress of Member States towards the 2011/2012 interim targets.

4. The Commission has indeed sent in May 2013 a reasoned opinion to Belgian authorities for non-communication of transposition measures under Directive 2009/28/EC ([1]). The replies of the Belgian authorities are currently being assessed by the Commission.

([1]) Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23rd April 2009, Available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=Oj:L:2009:140:0016:0062:en:PDF

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-010983/13
an die Kommission
Werner Schulz (Verts/ALE)
(26. September 2013)

Betrifft: Nichtgewährung der EU-Förderung für unabhängige Wahlbeobachtung in Aserbaidschan

Die EU-Kommission hat im Dezember 2012 eine Ausschreibung (EIDHR 19.04.01 und 19.08.01.03) über 2,2 Mio. EUR veröffentlicht, u. a. mit dem Ziel, die Beobachtung der anstehenden Präsidentschafts- Lokal- und Parlamentswahlen in Aserbaidschan zu beobachten. Laut ursprünglichem Zeitplan hätte die Entscheidung am 5. Mai 2013 fallen müssen, und die Vertragsunterzeichnung hätte am 30.5. sein sollen, damit eine gute Vorbereitung rechtzeitig vor den Präsidentschaftswahlen im Oktober 2013 ermöglicht worden wäre.

Die Entscheidungsfindung wurde jedoch um über zwei Monate verzögert. Ende Juli erhielten alle Bewerber für die Beobachtung der Präsidentschaftswahlen eine Absage, darunter auch renommierte und durch Kooperation mit EU-Partnern erfahrene nichtstaatliche Organisationen (NGOs). Die veranschlagten 2,2 Mio. EUR wurden fast vollständig von der EU-Delegation in Baku nach Brüssel zurück überwiesen.

— Warum wurden in der Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen nichtregistrierte Organisationen nicht als Antragsteller zugelassen?

— Ist der Kommission bewusst, dass, wie in allen autoritär regierten Staaten der Östlichen Partnerschaft, kritische NGOs nicht zur Registrierung zugelassen werden?

— Wie konnte es zu der Verzögerung von zwei Monaten bei der Arbeit der Evaluationskommission kommen?

— Welche Maßnahmen unternimmt die Kommission, um die Delegation in Baku in ihrer Arbeitsfähigkeit zu stärken?

— Welche Maßnahmen unternimmt die Kommission, um Organisationen der zivilgesellschaftlichen Wahlbeobachtung in den Staaten der Östlichen Partnerschaft in ihrer Arbeit nachhaltig und planbar zu fördern?

Antwort von Herrn Füle im Namen der Kommission
(24. Oktober 2013)

Anders als nach Informationsstand des Herrn Abgeordneten wurden von dem ausgeschriebenen Gesamtbudget von 2,2 Mio. EUR beinahe 90 % (1 970 762 EUR) vertraglich vergeben. Lediglich die restlichen 229 238 EUR flossen zurück. Die Wahlen wurden in Los 2 (Budget: 1 Mio. EUR) abgedeckt, dabei wurden nicht ausschließlich die Präsidentschaftswahlen, sondern auch die Kommunal- und Parlamentswahlen berücksichtigt. Bedauerlicherweise waren die für Los 2 eingereichten Anträge jedoch unzureichend in Anzahl und Qualität.

Nicht registrierte Organisationen konnten an der Ausschreibung gemeinsam mit registrierten Antragstellern teilnehmen. Die Delegation hat die Bildung solcher Partnerschaften, die im Rahmen des EIDHR ([1]) durchaus möglich sind, aktiv gefördert.

Der zeitliche Ablauf der Ausschreibung erfolgte nach dem üblichen Verfahren. Die Einreichungsfrist wurde in der Berichtigung von 15. März 2013 um zwei Wochen verlängert, um die Anforderungen für Mitantragsteller weniger restriktiv zu machen: Benachrichtigungen über Konzeptpapiere wurden am 17. Mai 2013 versandt, Benachrichtigungen über vollständige Anträge und Förderfähigkeit am 23. Juli 2013. Die Delegation ist ihren Aufgaben in effektiver Weise nachgekommen und ist mit qualifiziertem Personal besetzt.

Im Hinblick auf zukünftige Maßnahmen wird die Kommission weitere Anstrengungen unternehmen, um die Zusammenarbeit mit nicht registrierten NRO ([2]) zu erleichtern, die tatsächlich durch das EIDHR in Aserbaidschan unterstützt wurden. Um den NRO bei der Antragstellung auf Mittel der EU zu helfen, hat die Kommission ein Projekt zur technischen Unterstützung eingeleitet. Ebenso hat sie erneut die jährlichen Haushaltsmittel zur Unterstützung der Zivilgesellschaft durch thematische und geografische Programme erhöht.

([1]) Europäisches Instrument für Demokratie und Menschenrechte.
([2]) Nichtregierungsorganisationen.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010983/13
to the Commission
Werner Schulz (Verts/ALE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Failure to grant EU assistance for independent election observation in Azerbaijan

In December 2012 the Commission published a call for proposals (EIDHR 19.04.01 und 19.08.01.03) worth EUR 2.2 million with the aim, among other things, of providing for observation of the imminent presidential, local and parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan. Under the initial timetable, a decision should have been taken on 5 May 2013 and agreements should have been signed on 30 May in order to allow plenty of time for preparation before the presidential election in October 2013.

The decision was, however, put off for over two months. At the end of July, all applicants for observer status for the presidential election, including reputable NGOs with experience of working with EU partners, received a rejection. Almost all the projected expenditure of EUR 2.2 million was returned to Brussels by the EU Delegation in Baku.

— Why were non-registered organisations not permitted to apply in the call for proposals?

— Is the Commission aware that NGOs critical of the regime in Azerbaijan are, as in all states in the Eastern Partnership that are subject to authoritarian rule, not being admitted for registration?

— How come there was a two-month hold-up in the work of the Evaluation Committee?

— What action is the Commission taking to increase the effectiveness of the work of the Delegation in Baku?

— What action is the Commission taking to assist civil society organisations for election observation in the countries of the Eastern Partnership to plan and sustain their activities?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(24 October 2013)

Contrary to the Honourable Member's information, out of the total call for proposals budget of EUR 2.2 million almost 90% of the funds (EUR 1 970 762) were contracted. Only the remainder of EUR 229 238 was returned. Elections were covered in Lot 2 (EUR 1 million budget), focused not only on the presidential elections, but also on the municipal and parliamentary elections. Regrettably, the proposals submitted under Lot 2 were, however, insufficient in numbers and quality.

Non-registered organisations were able to participate in the call in partnership with registered applicants. The Delegation actively encouraged the forming of such partnerships, which are a distinct possibility under EIDHR ([1]).

The call calendar followed the usual procedure. The submission deadline was extended by two weeks in the 15 March 2013 Corrigendum, in order to allow for less restrictive eligibility for co-applicants: Notifications on Concept Notes were sent on 17 May 2013 and on Full Application and eligibility on 23 July 2013. The Delegation has been performing its tasks effectively and is fully equipped with skilled staff.

Concerning future action, the Commission will undertake further efforts to facilitate cooperation with non-registered NGOs ([2]), which were indeed supported through EIDHR in Azerbaijan. Furthermore, in order to help NGOs to apply for EU grants the Commission has launched a technical assistance project. It has also continued to increase the annual budget for support to civil society through thematic and geographical programmes.

([1]) European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.
([2]) Non-governmental organisations.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010984/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Vacunación de los infantes en la Unión Europea

En varios países europeos las posiciones contrarias a la vacunación obligatoria, como la llamada triple vírica, se están extendiendo en la sociedad y en las familias. Las familias se niegan a que sus hijos e hijas sean vacunados.

El número de casos de enfermedades como la viruela se está multiplicando exponencialmente en países de la Unión. La razón principal es la negativa de las familias a vacunar a sus hijos e hijas. Eso se debe, en gran medida, a que han recibido información falsa o sesgada sobre los posibles efectos secundarios negativos de la vacunación. Ello crea una situación sanitaria negativa en nuestras sociedades, que puede ir agravándose en el futuro si no se toman las medidas oportunas.

¿Es consciente la Comisión de este problema?

¿Tiene datos la Comisión sobre el porcentaje de infantes sin vacunar en los diferentes países de la Unión?

¿Tiene la Comisión datos actualizados sobre el aumento e incidencia de casos de enfermedades contagiosas, como la viruela, en los países de la Unión?

¿Está la Comisión considerando la posibilidad de lanzar algún tipo de iniciativa en colaboración con las autoridades estatales y locales para contrarrestar la información falsa y sesgada que reciben las familias sobre la vacunación?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de noviembre de 2013)

La Comisión conoce el problema de la posición contraria a la vacunación, que está afectando a los índices de vacunación en la Unión Europea.

Los datos sobre la cobertura de las enfermedades que se previenen mediante vacunación en la infancia son proporcionados por Venice 2, proyecto coordinado por el Centro Europeo para la Prevención y el Control de las Enfermedadess ([1]). En 1980, la Organización Mundial de la Salud declaró erradicada la viruela a nivel mundial.

En lo que respecta a las iniciativas para mejorar la percepción de los beneficios de la vacunación infantil, en 2011 el Consejo adoptó conclusiones a fin de intensificar los esfuerzos dirigidos a mejorar la cobertura de inmunización para las enfermedades que se previenen mediante vacunación, incluidos el sarampión, las paperas y la rubeola. La conferencia organizada por la Comisión en 2012 sobre inmunización infantil puso de relieve la importancia, en particular, de la vacunación contra el sarampión y la rubeola.

La Decisión del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 22 de octubre de 2013, sobre las graves amenazas transfronterizas para la salud insta a que se mejoren los procesos de intercambio de información en relación con la cobertura de las enfermedades que se previenen mediante vacunación. Además, la Decisión establece una base jurídica para las medidas de coordinación dirigidas a controlar los brotes, incluida la vacunación. La Decisión permite la adquisición conjunta de contramedidas médicas y hará posible que los Estados miembros de la UE que participan en este proceso adquieran conjuntamente las vacunas.

Por último, la vacunación es competencia de las autoridades nacionales de salud pública, que son también responsables de comunicar a la población en general y a los profesionales de la salud los beneficios de la vacunación.

([1]) http://venice.cineca.org/reports.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010984/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Vaccination of infants in the European Union

In several EU countries, opposition to mandatory vaccinations, such as MMR, is spreading in society and in families. Families refuse to allow their children to be vaccinated.

The number of cases of diseases like smallpox is multiplying exponentially in countries in the Union. The main reason is the refusal of families to vaccinate their children. This is largely due to them having received false or biased information about possible negative secondary effects of vaccination. This is creating a negative health situation in our societies, which may worsen in the future if appropriate measures are not taken.

Is the Commission aware of this problem?

Does the Commission have data on the percentage of unvaccinated infants in the different countries in the European Union?

Does the Commission have up-to-date information on the increase in the incidence of cases of infectious diseases like smallpox in countries in the Union?

Is the Commission considering the possibility of launching some kind of initiative in collaboration with state and local authorities to counter the false and biased information that families receive about vaccination?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The Commission is aware of the issue of vaccination refusal which is impacting vaccination coverage rates in the European Union.

Data on coverage of vaccine preventable diseases in childhood is provided by the VENICE 2 project coordinated by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. ([1]) Smallpox has been declared by the World Health Organisation globally eradicated in 1980.

Concerning initiatives to improve the perception of the benefits of childhood vaccination, the Council adopted conclusions in 2011 to strengthen efforts to improve immunisation coverage for vaccine preventable diseases, including measles, mumps and rubella. The conference organised by the Commission in 2012 on childhood immunisation further underlined the importance in particular of vaccination against measles and rubella.

The European Parliament and Council Decision of 22 October 2013 on serious cross border threats to health calls for improved processes to exchange information related to the coverage of vaccine preventable diseases. In addition, the decision provides a legal basis for coordination measures to control outbreaks, including vaccination. The decision further enables the joint procurement of medical countermeasures and will allow EU Member States that participate in this process to procure jointly vaccines.

Finally, vaccination is the competence of national public health authorities, who are also responsible to communicate the benefits of vaccination to the general population and healthcare workers.

([1]) http://venice.cineca.org/reports.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010985/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Prestación de desempleo en la Eurozona

¿Conoce la Comisión la sugerencia del FMI de crear una prestación común por desempleo en la eurozona?

¿Qué opinión le merece?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(20 de noviembre de 2013)

El Fondo Monetario Internacional (FMI), publicó en septiembre de 2013 el informe titulado «Towards a Fiscal Union for the Euro Area» (Hacia una unión fiscal para la zona del euro), en el que se menciona, entre otras iniciativas para completar la UEM, un sistema de transferencias temporales para mejorar la distribución del riesgo. Una de las opciones consideradas es un régimen común de seguro de desempleo. Si bien el informe del FMI aboga por incrementar la distribución del riesgo en la zona del euro, no destaca ninguna propuesta individual como la más adecuada para conseguir ese propósito. Con el fin de limitar el riesgo moral, el FMI aclara en su informe que, como requisito previo para cualquier incremento de la distribución del riesgo es preciso reforzar la gobernanza y las disposiciones en materia de ejecución. El análisis del FMI coincide en gran medida con el de la Comisión.

En su plan general de profundización de la UEM, de noviembre de 2012, la Comisión analiza las perspectivas a corto, medio y largo plazo. A largo plazo, también menciona la posibilidad de avanzar de forma escalonada hacia una capacidad presupuestaria para reforzar la estabilización que incluya un sistema vinculado a las prestaciones por desempleo. El principio rector sería que todo paso hacia una mayor mutualización del riesgo debe ir acompañado de una mayor disciplina e integración presupuestarias.

En su reciente Comunicación «Strengthening the Social Dimension of EMU» (Refuerzo de la dimensión social de la UEM), la Comisión ha reiterado que a largo plazo podría desarrollarse una capacidad de estabilización a nivel de la UEM. Dado que las competencias de la UE en materia de presupuesto, empleo y protección social son limitadas, esta última etapa requeriría una revisión fundamental de los Tratados que debería ir acompañada de una integración política equivalente, con las necesarias garantías de legitimidad democrática y rendición de cuentas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010985/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Unemployment benefit in the euro area

Is the Commission aware of the International Monetary Fund (FMI)'s suggestion to create a common unemployment benefit for the euro area?

What is its opinion of it?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) published in September 2013 a staff discussion note 'Towards a fiscal union for the euro area' mentioning, among other initiatives to complete the EMU, a system of temporary transfers to improve risk-sharing. A common unemployment insurance scheme is one of the options reviewed. While the IMF note advocates increasing fiscal risk-sharing in the euro area, it does not single out one proposal as best adequate for that purpose. In order to contain moral hazard, the IMF note clarifies that as a prerequisite for any increase in fiscal risk sharing, governance and enforcement provisions should be further strengthened. The IMF analysis is largely consistent with that of the Commission.

In its Blueprint on the deepening of EMU of November 2012, the Commission analysed prospects for further EMU deepening over the short, medium and long-term. For the long-term, it also mentions possibilities for a step-wise move towards a fiscal capacity to enhance stabilisation, including a system linked to unemployment benefits. The guiding principle would be that any steps to further mutualisation of risk go hand-in-hand with greater fiscal discipline and integration.

In its recent communication on 'Strengthening the Social Dimension of EMU', the Commission has reiterated that an EMU-level stabilisation capacity could be developed in the long-run. Given that the EU's competences are limited as regards budget, employment and social protection, this final stage would require a fundamental overhaul of the Treaties, which would also have to be accompanied by commensurate political integration, ensuring democratic legitimacy and accountability.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010986/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Primas a renovables y excepciones en España

El Gobierno español aprobó en julio pasado un decreto-ley mediante el cual se reforma el sector eléctrico en el Estado. Este decreto-ley cambia las reglas de juego del sector eléctrico español (Real Decreto-ley 9/2013 de 12 de julio). Por ejemplo, mediante ese decreto-ley se suprimen las primas por generación para las energías renovables.

Sin embargo, el decreto-ley señala una excepción a esa supresión. La misma no afectará de la misma forma a las adjudicatarias de un concurso solar de I+D de 2010. Aunque el texto del decreto está en plural, solo existe un posible beneficiario de esa excepción: Solar Reserve. A esta empresa se le mantendrá la oferta económica que presentó en el concurso.

¿Conoce la Comisión ese hecho?

¿Qué opinión tiene la Comisión sobe el hecho de que el decreto-ley dé trato de favor a un operador concreto del sistema?

¿Considera la Comisión que el decreto-ley defiende la libre competencia?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(14 de noviembre de 2013)

La Comisión no tiene conocimiento del caso concreto al que hace referencia Su Señoría, pero se pondrá en contacto con las autoridades españolas para recabar más información.

Si existiera un caso de discriminación, la Comisión analizaría si dicha medida está justificada en virtud de la legislación de la UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010986/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Renewable energy premiums and exceptions in Spain

In July, the Spanish Government adopted a decree-law to reform the country's electricity sector. This decree-law changes the rules of play for the Spanish electricity sector (Royal Decree-law 9/2013 of 12 July). For example, this decree-law removes the premiums for generating renewable energies.

However, the decree-law makes an exception to this removal. It will not have the same effect on winners of tenders for solar energy R&D in 2010. Although the decree's text uses the plural, there is only one possible beneficiary of this exception: Solar Reserve. The financial offer made by this company in its bid to tender will be maintained.

Is the Commission aware of this fact?

What is the Commission's opinion of the fact that this decree-law gives favourable treatment to a particular operator of the system?

Does the Commission consider the decree-law to defend free competition?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(14 November 2013)

The Commission is not aware of the specific case referred to by the Honourable Member, but it will contact Spanish authorities to obtain further information.

If there is a case of discrimination, the Commission will analyse if such measure is justified according to the EU legislation.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010988/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Toussas (GUE/NGL)
(26 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Όχι στην ιδιωτικοποίηση της παραλίας της Καραθώνας

Σε εξέλιξη βρίσκεται από το ΤΑΙΠΕΔ η διαδικασία ιδιωτικοποίησης της παραλίας της Καραθώνας — έκτασης 1 000 στρεμμάτων — στο Ναύπλιο της Αργολίδας, με σοβαρές επιπτώσεις για την εργατική τάξη και τα λαϊκά στρώματα της ευρύτερης περιοχής. Απαράδεκτη απόφαση, που εντάσσεται στην αντιλαϊκή πολιτική της συγκυβέρνησης ΝΔ-ΠΑΣΟΚ, της ΕΕ και της τρόικας, για την παράδοση δημόσιων χώρων και υποδομών της χώρας σε μονοπωλιακούς ομίλους.

Η εμπορευματοποίηση της παραλίας της Καραθώνας μεθοδεύεται εδώ και πολλά χρόνια. Ο δημοτική αρχή του Ναυπλίου έχει δώσει άδεια λειτουργίας σε μαγαζιά στη παραλία, τα οποία ουσιαστικά εμποδίζουν την ελεύθερη πρόσβαση των εργαζόμενων κατοίκων.

Με ευθύνη της δημοτικής αρχής του Ναυπλίου, ακριβώς πάνω από την παραλία της Καραθώνας λειτουργεί παράνομη χωματερή που αποτελεί βόμβα για την υγεία των λουόμενων και των κατοίκων της περιοχής και μόνιμη εστία ρύπανσης του περιβάλλοντος. Η κατάσταση με τα σκουπίδια έχει φτάσει στο απροχώρητο καθώς πολλές φορές έχουν πιάσει φωτιά, με αποτέλεσμα να έχει καεί και ένα κομμάτι του βουνού. Η δυσοσμία είναι ανυπόφορη και με τις πρώτες βροχές ρέει βρόμικο νερό από τον σκουπιδότοπο προς τη θάλασσα.

Βαρύτατες είναι οι ευθύνες της συγκυβέρνησης ΝΔ-ΠΑΣΟΚ, όπως και των προηγούμενων κυβερνήσεων, της δημοτικής αρχής Ναυπλίου και της Περιφερειακής Διοίκησης της Ανατολικής Πελοποννήσου γιατί απορρίπτουν τη διαλογή απορριμμάτων (χαρτί, γυαλί, μέταλλα, οργανικά) στην πηγή, βασική προϋπόθεση για την αποτελεσματική ανακύκλωση των απορριμμάτων και χωρίς υψηλό κόστος. Υιοθετούν τη μεγιστοποίηση των σύμμεικτων απορριμμάτων προωθώντας έτσι τη λύση της καύσης, που βάζει σε τεράστιους κινδύνους τη δημόσια υγεία, δεδομένου ότι παράγει τις καρκινογόνες διοξίνες και άλλα επικίνδυνα για την υγεία και το περιβάλλον απόβλητα. Η διαχείριση των απορριμμάτων σχεδιάζεται με κριτήριο τα επιχειρηματικά κέρδη και όχι την προστασία της υγείας της λαϊκής οικογένειας και του περιβάλλοντος της περιοχής.

Πώς τοποθετείται η Επιτροπή στα δίκαια αιτήματα των εργαζόμενων κατοίκων της περιοχής, τα οποία προβάλλουν το ΚΚΕ, η Λαϊκή Συσπείρωση και μαζικοί φορείς ενάντια στην εκχώρηση της παραλίας Καραθώνας σε ιδιώτη και για παραλίες ανοιχτές για όλο το λαό, δωρεάν, με τις κατάλληλες υποδομές; Πώς τοποθετείται στα αιτήματα για δημιουργία κρατικού φορέα για τη διαχείριση των απορριμμάτων, άμεση διαλογή των απορριμμάτων στην πηγή, ανακύκλωση, επεξεργασία κομποστοποίησης (για οργανικό λίπασμα) και ταφή των υπολειμμάτων σε ΧΥΤΑ με κατοχύρωση της δουλειάς και των εργασιακών δικαιωμάτων όλων των εργαζομένων στον τομέα αυτόν και για το άμεσο κλείσιμο της χωματερής και την αποκατάσταση του χώρου;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(20 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Υπεύθυνα να διοργανώνουν τις διαδικασίες ιδιωτικοποίησης είναι τα κράτη μέλη, τηρώντας απολύτως το δίκαιο της ΕΕ και λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τις διεθνείς εμπειρίες και βέλτιστες πρακτικές. Η απόφαση όσον αφορά ποια περιουσιακά στοιχεία του Δημοσίου ή ποιες δημόσιες επιχειρήσεις πρέπει να ιδιωτικοποιηθούν, σε ποιον βαθμό και με ποια σειρά θα διεξαχθούν οι εν λόγω ιδιωτικοποιήσεις υπάγεται εξ ολοκλήρου στην αρμοδιότητα των ελληνικών αρχών.

Η ευρωπαϊκή νομοθεσία περιλαμβάνει διάφορους στόχους που αποβλέπουν στην ενθάρρυνση της επαναχρησιμοποίησης και της ανακύκλωσης ιδίως των αστικών αποβλήτων (το ποσοστό επαναχρησιμοποίησης/ανακύκλωσης της τάξεως του 50% πρέπει να επιτευχθεί ως το 2020). Είναι αρμοδιότητα των κρατών μελών να οργανώνουν τα δικά τους συστήματα διαχείρισης αποβλήτων, έτσι ώστε να επιτυγχάνονται οι ευρωπαϊκοί στόχοι. Ως εκ τούτου, η ενδεχόμενη δημιουργία ενός εθνικού οργανισμού για τα απόβλητα αποτελεί αποκλειστική αρμοδιότητα των εθνικών αρχών.

Σύμφωνα με τα στοιχεία που υπέβαλαν οι ελληνικές αρχές τον Σεπτέμβριο του 2013, όλοι οι παράνομοι χώροι υγειονομικής ταφής αποβλήτων στην περιοχή του Ναυπλίου έχουν κλείσει και προς το παρόν τελούν υπό διαδικασίες αποκατάστασης. Ωστόσο, εάν η Επιτροπή λάβει νέα στοιχεία που αποδεικνύουν τη μη συμμόρφωση στον τομέα αυτό, θα λάβει όλα τα αναγκαία μέτρα ώστε να διασφαλίσει την πλήρη εφαρμογή της ευρωπαϊκής νομοθεσίας.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010988/13
to the Commission
Georgios Toussas (GUE/NGL)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: No to privatisation of Karathona beach

Privatisation of Karathona beach in Nafplion Argolidas (100 hectares) is currently being negotiated by the Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund. This will have a serious impact on the working and grassroots classes in the area as a whole. This unacceptable decision forms part of the anti-grassroots policy of the New Democracy/PASOK coalition, the EU and the Troika to sell off the country's public spaces and infrastructure to monopoly groups.

The commercialisation of Karathona beach has been pursued for many years now. Nafplion municipal council has granted licences for shops on the beach, which basically block free access for local workers.

Nafplion municipal council has allowed an illegal rubbish dump to operate directly above Karathona beach; this is an accident waiting to happen in terms of the health of bathers and local residents and a permanent source of environmental pollution. The rubbish dump is bursting at the seams and fires have broken out on numerous occasions, causing fire damage to part of the mountain. The stench is unbearable and the first rains of the season have washed filthy water down from the dump into the sea.

The New Democracy/PASOK coalition, previous governments, the Nafplion municipal council and the East Peloponnese regional government have a great deal to answer for, because they refuse to separate paper, glass, metal and organic waste as the first step towards effective and cheap recycling. They have opted to maximise mixed refuse dumps and go down the incineration route. This poses a huge threat to public health, because it produces carcinogenic dioxins and other forms of waste which are harmful to health and damage the environment. Waste management is designed so that waste companies make a profit, not to protect the health of ordinary people and the local environment.

What is the Commission's stand on the fair demands by local workers in the area being put forward by the Greek Communist Party, the Popular Rally and the media that Karathona beach should not be sold off and that beaches with suitable infrastructures should be accessible to everyone, free of charge? What is its stand on the demands being made for a government waste management agency to be set up, for waste to be sorted at source, recycled and composted (for organic fertiliser) and for the remainder to be buried in landfills, for the jobs and labour rights of all workers in this sector to be protected and for the dump to be closed immediately and the site restored?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

The responsibility to organise privatisation processes belongs to Member States, acting in full compliance with EC law, and taking into account international experiences and best practices. The choice of what, how far and in which sequence public assets or companies should be privatised remains entirely with the Greek authorities.

The European legislation includes several targets aiming at encouraging reuse and recycling notably for municipal waste (50% re-use/recycling rate to be met by 2020). It is the responsibility of the Member States to organise their waste management systems so that the European targets are met. Therefore the possible creation of a National Waste Agency is an exclusive competence of the national authorities.

According to the information presented by the Greek authorities in September 2013, all illegal landfills in Naflion zone have been closed and are currently being rehabilitated. However should the Commission receive any new information proving the non-compliance in this area, it will take all necessary steps to ensure full application of the European legislation.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010989/13
to the Council
Nick Griffin (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Tolerance

Could the Council clarify if any taxpayer's money has been given to the European Council on Tolerance and Reconciliation?

Reply
(18 November 2013)

There is no Council budget line for financing the European Council on Tolerance and Reconciliation.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010990/13
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Equitable Life compensation payment scheme

Could the Commission indicate whether there are further redress options available to Equitable Life policyholders, who are being offered about 22% of the calculated losses incurred?

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

The Commission fully understands the difficulties the collapse of the Equitable Life Assurance Society has created for Equitable Life policy-holders.

However, it should be noted that the Consolidated Life Assurance Directive ([1]) does not require that Member States have in place appropriate and effective schemes for the out-of-court settlement of disputes between insurance undertakings and their policy-holders.

Nevertheless, the Commission would like to assure the Honourable Member that it will continue to follow the case closely and will be ready to intervene should evidence of any infringement of EC law emerge from the proceedings set in motion by the UK authorities.

([1]) OJ L 345, 19.12.2002, p. 1-51.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010991/13
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Community trade-mark reform and non-agricultural geographical indicators

Could the Commission clarify whether the creation of collective and certification marks will, in any way, prejudice the introduction of a specific *sui generis* set of rules for non-agricultural geographical indicators able to encapsulate cultural and collective heritage dimensions which fall beyond the scope of those indicators?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The Commission's proposal to amend Council Regulation (EC) No 207/2009 on the Community trade mark by, *inter alia*, adding provisions on the protection of European certification marks does not prejudge in any way the Commission's ongoing reflection on the merits of protecting geographical indications for non-agricultural products at EU level.

The proposed rules on certification marks complement the existing provisions on Community collective marks and seek to remedy the current imbalance between the Community trade mark system and national systems, where certification marks are protected in several Member States. Certification marks allow a (mainly private) certifying body to permit adherents to the certification system to use the mark as a sign for goods or services complying with the corresponding certification requirements. Such mark does not need to have any geographic connotation and the certification requirements are freely set by the certification body. In contrast, geographical indications are a tool to identify products with a clear link to a geographical location, they are available to all relevant producers in the given area, and product specifications are linked to production materials or techniques linked to the geographic location and seek to preserve a traditional quality level. The two tools are therefore complementary.

The analysis of the feasibility of an EU-level protection for non-agricultural products has not yet been completed. No decision has therefore been taken yet as to its follow-up. The possible introduction, at EU level, of a specific sui generis set of rules to protect geographical indications for such products is an option that continues to be considered and further studied.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010992/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Phil Bennion (ALDE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Protests by Bangladesh workers and the minimum wage

Following the recent BBC Panorama programme investigation and the protests by ready-made--garment workers (RMG) in Bangladesh, can the Vice-President/High Representative please update me on any progress that EEAS can see on the following:

1. Is the protocol agreed between the UN, international companies (especially European- based firms), the Bangladesh Government and Bangladeshi trade unions being implemented?

2. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of any plans by the Bangladesh Government to increase the minimum wage?

3. Have basic health and safety standards, such as keeping gates to factories unlocked, been implemented?

4. Has any provision been made to ensure that RMG workers are not being unofficially worked outside of their legal working times? If so, is this mechanism being enforced effectively?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2013)

The European Commission understands the question refers to the Accord on Fire and Building Safety, to which the Commission is not a party and which was initiated by trade unions and NGOs, together with industry. The EU welcomes this initiative, which has been signed by over 100, mostly European, companies sourcing from Bangladesh. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is coordinating efforts by the Accord and other similar initiatives to strengthen *inter alia* the inspection of garment factories in Bangladesh, including on safety standards and working conditions.

The Commission is aware that Bangladesh is considering increasing the minimum wage. A new Wage Board has been established, and its members include employers' and workers' representatives.

The Honourable Member is also referred to replies to questions (E-008416/13, E-008417/2013, E-008418/2013, E-008419/2013, E-10828/13) ([1]) on initiatives by the Commission in Bangladesh, in particular, on the Sustainability Compact for continuous improvements in labour rights and factory safety in the Ready-Made Garment and Knitwear Industry in Bangladesh ([2]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm
([2]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/july/tradoc_151601.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010993/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(26 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Problematiche relative all'applicazione della direttiva 94/62/CE sugli imballaggi e i rifiuti di imballaggi

Il 27 marzo 2013 è stato pubblicato sulla Gazzetta ufficiale della Repubblica italiana il DM 18 marzo 2013 che individua le caratteristiche tecniche dei sacchi per l'asporto delle merci. Le disposizioni del decreto ministeriale dovrebbero entrare in vigore dal 13 settembre 2013, data in cui si sarebbe dovuta concludere la procedura di notifica alla Commissione ai sensi della direttiva 98/34/CE.

Nella risposta alla mia interrogazione E-004332/2013 «Problematiche relative all'applicazione della direttiva 94/62/CE sugli imballaggi e i rifiuti di imballaggio», la Commissione afferma che la legislazione italiana era oggetto di una procedura di infrazione e ne stava valutando la compatibilità con la normativa europea.

Può la Commissione:

1. riferire quali osservazioni ha sollevato in seguito alla procedura di infrazione cui è stata sottoposta la normativa italiana;

2. fornire un aggiornamento sullo stato della procedura d'infrazione citata nella risposta all'interrogazione E-004332/2013;

3. precisare se la disciplina italiana è in linea con la normativa europea in materia, in particolare con la direttiva 94/62/CE sugli imballaggi e rifiuti di imballaggio?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(21 novembre 2013)

La Commissione sta tutt'ora valutando la compatibilità della legislazione italiana (tra cui la più recente legislazione adottata e pubblicata dall'Italia in data 27 marzo 2013) con la normativa e le politiche dell'UE del settore, ivi compresa la direttiva 94/62/CE sugli imballaggi e i rifiuti di imballaggio ([1]).

La Commissione informa l'onorevole deputato che il 4 novembre 2013 ha adottato una proposta di modifica della summenzionata direttiva in merito alle disposizioni sulle borse di plastica in materiale leggero ([2]).

([1]) GU L 365 del 31.12.1994, pag. 1.
([2]) COM(2013)761 def.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010993/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Problems with the application of Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste

The Ministerial Decree of 18 March 2013 specifying the technical characteristics of carrier bags was published in the Official Gazette of the Italian Republic on 27 March 2013. The provisions of the ministerial decree were supposed to enter into force as of 13 September 2013, the date on which the procedure to notify the Commission in accordance with Directive 98/34/EC should have been completed.

In its answer to my Question E-004332/2013 'Problems with the application of Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste', the Commission stated that the Italian legislation was the subject of an infringement procedure and that it was assessing its compatibility with EU legislation.

1. Can the Commission report its observations following the infringement procedure concerning the Italian legislation?

2. Can it provide an update on the status of the infringement procedure referred to in its answer to Question E-004332/2013?

3. Can it specify whether the Italian legislation complies with EU legislation in this field, in particular with Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste?

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

The Commission has not finalised the assessment of the compatibility of the Italian legislation, including the latest legislation that was adopted and published by Italy on 27/03/2013, with EU legislation and policy in this area, including Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste ([1]).

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that on the 4th November 2013 it adopted a proposal to modify the abovementioned Directive with regard to provisions concerning lightweight plastic bags. ([2])

([1]) OJ L 365, 31.12.1994.
([2]) COM(2013) 761 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010994/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(26 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Possibile caso di discriminazione sul luogo di lavoro per capigliatura e abbigliamento

Il 6 marzo 2012 presso il Tribunale Militare di Verona si sarebbe verificato un episodio discriminatorio a danno di un dipendente civile del Ministero della Difesa italiano, oggetto di richiamo e preavviso di sanzioni disciplinari in quanto portatore di capelli lunghi e abbigliamento informale, ritenuti non consoni all'ufficialità dell'ente. Il dipendente sarebbe stato richiamato, con un pressante ordine a modificare il taglio di capelli e l'abbigliamento, e con un'espressa minaccia di sanzioni disciplinari, seppur in mancanza di ordini di servizio e/o direttive scritte dell'ente in tal senso ([1]). Il lavoratore, non essendosi adeguato all'ordine, sarebbe stato poi oggetto di ulteriori condotte mobbizzanti tese al suo isolamento in quanto privato per oltre un mese di un'autonoma postazione di lavoro, nonché attraverso iniziative disciplinari capziose sino ad innescare documentate patologie a carattere psicologico, pervenendo alle successive dimissioni per giusta causa con l'attivazione di azione di risarcitoria nei confronti dell'ente ([2]).

La vicenda sopra descritta appare come un possibile caso di discriminazione dei lavoratori in ragione del loro aspetto estetico, in assenza di qualsiasi normativa contraria che possa imporre ad un dipendente civile che svolge attività presso un ufficio giudiziario militare di avere i capelli corti e un abbigliamento formale con giacca e cravatta.

1. Ritiene la Commissione che sia contrario alla normativa in materia di parità di trattamento (direttiva 2000/78/CE) discriminare sul mercato del lavoro gli uomini che hanno capelli lunghi o un abbigliamento informale, a maggior ragione quando alcuna norma o uso aziendale imponga questi criteri estetici?

2. È essa disposta ad esaminare nei particolari la situazione denunciata dall'interrogante presso il Tribunale Militare di Verona, quale concreto esempio di trattamento discriminatorio riservato agli impiegati di sesso maschile da parte di un datore di lavoro (si veda l'interrogazione n. E-003765/1998 dell'11 dicembre 1998 e relativa risposta del 10 febbraio 1999)?

3. Viste anche la Raccomandazione 92/131/CEE della Commissione del 27 novembre 1991 e la Risoluzione del Consiglio del 29 maggio 1990, in tema di tutela della dignità delle donne e degli uomini nel mondo del lavoro, quali iniziative intende assumere affinché sia contrastata la discriminazione del lavoratore per canoni estetici e di abbigliamento nel caso concreto ed in via generale?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(21 novembre 2013)

La normativa dell'Unione offre tutela da diverse forme di discriminazione sul posto di lavoro: la direttiva 2000/78/CE ([3]) vieta le discriminazioni fondate sulla religione o le convinzioni personali, gli handicap, l'età o le tendenze sessuali per quanto riguarda l'occupazione e le condizioni di lavoro, la direttiva 2000/43/CE ([4]) proibisce la discriminazione per motivi di razza e origine etnica e la direttiva 2006/54/CE ([5]) attua il principio della parità di trattamento tra gli uomini e le donne in materia di occupazione e impiego.

La normativa dell'Unione in materia di parità di trattamento non contempla altre forme di discriminazione. Pertanto la questione se sia legittimo da parte di un datore di lavoro pubblico discriminare o molestare un dipendente sulla base del suo abbigliamento e della lunghezza dei capelli, come pure del suo aspetto generale, deve essere trattata nell'ambito del diritto nazionale.

([1]) Lo stesso Presidente del Tribunale Militare di Verona, con nota del 9 maggio 2013, rispondeva a specifica istanza scritta del dipendente in tema di normative interne all'ente sui canoni estetici e di abbigliamento del personale, affermando testualmente che: «agli atti d'ufficio non risultano ordini di servizio e/o direttive scritte, adottati dai vertici dell'ente in materia dei canoni estetici e di abbigliamento per il personale a status civile in servizio presso l'ente medesimo».

([2]) Si veda la motivazione della nota di dimissioni per causa di servizio del 3 febbraio 2013, nonché l'excursus degli eventi quali ripercorsi in dettaglio nelle istanze del dipendente del 3, 13 e 23 febbraio 2013 alla medesima amministrazione ai fini dell'attivazione del procedimento per il riconoscimento di infermità per causa di servizio, dichiarato inammissibile con nota del 3 aprile 2013 per sopravvenuta abrogazione dell'istituto.

([3]) Direttiva 2000/78/CE del Consiglio, del 27 novembre 2000, che stabilisce un quadro generale per la parità di trattamento in materia di occupazione e di condizioni di lavoro (GU L 303 del 2.12.2000, pag. 16).

([4]) Direttiva 2000/43/CE del Consiglio, del 29 giugno 2000, che attua il principio della parità di trattamento tra le persone indipendentemente dalla razza e dall'origine etnica (GU L 180 del 19 luglio 2000, pag. 22).

([5]) Direttiva 2006/54/CE, del 5 luglio 2006, sull'attuazione del principio delle pari opportunità e della parità di trattamento tra gli uomini e le donne in materia di occupazione e impiego (rifusione) (GU L 204 del 26 luglio 2006, pag. 23).

La raccomandazione 92/131/CEE della Commissione del 27 novembre 1991 ([6]) e la risoluzione del Consiglio del 29 maggio 1990 sulla tutela della dignità degli uomini e delle donne nel mondo del lavoro ([7]) riguardano le molestie sessuali o altro comportamento indesiderato di natura sessuale, e non già i casi di molestia legati all'aspetto generale di un lavoratore.

Alla luce di queste osservazioni, la Commissione non ha titolo a intervenire in virtù del diritto dell'UE per contrastare la discriminazione o le molestie nei confronti di lavoratori per canoni estetici e di abbigliamento.

([6]) Raccomandazione 92/131/CEE della Commissione, del 27 novembre 1991, sulla tutela della dignità delle donne e degli uomini sul lavoro.

([7]) Risoluzione del Consiglio, del 29 maggio 1990, sulla tutela della dignità degli uomini e delle donne nel mondo del lavoro (GU C 157 del 27 giugno 1990, pag. 3).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010994/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Possible case of discrimination in the workplace regarding hair and clothing

On 6 March 2012, at the Verona military tribunal, there was a case of discrimination against a civilian employee of the Italian Ministry of Defence. The employee was suspended and received notification of disciplinary sanctions because he had long hair and wore informal clothing, which was considered not in keeping with the body's official status. Apparently, the employee was suspended and ordered to change the length of his hair and his attire at once, with the express threat of disciplinary sanctions, although the organisation had no service regulations and/or written guidelines relating to these points ([1]). The worker did not comply with the order and was then subject to further harassment designed to isolate him, since he was deprived for over a month of his own workstation, and specious disciplinary measures were taken, which triggered documented psychological disorders. These apparently led to his subsequent resignation with a claim of just cause, and an action for compensation from the organisation ([2]).

The events described above seem to constitute a possible case of discrimination against workers on the grounds of their appearance, in the absence of any rules that might require a civilian employee carrying out duties at a military legal office to have short hair and adopt formal attire with a jacket and tie.

1. Does the Commission believe that it runs counter to the legislation on equal treatment (Directive 2000/78/EC) to discriminate in the workplace against men who have long hair or informal attire, and all the more so in cases where a company rule or practice imposes such criteria regarding appearance?

2. Is the Commission prepared to take a closer look at the situation at the Verona military tribunal referred to here, as a specific example of discriminatory treatment of male employees by an employer (see Question E-003765/1998 of 11 December 1998 and the answer of 10 February 1999)?

3. In view of Commission Recommendation 92/131/EEC of 27 November 1991 and the Council Resolution of 29 May 1990 on the protection of the dignity of women and men at work, what action does it intend to take to combat discrimination against workers on the grounds of rules regarding appearance and attire, in this specific case and in general?

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

EU Directives provide protection from discrimination at the workplace on a number of grounds: Directive 2000/78/EC ([3]) prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation in employment and occupation; Directive 2000/43 ([4]) similarly prohibits such discrimination on grounds of racial and ethnic origin; and Directive 2006/54/EC ([5]) implements the principle of equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation.

EU equal treatment legislation does not cover other grounds of discrimination. Therefore the question whether it is lawful for a public employer to discriminate or harass an employee on the ground of his attire and the length of his hair, as well as his general appearance, has to be solved under national law.

([1]) In his note dated 9 May 2013, the President of the Verona military tribunal replied to a specific written question from the employee regarding the organisation's rules on the appearance and attire of staff members, stating that: 'in the official documents there are no service regulations and/or written guidelines adopted by the management of the organisation regarding rules on appearance or attire for civilian staff working at the organisation'.

([2]) See the explanatory statement in the letter of resignation for work-related reasons dated 3 February 2013, and the descriptions of the events as explained in detail in the employee's applications dated 3, 13 and 23 February 2013 to the administration with a view to initiating proceedings for recognition of the existence of work-related illness, declared inadmissible in a letter dated 3 April 2013 because of the subsequent abolition of the institution.

([3]) Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation (OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p.16).

([4]) Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin (OJ L 180 of 19 July 2000 p. 22).

([5]) Directive 2006/54/EC 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 of 26 July 2006, p. 23).

Commission Recommendation 92/131/EEC of 27 November 1991 ([6]) and the Council Resolution of 29 May 1990 on the protection of the dignity of women and men at work ([7]) concern sexual harassment or other unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. Therefore they do not cover cases of harassment based on a worker's general appearance.

In view of the abovementioned observations, the Commission is in no position to take action under EC law to combat discrimination or harassment against workers on the grounds of rules regarding appearance and attire.

([6]) Commission Recommendation 92/131/EEC of 27 November 1991 on the protection of the dignity of women at work, 92/131/EEC.
([7]) Council Resolution of 29 May 1990 on the protection of the dignity of women and men at work, 90/C 157/02.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010995/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(26 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Possibili finanziamenti per la ricerca universitaria

L'Università telematica Pegaso, nata con decreto ministeriale del 20 aprile 2006, è una Open University che eroga 9 corsi di laurea, corsi postlaurea e corsi di formazione in ambiente e-learning grazie ad una piattaforma di ultima generazione unica nel suo genere. L'Ateneo dispone di oltre 200 poli didattici sul territorio e di 8 sedi d'esame nelle maggiori città italiane. Pegaso ha come missione il raggiungimento della completa interazione tra accademia e discente finalizzata al costante perfezionamento delle qualifiche culturali e professionali che si realizza attraverso i propri modelli pedagogici di formazione continua (*Lifelong Learning*) e di apprendimento personale (*Personal Learning Environment*). Fiore all'occhiello della Pegaso è il servizio di Job Placement che si occupa di guidare lo studente nel difficile percorso di inserimento nel mondo del lavoro successivamente alla conclusione del ciclo di studi.

L'Ateneo — ritenendo il processo di internazionalizzazione come uno dei cardini fondamentali per il proprio sviluppo culturale, scientifico e tecnologico — ha stabilito rapporti di collaborazione con prestigiose università europee ed extraeuropee rafforzando la dimensione internazionale della ricerca. Tramite il proprio Ufficio relazioni internazionali, l'Università facilita la comunicazione tra tutti i soggetti coinvolti nelle relazioni universitarie attraverso la mobilità di studenti e docenti, il trasferimento di tecnologia, progetti di cooperazione, programmi di ricerca congiunti, accordi bilaterali e contatti istituzionali. Proprio nell'ottica del potenziamento della dimensione internazionale Pegaso si candida quale ideatore e realizzatore di una piattaforma — condivisa tra le università telematiche europee — dalle caratteristiche uniche come, a puro titolo di esempio, la ricerca automatica degli argomenti sulla base dell'intelligenza e della relazione semantica. Si tratta di una sorta di «Erasmus telematico» ad altissimo coefficiente di tecnologia e di interazione che rivoluzionerà il modello di open university nel Vecchio Continente.

Tutto ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se vi è la possibilità di ricevere finanziamenti per incrementare la ricerca e lo sviluppouniversitario.

2. se sono presenti iniziative europee riguardanti simili iniziative e, se sì, quali;

3. se è in grado di fornire un quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di Androulla Vassiliou a nome della Commissione
(15 novembre 2013)

Le università per l'insegnamento a distanza svolgono un ruolo importante di apertura dell'accesso al sapere; tale ruolo potrà divenire più importante in futuro a motivo della crescente rilevanza di nuovi metodi di insegnamento e di apprendimento. La recente iniziativa della Commissione «Aprire l'istruzione» fornisce sostegno e orientamenti agli stakeholder e agli Stati membri per promuovere l'introduzione di pratiche e contenuti educativi aperti nei loro sistemi di istruzione e formazione. Quest'iniziativa sarà implementata con finanziamenti a valere sui nuovi programmi Erasmus+ e Orizzonte 2020 nonché sui Fondi strutturali e di investimento.

Inoltre, la Commissione ha avviato il portale Open Education Europa (http://openeducationeuropa.eu) che consente ai discenti potenziali di reperire e usare diverse risorse educative aperte, corsi e MOOC (corsi online aperti e di massa) di diverse istituzioni europee. Il portale intende accrescere la visibilità delle istituzioni e agevolare la ricerca di risorse pertinenti agli utilizzatori potenziali. L'università Pegaso potrebbe esaminare le potenzialità di cooperazione con questo portale per promuovere le risorse aperte nell'ambito del suo portafoglio.

L'università Pegaso potrebbe inoltre esaminare le opportunità di finanziamento nell'ambito dei partenariati strategici Erasmus+. Questi partenariati consentono alle organizzazioni di diversi paesi attive nel campo dell'istruzione, della formazione e della gioventù di cooperare per implementare prassi innovative sfocianti in un insegnamento e in un apprendimento di qualità elevata, nella modernizzazione istituzionale e nell'innovazione societale. Uno degli obiettivi consiste nel promuovere una maggiore varietà di modi di studio e nuove forme di apprendimento, segnatamente attraverso l'uso strategico delle TIC, delle risorse educative aperte e della mobilità virtuale a sostegno di approcci apprenditivi personalizzati e dell'apprendimento collaborativo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010995/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Possible funding for university research

Pegaso, the distance-learning university, which was established by ministerial decree on 20 April 2006, is an open university that offers nine undergraduate degree courses, postgraduate courses and training courses in an e-learning environment, through a latest-generation platform that is one of a kind. The university has over 200 teaching hubs in Italy and eight examination centres in major Italian cities. Pegaso's aim is to achieve full interaction between teaching staff and students, with the aim of constantly improving cultural and professional qualifications, through its own educational models for lifelong learning and personal learning environments. The jewel in Pegaso's crown is the job placement service, which gives students guidance in the difficult task of entering the world of work after finishing their studies.

Believing the process of internationalisation to be one of the vital aspects in its own cultural, scientific and technological development, the university has established collaborative links with prestigious universities in Europe and beyond, strengthening the international dimension of research. Through its international relations office, the university facilitates communication between those involved in university relations through the mobility of students and teachers, technology transfer, cooperation projects, joint research programmes, bilateral agreements and institutional contacts. With a view to strengthening the international dimension, Pegaso is bidding to be the originator and creator of a platform shared between the European distance-learning universities, with unique features such as automatic searching of subjects based on intelligence and the semantic relationship. It is a kind of 'distance Erasmus' with very high-level technology and interaction that will revolutionise the open university model in Europe.

1. Is there a possibility of receiving funding to increase university research and development?

2. Are there any European initiatives concerning similar initiatives and, if so, what are they?

3. Can the Commission provide an overview of the situation?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

Distance Teaching Universities have an important role in opening access to knowledge; this role may increase in the future due to the increased importance of new modes of teaching and learning. The Commission's recent initiative on 'Opening up Education' provides support and guidance for stakeholders and Member States to enhance the introduction of open education practices and content in their education and training systems. This initiative will be implemented with funding from the new programmes Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020, as well as Structural and Investment Funds.

In addition, the Commission has launched the Open Education Europa portal (http://openeducationeuropa.eu); it allows potential learners to find and access different Open Educational Resources, courses, and MOOCs, by different European institutions. It aims to enhance visibility for institutions and facilitate the search for relevant resources for potential users. Pegaso University may wish to explore the potential of cooperating with this portal to promote Open Resources in its portfolio.

Pegaso university could also explore the funding opportunities of the Erasmus+ strategic partnerships. These partnerships allow organisations from different countries — active in the fields of education, training and youth — to cooperate in order to implement innovative practices leading to high quality teaching and learning, institutional modernisation and societal innovation. One of the objectives is to promote a greater variety of study modes and new forms of learning, notably through strategic use of ICT, open educational resources and virtual mobility, supporting personalised learning approaches, and collaborative learning.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010997/13
alla Commissione
Pino Arlacchi (S&D)
(26 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Fondi europei al Marocco per la gestione dell'immigrazione

L'Unione Europea finanzia lo stato del Marocco con decine di milioni di euro all'anno per controllare e gestire al meglio i flussi migratori verso l'Europa. Il Marocco è, infatti, una delle vie di passaggio più importanti della migrazione clandestina in Europa per chi viene dall'Africa subsahariana. La maggior parte dei migranti arriva in Marocco attraverso i confini con l'Algeria, il Niger, il Mali o in mare dalla Mauritania in fuga da guerre civili o povertà estrema. Un rapporto pubblicato recentemente da «Medici senza frontiere» sottolinea però come la polizia marocchina violi continuamente i diritti umani dei migranti con un aumento costante di abusi, comportamenti degradanti e brutalità, nonché un livello intollerabile di violenze sessuali. Anche se è impossibile determinare la reale portata di questa violenza, i dati di MSF rivelano una situazione allarmante: dal 2010 al 2012, MSF ha prestato assistenza a 700 vittime di violenza sessuale. Sempre stando al rapporto, quando giungono segnalazioni di migranti in viaggio per mare, la guardia costiera spagnola, il più delle volte, riconsegna la nave alle autorità del Marocco. Molti di questi migranti sarebbero poi portati nelle zone più desolate del Marocco o dell'Algeria e abbandonati sul posto. Quasi la metà delle 10.500 consultazioni mediche condotte dal team di MSF tra il 2010 e il 2012 in queste zone sono correlate a condizioni di vita disagiate. I respingimenti delle navi verso le coste marocchine da parte della Spagna é in chiaro contrasto con le norme che riguardano il diritto d'asilo, e la deportazione dei migranti in terre inospitali da parte del Governo marocchino rappresenta una grave violazione dei diritti umani.

1. La Commissione è al corrente dei fatti denunciati da Medici Senza Frontiere?

2. Gli aiuti erogati dall'UE al Marocco per la gestione delle frontiere non dovrebbero essere sottoposti a severi controlli per evitare che possano essere usati per violare i diritti dei migranti?

3. Può la Commissione valutare la possibilità di intraprendere azioni volte a far sì che la Spagna rispetti gli obblighi assunti nell'ambito della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'UE e rispetti anche il divieto di respingimenti collettivi, sancito dall'articolo 4 del Protocollo 4 allegato alla Convenzione europea dei diritti dell'uomo e ribadito all'articolo 19 della Carta dei diritti dell'uomo dell'Unione europea?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(2 dicembre 2013)

La Commissione è a conoscenza del rapporto di «Medici senza frontiere» e ha manifestato la propria preoccupazione al Marocco in merito a tali abusi. La delegazione UE a Rabat ha istituito una task force con i rappresentanti degli Stati membri presenti nella città e i partner internazionali per discutere la situazione.

Attualmente il governo marocchino non fruisce di fondi UE per attività connesse ai controlli di frontiera. L'UE offre sovvenzioni a organizzazioni della società civile che provvedono ai bisogni e tutelano i diritti dei migranti irregolari rimasti bloccati in Marocco, operano per prevenire la migrazione irregolare e collaborano con la diaspora marocchina per favorire lo sviluppo del paese.

In settembre, il consiglio nazionale dei diritti dell'uomo del Marocco ha invitato a un nuovo approccio alla migrazione e all'asilo nel rispetto dei diritti umani dei migranti, un cambiamento approvato al più alto livello in Marocco. Attraverso il partenariato per la mobilità UE-Marocco recentemente concluso, l'Unione si è impegnata a fornire assistenza alle autorità del paese ai fini di una gestione migliore della migrazione, dell'elaborazione ed attuazione di una politica nazionale in materia di asilo nonché di una strategia di lotta alla tratta di esseri umani.

Gli Stati membri, se consegnano migranti illegali via mare alle autorità nazionali di un paese terzo, sono tenuti a rispettare il principio di non respingimento e, laddove le persone in questione abbiano già raggiunto il territorio dell'UE, il diritto di asilo e il divieto di espulsione collettiva, secondo quanto previsto nella legislazione dell'UE. La Commissione sorveglia attentamente il rispetto della normativa unionale da parte degli Stati membri e si tiene in stretto contatto con essi, comprese le autorità spagnole. In quanto custode dei trattati, la Commissione non esiterà a prendere gli opportuni provvedimenti ove sia chiaramente dimostrato che uno Stato membro ha violato il diritto dell'Unione europea.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010997/13
to the Commission
Pino Arlacchi (S&D)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: EU funds granted to Morocco to manage immigration

The EU is providing tens of millions of euros each year to Morocco to control and manage as effectively as possible migratory flows towards Europe. Morocco is one of the major transit countries for illegal migration to Europe for people coming from sub-Saharan Africa. Most migrants arrive in Morocco across the borders with Algeria, Niger and Mali, or by sea from Mauritania, to escape civil war or extreme poverty. However, a recent report published by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) highlights that Moroccan police constantly violate migrants' human rights. There has been a steady increase of abuse, degrading behaviour and brutality, as well as an unacceptable level of sexual violence. Although it is impossible to determine the true extent of this violence, MSF's data paint an alarming picture: between 2010 and 2012, MSF provided treatment to 700 victims of sexual violence. The report also states that when the Spanish coastguard is notified of migrants travelling by sea, they usually return the boat to the Moroccan authorities. Many of these migrants are then said to be taken to the most desolate areas of Morocco or Algeria, and abandoned there. Almost half of the 10 500 medical consultations carried out in these areas by MSF's teams between 2010 and 2012 were related to poor living conditions. Spain is clearly in breach of the rules on the right to asylum when it sends back boats to Morocco's coasts, and the Moroccan Government seriously violates migrants' human rights by deporting them to inhospitable areas.

1. Is the Commission aware of the facts reported by Médecins Sans Frontières?

2. Should the EU aid granted to Morocco to manage its borders not be subject to strict controls to prevent it being used to violate migrants' rights?

3. Can the Commission consider taking action to ensure that Spain upholds the obligations assumed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and that it also respects the prohibition of collective expulsions enshrined in Article 4 of Protocol No 4 to the European Convention on Human Rights, reiterated in Article 19 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

The Commission is aware of the report by Médecins Sans Frontières and expressed concerns to Morocco about such abuses. The EU Delegation in Rabat has set up a task force with Member States present in Rabat and international partners to discuss the situation.

The Moroccan Government does not currently benefit from EU funds for activities related to border controls. The EU provides grants to civil society organisations to cater for the needs and protect the rights of irregular migrants stranded in Morocco, to prevent irregular migration and to work with the Moroccan diaspora in favour of Morocco's development.

In September, Morocco's National Council of Human Rights called for a new approach to migration and asylum, respectful of migrants' human rights, a change endorsed at the highest level in Morocco. Through the recently concluded EU -Morocco Mobility Partnership, the EU has committed to provide assistance to the authorities to assist them in improving their capacity to better manage migration and to formulate and implement a national asylum policy as well as a strategy to fight human trafficking.

When handing over the authority over third-country national boat people to the authorities of a third country, Member States have to respect the non-refoulement principle, and, in case the persons concerned would already have reached EU territory, the right to asylum and prohibition of collective expulsion, as laid down in EC law. The Commission is closely monitoring Member States' compliance with EC law and is in close contact with them, including the Spanish authorities. As guardian of the Treaties, the Commission will not hesitate to take the appropriate steps where there is clear evidence that a Member State has violated EC law.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010998/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(26 september 2013)

Betreft: Lokale overheden vrezen de komst van Roemenen en Bulgaren

Uit een onderzoek van „Overheid in Nederland" ([1]) onder 1 733 raadsleden, wethouders, statenleden en burgemeesters in Nederland blijkt dat 58 % van hen verwacht dat de werkgelegenheid erop achteruit zal gaan als op 1 januari 2014 de grenzen opengaan voor Roemenen en Bulgaren. 36 % van de ondervraagden staat neutraal in zijn beantwoording en 6 % denkt dat de werkgelegenheid zal worden gestimuleerd.

Van de bestuurders en volksvertegenwoordigers uit 53 % zich negatief over vestiging van Roemeense en Bulgaarse arbeidsmigranten in hun regio. 52 % vreest dat zij een negatief effect zullen hebben op de leefbaarheid in de buurten.

In een reactie op het onderzoek heeft de Nederlandse minister van Sociale Zaken, de heer Asscher, verklaard begrip te hebben voor de zorgen van de bestuurders en volksvertegenwoordigers. Hij zegt de negatieve effecten van de komst van Roemenen en Bulgaren onder de aandacht te willen brengen van zijn Europese collega's.

1. Deelt de Commissie de opvatting van de Nederlandse bestuurders en volksvertegenwoordigers?

2. Zo neen, waarop baseert de Commissie haar afwijkende mening?

3. Zo ja, overweegt de Commissie voorstellen te doen om de mogelijkheid van het sluiten van de EU-binnengrenzen te verruimen totdat deze verwachte bestuurlijke noodsituatie is opgelost?

4. Bestaat er een wijze waarop de negatieve effecten van de komst van Roemenen en Bulgaren naar Nederland op Europees niveau kunnen worden ondervangen zoals de Nederlandse minister van Sociale Zaken suggereert?

Antwoord van de heer Andor namens de Commissie
(19 november 2013)

Het is moeilijk te voorspellen waarnaartoe Roemeense en Bulgaarse werknemers zich zullen begeven wanneer de beperkingen van de overgangsperiode op 1 januari 2014 worden opgeheven. Het is zeer wel mogelijk dat een groot deel van de potentiële migratie uit die lidstaten reeds heeft plaatsgevonden ([2]). Voorts merkt de Commissie op dat naast Nederland nog acht andere lidstaten op die datum hun arbeidsmarkt openstellen voor werknemers uit die landen. Ervaringen die zijn opgedaan bij afloop van de overgangsregelingen voor de EU-8-landen en in landen die enkele jaren geleden hun arbeidsmarkt voor Roemeense en Bulgaarse werknemers hebben opengesteld (Zweden, Finland en Denemarken) wijzen uit dat een massale instroom uitblijft wanneer de beperkingen eenmaal zijn opgeheven en dat zich geen negatieve gevolgen voor de plaatselijke werkgelegenheid voordoen. Aangezien toekomstige migratiestromen binnen de EU waarschijnlijk grotendeels afhangen van de mogelijkheden op de arbeidsmarkt, is de verwachting dat Roemeense en Bulgaarse werknemers openstaande vacatures in de ontvangende landen zullen vervullen.

De overgangsregelingen voor Roemeense en Bulgaarse werknemers lopen onherroepelijk af op 31 december 2013, zonder mogelijkheid tot verlenging.

De lidstaten wordt verzocht de steun uit het Europees Sociaal Fonds optimaal te benutten om de migrerende werknemers te helpen met hun integratie op de arbeidsmarkt.

([1]) www.overheidinnederland.nl/informatie/toponderzoek/s/437.

([2]) Uit een door de Commissie verricht onderzoek blijkt dat de instroom uit Roemenië en Bulgarije in de meest recente periode (2011-2012) veel geringer (-37 %) is uitgevallen dan in de periode vóór de crisis (2007-2008); zie: EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review, september 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010998/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Local authorities fear the arrival of Romanians and Bulgarians

According to a survey conducted by 'Overheid in Nederland' ([1]) ('Government in the Netherlands'), 58% of the 1 733 town councillors, aldermen, provincial councillors and mayors in the Netherlands who were polled anticipate a fall in job opportunities for the current population when the borders open to Romanians and Bulgarians on 1 January 2014. 36% of the respondents feel that the influx will not have any effect and 6% feel that it will stimulate employment.

53% of the administrators and elected officials who were polled were negatively inclined towards the prospect of Romanian and Bulgarian job migrants settling in their region. 52% feared that the migrants would have an adverse effect on quality of life in the local area.

The Dutch Minister for Social Affairs, Lodewijk Asscher, responded to the survey findings, saying that he understood the respondents' concerns. He said that he intended to draw the attention of his European colleagues to the negative effects of the influx of Romanians and Bulgarians.

1. Does the Commission share the view of the Dutch administrators and elected officials?

2. If not, on what basis has the Commission reached a different conclusion?

3. If so, is the Commission evaluating the possibility of allowing the re-establishment of internal EU border controls until the anticipated administrative emergency is resolved?

4. Is there a way in which the negative effects caused by the influx of Romanians and Bulgarians to the Netherlands can be overcome at European level, as suggested by the Dutch Minister for Social Affairs?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

It is difficult to forecast the movement of Romanian and Bulgarian workers when transitional restrictions are lifted on 1 January 2014. It is indeed possible that much of the potential migration from those Member States has already taken place ([2]). Moreover, the Commission notes that the Netherlands is but one of nine Member States that will open its labour market to workers from those countries on that date. Previous experience at the end of the transitional arrangements for the EU-8 countries and in countries which opened their labour markets to Romanian and Bulgarian workers several years ago (Sweden, Finland, and Denmark) suggests no massive influx once the restrictions end and no negative impact on local workers. As future flows are likely to be mainly driven by employment opportunities, future intra-EU movers from Bulgaria and Romania are likely to fill job vacancies in the receiving countries.

The transitional arrangements for Romanian and Bulgarian workers will end irrevocably on 31 December 2013 and there is no possibility of extending them.

The Member States are invited to make full use of support from the European Social Fund to help migrant workers integrate into the labour market.

([1]) www.overheidinnederland.nl/informatie/toponderzoek/s/437
([2]) Analysis by the Commission confirms that flows from Romania and Bulgaria have been much lower (by -37%) in the most recent period 2011-12 than in the pre-crisis period (2007-08), see: EU Employment and Social situation Quarterly Review, September 2013.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-010999/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL) e João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(26 de setembro de 2013)

Assunto: A espiral da desigualdade

Um estudo da OXFAM Internacional concluiu que os programas europeus de austeridade implementados na Europa — com base em impostos regressivos, cortes nos salários e cortes nos serviços públicos, particularmente em áreas como a educação, a saúde e a segurança social, entre outros — desmantelaram os mecanismos que reduziam a desigualdade e permitiam o crescimento equitativo. O estudo conclui que os mais pobres e as mulheres foram os mais atingidos, ao mesmo tempo que os mais ricos viram as suas fortunas crescer escandalosamente.

Acrescenta que, com a continuação das políticas de consolidação orçamental, a desigualdade e a pobreza aumentarão ainda mais e a Europa enfrentará uma década perdida. Em 2011, havia 120 milhões de pessoas que viviam em situação de pobreza, número que poderá aumentar pelo menos de 15 a 25 milhões até 2025, em resultado das medidas contínuas de austeridade.

Face aos resultados deste estudo, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Conhece o referido estudo? Qual a avaliação que faz?

2. Considera que a onda de austeridade económica que está a varrer a Europa está a contribuir para uma Europa solidária?

3. Pretende alterar a direção destas políticas, nomeadamente, nos países em que intervém no quadro das Troikas?

4. Como explica o aumento dramático do número de pessoas em situação de pobreza e, em paralelo, o aumento escandaloso das grandes fortunas?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(5 de dezembro de 2013)

1. A Comissão tem conhecimento do recente relatório «A Cautionary tale» da Oxfam e dos efeitos decorrentes da crise económica e financeira e das medidas de consolidação orçamental necessárias para corrigir os défices dos orçamentos públicos (especialmente nos países que beneficiam de assistência financeira internacional) sobre a pobreza e a coesão social. A Comissão está plenamente empenhada em assegurar um apoio adequado aos grupos mais vulneráveis da sociedade.

2. Como salientado na Análise Anual do Crescimento para 2013, a Comissão recomenda aos Estados-Membros conceberem o processo de consolidação orçamental de modo a minimizar os efeitos negativos para os grupos com rendimentos mais baixos e proteger o potencial de crescimento futuro, nomeadamente através do reforço do investimento em educação e da modernização dos sistemas de proteção social. Os responsáveis políticos têm várias opções em matéria de impacto distributivo da consolidação, selecionando a combinação adequada das despesas e das receitas, a sua conceção e direcionamento.

3. Um dos cinco objetivos da Estratégia Europa 2020 é a luta contra a pobreza. A Comissão coordena a ação dos Estados-Membros em matéria de realização destes objetivos através do Semestre Europeu e com o apoio dos fundos da UE ([1]). Para o próximo quadro financeiro plurianual, a Comissão propõe que, pelo menos, 25 % dos fundos de coesão sejam atribuídos ao Fundo Social Europeu. Além disso, propõe que pelo menos 20 % do total dos recursos do FSE em cada Estado-Membro sejam consagrados ao objetivo temático «promoção da inclusão social e luta contra a pobreza».

4. Por último, o Pacote de Investimento Social dá aos Estados-Membros orientações relativas a uma maior eficiência e eficácia das políticas sociais. O Pacote será implementado através do Semestre Europeu e com o apoio dos fundos da UE.

([1]) Por exemplo, FSE, FEDER, Progress, Instrumento Europeu de Microfinanciamento «Progress» e, por último, mas não menos importante, Fundo da UE para as pessoas mais carenciadas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010999/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL) and João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: The spiral of inequality

A study by Oxfam International has concluded that EU austerity programmes implemented in Europe — consisting of regressive taxes, wage cuts and public service cuts, particularly in areas such as education, healthcare and social security, to mention a few — have dismantled the mechanisms that reduce inequality and enable equitable growth. The study concludes that the poorest people and women have been hardest hit, while the richest have seen their wealth grow to outrageous proportions.

It adds that if fiscal consolidation policies continue, inequality and poverty will increase even more and Europe will face a lost decade. In 2011, there were 120 million people living in poverty, which could increase by at least 15 to 25 million by 2025 as a result of ongoing austerity measures.

In view of the findings of this study:

1. Is the Commission aware of this study? What is its assessment of it?

2. Does it think that the wave of economic austerity sweeping across Europe is contributing to European solidarity?

3. Will it change the focus of these policies, particularly in countries where it is intervening as part of the Troikas?

4. How can it explain the dramatic rise in the number of people living in poverty and, at the same time, the outrageous growth of large fortunes?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2013)

1. The Commission is aware of the recent Report 'A Cautionary tale' by Oxfam and of the challenges posed by the economic and financial crisis and the fiscal consolidation measures necessary to address public budget deficits — especially in countries receiving international financial assistance — in terms of poverty and social cohesion. It is fully committed to ensuring adequate support for the most vulnerable groups of society.

2. As stressed in the 2013 Annual Growth Survey, the Commissions recommends MS to devise fiscal consolidation in such a way to minimise adverse effects on low-income groups and preserve future growth potential, including through reinforced investment in education and by modernising social protection systems. Policy-makers do have options to affect the distributional impact of consolidation by selecting the appropriate mix of expenditure and revenue measures, their design and targeting.

3. Tackling poverty is one of the five headline targets of the Europe2020 strategy. The Commission coordinates MS action on achieving these targets through the European Semester and with the support of EU Funds ([1]). For the next multi-annual financial framework, the Commission proposes that at least 25% of cohesion funds be allocated to the European Social Fund. Moreover it proposes that at least 20% of total ESF resources in each MS shall be allocated to the thematic objective 'promoting social inclusion and combating poverty'.

4. Finally, the Social Investment Package gives guidance to MS on more efficient and effective social policies. The Package wil be implemented through the European Semester and with the support of EU Funds.

([1]) For example ESF, ERDF, PROGRESS, Progress Microfinance and, last but not least, the Fund for the Most Deprived.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-011002/13
à la Commission
Véronique De Keyser (S&D)
(26 septembre 2013)

Objet: Application de l'accord entre l'Union européenne et l'État d'Israël sur l'évaluation de la conformité et l'acceptation des produits industriels (ACAA)

Dans sa réponse du 9 août 2013 à la question écrite P-007039/2013, la Commission a indiqué que:

«Aux fins de l'article 9 de l'ACAA, se référant à l'annexe relative à l'acceptation des produits industriels — bonnes pratiques de fabrication (BPF) des produits pharmaceutiques, Israël a désigné, le 14 janvier 2013, le ministère de la santé comme autorité responsable pour l'État d'Israël. Dans sa réponse du 4 février 2013, la Commission a reconnu cette désignation et indiqué que la reconnaissance de l'Union européenne ne modifie pas sa position selon laquelle la juridiction légitime des autorités israéliennes ne s'étend pas aux territoires placés sous administration israélienne depuis 1967».

La Commission pourrait-elle fournir le texte de cette désignation tel qu'Israël l'a communiqué conformément à l'article 9, paragraphe 1, point a), de l'ACAA, ainsi que le texte de la reconnaissance de cette désignation par la Commission tel qu'elle l'a établi conformément à l'article 9, paragraphe 1, point b), de l'accord?

Réponse commune donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(23 octobre 2013)

La commission INTA du Parlement européen a reçu le 6 février 2013, avec le timbre «limité», l'échange de lettres entre la Commission européenne et les autorités israéliennes relatif à l'application des accords UE-Israël sur l'évaluation de la conformité et l'acceptation des produits industriels.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011000/13
to the Commission
Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Follow-up to questions P-007039/2013 and E-007251/2013

In its answers to Questions P-007039/2013 and E-007251/2013, dated 9 August and 13 August respectively, the Commission stated that:

For the purpose of Article 9 of the ACAA, as related to the annex on Mutual Acceptance of Industrial Products — Pharmaceutical Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), Israel designated, on 14 January 2013, the Ministry of Health as the responsible authority for the State of Israel. In its reply of 4 February 2013, the Commission acknowledged this designation indicating: 'The European Union's acknowledgement does not alter the European Union's position that the legitimate jurisdiction of Israeli authorities does not extend to the territories brought under Israeli administration since 1967'.

Did Israel designate the Ministry of Health as the responsible authority for the State of Israel by forwarding its nomination to the Union in conformity with Article 9.1(a) of the ACAA, i.e. 'stating the territory and title of the annex to this Agreement under which the Responsible Authority is competent to carry out the tasks listed in Article 8.1'? If so, how did it 'state the territory'?

In granting the Union's acknowledgement, did the Commission expressly state that 'acknowledgement is granted only on the basis that the territory covered by the responsible authority does not include the territories brought under Israeli administration in 1967'?

Question for written answer P-011002/13
to the Commission
Véronique De Keyser (S&D)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Application of the Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products (ACAA) Agreement

In its answer of 9 August 2013 to Written Question P-007039/2013, the Commission indicated that:

'For the purpose of Article 9 of the ACAA, as related to the annex on Mutual Acceptance of Industrial Products — Pharmaceutical Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), Israel designated on 14 January 2013 the Ministry of Health as the responsible authority for the State of Israel. In its reply of 4 February 2013, the Commission has acknowledged this designation indicating that "The European Union's acknowledgement does not alter the European Union's position that the legitimate jurisdiction of Israeli authorities does not extend to the territories brought under Israeli administration since 1967"'.

Could the Commission provide the actual text of the nomination forwarded by Israel in conformity with Article 9, paragraph 1(a) of the ACAA Agreement, as well as the actual text of the Commission's acknowledgement issued in conformity with Article 9, paragraph 1(b) of the agreement?

Joint answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(23 October 2013)

The INTA committee of the European Parliament received on 6th February 2013 on a limited basis, the exchange of letters between the European Commission and the Israeli authorities regarding the implementation of the EU-Israel Agreements on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of industrial products (ACAA).

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés P-011001/13
a Bizottság számára
Erik Bánki (PPE)
(2013. szeptember 26.)

Tárgy: A víz-keretirányelvből fakadó kötelezettségek a cianidos bányászat engedélyezése során

A víz Földünk egyik legbecsesebb természeti erőforrása. A Föld vízkészletének mindössze 2%-a édesvíz. Ezen szűkös természeti erőforrás azonban meghatározó fontosságú a biológiai, társadalmi és gazdasági élet valamennyi szegmensében. A növekvő lakossági igények és az éghajlatváltozás nyomán az egymással versengő vízigények 2030-ra várhatóan 40%-os globális vízellátási hiányt eredményeznek. Ez a folyamat Európát is érinteni fogja: a vízhez való hozzáférés mind egyéni, mind nemzeti szinten még inkább a prosperitás és a béke alapvető kérdésévé válik majd.

Bizonyára ismert a Bizottság előtt, hogy a kanadai hátterű Rosia Montana Gold Corporation Verespatakon tervezi megnyitni Európa legnagyobb külszíni aranybányáját, ahol ciántechnológiás eljárással 330 tonna aranyat és 1600 tonna ezüstöt akar kitermelni. A visszamaradó cianidos bányászati zagy elhelyezésére a tervek szerint egy 250 millió tonna összbefogadó kapacitású és 180 méter magas völgyzárógáttal ellátott tározó szolgálna. Egy jövőbeli baleset esetén – szakértők szerint – román és magyar területeken több száz folyam-kilométernyi édesvíz szennyeződne cianiddal, beleértve a Maros és a Tisza folyókat is, ami helyrehozhatatlan környezeti és közegészségügyi károkat okozna az érintett vízgyűjtő területen.

Az uniós vízvédelmi jog számos szabálya tiltja a vizek veszélyes anyagokkal való szennyezését, ennek alapjait a víz-keretirányelv fekteti le. A keretirányelv VIII. mellékletének 6. pontja alapján a cianidok fő szennyezőanyagnak minősülnek. A víz-keretirányelv továbbá széles körű együttműködési kötelezettséget ír elő a közös vízgyűjtő területen osztozó tagállamok számára a vizek jó állapotának elérése és fenntartása érdekében.

1. Tekintettel a verespataki beruházás rendkívüli mértékű határon átnyúló szennyezési potenciáljára, a víz-keretirányelv rendelkezései alapján milyen konkrét együttműködési kötelezettség terheli Romániát a szomszédos országok tekintetében a projekt engedélyezése során?

2. Milyen jogokat biztosít továbbá a víz-keretirányelv egy tagállam számára annak érdekében, hogy vizeinek jó állapotát ne veszélyeztethesse a szomszédos tagállamban zajló ipari tevékenység?

Janez Potočnik válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2013. november 4.)

A Bizottság osztja a tisztelt képviselő úr álláspontját, miszerint a víz Földünk egyik legbecsesebb természeti erőforrása.

A víz-keretirányelv ([1]) nem határoz meg szabályokat az egyedi projektek engedélyezési eljárására vonatkozóan, ugyanakkor azon tevékenységek, melyek a felszíni víztestek fizikai jellemzőinek új változásából következő állapotromlást eredményeznek, csak abban az esetben hajthatók végre, amennyiben a víz-keretirányelv 4. cikkének (7) bekezdésében megállapított feltételek teljesülnek.

A nemzetközi együttműködésre vonatkozóan a víz-keretirányelv 3. cikke értelmében a tagállamoknak biztosítaniuk kell, hogy az egy tagállam területénél nagyobb területen fekvő vízgyűjtőket egy nemzetközi vízgyűjtő kerülethez rendelik. A tagállamoknak továbbá azt is biztosítaniuk kell, hogy összehangolják a víz-keretirányelvben meghatározott, a környezeti célkitűzések elérésére vonatkozó követelményeket, különösen a vízgyűjtő kerület egészére vonatkozó intézkedési programokat. Nemzetközi vízgyűjtő kerületek esetében az érintett tagállamoknak együtt kell biztosítaniuk ezt a koordinációt annak érdekében, hogy egyik tagállam vízkészletének megfelelő állapotát se veszélyeztethesse egy másik tagállam.

Nemcsak a víz-keretirányelv, hanem más, bányászati projektek engedélyezésére vonatkozó irányelvek – így a környezeti hatásvizsgálatot ([2]) vagy a bányászati hulladékokat ([3]) érintő irányelvek – is nemzetközi együttműködést írnak elő abban az esetben, ha egy projekt/hulladékkezelő létesítmény működése valószínűleg jelentős hatást gyakorol a környezetre egy másik tagállam területén, vagy amennyiben a valószínűleg jelentősen érintett tagállam kérelmet nyújt be erre vonatkozóan.

([1]) 2000/60/EK irányelv, HL L 327., 2000.12.22.
([2]) 85/337/EGK irányelv, HL L 175., 1985.7.5.
([3]) 2006/21/EK irányelv, HL L 102., 2006.4.11.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011001/13
to the Commission
Erik Bánki (PPE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Obligations arising from the Water Framework Directive concerning authorisation for cyanide mining

Water is one of the earth's most precious natural resources. 2% of the earth's water is comprised of fresh water. This scarce natural resource is, however, of crucial importance in all areas of biological, social and economic life. People's increasing demands together with climate change will result in a 40% shortfall in water provision by 2030. This process will also have an impact on Europe: access to water will increasingly become a basic question of prosperity and peace at individual and national level.

The Commission is no doubt aware that the Rosia Montana Gold Corporation, which is listed in Canada, is planning to open Europe's largest open-cast gold mine in Verespatak and extract 330 tonnes of gold and 1 600 tonnes of silver using cyanide technology. There are plans to store the resultant sludge in a reservoir with a capacity of 250 million tonnes and a 180-metre-high coffer dam constructed across the valley. According to experts, in the event of an accident, fresh water in river systems for hundreds of kilometres in parts of Romania and Hungary, including the Maros and Tisza rivers, would suffer cyanide pollution, which would cause irreparable damage to the environment and to public health in the drainage area concerned.

A number of provisions in the EU's water legislation prohibit the polluting of waters by hazardous substances. The basis for this is laid down in the Water Framework Directive. Point 6 of Annex VIII of the framework Directive classifies cyanides as a main pollutant. The directive also lays down an obligation of cooperation for Member States sharing drainage basins in order to reach and preserve the 'good status' of waters.

1. Given the enormous potential for cross-border pollution of the Verespatak project, what specific obligations of cooperation do the provisions of the Water Framework Directive impose on Romania in terms of its neighbouring countries during the authorisation procedure?

2. What rights are laid down in the directive for a Member State to ensure that the good status of its waters is not put at risk by industrial activities undertaken in a neighbouring Member State?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(4 November 2013)

The Commission shares the view of the Honourable Member that water is one of the earth's most precious natural resources.

The Water Framework Directive ([1]) (WFD) does not set rules for authorisation procedures of individual projects, but certain activities resulting in deterioration of status due to new modifications to the physical characteristics of surface water bodies are only allowed if conditions laid down in Article 4.7 of the WFD are met.

Regarding international coordination, Article 3 of the WFD requires that Member States ensure that a river basin covering the territory of more than one Member State is assigned to an international river basin district. Member States should also ensure that the requirements of the WFD for the achievement of the environmental objectives, and in particular all programmes of measures are coordinated for the whole of the river basin district. For international river basin districts the Member States concerned are required to ensure this coordination, in order to ensure that the good status of waters of a Member State is not put at risk by another Member State.

Not only the WFD but also other Directives addressing authorisation of mining projects such as those on Environmental Impact Assessment ([2]) and on Mining Waste ([3]), require international coordination where a project/the operation of a waste facility is likely to have significant effects on the environment in another Member State or where a Member State, that is likely to be significantly affected, so requests.

([1]) Directive 2000/60/EC, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.
([2]) Directive 85/337/EEC, OJ L 175, 5.7.1985.
([3]) Directive 2006/21/EC, OJ L 102, 11.4.2006.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-011004/13
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(26. september 2013)

Om: Borgerinitiativet »Minority Safepack«

Den. 15. juli i år blev EU-Kommissionen ansøgt om registrering af det europæiske mindretals borgerinitiativ »Minority Safepack«. De europæiske mindretals ansøgning blev afvist med beskeden om, at det ikke er Unionens opgave at tage sig af mindretal, det må være op til medlemsstaterne.

Borgerinitiativet blev netop en del af Lissabontraktaten for at fremme borgernes indflydelse i EU, og hele idéen med borgerinitiativet er, at borgerne skal være med til at bestemme, hvad EU skal beskæftige sig med.

Med baggrund i Artikel 2 i Traktaten om den Europæiske Union (der bl.a. lyder: Unionen bygger på værdierne respekt for den menneskelige værdighed, frihed, demokrati, ligestilling, retsstaten og respekt for menneskerettighederne, herunder rettigheder for personer, der tilhører mindretal.) kan jeg simpelthen ikke forstå at EU kommissionen har afvist initiativet.

Læg hertil at tredje afsnit om ligestilling i EU's charter om grundlæggende rettigheder, samt den del af Københavnskriterierne, ligeledes stiller skrappe krav til nye medlemslandes beskyttelse af mindretal i høj grad kvalificere mindretalsbeskyttelse som et vigtigt EU kompetenceområde — både hvad angår mindretal i nye og gamle medlemslande.

Mit spørgsmål til Kommissionen er derfor:

Hvilken reel årsag er der til, at Kommissionen på forhånd afviser initiativet fra den store del af EU's borgere, der er en del af de mange mindretal? Vil kommissionen genoverveje afslaget?

Vil Kommissionen i benægtende fald genoverveje borgerinitiativet, så det i fremtiden reelt kan bruges til de emner, der optager borgerne?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Maroš Šefčovič
(4. november 2013)

Forslaget til borgerinitiativ, der henvises til i det ærede medlems spørgsmål, opfylder ikke en af de retlige betingelser for registrering, jf. artikel 4, stk. 2, i forordningen om borgerinitiativer ([1]), nemlig at »forslaget til borgerinitiativ falder ikke åbenbart uden for Kommissionens beføjelse til at fremsætte et forslag til EU-retsakt med henblik på gennemførelsen af traktaterne«. Denne betingelse kommer direkte fra artikel 11, stk. 4, i traktaten om Den Europæiske Union, der lyder, at »et antal unionsborgere på mindst en million, der kommer fra et betydeligt antal medlemsstater, kan tage initiativ til at opfordre Kommissionen til inden for rammerne af sine beføjelser at fremsætte et egnet forslag om spørgsmål, hvor en EU-retsakt efter borgernes opfattelse er nødvendig til gennemførelse af traktaterne«.

Kommissionen henviser det ærede medlem til sit brev af 13. september 2013 til initiativtagerne af dette initiativ, hvor begrundelsen for afslaget er specificeret. Dette brev er gjort offentligt tilgængeligt på borgerinitiativets websted: http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/documents/1765

([1]) Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets forordning (EU) nr. 211/2011 af 16. februar 2011 om borgerinitiativer, EUT L 65 af 11.3.2011, s. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011004/13
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: The 'Minority Safepack' citizens' initiative

On 15 July this year, an application was submitted to the Commission for the registration of the European minorities' citizens' initiative 'Minority Safepack'. The European minorities' application was rejected with the explanation that it is not the job of the Union to look after minorities; it is the responsibility of the Member States.

The citizens' initiative was included in the Treaty of Lisbon precisely in order to promote the influence of citizens in the EU, and the whole point of the citizens' initiative is that citizens should be involved in determining what the EU should concern itself with.

On the basis of Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (which states, amongst other things, that '[t]he Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities'), I simply cannot understand why the Commission rejected the initiative.

When you also consider that Title III (Equality) of the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights, as well as the relevant section of the Copenhagen Criteria, also lays down stringent requirements for new Member States concerning the protection of minorities, the protection of minorities most definitely qualifies as an important area of competence of the EU — in respect of minorities in both new and old Member States.

What is the real reason for the Commission's rejection from the outset of the initiative put forward by the large proportion of EU citizens that belong to the many minority groups? Will the Commission reconsider its refusal?

If not, will it re-evaluate the citizens' initiative so that in future it can actually be used for those matters that concern citizens?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(4 November 2013)

The proposed citizens' initiative referred to in the Honourable Member's question did not meet one of the legal conditions for registration as set out in Article 4(2) of the regulation on the citizens' initiative ([1]), namely that 'the proposed citizens' initiative does not manifestly fall outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act of the Union for the purpose of implementing the Treaties'. This condition directly results from Article 11(4) of the Treaty on European Union which states that 'not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the European Commission, within the framework of its powers, to submit any appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties'.

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its letter of 13 September 2013 sent to the organisers of this initiative in which the reasons for the refusal are detailed. This letter has been made publicly available in the citizens' initiative website:
http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/documents/1765

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 on the citizens' initiative, OJ L 65, 11.3.2011.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011005/13
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(26. September 2013)

Betrifft: Verordnung (EU) Nr. 576/2013 über die Unterbringung von Heimtieren

Die neuen Verordnungen ((EU) Nr. 576 & 577/2013) zu Heimtieren sind seit Mitte des Jahres 2013 in Kraft getreten und gelten ab 29. Dezember 2014. Im Anhang I B sind neben Vögeln, Amphibien, Reptilien, Nagetieren, Kaninchen und Wassertieren auch wirbellose Tiere aufgeführt. Daraus ergeben sich folgende Fragen:

1. Ist die Kommission im Begriff, Rechtsvorschriften zu erlassen, welche die Bestimmungen der unter Anhang I A aufgeführten Lebewesen auch auf die unter I B ausweiten? Diese Frage bezieht sich insbesondere auf die Notwendigkeit von Heimtierpass und Kennzeichnungspflicht (Tätowierung/Pass).

2. Falls nein, plant die Kommission hier einen Eingriff zur Abänderung nationaler Vorschriften?

3. Falls ja, in wie weit beachtet die Kommission die Verhältnismäßigkeit nicht nur in Hinblick auf das Risiko für die Gesundheit von Mensch und Tier, sondern auch in Bezug auf den Aufwand oder die generelle Durchführbarkeit, wie zum Beispiel bei der erlaubten Transportmenge, der Kennzeichnungspflicht oder der Notwendigkeit eines Heimtierpasses für Wirbellose (Würmer, Larven oder Käfer)?

4. Warum ist diese Verordnung ausschließlich auf Privatpersonen beschränkt und nicht auf Großhändler und Importeure ausgeweitet worden, da diesen hier gegebenenfalls nun ein legislatives Schlupfloch durch argumentative Verneinung/Umgehung des Handelszwecks ermöglicht werden könnte?

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(15. November 2013)

1. Die Kommission plant derzeit keine Vorschriften für die Verbringung von Heimtieren zu anderen als Handelszwecken bei den in Anhang I Teil B der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 576/2013 ([1]) des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates aufgeführten Arten.

2. Bis zur Festlegung von Unionsvorschriften kann die Kommission weder intervenieren noch die von den Mitgliedstaaten angewandten Vorschriften kommentieren, sofern diese in einem angemessenen Verhältnis zum mit der Verbringung dieser Art von Heimtieren zu anderen als Handelszwecken zusammenhängenden Risiko für die Gesundheit von Mensch und Tier stehen und nicht strenger sind als die Vorschriften für den Handel und die Einfuhr dieser Arten in die Europäische Union gemäß der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 576/2013.

3. Im Falle einer unmittelbaren Gefahr für die Gesundheit von Mensch und Tier im Zusammenhang mit der Verbringung dieser Arten von Heimtieren zu anderen als Handelszwecken kann die Kommission nach angemessener Konsultation einen delegierten Rechtsakt über artenspezifische präventive Gesundheitsmaßnahmen und Kennzeichnungsanforderungen erlassen, der alle nationalen Anforderungen berücksichtigt.

4. Die Verordnung (EU) Nr. 576/2013 gilt für ein Heimtier einer in Anhang I aufgelisteten Art, das seinen Halter während einer Reise begleitet, die weder den Verkauf des Heimtiers noch den Übergang des Eigentums an dem Heimtier bezweckt („Verbringung zu anderen als Handelszwecken"). Falls eine dieser Bedingungen nicht erfüllt ist, muss das Heimtier die EU-Tiergesundheitsanforderungen erfüllen, die für den Handel oder die Einfuhr der betreffenden Tierarten in die Europäische Union gelten („Verbringung zu Handelszwecken"). Ziel der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 576/2013 ist die Stärkung des Rechtsrahmens für die amtlichen Kontrollen, um wirksamer zu verhindern, dass Verbringungen zu Handelszwecken in betrügerischer Absicht als Verbringungen zu anderen als Handelszwecken getarnt werden.

([1]) ABl. L 178 vom 8.6.2013, S. 12.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011005/13
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Regulation (EU) No 576/2013 on the non-commercial movement of pet animals

The new Regulations ((EU) No 576 and 577/2013) on pet animals came into force in the middle of 2013 and apply from 29 December 2014. Annex I B lists invertebrates alongside birds, amphibia, reptiles, rodents, rabbits and aquatic animals. This raises the following questions:

1. Is the Commission in the process of adopting legislation which extends the provisions relating to the animals listed in Annex I A to those in Annex I B? This question concerns in particular the need for a pet passport and the requirement to be able to identify the animal (tattoo/passport).

2. If this is not the case, is the Commission planning to intervene in order to amend national regulations?

3. If it is the case, to what extent is the Commission taking into consideration the proportionality of the measures, not only with regard to the health of humans and animals, but also in respect of the cost and the general feasibility, for example the permitted transport volume, the identification requirements and the need for a pet passport for invertebrates (worms, larvae or beetles)?

4. Why does this regulation apply only to private individuals and not to wholesalers and importers who could exploit a legislative loophole by denying or circumventing the commercial purposes of their activities?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

1. At present, the Commission does not envisage adopting rules for the non-commercial movement of pet animals of the species listed in Part B of Annex I to Regulation (EU) No 576/2013 ([1]) of the European Parliament and of the Council.

2. Pending the establishment of Union rules, the Commission cannot intervene nor comment on rules applied by Member States where they are applied proportionately to the risk to public or animal health associated with the non-commercial movement of the pet animals of those species, and are not stricter than those applied to trade in and imports into the Union of those species, as provided for in Regulation (EU) No 576/2013.

3. In the event of an imminent risk to public or animal health associated with the non-commercial movement of pet animals of one of those species, the Commission may adopt a delegated act, following appropriate consultation, on species-specific preventive health measures, and on species-specific requirements concerning their marking taking into account any relevant national requirements.

4. Regulation (EU) No 576/2013 applies to a pet animal of the species listed in Annex I thereto, which accompanies its owner during his or her movement not aiming at the sale or the transfer of ownership of that pet animal ('non-commercial movement'). If one of the aforementioned conditions is not met, the animal must meet the EU animal health requirements applicable to trade in or imports into the Union of animals of the species concerned ('commercial movement'). Regulation (EU) No 576/2013 strengthens the legal framework for the official controls with the aim to better prevent that commercial movements are fraudulently disguised as non-commercial movements.

([1]) OJ L 178/12, 8.6.2013.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011006/13
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(26. September 2013)

Betrifft: Angekündigte Neuerungen zur Netzneutralität

Die geplanten Neuerungen (European Commission — SPEECH/13/498 04/06/2013) bezüglich der Netzneutralität steuern auf ein Zwei-Klassen-Internet zu. Die Neuerungen erlauben dem Telekom-Unternehmen, für eine schnellere Durchführung im Internet eine „Extra-Maut" zu verlangen. Dies widerspricht jedoch der Gleichberechtigung aller Daten im Internet. Des Weiteren bedeutet das erhebliche Mehrkosten für Internetnutzer.

Kann die Kommission dazu folgende Fragen beantworten:

1. Wie beurteilt die Kommission dieses Vorhaben im Hinblick auf die unterschiedliche Finanzkraft der Unternehmen?

2. Wie sind diese Neuerungen in Hinblick auf die Förderungen von KMU zu bewerten?

3. Wie soll die Umsetzung im Hinblick auf die Änderungen bei den bestehenden Kunden erfolgen? Im Besonderen: Welche Auflagen könnten in diesem Zusammenhang der Telekommunikationsbranche vonseiten der EU auferlegt werden?

4. Welchen Zweck verfolgt die Kommission mit dieser qualitativen Ungleichbehandlung von Kunden?

5. Welche Unternehmen, Interessengemeinschaften und Verbände haben die Kommission in Hinblick auf diese legislativen Neuerungen beraten? Wie setzt sich der legislative Fußabdruck zusammen?

Antwort von Frau Kroes im Namen der Kommission
(6. November 2013)

Der Kommissionsvorschlag garantiert den offenen Zugang zum Internet, indem er jegliches Blockieren, Drosseln, Beeinträchtigen oder Diskriminieren verbietet. Auf diese Weise werden alle Inhalte, Dienste und Anwendungen für alle Endnutzer über das offene Internet zugänglich und nutzbar sein. Dem Vorschlag zufolge haben Endnutzer unabhängig von ihrer Finanzkraft die Möglichkeit, mit Anbietern von Inhalten und Anwendungen sowie mit Betreibern elektronischer Kommunikation Verträge über Spezialdienste mit einer höheren Dienstqualität zu schließen, sofern solche Dienste zu keiner wiederholten oder dauerhaften Beeinträchtigung der allgemeinen Qualität des Internetzugangs führen. Die nationalen Regulierungsbehörden müssen dafür sorgen, dass die Qualität des Internetzugangs dem technischen Fortschritt entspricht, dass ein hochwertiger Zugang zum Internet zur Verfügung steht und dass Spezialdienste diese Qualität nicht beeinträchtigen. Außerdem sind sie befugt, Betreibern elektronischer Kommunikation bestimmte Mindestanforderungen an die Dienstqualität aufzuerlegen.

Der Vorschlag wird KMU und neugegründete Internet-Unternehmen bei der Innovation unterstützen, weil deren Anwendungen und Dienste dann nicht mehr blockiert oder beeinträchtigt werden können, wie dies heute oft noch geschieht. Um die Nachfrage der Endnutzer nach innovativen, hochwertigen Diensten wie Internetfernsehen (IPTV), Cloud-Angeboten oder elektronischen Gesundheitsdiensten decken zu können, werden KMU die Möglichkeit haben, Vereinbarungen über eine garantierte Dienstqualität zu schließen. Die Inanspruchnahme solcher Dienste ist freiwillig, so dass sich hieraus keine Änderungen für bestehende Kunden ergeben. Da ein Spezialdienst kein bloßer Ersatz für den Internetzugang sein darf, wird es auch kein Zwei-Klassen-Internet geben.

Dieses ausgewogene Konzept für die Netzneutralität beruht auf zahlreichen Zusammenkünften mit Interessenträgern ([1]), auf den eingegangenen Stellungnahmen ([2]) und auf einer breiten öffentlichen Konsultation ([3]), die im Jahr 2012 stattfand.

([1]) Unter Einbeziehung von Verbraucherverbänden, Bürgerrechtsorganisationen, Internetdiensteanbietern, Anbietern von Inhalten und Anwendungen und anderen.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/dae/item-detail-preview.cfm?user_id=139043&item_id=12288
Antworten gingen von mehr als 1 000 Bürger und 135 Organisationen ein.

([3]) Öffentliche Online-Konsultation über „besondere Aspekte der Transparenz, des Verkehrsmanagements und des Vertragswechsels in einem offenen Internet"
http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/line-public-consultation-specific-aspects-transparency-traffic-management-and-switching-open

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011006/13
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Announcement of new measures concerning net neutrality

The planned new measures (European Commission — SPEECH/13/498 04/06/2013) concerning net neutrality represent a move towards a two-tier Internet. They allow telecoms companies to charge an additional toll for faster processing on the Internet. However, this conflicts with the principle of the equality of all the data on the Internet. It also involves significant additional costs for Internet users.

1. What is the Commission's assessment of this plan with regard to the differences in the financial strength of the companies?

2. How should we evaluate these new measures in relation to support for SMEs?

3. How should the measures be implemented with regard to changes for existing customers? In particular, what conditions could the EU impose on the telecoms industry in this context?

4. What is the Commission's aim in introducing this qualitative unequal treatment of customers?

5. Which companies, lobby groups and associations advised the Commission about this new legislation? What is the legislative footprint made up of?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(6 November 2013)

The Commission's proposal guarantees open access to the Internet by prohibiting blocking, throttling, degradation or discrimination. Thus all content, services and applications will be available over the open Internet to all end-users. Under the proposal end-users may conclude agreements with content and application providers, regardless of their financial size, and with electronic communications providers for specialised services with an enhanced quality of service, provided such services do not cause recurring or continuous impairment of the general quality of Internet access. National regulators shall ensure that the quality of Internet access reflects advances in technology, that a high quality Internet is available and that specialised services are not impairing that quality. They are also empowered to set minimum quality of service requirements on electronic communications providers.

The proposal will help SMEs and Internet start-ups to innovate, as they will not see their applications and services blocked or degraded, as is currently often the case. SMEs will have the option to conclude agreements for a guaranteed quality of service, which is essential to satisfy demand from end-users for innovative, high-quality services such as IPTV, cloud or e-health. Availing of such services is on a voluntary basis, thus there will be no change for existing Internet customers. As specialised services must not be a substitute to the Internet access service, there will not be a two-tier Internet.

This balanced approach towards net neutrality is based on a large number of meetings with stakeholders ([1]) and on the responses received ([2]) to a wide-ranging public consultation ([3]) carried out in 2012.

([1]) Including consumer associations, civil rights organisations, Internet service providers, content and applications providers and others.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/dae/item-detail-preview.cfm?user_id=139043&item_id=12288
More than 1000 citizens and 135 organisations have provided responses.
([3]) Online public consultation on 'specific aspects of transparency, traffic management and switching in an Open Internet' (http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/line-public-consultation-specific-aspects-transparency-traffic-management-and-switching-open).

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011007/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(26 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Κίνδυνος υποβάθμισης της ποιότητας των υπηρεσιών σε επαγγελματικούς κλάδους από την ενσωμάτωση της 2005/36/ΕΚ στην ελληνική έννομη τάξη. Η περίπτωση του φυσικοθεραπευτή

Στο ευρύτερο πλαίσιο της εμπέδωσης μιας κοινής στρατηγικής για την ενιαία αγορά και με στόχο την άρση των εμποδίων για την ελεύθερη κυκλοφορία επαγγελματιών και διακίνηση υπηρεσιών εκδόθηκε από το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο και το Συμβούλιο η 2005/36/ΕΚ σχετικά με την αναγνώριση των επαγγελματικών προσόντων, που ενσωματώθηκε στην ελληνική έννομη τάξη με το Π.Δ. 38/2010, το οποίο σε δεύτερη φάση υπέστη τροποποιήσεις με την ψήφιση των νόμων 4093/2012 και 4111/2013. Με τις τελευταίες αυτές τροποποιήσεις διευρύνονται τόσο το πεδίο εφαρμογής όσο και οι προϋποθέσεις υπαγωγής στις διατάξεις της σχετικής Κοινοτικής Οδηγίας, καθιερώνοντας ουσιαστικά μια παράλληλη διαδικασία αναγνώρισης επαγγελματικών προσόντων — και όχι επαγγελματικής ισοδυναμίας τίτλων σπουδών — η οποία εγκυμονεί σοβαρούς κινδύνους, αφενός, για την υποβάθμιση των παρεχόμενων υπηρεσιών σε συγκεκριμένους κλάδους και, αφετέρου, για τη διαμόρφωση ενός ασαφούς περιβάλλοντος απόκτησης πρόσβασης από μη πραγματικούς δικαιούχους στην άσκηση επαγγελματικής δραστηριότητας στην Ελλάδα και, κατ' επέκταση, σε όλα τα κράτη-μέλη της ΕΕ. Με δεδομένη την εισαγωγή — σύμφωνα με την 2005/36/ΕΚ — της έννοιας του «μετανάστη εργαζόμενου-επαγγελματία», καθώς και του δικαιώματος των κρατών μελών να ορίζουν ένα ελάχιστο επίπεδο απαραίτητων προσόντων, ώστε να διασφαλίζεται η ποιότητα των παρεχόμενων υπηρεσιών στην επικράτειά του, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Συμμερίζεται τον κίνδυνο και την αγωνία των επαγγελματικών ενώσεων για την υποβάθμιση των παρεχόμενων υπηρεσιών του κλάδου τους από ενδεχόμενη αναγνώριση τίτλων σπουδών απονεμηθέντων από εγχώριες σχολές ιδιωτικού δικαίου που έχουν συμφωνίες δικαιόχρησης (franchising) με εκπαιδευτικά ιδρύματα άλλων κρατών μελών, όταν τα τελευταία δεν είναι αναγνωρισμένα από το εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα της χώρας τους;

2. Με βάση την αυξημένη ευθύνη άσκησης του επαγγέλματος του φυσικοθεραπευτή και ταυτόχρονα την ευχέρεια των κρατών μελών να αναγνωρίζουν σύμφωνα με την νομοθεσία τους τα επαγγελματικά προσόντα, κρίνει σκόπιμη την εισαγωγή πρόσθετων προϋποθέσεων — ανάλογων άλλων ιατρικών και παραϊατρικών επαγγελμάτων — για την απόκτηση της σχετικής επαγγελματικής ισοδυναμίας;

3. Υπάρχουν αντίστοιχα παραδείγματα άλλων κρατών μελών που, στην κατεύθυνση της θωράκισης της αξιοπιστίας του εν λόγω επαγγέλματος, έχουν προχωρήσει στη θέσπιση πρόσθετων κριτηρίων ή διαδικασιών; Αν ναι, τότε ποια είναι αυτά;

Απάντηση του κ. Barnier εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(14 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

1) Η Επιτροπή δεν συμμερίζεται τις ανησυχίες ορισμένων επαγγελματικών οργανώσεων, δεδομένου ότι η οδηγία 2005/36/ΕΚ ([1]) προβλέπει διασφαλίσεις όσον αφορά την αναγνώριση των επαγγελματικών προσόντων που παρέχεται μέσω συμφωνίας δικαιόχρησης. Ειδικότερα, το κράτος μέλος υποδοχής μπορεί να εξακριβώσει μέσω του κράτους μέλους καταγωγής:

α) κατά πόσον η εκπαίδευση στο ίδρυμα που παρέσχε την κατάρτιση έχει πιστοποιηθεί επισήμως από το εκπαιδευτικό ίδρυμα που βρίσκεται στο κράτος μέλος καταγωγής του τίτλου·

β) κατά πόσον οι τίτλοι επαγγελματικών προσόντων που έχουν εκδοθεί είναι οι ίδιοι με εκείνους που θα είχαν χορηγηθεί εάν η εκπαίδευση είχε πραγματοποιηθεί εξ ολοκλήρου στο κράτος μέλος καταγωγής·

γ) κατά πόσον τα επαγγελματικά προσόντα προσδίδουν τα ίδια επαγγελματικά δικαιώματα στην επικράτεια του κράτους μέλους καταγωγής.

Εφόσον δεν πληρούται ένα από αυτά τα κριτήρια, η αναγνώριση μπορεί να απορριφθεί.

([1]) Οδηγία 2005/36/ΕΚ σχετικά με την αναγνώριση των επαγγελματικών προσόντων, ΕΕ L 255 της 30.9.2005, σ. 22.

2) Σύμφωνα με τα διαθέσιμα στη βάση δεδομένων της Επιτροπής στατιστικά στοιχεία σχετικά με τα νομοθετικά κατοχυρωμένα επαγγέλματα, μεταξύ του 1997 και του 2012 χορηγήθηκε αναγνώριση για το επάγγελμα του φυσιοθεραπευτή στο 82% των περιπτώσεων (και για τις περισσότερες από αυτές η αναγνώριση έγινε αυτόματα). Ωστόσο, το σύστημα μπορεί να βελτιωθεί περαιτέρω. Αυτός είναι ο λόγος για τον οποίο η νέα οδηγία για την τροποποίηση της οδηγίας 2005/36/ΕΚ θεσπίζει τη δυνατότητα δημιουργίας «κοινών πλαισίων εκπαίδευσης» και «κοινών δοκιμασιών εκπαίδευσης». Οι τίτλοι που αποκτώνται στο πλαίσιο αυτών των κοινών πλαισίων εκπαίδευσης ή δοκιμασιών πρέπει να αναγνωρίζονται αυτομάτως στα άλλα συμμετέχοντα κράτη μέλη. Η Επιτροπή μπορεί να καθιερώσει τα πλαίσια αυτά με κατ' εξουσιοδότηση πράξεις. Τα κράτη μέλη μπορούν να εξαιρούνται από την εφαρμογή των κοινών πλαισίων εκπαίδευσης ή δοκιμασιών υπό συγκεκριμένους όρους.

3) Η Επιτροπή δεν διαθέτει πληροφορίες σχετικά με τη θέσπιση των εν λόγω μέτρων από άλλα κράτη μέλη.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011007/13
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Possible deterioration in quality of professional services, for example in the field of physiotherapy, following the transposition into Greek law of Directive 2005/36/EC

In a bid to consolidate the joint single market strategy and remove obstacles to the free movement of professions and freedom to provide services, the European Parliament and Council adopted Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications transposed into Greek law under Presidential Decree 38/2010. This was subsequently amended by Laws 4093/2012 and 4111/2013 widening the scope of the provisions and conditions of inclusion, thereby effectively creating a parallel procedure for the recognition of professional qualifications — as opposed to equivalence — leading to a serious risk of deterioration in the quality of professional services in certain fields, accompanied by doubts as to the professional qualifications of those admitted as practitioners in Greece and, by extension, all EU Member States. At the same time, Directive 2005/36/EC introduces the concept of the migrant professional, while Member States are entitled to establish minimum qualifications with a view to safeguarding the quality of services provided within their territory.

In view of this:

1. Does the Commission share the concerns of certain professional organisations regarding the risk of deterioration in the quality of services provided within their particular branch through recognition of qualifications issued by private law schools under franchising agreements with non-recognised professional institutions in other Member States?

2. With a view to ensuring more responsible professional standards in the field of physiotherapy and make it easier for Member States to recognise qualifications in accordance with their own legislation, does the Commission consider it advisable to introduce additional conditions of eligibility as for other medical and paramedical professions?

3. Have any other Member States adopted additional criteria and procedures with a view to upholding confidence in this profession and, if so, which?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(14 November 2013)

1. The Commission does not share the concerns of certain professional organisations, given that directive 2005/36/EC ([1]) provides safeguards with regard to the recognition of professional qualifications delivered through a franchised agreement. In particular, the host Member State may verify with the home Member State:

(a) whether the training course at the establishment which gave the training has been formally certified by the educational establishment based in the Member State of origin;

(b) whether the professional qualification issued is the same as that which would have been awarded if the course had been followed entirely in the Member State of origin; and

(c) whether the professional qualification confers the same professional rights in the territory of the Member State of origin.

([1]) Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, OJ L 255, 30.9.2005, p. 22.

If one of these criteria is not fulfilled, recognition may be refused.

2. According to the statistics available in the Commission database on regulated professions, between 1997 and 2012 recognition for the profession of physiotherapist was granted in 82% of cases (and for most of them it was automatic). However, the system can still be improved. This is why the new directive amending Directive 2005/36/EC introduces the possibility to set up 'common training frameworks' and 'common training tests'. Qualifications obtained under such common training frameworks or tests should automatically be recognised in the other participating Member States. The Commission may introduce such frameworks by delegated acts. Member States may be exempted from the application of common training frameworks or tests under specific conditions.

3. The Commission has no information about the introduction of such measures by other Member States.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011008/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(26 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ενεργειακό κόστος — βιωσιμότητα και ανταγωνιστικότητα των ελληνικών βιομηχανιών

Το ενεργειακό κόστος αποτελεί έναν από τους βασικότερους παράγοντες διαμόρφωσης του συνολικού κόστους παραγωγής, με την «επιρροή» του να είναι ακόμη πιο σημαντική στους κλάδους της ενεργοβόρου βιομηχανίας, επηρεάζοντας καθοριστικά την τελική τιμή πώλησης, άρα και την ανταγωνιστικότητα των προϊόντων τους. Στην Ελλάδα, σύμφωνα με τα στοιχεία των αντίστοιχων Βιομηχανικών Ενώσεων, οι ιδιαίτερα υψηλές τιμές ενέργειας υπονομεύουν τόσο την ανάπτυξη όσο και τη βιωσιμότητα των ελληνικών βιομηχανιών, με συνέπεια τη μείωση της παραγωγικής δραστηριότητας, την απώλεια θέσεων εργασίας και την ουσιαστική αποδόμηση κάθε εγχειρήματος για την δημιουργία του αναγκαίου εξωστρεφούς προσανατολισμού, καθώς και η εγχώρια ζήτηση εμφανίζεται εξαιρετικά περιορισμένη. Με δεδομένο, λοιπόν, αφενός, ότι η ανάκαμψη της ελληνικής οικονομίας και η βελτίωση του ισοζυγίου τρεχουσών συναλλαγών συνδέεται άρρηκτα με την «αναζωογόνηση» της ελληνικής βιομηχανίας και, αφετέρου, το διακηρυγμένο στόχο για την αύξηση της ανταγωνιστικότητας, ερωτάται η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή:

1. Διαθέτει στοιχεία για το ενεργειακό κόστος (τιμή kWh) στους βασικότερους κλάδους της βιομηχανίας έντασης ενέργειας (π.χ. μεταλλουργία, χαλυβουργία, τσιμεντοβιομηχανία, λιπάσματα, χαρτοποιία, υαλουργία κ.λπ.) στα κράτη μέλη;

2. Πώς αξιολογεί, ως μέλος και της τρόικας, μια πρόταση για μείωση του κόστους ενέργειας σε όλο το φάσμα της ελληνικής οικονομίας — τουλάχιστον στα επίπεδα του ευρωπαϊκού μέσου όρου — με στόχο την αύξηση της ανταγωνιστικότητάς της;

3. Υπάρχουν βέλτιστες πρακτικές και παραδείγματα άλλων κρατών μελών που προχώρησαν (είτε σε μεμονωμένους κλάδους, είτε συνολικά) σε μειώσεις του κόστους ενέργειας για τη στήριξη της παραγωγικής δραστηριότητας και της απασχόλησης; Αν ναι, ποια είναι αυτά και με ποιο τρόπο;

Απάντηση του κ. Oettinger εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(25 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή καταρτίζει επί του παρόντος έκθεση σχετικά με τις τιμές και το κόστος της ενέργειας, η οποία εξετάζει επίσης τις επιπτώσεις στις βιομηχανίες έντασης ενέργειας. Η έκθεση θα αναλύσει τη σύνθεση των ενεργειακών τιμών για τον μέσο καταναλωτή σε διάφορους τομείς έντασης ενέργειας. Στόχος είναι να εκδοθεί η εν λόγω έκθεση εγκαίρως για το Ευρωπαϊκό Συμβούλιο για την ανταγωνιστικότητα που θα διεξαχθεί τον Φεβρουάριο.

Κατά το δεύτερο εξάμηνο του 2012, οι μέσες τιμές λιανικής πώλησης ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας για βιομηχανικούς καταναλωτές που καταγράφηκαν στην Ελλάδα ήταν σε γενικές γραμμές ευθυγραμμισμένες με τον μέσο όρο της ΕΕ [1]. Το κόστος της ενέργειας διαδραματίζει σημαντικό ρόλο στην ανταγωνιστικότητα της βιομηχανίας, αλλά και το κόστος της εργασίας, οι εμπορικές πολιτικές και οι περιβαλλοντικές υποχρεώσεις, μεταξύ άλλων, έχουν επίσης επίδραση στην ανταγωνιστικότητα. Τα μέτρα που αποσκοπούν στη μείωση του ενεργειακού κόστους για τις επιχειρήσεις έντασης ενέργειας στην Ελλάδα πρέπει να λαμβάνουν πλήρως υπόψη τα οφέλη και το κόστος για ολόκληρο το σύστημα και όλους τους καταναλωτές ενώ, παράλληλα, θα μεγιστοποιούν τα οφέλη από την ενεργειακή απόδοση. Τα μέτρα κρατικών ενισχύσεων θα πρέπει να είναι καλά στοχοθετημένα και να περιορίζονται στα ελάχιστα αναγκαία ώστε να αποφεύγονται οι αρνητικές συνέπειες όπως οι στρεβλώσεις στην αγορά ηλεκτρισμού και πρόσθετα προβλήματα ρευστότητας για τους παραγωγούς ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας, που ήδη βρίσκονται σε δυσχερή κατάσταση.

Οι εθνικές πολιτικές σχετικά με τους φόρους και τις εισφορές σε αρκετά κράτη μέλη έχουν επίσης αμβλύνει τον αντίκτυπο του κόστους της ενέργειας για τις βιομηχανίες έντασης ενέργειας που είναι εκτεθειμένες στον παγκόσμιο ανταγωνισμό, με σκοπό να αποφευχθούν οι αρνητικές επιπτώσεις για την ανταγωνιστικότητα και την απασχόληση. Η Επιτροπή θεωρεί ότι η ολοκλήρωση της εσωτερικής αγοράς ενέργειας και η διαρκής έμφαση στην ενεργειακή απόδοση, σύμφωνα με τη νομοθεσία της ΕΕ, θα είναι ο πλέον αποτελεσματικός τρόπος για τη μείωση του ενεργειακού κόστους και τη βελτίωση της ανταγωνιστικότητας των βασικών βιομηχανιών. Επί του παρόντος δεν υπάρχει διαθέσιμη επισκόπηση των βέλτιστων πρακτικών σε όλα τα κράτη μέλη.

[1] Πηγή: Τριμηνιαία έκθεση για τις ευρωπαϊκές αγορές ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας, τόμος 6, τεύχος 2, σ. 27 — ΓΔ Ενέργειας — δεύτερο τρίμηνο του 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011008/13
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Energy costs — sustainability and competitiveness of Greek industries

Energy is a major factor with regard to total production costs, even more so in energy-intensive sectors, having a decisive impact on retail prices and competitiveness. According to the Greek industrial associations concerned, excessively high energy prices are undermining industrial growth and sustainability in Greece, leading to reduced output and job losses and effectively stifling any outward-looking entrepreneurial initiative, a situation aggravated by exceptionally weak domestic demand. Economic recovery in Greece and an improvement in its current account situation are therefore closely dependent on revitalising its industries and achieving its declared aim of becoming more competitive.

In view of this:

1. Does the Commission have information regarding energy costs (kWh) with regard to energy-intensive industries in the Member States (the metallurgical, steel, cement, fertiliser, paper and glass production sectors, for example)?

2. As a member of the Troika, what view does it take of the proposal to reduce the energy costs across the beard in Greece — at least compared with European averages — so as to make it more competitive?

3. Have best practices been established, for example by other Member States (in individual sectors or across the board) in reducing energy costs with a view to boosting output and employment figures? If so, which Member States have achieved this and how?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

The Commission is currently preparing a report on energy prices and costs which also examines the impact on energy intensive industries. The report will analyse the composition of energy prices for an average consumer in different energy intensive sectors. The aim is to adopt this report in time for February's European Council on competitiveness.

In the second half of 2012, average retail electricity prices in Greece for industrial consumers were roughly in line with the EU average ([1]). Energy costs play an important role in industrial competitiveness; but labour costs, trade policies and environmental obligations *inter alia* also have an effect on competitiveness. Measures intended to reduce energy costs for energy-intensive companies in Greece need to take full account of benefits and costs for the whole system and all consumers, while maximising gains from energy efficiency. State aid measures should be well targeted and limited to the minimum necessary to avoid negative consequences such as distortions in the electricity market and additional liquidity problems for electricity producers, who are already in a distressed situation.

National policies on taxes and levies in several Member States have also softened the impact of energy costs on energy-intensive industries that are exposed to global competition, with a view to avoiding negative impacts on competiveness and employment. The Commission considers that the completion of the internal energy market and a continued focus on energy efficiency in line with EU legislation will be the most effective way to reduce energy costs and improve key industries' competitiveness. An overview of best practices across Member States is currently not available.

([1]) *Source:* Quarterly Report on European Electricity Markets, Volume 6, issue 2, p27 — DG Energy — Second quarter 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011009/13
to the Commission
Alyn Smith (Verts/ALE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Price controls on fuel supplies

There have been some suggestions recently that government price controls should be instituted on domestic fuel supplies in the UK.

Can the Commission clarify the legal position on price controls and whether such an instrument would be in breach of EU competition rules?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

The EU competition rules, which prohibit anti-competitive agreements and abuses of dominance, concern behaviour by companies. To the extent that a company is required to act in a certain way as a result of binding national law or regulation, leaving no space for autonomous behaviour, the company would not be regarded as in breach of the EU competition rules.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-011010/13
a Bizottság számára
Bánki Erik (PPE)
(2013. szeptember 26.)

Tárgy: A Bizottság hivatalos válasza a Parlament cianidos bányászatról szóló állásfoglalására

A Parlament 2010. május 5-én túlnyomó többséggel elfogadta azt az állásfoglalást, amelyben felszólította a Bizottságot, hogy 2011 végéig tegyen javaslatot a cianidos bányászati technológia általános uniós betiltására.

Az Európai Unió működéséről szóló szerződés 225. cikke szerint a Parlament tagjainak többségével felkérheti a Bizottságot olyan kérdésre vonatkozó megfelelő javaslat előterjesztésére, amely az Európai Parlament megítélése szerint a Szerződések végrehajtása céljából uniós jogi aktus kidolgozását teszi szükségessé.

A cikk azt is kiköti, hogy amennyiben a Bizottság nem terjeszt elő javaslatot, ennek okairól tájékoztatja a Parlamentet.

Tekintettel arra, hogy a Bizottság még nem terjesztett elő javaslatot a cianidos bányászat tilalmáról, melyik hivatalos dokumentumban értesítette a Parlamentet azokról az okokról, amelyek a javaslat benyújtásának elmulasztását indokolják?

Janez Potočnik válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2013. november 22.)

A Bizottság 2010. július 6-án elfogadott feljegyzésében ([1]) tájékoztatta a Parlamentet arról, miért nem tervez – a Parlament 2010. május 5-i állásfoglalásában megfogalmazott kérésének eleget téve – jogalkotási javaslatot előterjeszteni a cianid bányászatban történő alkalmazásának általános tilalmáról.

([1]) SP(2010)4415, A cianidos bányászati technológiának az Európai Unióban történő általános betiltásáról szóló európai parlamenti állásfoglalás nyomon követése, a Bizottság 2010. július 6-án elfogadott feljegyzése: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2010/2593(RSP)&l=EN#tab-0)

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011010/13
to the Commission
Erik Bánki (PPE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Commission's formal response to Parliament's resolution on cyanide mining

Parliament adopted its resolution of 5 May 2010, in which it called on the Commission to propose a general EU ban on the use of cyanide in mining by the end of 2011, by an overwhelming majority.

Under Article 225 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Parliament may, acting by a majority of its component Members, request the Commission to submit any appropriate proposal on matters on which it considers that a Union act is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties.

This article also stipulates that if the Commission does not submit a proposal, it must inform Parliament of the reasons.

Given that the Commission has not yet proposed a ban on cyanide mining, in which official document did it formally inform Parliament of its reasons for not submitting a proposal?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2013)

The Commission informed the Parliament by note adopted by the Commission on 6/07/2010 ([1]) of the reasons why it did not intend to come forward with a legislative proposal introducing a general ban on the use of cyanide in mining as requested by the Parliament in its resolution adopted on 5/05/2010.

([1]) Note SP(2010)4415 Follow-up to the European Parliament resolution on a general ban on the use of cyanide mining technologies in the European Union, adopted by the Commission on 6 July 2010.
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2010/2593(RSP)&l=EN#tab-0)

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011011/13
a la Comisión
Paolo De Castro (S&D), Giancarlo Scottà (EFD), Herbert Dorfmann (PPE), Giovanni La Via (PPE), Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE), Iratxe García Pérez (S&D) y Michel Dantin (PPE)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Etiquetado de productos alimenticios — sistema «semáforo» del Reino Unido

A raíz de una recomendación del Ministerio de la Salud del Reino Unido, de 19 de junio de 2013, las grandes cadenas de distribución del Reino Unido emplean en el etiquetado de sus productos alimenticios un código de colores (rojo, naranja y verde) para señalar su contenido en grasas, ácidos grasos saturados, sales y azúcares. Dicha recomendación se emitió con carácter voluntario al amparo del Reglamento (UE) n° 1169/2011 (artículo 35, apartado 2). El referido Reglamento establece, en su artículo 35, apartado 1, una serie de requisitos que se deben cumplir a este respecto y prevé la adopción de actos de ejecución por la Comisión. Ahora bien, un sistema que clasifica los productos alimenticios sobre la base de su contenido en grasas, primordialmente, puede tener un efecto penalizador para muchos productos europeos (queso parmesano, queso mozzarella, otros quesos, jamones, etc.), que de esta manera, aun siendo de elevada calidad, corren el riesgo de ser considerados como productos poco saludables. Además, la imposición de etiquetas por los principales establecimientos de venta al por menor puede penalizar en particular a las pequeñas y medianas empresas al imponerles costes adicionales y crecientes de producción.

1. ¿Ha verificado la Comisión la conformidad de la Recomendación del Gobierno británico con lo previsto por el artículo 35, apartado 1, del Reglamento (UE) n° 1169/2011, esto es, que las referidas indicaciones «sean objetivas y no discriminatorias, y que su aplicación no suponga obstáculos a la libre circulación de mercancías»?

2. ¿Tiene la Comisión la intención de velar por la correcta aplicación del artículo 35, apartado 6 (relativo a los actos de ejecución), del Reglamento (UE) n° 1169/2011 haciendo suya la recomendación del Gobierno del Reino Unido y de precisar los requisitos enunciados en el artículo 35, apartado 1?

3. ¿No considera la Comisión que, de conformidad con lo previsto por la Directiva 98/34/CE, el Gobierno del Reino Unido debiera notificar su recomendación a la Comisión Europea?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(6 de noviembre de 2013)

1. Por su carácter voluntario, el código de colores para etiquetado nutricional recomendado por las autoridades del Reino Unido no crea un obstáculo de iure al comercio. Algunas empresas británicas han anunciado públicamente que utilizarán ese sistema, pero otras han declarado que no lo harán; esto indica que, en la situación actual, tampoco puede considerarse de facto un sistema obligatorio. Sin haber recibido más información sobre este sistema, la Comisión no puede verificar su conformidad con los demás criterios del artículo 35, apartado 1, del Reglamento (UE) n° 1169/2011, sobre la información alimentaria facilitada al consumidor ([1]).

2. La Comisión dará inicio a las acciones de ejecución encaminadas a garantizar la uniforme aplicación del artículo 35 en el momento oportuno.

3. La Comisión considera que la recomendación de las autoridades británicas sobre este sistema de etiquetado no precisa de una notificación con arreglo a la Directiva 98/34/CE, ya que, a la vista de la información disponible, no puede considerarse vinculante ni de iure ni de facto. La Comisión estará atenta a que así sea y a que la medida no cree obstáculos a la libre circulación de mercancías consagrada en las disposiciones pertinentes del Tratado, en particular, los artículos 34 a 36, así como en el artículo 35, apartado 1, letra g), del Reglamento (UE) n° 1169/2011.

([1]) DO L 304 de 22.11.2011, p. 18.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011011/13
an die Kommission
Paolo De Castro (S&D), Giancarlo Scottà (EFD), Herbert Dorfmann (PPE), Giovanni La Via (PPE), Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE), Iratxe García Pérez (S&D) und Michel Dantin (PPE)
(26. September 2013)

Betrifft: Lebensmittelkennzeichnung im Vereinigten Königreich nach dem Ampel-System

Gemäß einer Empfehlung des Gesundheitsministeriums des Vereinigten Königreichs vom 19. Juni 2013 kennzeichnen die meisten Einzelhändler im VK ihre Lebensmittelprodukte nach dem Ampelsystem (rot, orange und grün), basierend auf ihrem Gehalt an Fett, gesättigten Fettsäuren, Salz und Zucker. Diese Empfehlung wurde gemäß Artikel 35 Absatz 2 der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1169/2011 auf freiwilliger Basis angenommen. Diese Verordnung schreibt ferner vor, dass gewisse Voraussetzungen erfüllt sein müssen (Artikel 35 Absatz 1) und dass die Kommission Durchführungsrechtsakte erlassen muss. Ein System, bei dem Lebensmittel fast ausschließlich nach ihrem Fettgehalt eingestuft werden, droht zahlreiche europäische Produkte (Parmigiano Reggiano, Mozzarella und andere Käsesorten, Schinken usw.) zu benachteiligen, die dann trotz ihrer hohen Qualität als „ungesund" gelten würden. Außerdem bedroht diese Etikettierung durch die Haupt-Einzelhändler die Existenz der kleineren und mittleren Unternehmen zu benachteiligen, vor allem aufgrund der zusätzlichen — und eskalierenden — Produktionskosten.

1. Hat die Kommission überprüft, dass die oben genannte Empfehlung der britischen Regierung auch mit Artikel 35 Absatz 1 der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1169/2011 in Einklang steht, das heißt, dass die besagte Lebensmittelkennzeichnung objektiv und nicht diskriminierend ist und dass deren Anwendung kein Hindernis für den freien Warenverkehr darstellt?

2. Wird die Kommission sicher stellen, dass Artikel 35 Absatz 6 der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1169/2011 (betreffend Durchführungsrechtsakte) bei der Umsetzung der Empfehlung der Regierung des VK korrekt angewendet wird und wird sie ferner die Anforderungen, die sich aus Artikel 35 Absatz 1 ergeben, genauer definieren?

3. Ist die Kommission nicht der Auffassung, dass die Regierung des VK sie gemäß Richtlinie 98/34/EG über die besagte Empfehlung hätte in Kenntnis setzen müssen?

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(6. November 2013)

1. Da die Verwendung der von den britischen Behörden empfohlenen Kennzeichnung von Lebensmitteln nach dem Ampelsystem auf freiwilliger Basis erfolgt, schafft das System kein rechtliches Hindernis für den freien Warenverkehr. Einige britische Unternehmen haben öffentlich angekündigt, dass sie die Kennzeichnung verwenden werden, andere dagegen lehnen sie ab; dies zeigt, dass das System zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt auch *de facto* nicht als verpflichtend betrachtet wird. Die Kommission hat noch keine genauen Informationen über das fragliche System erhalten und kann daher nicht überprüfen, ob es auch in Einklang mit den anderen Kriterien des Artikels 35 Absatz 1 der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1169/2011 betreffend die Information der Verbraucher über Lebensmittel ([1]) steht.

2. Die Kommission wird die Umsetzungsmaßnahmen, mit denen die einheitliche Anwendung des Artikels 35 sichergestellt werden soll, rechtzeitig in die Wege leiten.

3. Nach Auffassung der Kommission erfordert die Empfehlung der britischen Behörden betreffend die Verwendung dieses Kennzeichnungssystems keine Mitteilung gemäß der Richtlinie 98/34/EG, da sie — nach Maßgabe der vorliegenden Informationen — weder *de jure* noch *de facto* als Pflichtvorgabe anzusehen ist. Die Kommission wird darauf achten, dass dies weiterhin der Fall bleibt und dass die Maßnahme keine Hindernisse für den freien Warenverkehr gemäß den einschlägigen Vertragsbestimmungen (insbesondere Artikel 34 bis 36) und Artikel 35 Absatz 1 Buchstabe g der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1169/2011 schafft.

([1]) ABl. L 304 vom 22.11.2011, S. 18.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011011/13
à la Commission
Paolo De Castro (S&D), Giancarlo Scottà (EFD), Herbert Dorfmann (PPE), Giovanni La Via (PPE), Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE), Iratxe García Pérez (S&D) et Michel Dantin (PPE)
(26 septembre 2013)

Objet: Étiquetage des denrées alimentaires: système britannique des «feux de signalisation»

À la suite d'une recommandation émise, le 19 juin 2013, par le ministère britannique de la santé, la grande distribution au Royaume-Uni procède à un étiquetage des produits alimentaires conformément à un système de codes de couleurs (rouge, orange et vert) qui varient selon la teneur en matières grasses, en graisses saturées, en sel et en sucre des aliments. Cette recommandation a été adoptée sur une base volontaire, conformément à l'article 35, paragraphe 2, du règlement (UE) n° 1169/2011. Le même règlement dispose que certaines exigences doivent être respectées (article 35, paragraphe 1) et que la Commission doit adopter des actes d'exécution. Tout système qui classifie les denrées alimentaires sur la seule base de leur teneur en matières grasses risque de pénaliser de nombreux produits européens (le *parmigiano reggiano*, la mozzarella, d'autres fromages, le jambon, etc.) qui seraient alors réputés «mauvais pour la santé», malgré la qualité élevée de ces produits. Par ailleurs, l'apposition d'étiquettes spécifiques par la grande distribution risque de pénaliser notamment les petites et moyennes entreprises en raison de l'augmentation — et de l'escalade — des coûts de production.

1. La Commission a-t-elle vérifié la conformité de la recommandation du gouvernement britannique susmentionnée avec l'article 35, paragraphe 1, du règlement (UE) n° 1169/2011; en d'autre termes, a-t-elle vérifié que les étiquettes des denrées alimentaires sont objectives et non discriminatoires et où l'application de ce système d'étiquetage n'entrave pas la libre circulation des biens?

2. La Commission entend-elle assurer la bonne mise en œuvre de l'article 35, paragraphe 6, du règlement (UE) n° 1169/2011 (concernant les actes d'exécution) compte tenu de la recommandation du gouvernement britannique, et de définir plus précisément les exigences de l'article 35, paragraphe 1?

3. La Commission n'estime-t-elle pas que le gouvernement britannique doit lui notifier la recommandation susmentionnée, conformément à la directive 98/34/CE?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(6 novembre 2013)

1. En raison de son caractère facultatif, le système d'étiquetage nutritionnel par codes de couleurs recommandé par les autorités britanniques ne crée pas d'entrave de jure aux échanges commerciaux. Certaines entreprises britanniques ont annoncé publiquement qu'elles utiliseront ce système et d'autres qu'elles ne le feront pas, ce qui montre qu'en l'état actuel, ce système ne peut pas non plus être considéré comme un système obligatoire de facto. La Commission, du fait qu'elle n'a pas reçu les détails du système en question, ne peut en vérifier la conformité avec les autres critères de l'article 35, paragraphe 1, du règlement (UE) n° 1169/2011 concernant l'information des consommateurs sur les denrées alimentaires ([1]).

2. La Commission commencera à s'occuper de la mise en œuvre des actions relatives à l'application uniforme de l'article 35 dans les délais prévus.

3. La Commission estime que la recommandation de ce système d'étiquetage par les autorités britanniques ne nécessite pas de notification en vertu de la directive 98/34/CE car, sur la base des données disponibles, il n'est pas considéré comme obligatoire, que ce soit de jure ou de facto. La Commission veillera à ce que ce soit le cas et à ce que cette mesure ne crée pas d'entrave à la libre circulation des marchandises comme le prévoient les dispositions pertinentes du traité, notamment ses articles 34 à 36, ainsi que l'article 35, paragraphe 1, point g), du règlement (UE) n° 1169/2011.

([1]) JO L 304 du 22.11.2011, p. 18.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011011/13
alla Commissione
Paolo De Castro (S&D), Giancarlo Scottà (EFD), Herbert Dorfmann (PPE), Giovanni La Via (PPE), Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE), Iratxe García Pérez (S&D) e Michel Dantin (PPE)
(26 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Etichettatura dei prodotti alimentari: il sistema semaforo usato nel Regno Unito

Conformemente alla raccomandazione del 19 giugno 2013 del ministero della sanità del governo britannico, i principali rivenditori del Regno Unito etichettano i prodotti utilizzando un sistema a più colori (rosso, arancione e verde) per illustrare il contenuto di grassi, grassi saturi, sale e zuccheri presenti nel prodotto alimentare. Questa raccomandazione è stata adottata volontariamente, in linea con il regolamento (UE) n. 1169/2011 (articolo 35, paragrafo 2). Lo stesso regolamento (articolo 35, paragrafo 1) prevede che siano soddisfatti determinati requisiti e che la Commissione adotti atti di esecuzione. Un sistema che classifica i generi alimentari esclusivamente in base al contenuto di grassi, rischia di penalizzare numerosi prodotti europei (Parmigiano Reggiano, mozzarella, prosciutto e altri formaggi, ecc.) che in tal caso sarebbero considerati «non sani», nonostante gli elevati standard di qualità. La diffusione di queste etichette fra i principali rivenditori rischia inoltre di penalizzare innanzitutto le PMI, con costi di produzione ulteriori.

1. Ha la Commissione verificato la conformità della raccomandazione del governo britannico all'articolo 35, paragrafo 1, del regolamento (UE) n. 1169/2011 (forme e simboli grafici che «sono obiettivi e non discriminatori e la loro applicazione non crea ostacoli alla libera circolazione delle merci»)?

2. Intende la Commissione assicurare la corretta applicazione dell'articolo 35, paragrafo 6, del regolamento (UE) n. 1169/2011 (atti di esecuzione), in seguito alla raccomandazione del governo britannico, nonché definire meglio i requisiti di cui all'articolo 35, paragrafo 1?

3. Non ritiene necessario che il governo britannico notifichi la raccomandazione alla Commissione, ai sensi della direttiva 98/34/EC?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(6 novembre 2013)

1. Dato il suo carattere facoltativo, il sistema di codici cromatici di etichettatura nutrizionale raccomandato dalle autorità britanniche non costituisce un ostacolo «de jure» agli scambi commerciali. Alcune aziende del Regno Unito hanno annunciato pubblicamente che ricorreranno a questo sistema, mentre altre hanno affermato che non lo faranno; ciò dimostra che, allo stato dei fatti, il sistema non può nemmeno essere considerato obbligatorio «de facto». Non avendo ricevuto informazioni dettagliate sul sistema in questione, la Commissione non può verificare la relativa conformità agli altri criteri di cui all'articolo 35, paragrafo 1, del regolamento (UE) n. 1169/2011 relativo alla fornitura di informazioni sugli alimenti ai consumatori ([1]).

2. A tempo debito la Commissione avvierà i lavori per l'attuazione di azioni riguardanti l'applicazione uniforme dell'articolo 35.

3. La Commissione ritiene che la raccomandazione di tale sistema di etichettatura da parte delle autorità britanniche non richieda alcuna notifica a norma della direttiva 98/34/CE dato che, sulla scorta delle informazioni disponibili, esso non viene considerato obbligatorio né «de jure» né «de facto». La Commissione vigilerà affinché ciò corrisponda al vero e tale misura non crei ostacoli alla libera circolazione delle merci, in linea con le disposizioni pertinenti del trattato, segnatamente quelle di cui agli articoli da 34 a 36 nonché all'articolo 35, paragrafo 1, lettera g), del regolamento (UE) n. 1169/2011.

([1]) GU L 304 del 22.11.2011, pag. 18.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011011/13
to the Commission
Paolo De Castro (S&D), Giancarlo Scottà (EFD), Herbert Dorfmann (PPE), Giovanni La Via (PPE), Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE), Iratxe García Pérez (S&D) and Michel Dantin (PPE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Food labelling: UK traffic-light system

Following a recommendation issued by the UK Government's Department of Health on 19 June 2013, major retailers in the UK are labelling food products according to a colour-coding system (red, orange and green) based on their fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar content. This recommendation was adopted on a voluntary basis in accordance with Article 35(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011. The same regulation stipulates that certain requirements must be met (Article 35(1)) and that the Commission must adopt implementing acts. Any system which classifies foodstuffs exclusively according to fat content risks penalising numerous European products (Parmigiano-Reggiano, mozzarella and other cheeses, ham, etc.), which would thus be considered 'unhealthy' despite their high quality. Furthermore, the attribution of labels by major retailers runs the risk of penalising small and medium-sized enterprises in particular, owing to additional — and escalating — production costs.

1. Has the Commission verified that the abovementioned UK Government recommendation conforms with Article 35(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011, i.e. that the food labels in question are objective and non-discriminatory and that their application does not create obstacles to the free movement of goods?

2. Does the Commission intend to ensure the correct application of Article 35(6) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 (on implementing acts) following the UK Government recommendation, and to define the requirements of Article 35(1) more precisely?

3. Does the Commission not think it necessary for the UK Government to notify the Commission of the abovementioned recommendation, in accordance with Directive 98/34/EC?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(6 November 2013)

1. Because of its voluntary character, the colour coded nutrition labelling scheme recommended by the UK authorities does not create a 'de jure' barrier to trade. Some UK companies announced publicly that they would use the scheme, while others announced they would not, which shows that, as the situation stands today, the system cannot be considered as a 'de facto' mandatory system either. The Commission, not having received the details of the scheme in question, cannot verify its conformity with the other criteria of Article 35(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers ([1]).

2. The Commission will initiate work on the implementing actions concerning the uniform application of Article 35 in due time.

3. The Commission considers that the recommendation of this labelling scheme by the UK authorities does not require a notification under Directive 98/34/EC since, on the basis of the available information, it is considered neither 'de jure' nor 'de facto' mandatory. The Commission will be vigilant that it is the case and that the measure does not create obstacles to the free movement of goods as provided by the relevant provisions of the Treaty, notably Articles 34 to 36, and in Article 35(1)(g) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011.

([1]) OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011017/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Proyecto de Directiva sobre energía renovable y criterios de sostenibilidad de la biomasa

Según algunas informaciones que se pueden encontrar en algunos medios, la Comisión Europea está a punto de finalizar un proyecto de Directiva que establecería criterios de sostenibilidad para la biomasa utilizada en el sector de la energía y, concretamente, sobre la biomasa de origen forestal. En particular, y según estas informaciones, se plantea que las zonas forestales consideradas de elevada biodiversidad no podrían ser proveedoras de materia prima con la consideración de energía renovable.

A la luz de lo anterior,

1. ¿puede la Comisión informar si estas informaciones son válidas?

2. ¿Cuándo tiene la Comisión previsto presentar dicho proyecto de Directiva?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(7 de noviembre de 2013)

La Comisión está analizando actualmente los problemas de sostenibilidad relacionados con el creciente uso de biomasa sólida y gaseosa para la generación de electricidad y calor. El objetivo de este análisis es determinar si convendría emprender nuevas acciones a escala de la UE mediante la introducción de criterios de sostenibilidad de carácter vinculante. Se tomará una decisión definitiva a la mayor brevedad posible.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011017/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Draft directive on renewable energy and sustainability criteria for biomass

According to reports in the media, the Commission is about to finalise a draft directive establishing sustainability criteria for biomass used in the energy sector, and specifically for forest biomass. In particular, according to these reports, it is proposed that forest areas of high biodiversity should not be used to provide raw material that is considered as a renewable energy source.

In view of the above:

1. Can the Commission confirm whether these reports are correct?

2. When does the Commission intend to present this draft directive?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(7 November 2013)

The Commission is currently analysing the sustainability issues related to the increasing use of solid and gaseous biomass for power and heat. The objective of this analysis is to determine whether additional EU action through the introduction of a EU binding sustainability criteria is needed and appropriate. A final decision will be taken as soon as possible.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011018/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Proyecto de Directiva sobre energía renovable — Zonas forestales

Según información que se puede encontrar en los medios de comunicación, la Comisión Europea estaría terminando los últimos detalles que establecerían la aplicación de criterios de sostenibilidad para la biomasa utilizada en el sector de la energía distinto al de los biocarburantes.

Según dichas fuentes, el proyecto impondría criterios de sostenibilidad a la biomasa utilizada para la producción de energía térmica o eléctrica. Así, la Comisión Europea exigiría que la materia prima no proceda de zonas forestales con elevada biodiversidad.

A la luz de lo anterior, ¿qué entiende la Comisión por zonas forestales de elevada biodiversidad?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de noviembre de 2013)

La Comisión está analizando actualmente los problemas de sostenibilidad relacionados con el creciente uso de biomasa sólida y gaseosa para la generación de electricidad y calor, con el fin de valorar si convendría emprender nuevas acciones a escala de la UE, entre ellas la introducción de criterios de sostenibilidad de carácter vinculante. Se tomará una decisión definitiva a la mayor brevedad posible. La Comisión no puede emitir comentarios sobre detalles técnicos de asuntos que están siendo objeto de deliberación.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011018/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Draft directive on renewable energy — Forest areas

According to reports in the media, the Commission is putting the final touches to sustainability criteria for biomass used in the energy sector that are different from those applied to biofuels.

According to these sources, the draft directive would impose sustainability criteria on biomass used to produce thermal energy and electricity. The Commission would require the raw material not to come from forest areas of high biodiversity.

In light of the above, what does the Commission understand by 'forest areas of high biodiversity'?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

The Commission is currently analysing the sustainability issues associated with increased use of solid and gaseous biomass for power and heat, with the view to consider whether additional EU action is needed and appropriate, including EU binding sustainability criteria. A final decision will be taken as soon as possible. The Commission is not in the position to comment on technical details of issues under deliberation.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011019/13
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Designation of a disability Commissioner

For more than two decades there has been a common legal framework in Europe on non-discrimination, under Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) . This article prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, which has resulted in a series of directives being drawn up based on the concept of equal opportunities and aiming to guarantee equal treatment for all in all aspects of life.

While the above are very welcome developments, the time has now come for the designation of a Commission with a specific disability portfolio.

What steps will the Commission take to ensure that we have a disability Commissioner?

Question for written answer E-011077/13
to the Commission
Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Disability rights

Given that approximately 80 million people in Europe are currently affected by a disability, can the Commission confirm whether it has plans to designate a member of the next Commission to be responsible for disability rights?

Joint answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(11 November 2013)

The Commission is fully committed to the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, as demonstrated by the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 ([1]) and by the conclusion by the European Union of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([2]).

The rights based approach has become the norm for our actions in the disability field. Therefore, in the current College the lead responsibility for disability policies falls under the remit of the Vice-President of the Commission, in charge of Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship.

Deciding the distribution of portfolios and responsibilities within the new College of Commissioners is a prerogative of the next President of the European Commission.

([1]) COM(2010) 636 final.
([2]) 2010/48/EC — OJ L 23, 27.1.2010, p. 35.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011020/13
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: Withdrawal of the proposed Pregnant Workers Directive under the right of initiative

It has been three years now since the Council received the Pregnant Workers Directive. It is very clear that there is no political will from the Member States to open negotiations on this file. The Commissioner with responsibility for gender equality and the initiator of the proposed directive has repeatedly voiced her support for the proposals and on some occasions, has intervened in an attempt to influence Council.

A lot of time has been devoted in the Parliament to fighting the Council and promoting this directive but it is evident that the Member States have given their verdict on the proposals. The response has been a resounding 'no'. Is it not time that the Commission withdrew the proposed Pregnant Workers Directive under the right of initiative?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(5 November 2013)

With regard to the Commission proposal to amend the Pregnant Workers Directive (92/85/EEC), the Irish Presidency had resumed informal contacts with the European Parliament and Member States. In June 2013 the coordinators of the political groups of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) — with the exception of the ECR — sent a letter to the Irish Presidency in order to express their willingness to find an agreement with the Council on this file. In its reply the Presidency explained the features on the basis of which a compromise solution could be envisaged. Therefore, in view of the ongoing efforts of the Presidencies and the European Parliament to move the file forward, there seems no reason to withdraw the proposal at this stage.

The Commission will consider this proposal in the context of one of the next REFIT exercises.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris P-011021/13
adresată Comisiei
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(27 septembrie 2013)

Subiect: Stadiul lucrărilor la Gazoductul Iași-Ungheni

În luna august 2013, Autoritatea Comună de Management pentru Programul Operațional Comun „România-Ucraina-Republica Moldova" a semnat contractul pentru proiectul privind interconexiunea de gaze naturale Iași (România)-Ungheni (Republica Moldova). Proiectul ar urma să fie prima conductă de gaze naturale care face legătura între Republica Moldova și Uniunea Europeană și are drept scop diversificarea surselor de aprovizionare cu gaze pentru Republica Moldova. Din costurile totale ale investiției, șapte milioane de euro reprezintă contribuția Uniunii Europene în cadrul Instrumentului european de vecinătate și parteneriat și a Programului de Cooperare Transfrontalieră România-Ucraina-Republica Moldova 2007-2013.

La 27 august, în prezența comisarului european pentru energie, dl. Günther Oettinger, au fost inaugurate lucrările în cadrul acestui proiect. Însă la numai câteva zile după inaugurarea lucrărilor (la care au participat printre alții și premierul României, Victor Ponta, și cel al Republicii Moldova, Iurie Leancă) toate materialele prezente la locul construcției (atât pe șantierul de pe partea românească, cât și pe cel din Republica Moldova) au dispărut, iar până în prezent lucrările propriu-zise nu au fost demarate, fapt constatat în urma mai multor reportaje mass-media, dar și ca urmare a vizitei președintelui României la fața locului.

Termenul avansat în mod public de prim-ministrul român pentru finalizarea proiectului este sfârșitul lunii decembrie, însă în condițiile în care, după o lună de la inaugurarea șantierului, lucrările nu au debutat, acest termen este nerealist.

Deține Comisia mai multe informații cu privire la cauzele care au determinat această întârziere în începerea lucrărilor și care sunt măsurile pe care le are în vedere pentru a se asigura că toate angajamentele asumate în contextul acestui proiect de investiții finanțat parțial de către UE vor fi respectate? Există în cadrul contractului semnat de Autoritatea Comună de Management pentru Programul Operațional Comun „România-Ucraina-Republica Moldova" un calendar privind evoluția lucrărilor cu termene stabilite (pe lângă cel de finalizare a lucrărilor)? Și dacă da, sunt respectate în prezent aceste termene?

Răspuns dat de dl Oettinger în numele Comisiei
(28 octombrie 2013)

Cu ocazia întâlnirii sale cu viceprim-ministrul Republicii Moldova, dl Lazăr, la 24 septembrie 2013, comisarul responsabil cu energia s-a asigurat personal că nu există întârzieri în implementarea proiectului privind gazoductul Iași - Ungheni. Cu toate acestea, după deschiderea oficială, a fost necesară încheierea unui acord final cu contractantul, cu privire la planificarea lucrărilor de construcții. Conform informațiilor Comisiei, autoritățile din Republica Moldova și cele din România s-au întâlnit cu contractantul în data de 26 septembrie 2013 pentru a planifica organizarea lucrărilor. Comisia înțelege că între timp au fost demarate lucrările de construcții.

În baza dosarului primit de Comisie din partea Autorității Comune de Management pentru Programul de Cooperare Transfrontalieră România - Ucraina - Republica Moldova 2007 - 2013, durata preconizată a proiectului este de 12 luni de la semnarea contractului de grant. Întrucât contractul de grant a fost semnat la 8 august 2013, proiectul ar trebui să fie finalizat până la 8 august 2014, cel târziu.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011021/13
to the Commission
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: State of play in the work on the Iași-Ungheni gas pipeline

In August 2013, the Joint Managing Authority for the Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova Joint Operational Programme signed the agreement on the natural gas pipeline connection between Iași (Romania) and Ungheni (Republic of Moldova). The aim of the project is to construct the first natural gas pipeline connecting the Republic of Moldova with the European Union, with the goal of diversifying the Republic of Moldova's sources of natural gas supply. The European Union has contributed EUR 7 million of the total investment costs through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument and the Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova Cross-border Cooperation Programme for 2007-2013.

The project was launched on 27 August, in the presence of the European Commissioner for Energy, Günther Oettinger. However, just a few days after the launching ceremony (which was also attended by the Prime Minister of Romania, Victor Ponta, and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, Iurie Leancă), all the materials had disappeared both from the construction site in Romania and from the site in the Republic of Moldova, meaning that — as has been widely reported in the media — work proper has not yet started, even following a visit to the site by the President of Romania.

The Prime Minister of Romania has publicly announced that the project will be completed by the end of December, but given that work has yet to begin at the construction site, one month after the launch of the project, that deadline is unrealistic.

Does the Commission have any further information on the causes for this delay in the start of the works, and what steps will it take to ensure that all the commitments made with regard to this investment project, which is being part-financed by the EU, will be honoured? Does the agreement signed by the Joint Managing Authority for the Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova Joint Operational Programme set out a timetable with deadlines for the completion of each phase of the project (alongside the overall timetable for completion)? If so, are those deadlines currently being respected?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(28 October 2013)

Following his meeting with the Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister Lazar on 24 September 2013, the Commissioner responsible for Energy is now personally assured that there are no delays in the implementation of the laşi — Ungheni gas pipeline project. However, a final agreement on the planning of the concrete works needed to be made with the contractor after the official opening. According to Commission information, the Moldovan and Romanian authorities met with the contractor on the 26 September 2013 to plan the organisation of the works The Commission understands that the concrete works have started in the meantime.

Based on the full project application received by the Commission from the Joint Management Authority of the Romania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova Cross border Cooperation Programme for 2007-2013, the project duration is expected to be 12 months from the signature of the grant contract. As the grant contract was signed on 8 August 2013, the project should be completed by 8 August 2014 at the latest.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011022/13
a la Comisión
Andrés Perelló Rodríguez (S&D)
(27 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Aplicación de copago farmacéutico para el tratamiento de enfermedades crónicas y graves en España

El pasado 19 de septiembre se publicaba en el Boletín Oficial del Estado de España la Resolución de la DG de Cartera Básica de Servicios del Sistema Nacional de Salud y Farmacia, de 10 de septiembre, por la que se procede a modificar las condiciones de financiación de medicamentos incluidos en la prestación farmacéutica del Sistema Nacional de Salud mediante la asignación de aportación del usuario, en desarrollo del Real Decreto-ley 28/2012, de medidas de consolidación y garantía del sistema de la Seguridad Social.

La medida, que entrará en vigor el 1 de octubre, supondrá un copago para medicamentos que hasta ahora se dispensan de manera ambulatoria y gratuita en los hospitales. La aportación del usuario será de un 10 % hasta un máximo de 4,20 € del precio de los medicamentos por cada envase dispensado, y se estima que supondrá un gasto de hasta 40 000 € anuales para enfermos graves o crónicos. Entre los fármacos incluidos se encuentran medicamentos de alto impacto económico destinados a tratar a pacientes crónicos o graves contra enfermedades como el cáncer, la artritis, la hepatitis, la esclerosis múltiple, o para tratamientos de fertilidad. Este copago supone una barrera de acceso que puede ser devastadora para miles de enfermos crónicos y graves y sus familias, ya que no sólo pone en peligro la salud de estos pacientes, sino que también les sitúa a ellos y a sus familias en claro riesgo de pobreza o exclusión social.

En el marco del Semestre Europeo, la Comisión reconoce expresamente, en su Estudio Prospectivo Anual sobre el Crecimiento 2013, la necesidad de desarrollar estrategias de inclusión activa para garantizar «un acceso a una atención sanitaria de calidad», así como «un acceso amplio a servicios asequibles.»

Además, el Consejo, en su recomendación relativa al Programa Nacional de Reformas de 2013 de España, recomienda «adoptar y aplicar las medidas necesarias para reducir el número de personas con riesgo de pobreza o exclusión social.»

¿Considera la Comisión que el copago de los medicamentos anunciado por el Gobierno español garantiza un acceso amplio a la atención sanitaria? ¿Considera que este copago garantiza el acceso a unos servicios asequibles como recomienda la Comisión a España en su Estudio Prospectivo Anual?

¿Considera la Comisión que el copago anunciado por el Gobierno español reducirá el número de personas con riesgo de pobreza o exclusión social, o bien que esta medida contraviene las recomendaciones del Consejo respecto al Programa Nacional de Reformas de 2013?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(20 de noviembre de 2013)

La Comisión es consciente de que existen políticas diferentes en los Estados miembros con respecto al copago de los medicamentos por parte de los pacientes. Según los datos disponibles, el gasto público de España en productos farmacéuticos es superior a la media de la UE, aunque con una proporción de copago privado inferior a la media ([1]).

La Comisión sabe que España ha adoptado diversas reglamentaciones destinadas a garantizar la sostenibilidad de su sistema nacional de salud, entre otras, la modificación del mecanismo para determinar el pago compartido de los medicamentos. Este mecanismo ha pasado de un porcentaje a tanto alzado del que los pensionistas (salvo los funcionarios públicos) estaban exentos a una norma vinculada a los ingresos no aplicable a las pensiones mínimas, a las rentas básicas y, por primera vez, a los desempleados de larga duración.

Por otra parte, en la Recomendación del Consejo de 9 de Julio de 2013 ([2]), y, en particular, en sus recomendaciones 1 y 6, se invita a España a aumentar la rentabilidad del sector sanitario, al tiempo que se mantiene el acceso para los grupos vulnerables, y a adoptar y aplicar las medidas necesarias para reducir el número de personas en riesgo de pobreza o exclusión social. Las cuestiones planteadas por Su Señoría serán examinadas en profundidad por la Comisión durante la supervisión de las reformas introducidas en España en el marco del actual ejercicio del Semestre Europeo.

([1]) Véase, por ejemplo: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/economic_paper/2012/pdf/ecp_461_en.pdf
([2]) http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/es/13/st10/st10656-re01.es13.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011022/13
to the Commission
Andrés Perelló Rodríguez (S&D)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: Spanish co-payment scheme for pharmaceutical products used to treat serious and chronic illnesses

On 19 September 2013, the Spanish Official State Gazette (BOE) published the Resolution of the Directorate General for basic national healthcare and pharmaceutical services dated 10 September. The resolution modifies the payment terms for medication provided under the Spanish national health system to include a patient contribution, thereby implementing Royal Decree-Law 28/2012, which contains measures to consolidate and guarantee the social security system.

The new rules will enter into force on 1 October. Patients will now be required to pay part of the cost of medicinal products that were previously dispensed free of charge to hospital outpatients. Patients will be required to contribute 10%, up to a maximum of EUR 4.20 per package. Estimates indicate that the annual cost of medication for serious and chronic illnesses could be as much as EUR 40 000. The pharmaceutical products include very expensive medication given to patients with chronic and serious illnesses such as cancer, arthritis, hepatitis and multiple sclerosis, and fertility treatments. The co-payment scheme could limit access to medication and have a devastating effect on thousands of patients with serious and chronic illnesses and their families. The measure will not only endanger patients' health — it also clearly puts patients and their families at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

In the Annual Growth Survey 2013 released during the European Semester, the Commission specifically recognised the need to develop active inclusion strategies to guarantee 'broad access to affordable and high-quality' healthcare services.

The Council Recommendation on Spain's 2013 national reform programme also advises that Spain 'adopt and implement the necessary measures to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion'.

Does the Commission believe that the Spanish Government's introduction of a co-payment system for medication guarantees broad access to healthcare services? Does the Commission think that the co-payment scheme guarantees access to affordable services in Spain as recommended in the Annual Growth Survey?

Does the Commission believe that the co-payment scheme announced by the Spanish Government will reduce the number of individuals at risk of poverty and social exclusion? Or does the measure run counter to the Council recommendations on the 2013 national reform programme?

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

The Commission is aware that there are different policies in Member States on patient co-payments for medicinal products. According to available data, Spain's public spending on pharmaceuticals is above the EU average but with a share of private co-payment below the average. ([1])

The Commission is aware that Spain has passed various regulations striving to ensure the sustainability of its national health system. Among them, Spain has changed its mechanism to determine the cost-sharing for medication. This new mechanism has moved from a flat percentage from which pensioners (other than civil servants) were exempted, to an income related rule from which are exempted minimum pensions, basic income and, for the first time, the long-term unemployed.

In addition, the Council Recommendation of 9 July 2013 ([2]), and particularly Recommendations 1 and 6 thereof, invite Spain to increase the cost-effectiveness of the health sector while maintaining accessibility for vulnerable groups, as well as to adopt and implement the necessary measures to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion.

The questions raised by the Honourable Member will be scrutinised by the Commission during its monitoring of the Spanish reforms under the current European Semester exercise.

([1]) See for instance http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/economic_paper/2012/pdf/ecp_461_en.pdf
([2]) http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/13/st10/st10656-re01.en13.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011023/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(27 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Secesión de un Estado miembro de la UE

En la respuesta E-008133/2012, el Sr. Barroso dijo en nombre de la Comisión: *«No le corresponde a la Comisión manifestar una posición sobre cuestiones de organización interna relacionadas con las disposiciones constitucionales de los Estados miembros. Ciertas hipótesis, como la separación de una parte de un Estado miembro o la creación de un nuevo Estado, no tendrían carácter neutro en relación con los Tratados de la UE. A petición de un Estado miembro que detallase una situación concreta, la Comisión expresaría su opinión sobre las consecuencias legales de la misma con arreglo a la legislación de la UE.»* ([1])

Recientemente, varios comisarios europeos ([2]) y hasta el portavoz del Parlamento Europeo ([3]) han emitido versiones contradictorias sobre procesos de posible secesión de territorio europeo y la creación de nuevos Estados.

¿Ha pedido algún Estado miembro la opinión legal de la Comisión sobre el proceso que debería seguir una región europea que declarase su independencia de forma democrática?

¿Ha planteado el Estado español a la Comisión alguna situación concreta con respecto a la posible independencia de Catalunya?

En caso negativo, ¿puede un funcionario con obligaciones de portavoz posicionarse sobre cuestiones políticas con respecto a las que la Comisión no tiene una opinión firme?

Respuesta del Sr. Barroso en nombre de la Comisión
(20 de noviembre de 2013)

Tal y como observó la Comisión en su respuesta a la pregunta escrita E-008133/2012, su papel no consiste en posicionarse sobre cuestiones de organización interna relacionadas con las disposiciones constitucionales de un Estado miembro en particular.

Hipótesis como la separación de una parte de un Estado miembro o la creación de un nuevo Estado no tendrían un carácter neutro respecto a los Tratados de la UE. La Comisión Europea expresaría su opinión sobre las consecuencias legales con arreglo a la legislación de la UE en caso de que un Estado miembro lo solicitara detallando un escenario concreto.

Como ha confirmado la Comisión en la respuesta a las preguntas escritas P-009756/2012 y P-009862/2012, la UE se basa en los Tratados, aplicables únicamente a los Estados miembros que los han aprobado y ratificado. Si una parte del territorio de un Estado miembro dejase de ser parte de ese Estado para convertirse en un nuevo Estado independiente, los Tratados ya no serían aplicables en dicho territorio. En otras palabras, un nuevo Estado independiente, por el hecho de alcanzar la independencia, pasaría a convertirse en un tercer país con respecto a la UE y los Tratados dejarían de ser aplicables en su territorio.

De conformidad con el artículo 49 del Tratado de la Unión Europea, cualquier Estado europeo que respete los principios establecidos en el artículo 2 del Tratado de la Unión Europea podrá solicitar el ingreso como miembro de la UE. Si la solicitud fuera aceptada unánimemente por el Consejo, se negociaría un acuerdo entre el Estado candidato y los Estados miembros sobre las condiciones de admisión y las adaptaciones de los Tratados que supondría esta admisión. Dicho acuerdo estaría sujeto a la ratificación de todos los Estados miembros y del Estado candidato.

([1]) http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/elecciones-2012/comision-europea-solo-opinara-sobre-independencia-catalunya-espana-pide-2248711
([2]) http://www.rtve.es/alacarta/videos/noticias-24-horas/almunia-advierte-cataluna-quedaria-fuera-si-se-independizara/2020030/
http://www.naciodigital.cat/noticia/59488/ce/recalca/ara/no/posicio/oficial/sobre/proc/catala
([3]) http://www.europapress.es/nacional/noticia-eurocamara-cataluna-reingresar-ue-requiere-unanimidad-28-20130917114736.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011023/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: Secession of an EU Member State

Speaking on behalf of the Commission in answer to E-008133/2012, Mr Barroso said: 'It is not the role of the Commission to express a position on questions of internal organisation related to the constitutional arrangements in the Member States. Concerning certain scenarios such as the separation of one part of a Member State or the creation of a new State, these would not be neutral as regards the EU Treaties. The Commission would express its opinion on the legal consequences under EC law, on request from a Member State detailing a precise scenario.' ([1])

Several European Commissioners ([2]) and even Parliament's spokesperson ([3]) have recently made conflicting statements about what processes would apply in the event of part of an EU territory declaring independence and the creation of new Member States.

Has any Member State asked the Commission for a legal opinion on the procedure for a European region seeking to declare itself independent using a democratic process?

Has Spain discussed with the Commission any specific scenarios under which Catalonia might become independent?

If not, is an official spokesperson authorised to comment on the political ramifications, given that the Commission does not have a clear opinion?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

As the Commission has noted in its reply to Written Question E-008133/2012, it is not its role to express a position on questions of internal organisation related to the constitutional arrangements of a particular Member State.

Scenarios such as the separation of one part of a Member State or the creation of a new state would not be neutral as regards the EU Treaties. The European Commission would express its opinion on the legal consequences under EC law upon request from a Member State detailing a precise scenario.

As the Commission has confirmed in the reply to written questions P-009756/2012 and P-009862/2012, the EU is founded on the Treaties which apply only to the Member States who have agreed and ratified them. If part of the territory of a Member State would cease to be part of that state because it were to become a new independent state, the Treaties would no longer apply to that territory. In other words, a new independent state would, by the fact of its independence, become a third country with respect to the EU and the Treaties would no longer apply on its territory.

Under Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union, any European state which respects the principles set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union may apply to become a member of the EU. If the application is accepted by the Council acting unanimously, an agreement is then negotiated between the applicant state and the Member States on the conditions of admission and the adjustments to the Treaties which such admission entails. This agreement is subject to ratification by all Member States and the applicant state.

([1]) http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/elecciones-2012/comision-europea-solo-opinara-sobre-independencia-catalunya-espana-pide-2248711
([2]) http://www.rtve.es/alacarta/videos/noticias-24-horas/almunia-advierte-cataluna-quedaria-fuera-si-se-independizara/2020030/
http://www.naciodigital.cat/noticia/59488/ce/recalca/ara/no/posicio/oficial/sobre/proc/catala
([3]) http://www.europapress.es/nacional/noticia-eurocamara-cataluna-reingresar-ue-requiere-unanimidad-28-20130917114736.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011024/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(27 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Seguridad en el transporte por tren

El pasado 21 de septiembre colisionaron dos trenes en la estación de Sants, en Barcelona, provocando 22 heridos leves ([1]). La Generalitat de Cataluña hace tiempo que está denunciando la falta de inversión en seguridad en la red de Cercanías de Barcelona por parte del Ministerio de Fomento. El Director General de Transports i Mobilitat del Departament de Territori i Sostenibilitat de la Generalitat, Pere Padrosa, ha arremetido contra Adif por la falta de inversión ferroviaria en Cataluña y ha asegurado que el sistema de señalización es propio del siglo XX, no del XXI.

En referencia a las preguntas E-006034/2011, E-006035/2011 y E-002752/2012, y de conformidad con la Directiva 2004/49/CE (Directiva de seguridad ferroviaria), cabe señalar que es obligación de los Estados miembros garantizar la seguridad de sus redes ferroviarias, en particular mediante una autoridad nacional responsable en materia de seguridad, y que, en España, la Dirección General de Ferrocarriles es quien concede a Adif la autorización de seguridad (Real Decreto 810/2007).

Estos accidentes están generando gran preocupación entre la población catalana y generan impotencia al Gobierno catalán, ya que la gestión de las estaciones, trenes y vías depende del Gobierno español. Hasta ahora solo ha habido heridos leves, pero, si no se actúa, algún día puede haber un accidente realmente grave.

¿Qué medidas está tomando la Comisión para resolver este problema de seguridad?

Respuesta del Sr. Kallas en nombre de la Comisión
(31 de octubre de 2013)

1. La Comisión puede intervenir en caso de vulneración de la normativa de la UE por parte de un Estado miembro.

2. De conformidad con la Directiva 2004/49/CE (Directiva de seguridad ferroviaria ([2])), los Estados miembros están obligados a garantizar la seguridad de sus redes ferroviarias, en particular a través de una autoridad nacional de seguridad competente para conceder una autorización de seguridad al administrador de infraestructuras. Esa autorización debe ser retirada si la autoridad responsable de la seguridad considera que las infraestructuras no son seguras o si el administrador de las infraestructuras ha dejado de cumplir las condiciones requeridas para obtener la autorización. Las decisiones sobre inversión en infraestructuras son competencia de los Estados miembros y de los administradores de infraestructuras. En España, la autorización de seguridad la concede a ADIF la Dirección General de Ferrocarriles (Real Decreto 810/2007).

3. El organismo nacional de investigación (en España, la Comisión de Investigación de Accidentes Ferroviarios — CIAF) es el responsable de efectuar las investigaciones oportunas tras un accidente grave con el fin de proporcionar indicaciones sobre sus causas y extraer enseñanzas del suceso para incrementar la seguridad.

4. La CIAF ha publicado los informes finales sobre los accidentes ocurridos cerca de Barcelona a los que hacía referencia su Señoría en su anterior pregunta escrita E-002752/2012 ([3]):

1. 19 de enero de 2012 (El Clot Aragó)

2. 9 de febrero de 2012 (Mataró).

Los informes concluían que, en ambos casos, el origen del accidente estaba vinculado a un error humano. Los informes no proporcionan pruebas materiales que permitan llegar a la conclusión de que ADIF no esté prestando la debida atención a la seguridad de la red ferroviaria catalana.

([1]) http://www.lavanguardia.com/sucesos/20130920/54387814377/heridos-choque-trenes-estacion-sants.html
([2]) DO L 164 de 30.4.2004.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011024/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: Rail transport safety

On 21 September 2013, 2 trains collided in Sants station in Barcelona, leaving 22 people with minor injuries. ([1]) For some time now, the Catalan regional government has criticised the Ministry for Public Works for failing to invest in safety on Barcelona's suburban train network (*Rodalies de Catalunya*). Pere Padrosa, the Catalan Director General for Transport and Mobility, which is part of the regional Department for Land Use and Sustainability, lambasted ADIF (the body that manages railway infrastructure) for failing to invest in Catalonia and claimed that the signalling system dates back to the 20th century.

With reference the answers to questions E-006034/2011, E-006035/2011 and E-002752/2012 and according to Railway Safety Directive Directive 2004/49/EC, Member States are required to ensure the safety of their rail networks, in particular via a national Safety Authority. In Spain, the safety authorisation is granted to ADIF by the Directorate General for Railways (Dirección General de Ferrocarriles, Real Decreto 810/2007).

The people of Catalonia are very concerned about these accidents. The Catalan regional government is impotent, since the Spanish Government is responsible for managing stations, trains and tracks. So far, all injuries have been minor, but a really serious accident could occur if no action is taken.

What measures is the Commission taking to remedy this safety issue?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(31 October 2013)

1. The Commission can intervene in case of violation of EU legislation by a Member State.

2. According to the Railway Safety Directive 2004/49/EC ([2]), Member States are required to ensure the safety of their railway networks, in particular via a national Safety Authority competent for granting a safety authorisation of the infrastructure manager. If the safety authority considers infrastructure unsafe, or if the infrastructure manager no longer satisfies the conditions for the authorisation, then the authorisation must be withdrawn. Decisions on infrastructure investment fall within the competence of the Member States and individual infrastructure managers. In Spain, the safety authorisation is granted to ADIF by the Directorate General for Railways (Dirección General de Ferrocarriles, Real Decreto 810/2007).

3. The National Investigation Body (in Spain: Comisión de Investigación de accidentes ferroviarios — CIAF) has the responsibility to carry out investigations after a serious accident, with the aim of providing indications on the causes and drawing lessons from the event for the improvement of safety.

4. The CIAF has published the final reports related to the accidents that occurred near Barcelona which were referred to by the Honourable Member in his previous Written Question E-002752/2012 ([3]):

1. 19 January 2012 (El Clot Aragó)

2. 9 February 2012 (Mataró)

The reports concluded that in both cases the origin of the accident was related to human error. The reports do not provide factual evidence which woud lead to the conclusion that ADIF is neglecting safety on the Catalonia rail network.

([1]) http://www.lavanguardia.com/sucesos/20130920/54387814377/heridos-choque-trenes-estacion-sants.html
([2]) OJ L 164, 30.4.2004.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011025/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(27 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Proyecto de regadío

Según se informa en la prensa ([1]), la Comisión Europea ha pedido este jueves, 26 de septiembre de 2013, al Estado español que detenga un proyecto de regadío en la provincia de Jaén con agua extraída de los acuíferos del parque natural Sierras de Cazorla, Segura y las Villas hasta que se haya completado un estudio de impacto ambiental adecuado. Si en el plazo de dos meses las autoridades del Estado español no cumplen sus exigencias, el Ejecutivo comunitario podría llevar el caso ante el Tribunal de Justicia de la UE.

A la luz de lo anterior,

1. ¿Puede facilitar la Comisión toda la información relevante referente a las exigencias que ha planteado a las autoridades del Estado español?

2. ¿Cuáles son las razones jurídicas en las que basa tal decisión?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(14 de noviembre de 2013)

El 30 de septiembre de 2013 la Comisión envió a España en aplicación del artículo 258 del Tratado de Funcionamiento de la Unión Europea un dictamen motivado en el que establecía su posición sobre el incumplimiento de las obligaciones derivadas de la Directiva de la evaluación del impacto ambiental ([2]) y de la Directiva de Hábitats ([3]), así como sobre las medidas que debían adoptar las autoridades españolas para garantizar que esas obligaciones se cumplieran.

En su dictamen motivado, la Comisión consideraba que las autoridades españolas habían incumplido obligaciones fundamentales impuestas por esas dos Directivas al haber autorizado en la provincia de Jaén un proyecto de regadío sin antes haber evaluado de forma adecuada su posible impacto en las aguas subterráneas y en los objetivos de conservación de los espacios de la red Natura 2000 afectados por el proyecto. La Comisión indicaba también que dichas autoridades no habían tomado las medidas oportunas para evitar el deterioro de los hábitats y la perturbación de las especies por las que se habían incluido esos espacios en Natura 2000.

El plazo del que disponen las autoridades españolas para presentar sus observaciones a la Comisión finaliza el 30 de noviembre de 2013.

([1]) http://www.20minutos.es/noticia/1929849/0/

([2]) Directiva 2011/92/UE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 13 de diciembre de 2011, relativa a la evaluación de las repercusiones de determinados proyectos públicos y privados sobre el medio ambiente (codificación).

([3]) 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.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011025/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: Irrigation project

According to media reports, ([1]) on Thursday, 26 September 2013, the Commission asked Spain to suspend an irrigation project in the Jaén province using water from natural aquifers in the Sierras de Cazorla, Segura y las Villas Natural Park pending a full environmental impact assessment. If the Spanish authorities fail to comply with this request within two months, the Commission could take the case to the Court of Justice of the European Union.

In view of the above:

1. Can the Commission provide full details of what it has required of the Spanish authorities?

2. What are the legal grounds for this decision?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(14 November 2013)

On 30 September 2013 the Commission sent Spain a Reasoned Opinion under Article 258 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, setting out its position on the infringement and the action required by the Spanish authorities to ensure compliance with the relevant obligations under the Environmental Impact Assessment ([2]) and Habitats ([3]) Directives.

In its Reasoned Opinion, the Commission took the view that the Spanish authorities have failed to respect key obligations under the abovementioned Directives by authorising the irrigation project in the Jaén province without having first properly assessed its potential impact on groundwater and on the Natura2000 sites in question in view of their conservation objectives, nor taken the adequate measures to avoid deterioration of habitats and disturbances of the species for which the areas have been designated.

The Spanish authorities have until 30 November 2013 to submit their observations to the Commission.

([1]) http://www.20minutos.es/noticia/1929849/0/

([2]) Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (codification).

([3]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011027/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(27 ta' Settembru 2013)

Suġġett: Definizzjoni ta' xogħol prekarju

Sabiex tiġi indirizzata b'mod komprensiv il-problema li qed tikber tax-xogħol prekarju, il-Kummissjoni tista' tagħti definizzjoni ta' xogħol prekarju?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Andor f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(15 ta' Novembru 2013)

Il-Kummissjoni tirreferi lill-Onorevoli Membru għat-tweġiba tagħha għall-mistoqsija bil-miktub P-009626/2013 ([1]).

Ix-xogħol prekarju mhuwiex kunċett ġuridiku. Studju dwar ix-xogħol prekarju u d-drittijiet soċjali li twettaq fl-2012 ([2]) sab li l-prekarjetà fir-relazzjonijiet tal-impjieg ġejja minn taħlita ta' fatturi, inklużi l-kategorija tax-xogħol, is-sistema assistenzjali fis-seħħ u s-sitwazzjoni tal-familja tal-ħaddiem. Skont dawk il-fatturi, il-prekarjetà tista' taffettwa lill-ħaddiema b'kull forma ta' kuntratt ta' impjieg.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=P-2013-009626&language=MT
([2]) "Study on precarious work and social rights" ("Studju dwar ix-xogħol prekarju u d-drittijiet soċjali") imwettaq għall-Kummissjoni mill-università msejħa "London Metropolitan University" f'April tal-2012, li jinsab fis-sit tal-internet li ġej: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=157&langId=mt&furtherPubs=yes

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011027/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: Definition of precarious work

In order to tackle the increasing problem of precarious work in a comprehensive way, can the Commission give a definition of precarious work?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question P-009626/2013 ([1]).

'Precarious work' is not a legal concept. A study ([2]) on precarious work and social rights carried out in 2012 found that precariousness in employment relationships arises from a combination of factors, including the category of work, the welfare system in place and the worker's family situation. Depending on those factors, precariousness can affect workers with any form of employment contract.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=P-2013-009626&language=EN
([2]) 'Study on precarious work and social rights', carried out for the Commission by London Metropolitan University, April 2012; available at: (http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=157&langId=en&furtherPubs=yes).

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011028/13
à la Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(27 septembre 2013)

Objet: Incidence sur l'héliciculture de l'étiquetage européen prévu en décembre 2014

Alors que la moralisation du secteur agroalimentaire est devenue un véritable enjeu, le code des pratiques loyales qui encadre l'héliciculture a été modifié en 2012, de telle sorte qu'à la demande des industriels, la mention du mode et du lieu de production est devenue facultative. Les producteurs d'escargots souhaitent cependant une reconnaissance de leurs efforts (élevage et identité géographique) et demandent plus de traçabilité.

Le règlement (UE) n° 1169/2011 du 25 octobre 2011 sur l'étiquetage des produits culinaires comprenant un seul ingrédient et sur les ingrédients constituant plus de 50 % du produit fini entrera en application en décembre 2014.

Dans quelle mesure cette règlementation s'appliquera-t-elle aux héliciculteurs? Dans quelle mesure leur permettra-t-elle d'obtenir une meilleure traçabilité et une réelle reconnaissance de leur travail?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(15 novembre 2013)

Le règlement (UE) nº 1169/2011 du Parlement européen et du Conseil concernant l'information des consommateurs sur les denrées alimentaires ([1]) s'applique à toutes les denrées alimentaires destinées au consommateur final ou aux collectivités. Il définit les informations obligatoires qui doivent figurer sur les denrées alimentaires préemballées, tout en laissant aux États membres le soin de réglementer celles qui doivent figurer sur les denrées alimentaires non préemballées. Par ailleurs, il demande à la Commission de présenter au Parlement européen et au Conseil des rapports envisageant la possibilité d'étendre à d'autres denrées alimentaires l'indication obligatoire de l'origine sur l'étiquetage, y compris pour les produits à un seul ingrédient et les ingrédients constituant plus de 50 % d'une denrée alimentaire. Ces rapports doivent tenir compte de la nécessité d'informer les consommateurs, de la faisabilité de fournir l'indication du pays d'origine ou du lieu de provenance et d'une analyse des coûts et des avantages de l'introduction de telles mesures, analyse englobant les incidences juridiques sur le marché intérieur et les conséquences pour le commerce international. En fonction des conclusions de ces rapports, la Commission peut présenter des propositions de modification des dispositions pertinentes de la législation de l'Union ou adopter de nouvelles initiatives, le cas échéant, sur une base sectorielle. En soi, la Commission ne peut, à ce stade, prendre position sur la question soulevée en l'espèce.

([1]) JO L 304 du 22.11.2011, p. 18.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011028/13
to the Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: Snail farming impact of European labelling planned for December 2014

While raising ethical standards in the agro-food sector has become a real issue, the code of fair practice governing snail farming was amended in 2012 at the request of manufacturers, making it optional to list the method and place of production. However, snail producers would like recognition of their work (farming and geographical identity) and are calling for greater traceability.

Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of 25 October 2011 on the labelling of food products that contain a single ingredient and on ingredients that represent more than 50% of the finished product will come into force in December 2014.

To what extent will this regulation apply to snail farmers? To what extent will it allow them to improve traceability and gain real recognition of their work?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and the Council on the provision of food information to consumers ([1]) applies to all foods delivered to the final consumer or to mass caterers. It establishes the mandatory information for prepacked foods while it leaves up to the Member States to regulate the mandatory information for non-prepacked foods. Regarding mandatory origin labelling, it requires the Commission to submit reports to the European Parliament and the Council exploring the possibility to extend mandatory origin labelling with respect to certain foods, including for single ingredient products and ingredients that represent more than 50% of a food. Those reports must take into account the need for the consumer to be informed, the feasibility of providing the mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance and an analysis of the costs and benefits of the introduction of such measures, including the legal impact on the internal market and impact on international trade. Depending on the outcome of the reports, the Commission may submit proposals to modify the relevant Union provisions or may take new initiatives, where appropriate, on a sectorial basis. As such, the Commission cannot at this stage take a position on the issue raised at hand.

([1]) OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011030/13
alla Commissione
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(27 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Aiuti di Stato per materiale rotabile ad operatori del trasporto merci — Replica

Il 6.5.2013 rivolsi alla Commissione l'interrogazione E-004934/2013 e la risposta del Commissario Almunia fu pubblicata il 12.7.2013.

Alla luce degli elementi menzionati nella replica pervenuta, vi sono taluni aspetti che la Commissione dovrebbe tenere in considerazione al fine di rivedere la posizione espressa.

In particolare, il traffico merci via ferrovia in Italia ha registrato negli ultimi 5 anni una riduzione verticale del 38,9 % passando da 70.743.130 treni/km del 2008 a 43.206.034 treni/km del 2012 (Fonte RFI, Fercargo).

Alcune imprese italiane hanno partecipato alla Consultazione indetta dalla DG Concorrenza al fine di formulare osservazioni sull'applicazione del regolamento generale di esenzione per categoria, inviando l'apposito questionario in data 12.9.2012 nel quale si richiedeva espressamente una modifica delle Linee guida comunitarie per gli aiuti di Stato alle imprese ferroviarie (2008/C 184/07).

Contrariamente ai principi di liberalizzazione perseguiti dalla Commissione nei pacchetti ferroviari, non ultimo il quarto che a breve sarà approvato, allargando gli orizzonti all'Europa si assiste inesorabilmente ad una vera e propria ri-monopolizzazione del settore cargo ferroviario confermato dal fatto che le compagnia ferroviaria tedesca (Deutsche Bahn AG) può «vantare» una quota di mercato pari al 79 %.

La concessione agli incumbent di aiuti per l'acquisto di materiale rotabile per il trasporto passeggeri acuisce ulteriormente la «discriminazione» e avvantaggia ulteriormente le imprese (ex)monopoliste che perpetrano, almeno per l'Italia, l'obiettivo di ridurre drasticamente la possibilità di investimenti nel settore cargo da parte di imprese private «bloccando» nei fatti la concorrenza.

Tale ostacolo si concretizza nella impossibilità da parte di altre imprese di usufruire sia di aiuti ma anche di ingenti risorse finanziarie che sono messe a disposizione degli incumbent dagli azionisti di riferimento, nella fattispecie lo Stato.

Alla luce di quanto sopra indicato non ritiene la Commissione che mediante l'erogazione di aiuti di Stato per l'acquisto di materiale rotabile anche ad operatori del trasporto merci si favoriscano gli investimenti dei piccoli operatori privati riducendo de facto i regimi oligo-monopolistici esistenti dicotomici rispetto alle condizione di liberalizzazione necessarie?

Risposta di Joaquin Almunia a nome della Commissione
(22 novembre 2013)

La Commissione è consapevole del rischio del trasferimento del trasporto merci dalla ferrovia alla strada. A tale riguardo le attuali linee guida in materia di trasporti ferroviari contengono varie disposizioni che possono essere utilizzate a vantaggio del trasporto merci per ferrovia, in particolare aiuti per l'utilizzo dell'infrastruttura ferroviaria, cosa che riduce i costi esterni e rafforza l'interoperabilità ai sensi del capo 6 delle linee guida.

Finora gli Stati membri non hanno notificato alla Commissione alcun progetto di cofinanziamento per l'acquisto di materiale rotabile da parte di operatori del trasporto merci. Data l'assenza di una prassi decisionale, non risulta necessario o appropriato codificare le norme applicabili agli aiuti per il materiale rotabile per il trasporto merci nelle linee guida in materia di trasporti ferroviari.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011030/13
to the Commission
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: State aid for rolling stock and freight train operators — reply

On 6 May 2013 I submitted Question E-004934/2013 to the Commission, and Commissioner Almunia's answer was published on 12 July 2013.

In the light of the points mentioned in the answer, there are some aspects that the Commission ought to take into account with a view to reviewing the position it has expressed.

In particular, over the last five years rail freight traffic has fallen sharply in Italy, by 38.9%, from 70 743 130 train-km in 2008 to 43 206 034 train-km in 2012 (*Source:* RFI, Fercargo).

Some Italian companies have taken part in the consultation organised by DG Competition with a view to providing comments on the application of the General Block Exemption Regulation. On 12 September 2012 they sent in the relevant questionnaire, expressly calling for an amendment to the Community guidelines on state aid for railway undertakings (2008/C 184/07).

Contrary to the principles of liberalisation which the Commission has set out to achieve in the rail packages, not least the fourth, which is shortly to be adopted, enlarging the horizons to Europe is inevitably bringing about a shift in the direction of an outright re-monopolisation of the rail freight sector. This is confirmed by the fact that the German rail company (Deutsche Bahn AG) can 'boast' a market share of 79%.

Allocating aid to incumbent operators for the purchase of rolling stock for passenger transport is further exacerbating the 'discrimination' and giving additional advantages to the (former) monopoly enterprises which, at least for Italy, set out to drastically reduce possible investments in the cargo sector by private enterprises, actually hindering competition.

This obstacle can be seen in the way it is impossible for other enterprises to benefit either from aid or from the huge financial resources that are made available to the incumbent operators by the existing shareholders — in this case, the State.

In view of the above, does the Commission not believe that granting state aid for the purchase of rolling stock to freight transport operators too would promote investment in small private operators, thus bringing about a real reduction in the existing oligopolistic or monopolistic systems, which are totally odds with the necessary conditions for liberalisation?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2013)

The Commission is aware of the risk of cargo being transferred from rail to the road. In this respect the current Railway Guidelines contain several provisions that can be used for the benefit of rail cargo transport, in particular aid for rail infrastructure use, reducing external costs and enhancing interoperability under Chapter 6 of the Guidelines.

Member States so far have not notified to the Commission any projects for co-financing the purchase of rolling stock by freight transport operators. Given the absence of a decision-making practice, it does not appear necessary or appropriate to codify the rules applicable to aid for freight rolling stock in the Railway Guidelines.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011031/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 septembre 2013)

Objet: Observatoire du lait

Le commissaire européen à l'agriculture, Dacian Cioloş, envisage de créer un observatoire du lait, afin de mieux analyser les tendances sur un marché qui sera pleinement libéralisé à partir de 2015.

«Nous devons mettre en place un nouveau système de collecte de données pour mettre à disposition du secteur des analyses dans un laps de temps plus court», a-t-il déclaré, à Bruxelles, lors d'une conférence convoquée pour préparer l'abandon des quotas fin mars 2015. «J'envisage de proposer ce type d'outil au sein de la Commission européenne, en créant un observatoire des marchés. Celui-ci sera chargé de faire cette analyse sur le court terme et de présenter des données au secteur».

1. L'objectif est-il de permettre une adaptation flexible des volumes de lait offerts à la demande du marché?

2. La Commission pense-t-elle que ce sera suffisant?

3. Quelles sont les perspectives de fluctuation du marché du lait escomptées par la Commission?

4. Comment la Commission imagine-t-elle pouvoir rétablir l'équilibre sur le marché et stabiliser le prix moyen du lait à un niveau qui permette de couvrir le coût de production?

Réponse donnée par M. Cioloş au nom de la Commission
(15 novembre 2013)

L'objectif de l'Observatoire du marché du lait (OML) est de fournir des informations plus transparentes au secteur laitier de l'UE grâce à la diffusion en temps utile d'informations et d'analyses à court terme concernant le marché.

La Commission croit que cet instrument améliorera efficacement la transparence en communiquant des informations plus détaillées et plus fréquentes.

Les fluctuations ne peuvent être prévues pour aucun marché. Toutefois, l'OML tirera le meilleur parti de son expertise pour réaliser des analyses précises de la situation et des tendances du marché.

En outre, l'OML mettra à disposition des informations sur le marché, pour que les acteurs économiques puissent prendre leurs décisions entrepreneuriales en s'appuyant sur les meilleures informations possibles.

Le nouveau cadre de la PAC offre des outils pour mieux soutenir le secteur laitier de l'Union européenne. Le nouveau règlement OCM unique renforcera les instruments d'intervention permettant à la Commission de corriger les déséquilibres du marché. De plus, de nouvelles dispositions permettront à la Commission d'adopter des mesures d'urgence en cas de crise grave dans le secteur laitier.

Dans le domaine du développement rural, de nouvelles dispositions permettront aux États membres d'élaborer des sous-programmes thématiques ciblant un secteur spécifique, tel que le secteur laitier. Un nouvel ensemble d'outils de gestion des risques donnera également la possibilité aux États membres d'accorder des aides supplémentaires aux producteurs laitiers confrontés à des risques.

La Commission réfléchit actuellement aux résultats des discussions qui ont eu lieu lors de la conférence sur le lait à laquelle se réfère l'Honorable Parlementaire. Les conclusions de celle-ci seront présentées au Parlement européen et au Conseil avant la fin de l'année.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011031/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: Milk observatory

European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Dacian Cioloş, is planning to create a milk observatory in order to better analyse trends in a market that will be opened up completely in 2015.

During a conference held in Brussels to prepare for the abolition of quotas at the end of March 2015, Commissioner Cioloş said: 'We must put in place a new system of data collection to provide industry analysis in a shorter period of time. So, I plan to offer this type of tool within the European Commission, creating a market observatory. It will be responsible for short-term analysis and present the data to the sector.'

1. Is the aim to allow milk volumes to be adjusted more easily to meet market demand?

2. Does the Commission believe this will be sufficient?

3. Does it predict future fluctuations in the milk market?

4. How will it redress the balance in the market and stabilise the average price of milk at a level that covers the cost of production?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

The aim of the Milk Market Observatory (MMO) is to provide the EU dairy sector with more transparency by means of disseminating market data and short-term analysis in a timely manner.

The Commission expects this instrument to be effective in terms of improving transparency through more detailed and more frequent information.

Fluctuations cannot be predicted in any market. However, the MMO will take the most of its expertise to produce accurate analyses on the market situation and trends.

Moreover, the MMO will make market information available, so that the economic operators can make their entrepreneurial decisions with the best possible information basis.

The new CAP framework provides for tools to better support the EU milk sector. The new Single CMO regulation will strengthen the intervention instruments available for the Commission to tackle market imbalances. In addition, new provisions will allow the Commission to adopt emergency measures in the eventuality of a severe crisis in the milk sector.

In the field of rural development, new provisions allow Member States to design thematic sub-programmes, targeted to a specific sector such as dairy. A new risk management toolkit will also give Member States the possibility to offer extra help to dairy farmers dealing with risk.

The Commission is currently reflecting on the outcome of the discussions held at the milk conference the Honourable Member is referring to, and the conclusion of the milk conference will be presented at the European Parliament and the Council before the end of the year.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011157/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(1 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Encarcelamiento de Berta Cáceres por su oposición a la presa de Agua Zarca (Honduras)

El Juzgado de Letras de Intibucá (Honduras) ordenó el pasado 20 de septiembre el encarcelamiento de Berta Cáceres, dirigente del pueblo lenca. El poder judicial del Gobierno del Presidente Porfirio Lobo vuelve a recurrir a la persecución de los defensores del medio ambiente en Honduras.

Esta detención, realizada bajo falsas acusaciones según denuncian fuentes del pueblo lenca, se produce unos meses después del asesinato de Tomás García, otro dirigente de dicho pueblo, involucrado en la defensa de la cuenca del río Blanco, donde las empresas hidroeléctricas DESA y Sinohydro están desarrollando el proyecto de la presa de Agua Zarca, que tendrá efectos devastadores para las comunidades lenca de la zona.

Estas comunidades han dado a conocer, de manera enérgica, su rechazo al proyecto que las dos empresas están realizando en su región, que viola el derecho de las poblaciones indígenas locales a ser consultados sobre el proyecto, tal y como recoge la Convención 169 de la Organización Internacional de Trabajo que el Estado de Honduras ratificó en 1995.

Esta situación muestra una actitud persecutoria de las protestas de las comunidades lenca, que tan solo exigen que el Gobierno de Honduras cumpla con las obligaciones jurídicas que tiene con respecto a los pueblos indígenas en relación con el desarrollo de un proyecto que afecta a sus tierras. Toda vez que próximamente se celebrarán elecciones, las protestas políticas en favor del cumplimiento del Derecho internacional demuestran que el Gobierno hondureño emplea las instituciones para la persecución de los opositores políticos.

¿Está al tanto la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante de la detención de la dirigente lenca Berta Cáceres?

¿Tiene intención de instar a la Administración hondureña a que libere a dicha dirigente?

¿Piensa exigir al Gobierno de Honduras que aplique el derecho de consulta a las comunidades lenca, en virtud de lo dispuesto en el Convenio 169 de la OIT, en relación con la presa de Agua Zarca?

¿Piensa instar a Honduras a que revise sus acciones en contra de los opositores políticos de cara a las próximas elecciones del 24 de noviembre?

Respuesta conjunta de la alta representante y vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(19 de noviembre de 2013)

La Delegación de la UE en Honduras fue informada de este asunto y se puso inmediatamente en contacto con las autoridades hondureñas para recabar información. Según las explicaciones facilitadas, no ha habido acoso judicial contra los tres líderes indígenas, incluida la Sra. Dª Bertha Cáceres. El proceso se ha llevado a cabo con arreglo al código penal hondureño, que constituye la base jurídica para imponer a la Sra. Cáceres la pena de prisión preventiva.

La Delegación de la UE también se entrevistó con representantes de la FIDH (Federación Internacional de Derechos Humanos) durante su última misión en Honduras (28 de septiembre) y se habló entonces de este asunto. La Delegación de la UE recaba continuamente información de las ONG locales de derechos humanos y seguirá estando atenta al curso de este y otros asuntos.

La UE da prioridad absoluta a la cuestión de las violaciones de los derechos humanos en el diálogo permanente con las principales partes interesadas del Gobierno. La UE ha prestado apoyo a los defensores de los derechos humanos mediante el Instrumento Europeo para la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos, en particular mediante el refuerzo de las capacidades institucionales de las organizaciones de derechos humanos dedicadas a esta importante tarea. La UE también está apoyando actualmente la aplicación de la Política Pública en Derechos Humanos y el fortalecimiento del sistema nacional de protección de los derechos humanos, incluidos los de las comunidades indígenas.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011032/13
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 septembre 2013)

Objet: VP/HR — Honduras: dirigeants indigènes injustement emprisonnés

1. Les autorités honduriennes doivent abandonner les poursuites engagées contre trois dirigeants indigènes à la suite d'accusations fallacieuses. Leur procès se termine vendredi 20 septembre. À l'approche de l'élection présidentielle en novembre, les défenseurs des Droits de l'homme sont de plus en plus souvent victimes d'attaques dans ce pays. Comment réagissent les autorités européennes?

2. Des entretiens sont-ils prévus sur cette violation des Droits de l'homme?

«Ceux qui défendent les droits fondamentaux au Honduras risquent désormais leur vie. Les dirigeants indigènes protégeant les droits de leur peuple sont particulièrement visés», a déploré Nancy Tapias Torrado, spécialiste à Amnesty International des défenseurs des Droits de l'homme de la région des Amériques. En mai, elle a rencontré ces trois responsables, Bertha Cáceres, Tomás Gómez et Aureliano Molina, qui ont été accusés «d'usurpation, de coercition et de dommages continuels» et d'incitation d'autrui à commettre ces mêmes infractions. S'ils étaient emprisonnés, Amnesty International les considérerait comme des prisonniers d'opinion. Les trois accusés étaient en première ligne d'une campagne concernant un projet hydroélectrique à Rio Blanco, dans le nord-ouest du Honduras, où vit la communauté indigène Lenca. Ils demandent le respect de leurs droits fondamentaux, notamment le droit de donner leur consentement libre, préalable et éclairé à ce projet.

Bertha Cáceres, coordonnatrice du Conseil civique d'organisations populaires et indigènes du Honduras (COPINH), doit par ailleurs répondre d'accusations de transport d'arme à feu non enregistrée. Elle affirme que l'arme en question a été subrepticement placée dans sa voiture par des militaires à un point de contrôle. Le procès dont elle fait l'objet pour ces charges d'accusation est en cours.

3. Il paraît manifeste que le harcèlement dont Bertha Cáceres est actuellement la cible vise à l'empêcher de défendre les droits du peuple Lenca. Les autorités européennes ne devraient-elles pas lui montrer toute leur solidarité?

Réponse commune donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(19 novembre 2013)

La délégation de l'UE au Honduras a été informée de cette affaire et a immédiatement demandé des renseignements aux autorités honduriennes. Selon les explications fournies, les trois dirigeants indigènes, parmi lesquels Mme Bertha Caceres, n'ont pas été victimes de harcèlement judiciaire. Les procédures ont été menées dans le respect du code pénal du pays, sur la base juridique duquel M^me^ Caceres a été placée en détention préventive.

La délégation de l'UE a également rencontré des représentants de la FIDH (Fédération internationale des Droits de l'homme) à l'occasion de leur dernière mission au Honduras (le 28 septembre) et abordé cette affaire avec eux. Elle demande en permanence des informations aux ONG locales chargées de défendre les Droits de l'homme et continuera à suivre l'évolution de ce dossier et d'autres affaires.

Dans le cadre du dialogue permanent qu'elle entretient avec les principales parties intéressées au sein du gouvernement, l'UE donne la priorité absolue au respect des Droits de l'homme. Elle soutient les défenseurs des Droits de l'homme par l'intermédiaire de l'instrument européen pour la démocratie et les Droits de l'homme, notamment en renforçant les capacités institutionnelles que les organisations de défense des Droits de l'homme consacrent à cette tâche importante. En outre, l'UE appuie actuellement la mise en œuvre de la politique publique nationale des Droits de l'homme et le renforcement du système national de protection des Droits de l'homme, y compris des droits des communautés indigènes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011032/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Honduras: indigenous leaders wrongfully imprisoned

1. Authorities in Honduras must drop spurious charges against three indigenous leaders, whose trial ends on Friday 20 September 2013. There have been an increasing number of attacks against human rights defenders in the country ahead of the presidential elections in November. What is the European authorities' response to this?

2. Have any meetings been scheduled with regard to this breach of human rights?

According to Nancy Tapias Torrado, Researcher on Human Rights Defenders in the Americas at Amnesty International, 'Defending human rights in Honduras has become a life-threatening activity with indigenous leaders protecting their peoples' rights being particularly vulnerable to attack.' In May 2013 Ms Tapias Torrado met the three leaders, Bertha Cáceres, Tomás Gómez and Aureliano Molina, who have been charged with 'usurpation, coercion and continued damages' and with inciting others to commit these crimes. If they are imprisoned, Amnesty International will consider them prisoners of conscience. The three defendants were at the forefront of a campaign concerning a hydroelectric project in Rio Blanco, north-west Honduras, where the Lenca indigenous community lives. They want their fundamental rights, including the right to free, prior and informed consent regarding the project, to be respected.

Bertha Cáceres, coordinator of the Civic Council of the Indigenous and Popular Organisations of Honduras (COPINH), is also facing charges of carrying an unlicensed gun. She claims that it was planted in her car by military officers at a checkpoint. The trial on these charges is ongoing.

3. It seems obvious that the current harassment of Bertha Cáceres is designed to prevent her from defending the rights of the Lenca people. Should the European authorities not offer her their full support?

Question for written answer E-011157/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — The jailing of Berta Cáceres for her opposition to the Agua Zarca dam (Honduras)

On 20 September, the Court of Intibucá in Honduras ordered the imprisonment of Berta Cáceres, leader of the Lenca people. The judiciary of President Porfirio Lobo's government is once again persecuting environmental campaigners in Honduras.

This sentence, which Lenca sources say was based on false accusations, took place several months after the murder of Tomás García, another Lenca leader who was involved in defending the basin of the River Blanco, where the hydroelectric companies DESA and Sinohydro are working on the Agua Zarca dam project, which will have a devastating effect on local Lenca communities.

These communities have voiced their strong opposition to the project, which violates the principles of consultation enshrined in Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation, which was ratified by Honduras in 1995.

This situation demonstrates the persecution faced by Lenca protestors, who are merely asking the Honduran Government to fulfil its legal obligations to consult indigenous people on the development of a project that affects their lands. In view of the fact that elections will soon be held, political protests demanding that international law be applied reveal that the Honduran Government uses the institutions to persecute its political opponents.

Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the imprisonment of the Lenca leader Berta Cáceres?

Will she urge the Honduran Government to release this leader?

Will she demand that the Honduran Government respects the right of Lenca communities to be consulted on the Agua Zarca dam, as set down in Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation?

Given that elections are due to be held on 24 November, will she urge Honduras to review the actions takes against political opponents?

Joint answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

The EU Delegation in Honduras was informed of this case and immediately contacted Honduran authorities requesting information. According to explanations provided there has been no judicial harassment towards the three indigenous leaders, including Mrs Bertha Caceres. The proceedings have been done in accordance with the Honduran Penal code which is the legal basis for sentencing Mrs Caceres to preventive detention.

The EU Delegation also met representatives of the FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights) during their last mission to Honduras (September 28th) and discussed this case. The EU Delegation is continuously requesting information from local Human Rights NGOs and will continue monitoring new developments on this and other cases.

The EU gives high priority to the matter of human rights violations in ongoing dialogue with all key stakeholders of government. The EU has supported Human Rights defenders through the European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy, especially by strengthening institutional capacities of Human Rights organisations dedicated to this important task. The EU is also currently supporting the implementation of the National Human Rights Public Policy and the strengthening of the national system for the protection of Human Rights, which includes those of the indigenous communities.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011034/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 septembre 2013)

Objet: Transition écoresponsable

La transition écologique suppose une prise de conscience des consommateurs, dont les attitudes à l'égard de ce qu'ils consomment doivent évoluer. Toutefois, la volonté des gouvernements ne se limite pas à modifier les comportements de consommation en renchérissant ce qui pollue et en incitant financièrement les consommateurs et citoyens à privilégier la vertu environnementale au gaspillage ou à l'hyper-consumérisme.

Un consommateur mieux informé est à même de choisir la voie d'une consommation durable. Informé, il peut peser sur la chaîne de production, encourager les circuits courts, exiger que ce qu'il achète soit réparable et de bonne qualité.

Que met en place la Commission concrètement afin de donner le pouvoir d'agir aux Européens pour qu'ils s'approprient les outils de la transition écologique? Tant promouvoir l'économie sociale et solidaire que rééquilibrer les pouvoirs en faveur des consommateurs traduisent en actes cette volonté.

Réponse donnée par M. Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(28 novembre 2013)

Sensibiliser les citoyens aux incidences environnementales de la consommation est au centre d'un grand nombre de politiques de la Commission, notamment du plan d'action pour une consommation et une production durables de 2008. Ce plan inclut certains instruments, tels que le label écologique de l'UE et l'étiquetage relatif à l'efficacité énergétique, qui sont reconnus par les citoyens de l'Union et qui facilitent, au quotidien, les choix durables dans le marché unique. Cela se reflète également dans la feuille de route pour une Europe efficace dans l'utilisation des ressources qui met l'accent sur la nécessité de fournir au consommateur des informations crédibles sur la performance environnementale afin de s'assurer que la préférence aille aux meilleurs produits du marché. Dans sa proposition de «marché unique des produits verts» ([1]), la Commission expérimente la mesure de l'empreinte écologique de produits appartenant à dix groupes de produits, sur la base d'analyses du cycle de vie, en vue d'une future mise en pratique au moyen d'instruments tels que l'éco-conception et l'étiquetage écologique.

Le secrétaire général du bureau européen des unions de consommateurs (BEUC) étant membre de la plate-forme européenne de l'utilisation efficace des ressources ([2]), le point de vue des consommateurs est intégré à l'élaboration de l'approche de la Commission en matière d'utilisation efficace des ressources.

([1]) COM(2013) 196 du 9.4.2013.
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd.smgp/
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/resource_efficiency/re_platform/about/members/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011034/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: Environmentally responsible transition

Environmental transition requires awareness on the part of consumers, whose attitudes towards what they consume need to change. However, governments aim to do more than simply change consumer behaviour by raising the price of anything that pollutes and offering consumers and citizens financial incentives to prioritise their environmental responsibility over waste and hyperconsumerism.

Well-informed consumers are able to choose the path of sustainable consumption. By being informed, they can influence the production chain, encourage the use of short supply chains and demand that the goods they buy can be repaired and are of good quality.

What practical steps is the Commission taking to empower Europeans to take ownership of the tools of environmental transition? Promoting the social and solidarity economy and adjusting the balance of power in favour of consumers both give concrete expression to this aim.

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

Raising citizens' awareness on the environmental impacts of consumption has been a central element of many Commission policies, such as the 2008 Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan. The Plan includes some policy instruments such as the EU Ecolabel and the Energy Efficiency Label, which are recognised by EU citizens and facilitate on a daily basis sustainable choices in the single market. This has been reflected also in the Roadmap for Resource Efficiency which puts particular emphasis on the need for credible consumer information on environmental performance to ensure that the best products on the market are rewarded. In its proposal for a 'Single Market for Green Products' ([1]) the Commission is piloting product environmental footprinting of 10 product groups based on life-cycle analyses with a view to applying these via instruments such as eco-design and eco-labelling in the future.

Consumer views are integrated into the development of the Commission's approach on resource efficiency through the membership of the Secretary General of the European Consumers' Organisation (BEUC) in the European Resource Efficiency Platform ([2]).

([1]) COM(2013) 196 of 9.4.2013.
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd.smgp/
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/resource_efficiency/re_platform/about/members/index_en.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011035/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 septembre 2013)

Objet: Indice de confiance du consommateur européen

En septembre, la confiance du consommateur américain s'est dégradée légèrement plus qu'attendu, retombant à son plus bas niveau depuis le mois de mai, ainsi que le montre l'enquête publiée par le *Conference Board*.

L'indice de confiance du consommateur est revenu à 79,7 contre 81,8 (révisé) en août, alors que les économistes et analystes interrogés par Reuters prévoyaient en moyenne un chiffre de 79,9 après celui de 81,5 initialement annoncé pour le mois dernier.

Le repli de septembre s'explique principalement par la dégradation du jugement des consommateurs sur les perspectives futures, une composante revenue à 84,1 contre 89,0 le mois dernier.

Celle du jugement sur la situation actuelle a au contraire progressé à 73,2 contre 70,9.

1. La Commission dispose-t-elle d'un instrument de mesure de l'indice de confiance du consommateur au niveau européen?

2. Si oui, quelle est l'évolution de cette confiance?

Réponse donnée par M. Rehn au nom de la Commission
(5 novembre 2013)

L'instrument utilisé par la Commission pour mesurer la confiance des consommateurs à l'échelle de l'Union est le programme commun harmonisé des enquêtes de conjoncture de l'Union européenne. Les enquêtes harmonisées sont effectuées au niveau national, pour le compte de la Commission, par des instituts partenaires, comme les ministères, les instituts de statistique, les banques centrales, les instituts de recherche, etc. Les enquêtes sont réalisées sur une base mensuelle selon une méthodologie commune. Les données collectées servent de base au calcul des indicateurs composites de la Commission, et notamment d'un indice de confiance des consommateurs à l'échelle de l'Union. Les résultats des enquêtes sont publiés chaque mois sur le site web consacré aux enquêtes de conjoncture ([1]), qui offre une multitude d'informations sur les indicateurs publiés, les séries chronologiques téléchargeables, les instituts partenaires ainsi que sur les détails méthodologiques et organisationnels concernant le programme des enquêtes de conjoncture. Le guide méthodologique de l'utilisateur décrit dans le détail la manière dont les indicateurs de confiance de la Commission sont calculés ([2]).

Selon les derniers résultats des enquêtes de conjoncture publiés (27 septembre 2013), la confiance des consommateurs dans l'Union a poursuivi la tendance à la hausse observée depuis janvier 2013. L'amélioration enregistrée en septembre ([3]) s'explique par des perspectives plus optimistes sur la situation économique générale et la situation financière des ménages ainsi que par une amélioration des perspectives en matière de chômage, qui, ensemble, font plus que compenser la hausse du pessimisme des consommateurs quant à l'évolution de leur épargne au cours des 12 prochains mois ([4]).

([1]) (http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/db_indicators/surveys/index_en.htm).
([2]) (p. 15) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/db_indicators/surveys/documents/userguide_en.pdf
([3]) De – 12,8 à – 11,7.
([4]) Toutes les questions posées ont trait à l'évolution au cours des 12 prochains mois. L'ensemble des résultats détaillés sont disponibles (sous forme de fichiers Excel) à l'adresse http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/db_indicators/surveys/time_series/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011035/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: European consumer confidence index

According to a survey published by The Conference Board, US consumer confidence fell slightly more than expected in September 2013, reaching its lowest level since May 2013.

The consumer confidence index stands at 79.7, down from 81.8 (revised) in August 2013, even though economists and analysts interviewed by Reuters predicted, on average, a figure of 79.9, after the 81.5 figure initially announced for last month.

The fall in September is mainly due to the fact that consumers' assessment of future conditions grew more pessimistic, with the expectations index falling to 84.1 from 89.0 last month.

The present situation index did, however, increase to 73.2 from 70.9.

1. Does the Commission have an instrument for measuring consumer confidence at EU level?

2. If so, what changes in consumer confidence have been identified?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(5 November 2013)

The Commission's instrument for measuring consumer confidence at the EU level is the Joint Harmonised EU Programme of Business and Consumer Surveys (BCS). The harmonised surveys are carried out on behalf of the Commission at national level by partner institutes e.p. ministries, statistical offices, central banks, research institutes etc. The surveys are conducted on a monthly basis according to a common methodology. The collected data provides bases for the Commission's composite indicators such as an EU-wide index of consumer confidence. The survey results are published every month on the BCS website ([1]), which offers a wealth of information on indicator releases, downloadable time series, partner institutes and methodological and organisational details of the BCS programme. The Methodological user guide sets out the details underling the computation of the Commission's confidence indicators ([2]).

According to the latest release of the BCS results (27 September 2013), Consumer confidence in the EU continued the upward trend persisting since January 2013. The improvement in September ([3]) was thanks to more optimistic expectations on the future general economic situation, the future financial situation of households and easing unemployment expectations, which together more than outweighed consumers' increased pessimism about their savings over the next 12 months ([4]).

([1]) (http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/db_indicators/surveys/index_en.htm).
([2]) (p. 15) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/db_indicators/surveys/documents/userguide_en.pdf
([3]) From -12.8 to -11.7.
([4]) All questions refer to developments over the next 12 months .All detailed results are available (in excel files) at http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/db_indicators/surveys/time_series/index_en.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011036/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 septembre 2013)

Objet: Trois quarts des poulets de l'Union européenne contiennent des bactéries résistantes aux antibiotiques

Un test en laboratoire réalisé à la demande de Test-Achats a démontré que notre viande contenait trop de bactéries productrices d'ESBL *(Extended Spectrum Beta Lactamase)*. Les bactéries ESBL étant résistantes aux antibiotiques, certains germes pathogènes ne réagissent plus aux effets des antibiotiques.

En avril et août de cette année, Test-Achats a acheté 105 filets de poulet, 38 pièces de porc et 38 de bœuf, afin d'y détecter la présence de bactéries productrices d'ESBL. ESBL est le nom donné à un groupe d'enzymes produites par des bactéries et résistantes aux antibiotiques.

Trop de viandes contiennent des bactéries résistantes: 73 % des filets de poulet analysés, 16 % de la viande de porc et 8 % de la viande de bœuf. En Belgique, les antibiotiques sont abondamment utilisés dans les élevages de volailles, de porcs et de bovins. Nous figurons encore parmi les plus importants utilisateurs d'antibiotiques d'Europe. Les mêmes résultats ont été dénoncés dans d'autres États membres.

1. Selon la Commission, n'est-il pas grand temps de faire marche arrière et de réduire durablement et drastiquement la consommation d'antibiotiques, tant en médecine humaine que vétérinaire?

2. La Commission adhère-t-elle à la suggestion de préconiser qu'un système de collecte de données concernant l'administration d'antibiotiques aux animaux soit mis en place, par type d'élevage et par producteur, et que des seuils soient fixés quant à l'utilisation d'antibiotiques par secteur, en fonction de l'espèce animale exploitée?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(14 novembre 2013)

La Commission considère la résistance aux antimicrobiens comme une priorité. Le 15 novembre 2011, la Commission a publié un plan d'action de cinq ans destiné à lutter contre la résistance aux antimicrobiens ([1]).

Le plan d'action de la Commission prévoit des actions dans les domaines du renforcement et de la promotion d'une utilisation appropriée des antimicrobiens tant en médecine humaine qu'en médecine vétérinaire et de la collecte de données sur l'utilisation des antibiotiques en médecine vétérinaire.

L'une des actions consiste en l'élaboration — en collaboration avec les États membres — de recommandations sur l'utilisation prudente d'antibiotiques en médecine vétérinaire. S'agissant de la collecte de données sur l'utilisation des antibiotiques chez les animaux, la Commission renvoie au troisième rapport du projet ESVAC de surveillance européenne de la consommation d'antimicrobiens à usage vétérinaire publié par l'Agence européenne des médicaments le 15 octobre 2013 ([2]).

La Commission a publié un plan d'action ([3]) qui décrit 12 actions à mettre en œuvre, en recense les objectifs prioritaires et les activités concrètes et indique des délais à respecter.

Pour plus d'informations, l'Honorable Parlementaire voudra bien se reporter aux réponses aux questions écrites E-006941/2013 et E-002549/2013 ([4]).

([1]) COM(2011) 748 final.
([2]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/regulation/document_listing/document_listing_000302.jsp
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/antimicrobial_resistance/policy/index_fr.htm
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/fr/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011036/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: Three quarters of chickens in the European Union contain antibiotic-resistant bacteria

A laboratory test commissioned by Test-Achats has revealed that our meat contains too many extended-spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL)-producing bacteria. Since ESBL bacteria are resistant to antibiotics, some pathogens no longer respond to the drugs.

In April and August 2013, Test-Achats purchased 105 chicken fillets, 38 cuts of pork and 38 cuts of beef in order to see whether they contained ESBL-producing bacteria. ESBL is the name given to a group of enzymes that are produced by bacteria and which provide resistance to antibiotics.

Too much of our meat contains resistant bacteria: it was found in 73% of the chicken fillets tested, 16% of the pork and 8% of the beef. In Belgium, antibiotics are widely used in poultry, pig and cattle farms. The country is still one of Europe's biggest consumers of antibiotics. The same results have been reported in other Member States.

1. Does the Commission not believe it is high time we changed our approach by permanently and drastically reducing our consumption of antibiotics, in both human and veterinary medicine?

2. Does it subscribe to the idea of calling for a system for collecting data on antibiotic use in animals to be created, by farm type and producer? Does it also agree that thresholds should be set with regard to the use of antibiotics in each sector, according to the animal species farmed?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(14 November 2013)

Antimicrobial resistance is a priority for the Commission. The Commission issued a 5-year Action Plan against the rising threats from antimicrobial resistance ([1]) on 15 November 2011.

Actions related to the strengthening and promotion of the appropriate use of antimicrobials both in human and veterinary medicine and to the collection of data on antibiotic use in veterinary medicine are included in the action plan of the Commission.

One of these actions is the preparation — in collaboration with Member States — of a guidance document for prudent use of antibiotics in the veterinary field. As regards the collection of data of antibiotic use in animals, the Commission would refer to the third report of the European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption (ESVAC) project published by the European Medicines Agency on 15 October 2013 ([2]).

The Commission has published a Road map ([3]) on the implementation of the 12 actions covered by the action plan, including their operational objectives, the concrete activities and the deadlines for each of the actions.

For more information, I refer the Honourable Member to answers given by the Commission to written questions E-006941/2013 and E-002549/2013 ([4]).

([1]) COM(2011) 748 final.
([2]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/regulation/document_listing/document_listing_000302.jsp
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/antimicrobial_resistance/policy/index_en.htm
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011038/13
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 septembre 2013)

Objet: VP/HR — Un rédacteur en chef indépendant incarcéré en raison de la couverture accordée à une vidéo d'Al Qaïda

Des policiers en civil ont arrêté Ali Anouzla à son domicile à Rabat tôt mardi 17 septembre, peu après que Lakome, son site arabophone d'information au ton très libre, a publié un article consacré à une vidéo diffusée par le groupe armé Al Qaïda au Maghreb islamique (AQMI). Il n'a encore été inculpé d'aucune infraction.

Quand les policiers ont appréhendé Ali Anouzla mardi 17 septembre, ils ont fouillé son logement et confisqué des livres et des documents, ainsi que son ordinateur personnel. Ils l'ont ensuite emmené dans les bureaux de Lakome, où ils ont également saisi plusieurs articles dont des composants d'ordinateurs, selon des journalistes qui étaient présents sur place.

1. Selon la Commission, la décision des autorités marocaines de placer le journaliste et rédacteur en chef Ali Anouzla en détention constitue-t-elle bien une attaque contre les médias indépendants du pays? Ne convient-il pas de relâcher cet homme immédiatement et sans condition?

2. La Commission compte-t-elle contacter les autorités marocaines à ce sujet?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(19 novembre 2013)

L'Union européenne suit de près cette affaire. C'est ainsi qu'elle a établi des contacts avec les autorités marocaines, des institutions de défense des Droits de l'homme et des experts juridiques.

Dans tous ces contacts, l'UE insiste sur le grand retentissement du cas de M. Ali Anouzla.

Les autorités marocaines ont présenté une série de charges liées au terrorisme contre le journaliste et assurent qu'il bénéficiera d'un procès équitable, transparent et ouvert au public. M. Anouzla a été remis en liberté le 25 octobre dernier, mais il est toujours accusé. Si les charges retenues devaient conduire à un procès, la délégation de l'UE y assisterait à titre d'observateur.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011038/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Independent editor-in-chief imprisoned due to coverage of an Al Qaeda video

Undercover police officers arrested Ali Anouzla at his home in Rabat early on Tuesday 17 September shortly after Lakome, his Arabic-language information site, which has a very free tone, published an article about a video broadcast by the armed group Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI). He has not yet been charged with any offence.

When the police arrested Ali Anouzla on Tuesday 17 September they raided his home and confiscated books and documents, as well as his personal computer. They then brought him to the Lakome offices where they also seized several items including computer parts, according to journalists who were there.

1. In the Commission's opinion, does the Moroccan authorities' decision to place the journalist and editor-in-chief Ali Anouzla in custody represent an attack against the country's independent media? Should this man not be released immediately and unconditionally?

2. Does the Commission intend to contact the Moroccan authorities about this matter?

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

The European Union is closely following this case. In this context, contacts have been made with the Moroccan authorities, human rights institutions as well as with legal experts.

In all these contacts the EU is stressing the high profile of the case of Mr Ali Anouzla.

The Moroccan authorities presented a list of terrorism-related charges against Ali Anouzla and ensured that he will be given a fair and transparent trial, open to the public. Mr Anouzla was released from prison on 25 October but remains accused. Should the charges be retained leading to the trial, the EU Delegation will be observing the trial.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011042/13
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 septembre 2013)

Objet: VP/HR — Agression de militants à Erevan

1. Comptez-vous demander aux autorités arméniennes d'enquêter sans délai et de manière approfondie sur l'agression dont ont été victimes deux militants arméniens, et de veiller à ce que les personnes soupçonnées d'être responsables de ces agissements soient déférées à la justice?

2. Quelle est votre position sur ce qui s'est passé à Erevan?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Catherine Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(12 décembre 2013)

1. Le 13 septembre, la délégation de l'UE à Erevan a fait part, dans une déclaration locale, de la profonde préoccupation que lui inspirent les événements survenus récemment dans la capitale arménienne, notamment les attaques dont ont été victimes certains membres de la société civile et les actes d'intimidation à l'encontre de défenseurs des Droits de l'homme.

Elle a en outre invité les autorités arméniennes à prendre des mesures rapides et résolues pour

traduire sans délai les auteurs de ces actes en justice et a rappelé que le respect des principes démocratiques, des Droits de l'homme et des libertés fondamentales reste un élément fondamental des relations bilatérales entre l'Union européenne et l'Arménie.

2. L'Union européenne est profondément préoccupée par ces événements et, en collaboration avec des organisations internationales, elle continuera de suivre l'évolution de la situation et d'aborder la question avec les autorités arméniennes s'il y a lieu. Au mois de septembre, M. Füle, membre de la Commission, a rencontré, à Erevan, trois militants de la société civile qui ont été victimes d'agressions.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011042/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Attack on activists in Yerevan

1. Will the Commission call on the Armenian authorities to investigate thoroughly and without delay the attack on two Armenian activists and ensure that the persons suspected of perpetrating these acts are brought to justice?

2. What is the Commission's position on what took place in Yerevan?

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

1. The EU Delegation in Yerevan issued a local statement on September 13th whereby it expressed deep concern at recent incidents in Yerevan involving attacks on members of civil society as well as cases of intimidation targeting human rights defenders.

Moreover, it called upon the Armenian authorities to take prompt and decisive action to bring

the perpetrators to justice without delay and recalled that respect for democratic principles,

human rights and fundamental freedoms remain essential elements in the European Union's

bilateral agenda with Armenia.

2. The EU is deeply concerned at these incidents and, together with international organisations, will continue to monitor the developments and to address the issue with the Armenian authorities appropriately. Commissioner Füle met in September in Yerevan with three civil society activists who had been attacked.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011044/13
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 septembre 2013)

Objet: VP/HR — Zambie homophobe

Le 12 septembre, James Mwape et Philip Mubiana, tous deux âgés de 22 ans, se présenteront devant un juge chargé d'examiner leur demande de mise en liberté dans la ville de Kapiri Mposhi. Ils sont incarcérés depuis le 6 mai 2013 et ont chacun été inculpés de deux chefs de relations «contre nature».

Il est grand temps de cesser de persécuter les gens au motif de leur orientation sexuelle ou de leur identité de genre réelles ou perçues. Les droits humains protègent la dignité de chacun et l'égalité entre tous.

Les deux jeunes gens ont d'abord été arrêtés le 25 avril 2013, puis maintenus en détention jusqu'au 2 mai 2013, quand ils ont été libérés sous caution. À la suite de leur remise en liberté, ils ont été appréhendés une seconde fois à peine quatre jours plus tard, après qu'un voisin a fait un nouveau signalement à la police.

1. L'arrestation d'une personne en raison de son orientation sexuelle réelle ou perçue comme telle ne porte-t-elle pas atteinte au principe fondamental de non-discrimination qui sous-tend le droit relatif aux droits humains?

2. Comment comptez-vous aborder la question avec le gouvernement zambien afin qu'il abandonne les poursuites ouvertes contre deux hommes accusés d'avoir eu des relations homosexuelles et qu'il les libère sans condition?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(18 novembre 2013)

1. Les personnes lesbiennes, gays, bisexuelles, transgenres et intersexuées (LGBTI) ont les mêmes droits fondamentaux que tous les êtres humains, y compris le droit à la non-discrimination. Le droit et les politiques de l'UE prévoient l'égalité et l'absence de discrimination fondée sur l'orientation sexuelle, consacrées aux articles 10 et 19 du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne et à l'article 21 de la Charte des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne. Ce principe est inscrit dans de nombreux instruments internationaux et bénéficie donc d'un vaste champ d'application.

L'UE a soutenu à l'unanimité la déclaration de l'assemblée générale des Nations unies relative aux Droits de l'homme et à l'orientation sexuelle et l'identité de genre de décembre 2008, appuyée par 68 pays répartis sur les cinq continents. Cette déclaration réaffirme le principe de non-discrimination et condamne les exécutions, les arrestations arbitraires et les violations des Droits de l'homme fondées sur l'orientation sexuelle ou l'identité de genre.

2. Avant les événements décrits par l'Honorable Parlementaire, la délégation de l'UE a rencontré à plusieurs reprises des organisations œuvrant en Zambie pour la défense des Droits de l'homme et, en particulier, les droits des LGBTI, en vue de déterminer la meilleure façon de leur venir en aide. En juin, à l'occasion de la visite en Zambie du commissaire Piebalgs, une réunion a été organisée avec les principales associations représentant les LGBTI.

L'Union européenne prône une diplomatie discrète tout en insistant auprès des autorités sur l'importance du respect des Droits de l'homme pour tous. Cette approche prend en compte les préoccupations des organisations locales de LGBTI. L'Union européenne continuera à suivre de près cette situation.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011044/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Homophobic Zambia

On 12 September, James Mwape and Philip Mubiana, both 22 years old, will appear in court for a remand hearing in the town of Kapiri Mposhi. They have been in custody since 6 May 2013 facing two counts each of committing offences 'against the order of nature'.

It is high time that individuals stopped being persecuted because of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Human rights protect the dignity and equality of all people.

The two young men were initially arrested on 25 April 2013 and detained until 2 May 2013 when they were granted bail. After their release they were arrested for the second time just four days later following another report to the police by a neighbour.

1. Does the arrest of someone for their real or perceived sexual orientation not in itself represent a violation of the fundamental principle of non-discrimination which underlines human rights law?

2. How do you intend to address the issue with the Zambian Government so that it drops the charges brought against two men accused of having had homosexual relations and releases them unconditionally?

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

1. LGBTI persons have the same human rights as all individuals, including the right to nondiscrimination. EC laws and policies provide for equality and non-discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, enshrined in Articles 10 and 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFREU). This principle is also enshrined in numerous international instruments, having a wide scope in its application.

The EU unanimously supported the December 2008 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Statement on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity, supported by 68 countries from five continents. The Statement reaffirms the principle of non-discrimination and condemns executions, arbitrary arrest or violations of human rights on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

2. Prior to the events described by the Honourable Member, the EU Delegation met on several occasions with organisations operating in Zambia in defence of human rights, and particularly, the LGBTI rights, with a view to assess how best to assist. In June, during the visit to Zambia of Commissioner Piebalgs, a meeting was organised with the main LGBTI associations.

The EU favours a quiet diplomacy approach while raising with the authorities the importance of the respect of the human rights for all. This line takes into account the concern of local LGBTI organisations. The EU will continue to follow closely this situation.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011046/13
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 septembre 2013)

Objet: VP/HR — Expulsions de Bagou

Dans la localité de Bagou, il est prévu que les maisons des habitants soient détruites pour permettre la construction de locaux à usage commercial. Une militante des droits au logement et sa famille figurent parmi les personnes menacées.

Depuis 2003, ce sont plus de 5 000 familles qui ont été expulsées de Bagou, dans un contexte marqué par des actes d'intimidation et des menaces de violence. Han Ying, qui est très engagée contre les expulsions et les démolitions, a été prise pour cible par les autorités de manière répétée.

Cette militante a expliqué que, depuis le mois de juillet, Bagou avait reçu de nombreuses visites d'hommes portant l'uniforme de la police (mais pas d'identification) et d'hommes de main qui avaient menacé de démolir leurs maisons. La mère de Han Ying, qui est âgée, a été blessée le 16 août au cours d'un incident avec des policiers qui tentaient de démolir des bâtiments.

Après plusieurs mois de harcèlement, et bien qu'un recours contre l'expulsion soit en instance devant un tribunal de Pékin, les autorités locales ont délivré la semaine dernière aux six familles encore à Bagou un ordre d'expulsion à échéance du vendredi 13 septembre. Des dizaines de personnes non identifiées, dont certaines en uniforme de police et tenue antiémeute, sont désormais présentes au village et menacent de démolir les maisons encore debout.

Les autorités n'ont pas offert d'indemnisation adéquate aux habitants de Bagou et ne leur ont pas proposé de relogement. Des dommages et intérêts ont certes été proposés aux familles qui avaient perdu leur maison, mais ils n'étaient pas conformes aux critères fixés par la législation chinoise. Les familles ont fait valoir leur insuffisance et ont rejeté l'offre.

1. Comment réagissent les autorités européennes à ce qui semble être une violation des Droits de l'homme?

2. Que comptent entreprendre les autorités européennes dans ce dossier?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(13 novembre 2013)

La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante a parfaitement connaissance de l'expulsion des habitants de la localité de Ba Gou.

La question des droits fonciers et des expulsions forcées a figuré à l'ordre du jour du dernier dialogue UE-Chine sur les Droits de l'homme, qui s'est tenu à Guiyang (province du Guizhou) le 25 juin 2013. Bien qu'une réglementation régissant les expropriations et l'indemnisation pour les logements et les terres appartenant à l'État soit en vigueur depuis janvier 2011, la Commission sait que des pressions ont été exercées sur de nombreux habitants pour les pousser à renoncer à leurs biens. Des troubles ont éclaté, témoignant du défaut de mise en œuvre de la réglementation, qui ne prévoit pas de protection pour les locataires ou les habitants des zones rurales.

La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante a également été informée du harcèlement dont sont victimes les défenseurs des Droits de l'homme. Dans le communiqué de presse publié au terme de sa récente visite en Chine, le représentant spécial de l'Union européenne pour les Droits de l'homme a noté que la persécution, l'arrestation et la détention de personnes exprimant pacifiquement leur opinion ou exerçant légalement leur activité professionnelle constituait une tendance inquiétante.

La situation générale dans le domaine des Droits de l'homme en Chine sera abordée par le Conseil des Droits de l'homme des Nations unies lors du prochain examen périodique universel, qui aura lieu à Genève le 22 octobre.

Pour sa part, la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante continuera à suivre la situation, à faire part de sa préoccupation aux autorités chinoises et à encourager la mise en œuvre du droit international en matière de Droits de l'homme.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011046/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Evictions from Ba Gou

Homes in the village of Ba Gou are slated for demolition to make way for a commercial development. A housing rights activist and her family are among the potential evictees.

Since 2003 over 5 000 families have been evicted from Ba Gou amid intimidation and threats of violence. Han Ying, a prominent campaigner against the evictions and demolitions, has been repeatedly targeted by the authorities.

According to her report, Ba Gou has received frequent visits since July from unidentified men in police uniforms and hired thugs threatening to demolish houses. Han Ying's elderly mother was injured on 16 August during a confrontation with police officers who tried to demolish buildings.

After months of harassment, and despite the fact that an appeal against the evictions is pending before a Beijing court, last week the local authorities served the six families remaining in Ba Gou with an eviction notice for Friday 13 September. Dozens of unidentified people, some in police uniform and carrying riot gear, have congregated at the village threatening to demolish the buildings still standing.

The Ba Gou residents have not been offered adequate compensation or an alternative place to live by the authorities. Some compensation was offered to families who had lost their homes, but this did not meet the standards set in Chinese law and was rejected by the residents as not nearly sufficient.

1. How will the European authorities respond to what appears to be a violation of human rights?

2. What action do the European authorities intend to take on this matter?

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

The HR/VP is fully aware of the evictions from Ba Gou village.

The issue of land rights and forced evictions was on the agenda of the latest EU-China Human Rights dialogue, which took place in Guiyang (Guizhou Province) on 25 June 2013. Although the 'Expropriations and Compensation Regulations for Houses and State-owned Land' have been in force since January 2011, the Commission is aware that many residents have been pressured in surrendering their property, leading to unrest, indicating poor implementation of the regulations. Also the regulations do not provide protection to tenants or rural residents.

The HR/VP is also aware of the harassment suffered by Human Rights defenders. In the press release he issued at the end of his recent visit to China, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights noted, as one of the worrying trends, 'the persecution, arrest, and detention of people for peacefully expressing their views or legally exercising their professional duties'.

The overall Human Rights situation in China will be addressed by the UN Human Rights Council during the upcoming Universal Periodic Review, which will take place in Geneva on 22 October.

For its part, the HR/VP will continue to monitor the situation and raise its concern with the Chinese authorities and to promote the implementation of International Human Rights Law.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011047/13
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 septembre 2013)

Objet: VP/HR — Viols en Inde

Le 10 septembre, le tribunal avait déclaré quatre hommes coupables de viol en réunion, de meurtre et d'autres chefs d'accusation. Un adolescent de 17 ans jugé dans la même affaire avait été condamné le 31 août à trois ans de détention en maison de redressement. Un autre accusé avait été découvert mort dans sa cellule le 10 mars.

Les cas de viols et d'autres formes de violence sexuelle à l'égard des femmes restent courants dans tout le pays. En avril, le gouvernement a adopté de nouvelles lois érigeant en infraction plusieurs formes de violence contre les femmes, telles que les attaques à l'acide, le harcèlement de type «traque» (ou stalking) et le voyeurisme.

1. D'après la Commission, n'est-ce pas plutôt une réforme en profondeur des procédures et des institutions, et non la peine de mort, qui sont nécessaires pour lutter contre le problème endémique de la violence contre les femmes en Inde?

2. Les autorités européennes partagent-elles l'avis qu'il est inacceptable que le viol conjugal ne soit toujours pas considéré comme un crime si l'épouse a plus de 15 ans?

3. Estiment-elles normal que les forces de sécurité continuent de bénéficier d'une immunité judiciaire de fait pour les actes de violence sexuelle?

4. Pour faire face à ce problème, il faut de nouvelles lois mais il faut aussi que les autorités veillent à ce que la justice réagisse de manière efficace à chaque fois qu'un viol ou d'autres formes de violence sexuelle sont signalés. Comment ces thématiques sont-elles abordées avec le gouvernement indien?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute représentante au nom de la Commission
(12 novembre 2013)

L'Union européenne s'est engagée de longue date à promouvoir l'égalité des sexes et les droits des femmes et à lutter contre toutes les formes de violence perpétrée à leur égard, telles que le viol, qu'il soit ou non conjugal.

L'UE est, par principe, opposée à la peine de mort, et ce quels que soient les délits commis ou les circonstances. Même dans le cas rappelé par l'Honorable Parlementaire, elle estime que la peine capitale ne constitue pas une réponse appropriée à un problème grave, auquel il convient de remédier par des réformes juridiques et institutionnelles, l'éducation, le développement socioculturel et une modification des comportements au sein de la société.

L'UE a toujours insisté sur la nécessité de placer les mécanismes de protection des Droits de l'homme au centre des efforts déployés afin de garantir la responsabilité et l'obligation de rendre compte des abus commis par les forces de sécurité à l'encontre de civils. Elle soulève cette question régulièrement dans le cadre du dialogue périodique qu'elle entretient avec le gouvernement de l'Inde concernant les Droits de l'homme. Elle a pris note avec satisfaction du «Rapport Verma», rendu en janvier 2013 par une commission spéciale. Ce rapport formule des recommandations contre la violence sexuelle et l'impunité, recommandations dont elle suivra avec attention la mise en œuvre.

Outre les interactions au niveau politique, les questions liées aux Droits de l'homme et à l'égalité hommes-femmes sont au centre de l'action de l'UE en matière de coopération au développement: les programmes liés à l'éducation et à la santé sont résolument axés sur le bien-être des femmes et des fillettes, tandis que nombreux projets ont permis à des organisations de la société civile de lutter contre la violence à l'égard des femmes, et notamment la traite des êtres humains et le mariage d'enfants, la violence conjugale et le VIH/SIDA.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011047/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Rapes in India

On 10 September a court pronounced four men guilty of gang rape, murder and other charges. A 17-year-old convicted in the same case was sentenced to three years' detention in a juvenile home on 31 August. Another accused was discovered dead in his prison cell on 10 March.

Cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence against women are still common throughout the country. In April, the Indian Government passed new laws criminalising several forms of violence against women, including acid attacks, stalking and voyeurism.

1. Does the Commission agree that far-reaching procedural and institutional reforms are needed to tackle the endemic problem of violence against women in India rather than the death penalty?

2. Do the European authorities agree that it is unacceptable for rape within marriage still not to be considered a crime if the wife is over 15?

3. Do the European authorities believe that the security forces should continue to be entitled to legal immunity for acts of sexual violence?

4. New laws are required to tackle this problem, but also sustained commitment by the authorities to ensure that the justice system responds effectively to all reports of rape or other forms of sexual violence. How are these issues raised with the Indian Government?

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

The EU has a long-standing commitment to promote gender equality and women's rights and combat all forms of violence against women, including rape, regardless of whether it is perpetrated within or outside marriage.

The EU has a principled opposition to the death penalty, for all the crimes and under all circumstances. Even in the case recalled by the Honourable Member, the EU believes that capital punishment is not an appropriate answer to a grave problem that must be tackled with institutional and legal reforms, education, socio-cultural development and change of societal behaviour patterns.

The EU has consistently urged placing human rights protection mechanisms at the centre of any attempt to ensure responsibility and accountability for abuses committed by the security forces against civilians. This issue is one of those regularly raised by the EU in its periodic Human Rights Dialogue with the Government of India. The EU took positive note of the so-called Verma Report issued in January 2013 by a special commission; the document made recommendations to fight sexual violence and impunity. The implementation of these recommendations will be followed closely by the EU.

In addition to the interactions at the political level, human rights and gender issues are mainstreamed into EU's development cooperation activities: education and health-related programmes have a strong focus on women and girls' welfare, while numerous projects have helped civil society organisations to address violence against women, including trafficking and child marriage, domestic violence and HIV/AIDS.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011048/13
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 septembre 2013)

Objet: VP/HR — Vulnérabilité des expulsés en Somalie

Plusieurs milliers de personnes sont expulsées par la force de campements de fortune installés à Mogadiscio, dans le cadre des projets d'assainissement de la capitale que continue de mettre en œuvre le gouvernement. Les expulsions forcées se sont poursuivies et se sont même accélérées ces derniers mois alors que les autorités se sont montrées incapables de proposer un autre lieu sûr où reloger ces personnes.

1. Les autorités européennes partagent-elles l'avis qu'il est absolument inacceptable que des personnes qui ont rejoint la capitale en quête de protection soient expulsées de force? Qui plus est, cette situation s'est traduite par de très nombreuses atteintes aux droits fondamentaux.

2. Quelle est votre position sur la question somalienne?

3. Quelle est votre marge de manœuvre?

Réponse donnée par Mme Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(27 novembre 2013)

1. La Somalie, qui compte 1,1 million de personnes déplacées à l'intérieur de ses frontières et plus d'un million de réfugiés somaliens vivant en dehors de son territoire, est confrontée à l'une des pires crises au monde en la matière. En début d'année, le gouvernement somalien a annoncé un plan de réinstallation des quelque 369 000 personnes déplacées de Mogadiscio vers de nouveaux camps situés en périphérie de la capitale. L'intention déclarée du gouvernement était la création de meilleures conditions de sécurité pour les personnes déplacées ainsi que l'amélioration des conditions de vie jusqu'à ce qu'elles puissent regagner leur lieu d'origine ou s'intégrer sur place. En l'absence d'indicateurs clés pour une relocalisation sûre et volontaire, celle-ci a été différée jusqu'à ce que les critères de référence essentiels en matière d'équipements de base, de sécurité de l'utilisation des sols et de sécurité soient remplis.

2. Pour l'Union européenne, la protection par le gouvernement des populations déplacées en Somalie, et particulièrement des femmes et des jeunes filles, est une nécessité de premier ordre. L'amélioration de la prise de conscience, par les forces de sécurité somaliennes, de l'importance des Droits de l'homme et de l'égalité hommes-femmes est par conséquent une priorité pour l'UE. Il importe, avant tout, que la population somalienne fasse confiance à ces forces de sécurité, qui restent fondamentales pour assurer la stabilité et la sécurité dans tout le pays. Les retours doivent avoir lieu dans le cadre d'une amélioration des conditions de sécurité et des moyens de subsistance.

3. La conférence sur le «New Deal» UE-Somalie du mois de septembre à Bruxelles a adopté «l'accord Somalie», qui reconnaît explicitement la nécessité de créer les conditions pour un retour volontaire et la réintégration des personnes déplacées à l'intérieur du pays, dans le respect du droit international, et a souligné qu'il convient d'accorder une attention particulière à la protection des droits des groupes les plus vulnérables, notamment les personnes déplacées à l'intérieur du pays.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011048/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Vulnerability of evictees in Somalia

Thousands of people are being forcibly evicted from makeshift camps in Mogadishu as part of the government's ongoing attempts to clean up the capital. Forced evictions have continued and even gathered pace in recent months despite authorities' failure to find an alternative safe location for the evictees.

1. Do the European authorities agree that it is absolutely unacceptable for people who have fled to the capital for protection to be forcibly evicted, all the more so because this situation has resulted in large-scale abuses of fundamental rights?

2. What is your position on the Somalia issue?

3. Which opportunities for action are open to you?

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

1. Somalia is facing one of the worst displacement crises in the world, with 1.1 million people displaced within the national borders and over a million Somalis living as refugees outside of the country. The Somali Government announced plans to relocate Mogadishu's displaced population of 369,000 people to new camps outside the city centre earlier this year. The government's stated intention was to create better security conditions for the displaced as well as improved living conditions until such a time as they can either return home or integrate locally. Since key benchmarks for a safe and voluntary relocation have not yet been put in place, the relocation was deferred until key benchmarks on basic services, security of land use and security were met.

2. The need for government protection for displaced communities with special attention to the protection of women and girls is high on the EU's agenda for Somalia. Improving the human rights and gender awareness of the Somali security forces is therefore a priority for the EU. Above all, Somalis must trust these forces, which remain fundamental to bringing stability and security throughout Somalia. Returns need to take place in the context of increased security conditions and livelihood opportunities.

3. The EU-Somalia New Deal Conference of September in Brussels endorsed 'The Somali Compact' that explicitly recognises the need to create the conditions for voluntary return and reintegration of Internally Displaced Persons in accordance with international law and underlined that particular focus must be given to the protection of the rights of the most vulnerable groups, such as IDPs.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011049/13
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 septembre 2013)

Objet: VP/HR — Régression des Droits de la femme en Afghanistan

L'homicide de l'une des policières les plus haut gradées d'Afghanistan est le dernier revers en date dans le cadre de la lutte pour les Droits des femmes dans ce pays. Le lieutenant Negar, 38 ans, est morte le matin du 16 septembre à l'hôpital, après que deux motards non identifiés lui eurent tiré une balle dans le cou la veille, près du siège de la police de Lashkar Gah, la capitale de la province instable du Helmand. Elle s'était exprimée haut et fort en faveur de la protection des femmes qui s'élèvent contre le recours à la violence à l'égard des femmes, des jeunes filles et des fillettes. D'autres femmes publiques — comme sa prédécesseure, une auteure indienne et deux représentantes du ministère de la condition féminine — ont été tuées en Afghanistan au cours de l'année écoulée, et une députée a récemment été prise en otage par les talibans. Les Droits des femmes ont progressé ces dernières années, et il est possible qu'un seuil critique ait été atteint. Davantage de femmes occupent des postes à responsabilité, l'accès à l'éducation s'est développé, et de nouvelles lois prometteuses visent à protéger les femmes et les filles contre la violence. Mais à mesure que les Afghanes acquièrent une voix et du pouvoir, elles sont également exposées à des menaces nouvelles et accrues. Certains défenseurs des Droits des femmes déclarent qu'ils recommencent à s'autocensurer, redoutant de nouvelles représailles.

1. Les autorités européennes partagent-elles cet avis?

2. Comment réagissent-elles à ce qui semble être une nouvelle régression des Droits de la femme?

3. Ne craignez-vous pas que les dirigeants afghans et étrangers ne deviennent blasés face au grand nombre d'attaques visant des femmes occupant des positions en vue, outre les violences dont sont victimes des femmes, des jeunes filles et des filles au quotidien, alors qu'il reste beaucoup à faire pour protéger et faire progresser les Droits des femmes en Afghanistan?

4. En 2009, le président Karzaï a adopté par décret la loi sur l'éradication de la violence à l'égard des femmes. Cependant, non seulement un grand nombre des dispositions de ce texte ne sont toujours pas pleinement appliquées, mais certains ont en outre tenté de faire abroger la loi. Que comptent faire les autorités européennes afin de convaincre les autorités afghanes de tout faire pour protéger les Droits des femmes?

Réponse donnée par la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante Ashton au nom de la Commission
(11 novembre 2013)

L'UE s'engage de longue date en faveur de l'égalité hommes-femmes, de la promotion des Droits de la femme et de la lutte contre toutes les formes de violence contre les femmes, que ce soit à l'intérieur ou à l'extérieur de ses frontières.

Dans ce contexte, la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante partage les inquiétudes exprimées par l'Honorable Parlementaire. Il est indéniable que les femmes qui œuvrent dans le service public d'Afghanistan, en particulier dans la police, sont très vulnérables. Même si la communauté internationale a consacré beaucoup d'aide à la constitution de capacités supplémentaires dans le pays pour mettre en œuvre la législation sur les Droits de la femme, cette problématique persistera pendant de nombreuses années encore.

Après des années de conflit, l'Afghanistan a besoin d'un répit avant que les changements économiques et sociaux, notamment la mise en œuvre de la primauté de la loi et des droits individuels, puissent prendre racine. Voilà pourquoi l'UE insiste sur la nécessité de maintenir le soutien au développement de l'Afghanistan à long terme. Dans l'intervalle, l'UE continuera à presser les autorités afghanes à respecter tant les dispositions de l'accord-cadre de responsabilité mutuelle de Tokyo que les «lignes rouges» définies à Bonn qui ne doivent pas être franchies en ce qui concerne tout règlement politique futur avec les Taliban. Les Droits de l'homme constitueront des éléments essentiels de « l'accord de coopération entre l'UE et l'Afghanistan» relatif au partenariat et au développement, qui est envisagé.

Dans ses politiques extérieures, l'UE promeut les droits de la femme, en particulier par le renforcement des capacités, l'éducation en matière de Droits de l'homme, la fourniture d'un soutien juridique, de logements, de conseils et de services de médiation aux femmes et aux jeunes filles touchées par la violence familiale. La mission de police dans le cadre d'EUPOL Afghanistan a aussi apporté une aide aux unités d'intervention familiale du ministère de l'intérieur qui organisent une formation spécialisée dans les enquêtes pénales.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011049/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Step backwards for women's rights in Afghanistan

The murder of one of Afghanistan's highest-ranking female police officers is the latest setback in the fight for women's rights in this country. Lieutenant Negar, 38, died in hospital on the morning of 16 September after being shot in the neck the night before by two unidentified motorcyclists near the police headquarters in Lashkar Gah, the capital of the volatile Helmand province. She had been vocal in supporting protection for women who speak out against violence towards women and girls. Other female public figures — such as her predecessor, an Indian author and two representatives from the Ministry of Women's Affairs — have been killed in Afghanistan during the past year, and a female member of the Afghan parliament was recently taken hostage by the Taliban. Women's rights have improved in recent years, and may have reached a critical threshold. More women hold positions of responsibility, access to education has increased, and promising new laws aim to protect women and girls against violence. But as Afghan women gain a voice and power, they are also exposed to new and greater threats. Some women's rights activists report that they are starting to censor themselves again due to fears of fresh reprisals.

1. Do the European authorities share this opinion?

2. What is the response to what appears to be a new step backwards for women's rights?

3. Surely there must be concern that Afghan and foreign leaders are becoming indifferent to the numerous attacks targeting women in prominent positions, as well as the violence suffered by women and girls every day, while there is a great deal to be done to protect and advance women's rights in Afghanistan?

4. In 2009, President Karzai passed a law by presidential decree to eradicate violence towards women. However, not only have many of its provisions yet to fully come into force, but some people have also attempted to have the law repealed. What do the European authorities intend to do to convince the Afghan authorities to do all they can to protect women's rights?

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

The EU has a long-standing commitment to promote gender equality and women's rights and combat all forms of violence against women within and outside its borders.

In this context, the HR/VP shares the concerns expressed by the Honourable member. It is undeniable that women in the Afghan public service, and in particular in the police, are very vulnerable. Much international support has been dedicated to build additional Afghan capacities to implement legislation on women's rights but this will continue to be a crucial issue for many years to come.

Afghanistan needs a respite from the years of conflict before economic and social change, including the development of the rule of law and individual rights, can take root. Hence the EU's insistence on the need to keep up support for Afghanistan's development over the long term. In the meantime, the EU will continue urging Afghan authorities to comply with both the provisions of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework and with the Bonn 'red lines' regarding any future political settlement with the Taliban. The envisaged EU-Aghanistan Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development will also incorporate human rights provisions as essential elements.

In its external policies, the EU promotes women's rights in particular through capacity building, human rights education, the provision of legal support, shelter, counselling and mediation for women and girls affected by family violence. The EUPOL Afghanistan police mission has also supported the Ministry of the Interior's Family Response Units providing specialized training in criminal investigation.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011051/13
to the Commission
Richard Ashworth (ECR)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: Commission action on Gelmini law

The unfair situation for foreign language teachers in Italian universities (*lettori*) has dragged on for far too long. Members from a range of parties have been asking questions about this matter since 2010, and the PETI Committee was dealing with the issues at an earlier stage. The Commission has been aware of the situation for years, yet nothing seems to have been achieved, as the Italian authorities and universities have been ignoring numerous European Court of Justice rulings and requests from European Union institutions. Multiple 'virtual' constituents of the South East of England have been forced to take legal proceedings against their Italian university employers; however, they are caught out by Article 26 of Law 240 (the Gelmini Law of 30 December 2010). Lettori are paid 50% of the salary that their Italian colleagues receive, have their local contracts unilaterally annulled, and have no right to have their grievances heard, solely because they are foreign language teachers.

Commissioner Andor, in his answer to Written Question E-000936/2013, stated that clarifications concerning Law 240 from the Italian authorities were due on 25 June 2013.

1. Has the Commission established whether or not the Italian authorities are breaching European law in their discriminatory actions towards *lettori*?

2. What answers did the Italian authorities provide to the Commission on the situation of *lettori*?

3. Based on these answers, what action has the Commission decided to take on the matter of *lettori*?

4. What timeframes have been established for the aforementioned Commission action?

5. How will the Commission ensure that any action taken directly affects *lettori* and has the practical effect of ending the discrimination against foreign language teachers in Italy?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(13 November 2013)

As the Honourable Member notes, the Commission has been in contact with the Italian authorities in connection with the complaint filed by the *Associazione Lettori di Lingua Straniera in Italia* (ALLSI).

ALLSI's main complaint concerns the lack of recognition of the years of service put in by *ex-lettori* who have become *collaboratori esperti linguistici*, the salary increments they claim they should have received and the fact that their careers were split pursuant to Law No 63 of 5 March 2004 as interpreted by Law No 240 of 30 December 2010 (the 'Gelmini law'). The Commission notes that the universities concerned do not agree with the demands for increments from the complainants, who have initiated proceedings before the Italian courts.

The complainants claim that the last sentence of Article 26(3) of Law 240/2010, which provides for the extinction of all court cases pending, infringes Article 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The Commission notes, however, that the Italian courts have not interpreted that provision uniformly and a request for a ruling on its constitutionality is pending before the Italian Constitutional Court. Under the circumstances and until there is an authoritative interpretation of that Law, the Commission cannot conclude that that provision infringes Article 47 of the Charter.

In conclusion, after comparing the complainants' claims with the information in its possession and finding no evidence that could allow it to initiate an infringement procedure against Italy under Article 258 TFEU, the Commission has informed the complainants that it intends to close the case. Before it does this, however, it has invited the complainants to provide any new information of relevance and is waiting for them to react.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011053/13
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (NI)
(27 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Chiarimenti sulla trasparenza della procura europea, in particolare sulla trasferibilità dei dati penali ai paesi terzi

Nella sua proposta di regolamento del Consiglio che istituisce la Procura europea (COM(2013)0534 del 17 luglio 2013), la Commissione sostiene che:

— ai sensi dell'articolo 86 del trattato, la Procura europea esercita l'azione penale, il che implica l'imputazione e la scelta del foro. […] Il foro dovrebbe essere scelto sempre dal procuratore europeo in base a una serie di criteri trasparenti.

Può la Commissione specificare quali sono i criteri trasparenti ai quali si riferisce?

— La Procura europea può avvalersi di esperti nazionali distaccati o di altro personale non impiegato dalla medesima.

Può la Commissione specificare cosa si intende per «altro personale»? Sia per gli esperti nazionali distaccati che per l'altro personale non impiegato quali sono i criteri di selezione? La retribuzione è a carico di chi?

— Se necessario allo svolgimento dei suoi compiti, la Procura europea può trasferire i dati personali a un'autorità di un paese terzo […].

Può la Commissione specificare cosa si intende per «autorità di un paese terzo?»

— I servizi di traduzione necessari per il funzionamento della Procura europea sono forniti dal Centro di traduzione degli organismi dell'Unione europea.

Può la Commissione specificare chi si fa carico dei costi di traduzione?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(20 novembre 2013)

I criteri per la scelta dell'organo giurisdizionale competente per il procedimento sono stabiliti all'articolo 27, paragrafo 4, della proposta.

Per quanto riguarda gli esperti nazionali distaccati e il personale che può essere impiegato dalla Procura europea, i criteri di selezione sono decisi dalla Procura stessa in base alle effettive esigenze e conformemente alle norme adottate ai sensi dell'articolo 55, paragrafo 2, della proposta. Gli esperti nazionali distaccati mantengono il proprio posto presso le autorità nazionali da cui provengono, poiché la durata del loro incarico presso la Procura europea è limitata. Durante questo periodo continuano ad essere retribuiti dall'autorità nazionale e la Procura corrisponde loro una diaria per coprire le spese di soggiorno all'estero. Per quanto riguarda l'«altro personale», si tratta di esperti o consulenti esterni che possono venire impiegati dalla Procura per specifici compiti a breve termine che richiedono una data competenza di cui la Procura non dispone (contabilità, analisi scientifica, banca e finanze).

Per quanto attiene al trasferimento di dati personali alle autorità di paesi terzi i termini sono stabiliti nella proposta, che prevede specifiche limitazioni delle finalità e condizioni chiare. Le autorità dei paesi terzi che possono ricevere dati personali dalla Procura sono quelle che possono fornire assistenza o che devono essere coinvolte nell'attività operativa della Procura in virtù delle loro specifiche competenze, ad es. la polizia, le autorità doganali, i servizi dei pubblici ministeri, ecc.

Quanto ai costi di traduzione, se la richiesta di traduzione emana dalla Procura i costi saranno coperti dal bilancio di tale ufficio.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011053/13
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (NI)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: Clarification regarding the transparency of the European Public Prosecutor's Office, in particular the transferability of criminal data to third countries

In its proposal for a Council Regulation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (COM(2013)0534 of 17 July 2013), the Commission states that:

— 'Article 86 of the Treaty requires the European Public Prosecutor's Office to exercise the functions of the prosecutor, which includes taking decisions on a suspect's indictment and the choice of jurisdiction. […] The jurisdiction of trial should be chosen by the European Public Prosecutor on the basis of a set of transparent criteria.'

Can the Commission specify what these transparent criteria are?

— 'The European Public Prosecutor's Office may make use of seconded national experts or other persons not employed by it.'

Can the Commission specify what it intends by 'other persons'? What are the selection criteria for both seconded national experts and other persons not employed by the Office? Who is responsible for their remuneration?

— 'The European Public Prosecutor's Office may transfer personal data to an authority of a third country […] in so far as this is necessary for it to perform its tasks.'

Can the Commission specify what it intends by 'authority of a third country'?

— 'The translation services required for the functioning of the European Public Prosecutor's Office shall be provided by the Translation Centre of the bodies of the European Union.'

Can the Commission specify who is responsible for the translation costs?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

The criteria for the choice of jurisdiction of the trial are established in Article 27(4) of the proposal.

In relation to seconded national experts and persons that can be employed by the European Public Prosecutor's Office, the selection criteria are to be decided by the European Public Prosecutor's Office itself, depending on the exact needs and in accordance with the rules to be adopted following Article 55(2) of the proposal. Seconded national experts keep their positions in the national authorities they come from since the maximum duration of their assignment to the European Public Prosecutor's Office is limited. During this period they continue being paid by the national authority while receiving per diem allowance from the Office in order to cover their living expenses abroad. As for the 'other persons', these are external experts or consultants who might be hired by the Office for specific short-term tasks which require expertise (accounting, forensics, banking and finance) not available in the Office.

In relation to transfer of personal data to third countries' authorities, the conditions are set in the proposal which foresees specific purpose limitations and clear conditions. The authorities of the third countries which can receive personal data from the Office are those that may provide assistance or otherwise need to be involved in the operational activity of the Office in view of their specific competences, e.g. police, customs authorities, prosecutions services etc.

As regards the translation costs, if the request of the translation is to be made by the Office, the costs will be covered by its budget.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011054/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(27 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Denuncia de Ecuador ante la ONU por el caso Chevron/Texaco

El día de ayer, 25 de septiembre, el Canciller del Gobierno de la República de Ecuador, Ricardo Patiño, denunció ante las Naciones Unidas el daño medioambiental causado en la selva amazónica por la compañía norteamericana Chevron-Texaco.

La empresa estadounidense fue sentenciada por un tribunal ecuatoriano en 2011 a pagar 19 000 millones de dólares a unos 30 000 pobladores amazónicos que resultaron afectados por vertidos en la zona amazónica del país. La empresa explotaba más de 350 pozos petrolíferos y la sentencia determina que la compañía empleaba sistemáticamente malas prácticas que provocaban la contaminación del medio en una zona de importantísima biodiversidad como es la selva amazónica.

Según los datos que pone a disposición dicha sentencia judicial, la empresa vertió entre 1964 y 1992 aproximadamente 80 millones de toneladas de residuos petrolíferos en plena selva amazónica. Esta cantidad es aproximadamente unas 87 veces superior a la vertida por la multinacional British Petroleum en el Golfo de México en 2010, vertido que desencadenó una denuncia por parte del Gobierno de EE.UU., que concluyó con una condena para la compañía británica a pagar 1 300 millones de euros.

En lugar de acatar dicha sentencia, Chevron-Texaco ha demandado en tres ocasiones al Estado ecuatoriano y ha emprendido una campaña de desprestigio del sistema judicial de Ecuador. Dichas demandas han sido motivadas frente a una sentencia absolutamente legítima y acorde al derecho de la República de Ecuador. Por ello Ecuador ha presentado su demanda ante la ONU de forma que los países del mundo se posicionen ante la negativa de Chevron a cumplir las legítimas sentencias del país latinoamericano.

¿Conoce la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante la citada demanda presentada contra Ecuador? ¿Considera adecuada a derecho la sentencia de los tribunales ecuatorianos en el caso de la República de Ecuador contra Chevron/Texaco? ¿Piensa apoyar la denuncia de Ecuador en las Naciones Unidas para garantizar que Chevron cumpla la sentencia ecuatoriana?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(19 de noviembre de 2013)

La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta es consciente de la demanda a la que se refiere su Señoría. Sin embargo, es preciso señalar a la atención de Su Señoría el hecho de que las instituciones de la Unión Europea no están en condiciones de intervenir en procedimientos jurídicos que afectan a un tercer país y a una empresa no perteneciente a la UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011054/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Ecuador takes case against Chevron/Texaco to the UN

On 25 September, the Republic of Ecuador's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ricardo Patiño, denounced before the United Nations the environmental damage to the Amazon rainforest caused by North American company Chevron-Texaco.

In 2011, an Ecuadorian court ordered the US company to pay USD 19 billion to some 30 000 inhabitants affected by the dumping in the Amazon area of the country. The company exploited more than 350 oil wells and the judgment determined that the company systematically employed bad practices, leading to the environmental contamination of an area of such great importance in terms of biodiversity as the Amazon rainforest.

According to the data made available for the abovementioned court judgment, the company dumped approximately 80 million tons of oil waste in the midst of the Amazon rainforest between 1964 and 1992. This is some 87 times greater than the spill caused by multinational British Petroleum in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, which triggered proceedings on the part of the US Government that concluded in the British company being required to pay out EUR 1.3 billion (EUR 1 300 million).

Rather than complying with the said judgment, Chevron-Texaco has filed a lawsuit against Ecudador on three occasions and has embarked upon a campaign to discredit the Ecuadorian judicial system. These lawsuits have been justified in the face of an entirely legitimate judgment that complies with the law of the Republic of Ecuador. Consequently, Ecuador has brought its lawsuit before the UN so that the countries of the world can unite against Chevron's refusal to comply with the lawful rulings of this Latin American country.

Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the abovementioned lawsuit that has been brought against Ecuador? Does she consider the judgment of the Ecuadorian courts sufficient in the case of the Republic of Ecuador against Chevron/Texaco? Is she considering supporting Ecuador's lawsuit before the United Nations to ensure that Chevron complies with the Ecuadorian ruling?

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

The High Representative/Vice-President is aware of the lawsuit to which the Honourable Member is referring. However, the attention of the Honourable Member is drawn to the fact that the institutions of the European Union are not in a position to intervene in legal proceedings involving a third country and a non-EU company.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011055/13
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(27. September 2013)

Betrifft: Gesundheitsgefährdende Kinder-Tattoos zum Aufkleben

Alarmierende Ergebnisse einer Testreihe, die von der Arbeiterkammer in Österreich — im Bundesland Oberösterreich — durchgeführt wurde, bringen Verbraucherschützer auf den Plan. Demnach enthalten alle Proben der Testreihe mindestens zwei gesundheitlich bedenkliche Substanzen. Bei der chemischen Analyse entsprachen drei Tattoos nicht den Grenzwerten der Spielzeugrichtlinien für Organozinnverbindungen, und bei einem der beliebtesten Bilder für Kinderhaut wurde die hormonwirksame Konzentration sogar um das Sechzehnfache überschritten. In zwei Proben wurden zu viele polyzyklische aromatische Kohlenwasserstoffe (PAK) gefunden. Neun Tattoo-Proben weisen die maximal tolerierbare Konzentration dieser Verbindungen auf. Die Verbindungen stehen im Verdacht, krebserregend zu sein. Die potenziellen Opfer dieser Tattoo-Aufkleber sind Kinder, denn bis dato sahen Eltern keinerlei Gefahr für ihren Nachwuchs.

Ist sich die Kommission der oben dargestellten Problematik bewusst? Kennt die Kommission den oben erwähnten Test und die österreichischen Laboruntersuchungen?

Gibt es ähnliche Ergebnisse aus anderen Mitgliedstaaten? Wenn ja: Welche, und warum wurden die Produkte bisher nicht vom Markt genommen und verboten? Falls nicht bekannt: Gedenkt die Kommission europaweite Studien durchzuführen?

Wie kann sichergestellt werden, dass künftig keine gesundheitsschädlichen Tattoos mehr im Binnenmarkt gehandelt werden?

Antwort von Herrn Tajani im Namen der Kommission
(19. November 2013)

Die Kommission hatte keine Kenntnis über die Tests, die von der Arbeiterkammer Oberösterreich ([1]) zum Thema Tattoo-Aufkleber für Kinder durchgeführt wurden.

Immer wenn Grenzwerte für gefährliche Chemikalien, die in der Richtlinie über die Sicherheit von Spielzeug festgelegt sind, überschritten werden, wird von den nationalen Marktaufsichtsbehörden erwartet, dass sie jedwede getroffene Maßnahme über RAPEX ([2]), das Schnellwarnsystem der Europäischen Union, melden; vorausgesetzt, dass die Gründe für die Maßnahmen oder die Auswirkungen der Maßnahmen über das nationale Hoheitsgebiet hinausreichen ([3]).

Bislang wurden über RAPEX noch keine Tattoo-Aufkleber gemeldet. Zwischen 2007 und 2013 wurden jedoch 90 Tätowiertinten, die von Tätowierern verkauft oder verwendet wurden, von den Marktaufsichtsbehörden der Mitgliedstaaten gemeldet. Diese Behörden sind dazu berechtigt, auch Tattoo-Aufkleber zu testen.

Die Gewährleistung der Sicherheit der Produkte, einschließlich Tätowiermittel, obliegt in erster Linie den Herstellern und Importeuren. Die Mitgliedstaaten wiederum müssen sicherstellen, dass die Hersteller und Importeure ihren Verpflichtungen nachkommen.

Darüber hinaus sollte ein Mitgliedstaat einen Vorschlag für eine Beschränkung gemäß der REACH-Verordnung ([4]) ausarbeiten, wenn er der Auffassung ist, dass ein Stoff ein Risiko für die menschliche Gesundheit oder die Umwelt mit sich bringt, das nicht angemessen beherrscht wird und behandelt werden muss.

Zudem haben sich mehrere Mitgliedstaaten für die Einführung einer spezifischen EU-Gesetzgebung für Tätowiermittel ausgesprochen. Die Kommission prüft derzeit diese Frage.

([1]) http://ooe.arbeiterkammer.at/service/testsundpreisvergleiche/tests/Kinder-Tattoos.html
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/rapex/index_en.htm
([3]) Artikel 44 der Richtlinie 2009/48/EG (Richtlinie über die Sicherheit von Spielzeug).
([4]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1907/2006, Artikel 69.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011055/13
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: Stick-on children's tattoos that pose a risk to health

Alarming results from a series of tests carried out by the Chamber of Labour in Austria — in the province of Upper Austria — are spurring consumer protection organisations into action. These results show that all of the samples in the series of tests contain at least two substances that pose a risk to health. When subjected to chemical analysis, three tattoos did not comply with the limit values of the Toy Safety Directives for organotin compounds, and one of the most popular pictures for children's skin was found to have sixteen times the hormone disrupting concentration. Two samples were found to contain too many polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). Nine tattoo samples displayed the maximum tolerable concentration for these compounds. These compounds are suspected of being carcinogenic. The potential victims of these tattoo stickers are children, as up to now parents have not considered there to be any danger to their children.

Is the Commission aware of the problem described above? Is it familiar with the abovementioned test and the Austrian laboratory tests?

Have any similar results been obtained in other Member States? If so, what are these results and why have the products not yet been taken off the market and banned? If no results are known, does the Commission intend to carry out Europe-wide studies?

How can it be ensured that no more tattoos that pose a risk to health are sold on the internal market in future?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

The Commission was not aware of the tests carried out by the Chamber of Labour in Upper Austria ([1]) to check the problem of stick-on tattoos for children.

Whenever limit values for dangerous chemicals as set by the Toys Safety Directive are exceeded national market surveillance authorities are expected to notify any action taken to the EU's rapid alert system, RAPEX ([2]), provided the reasons which prompted the measure or the effects of the measure go beyond its territory ([3]).

So far no stick-on tattoos have been notified to RAPEX. However, 90 notifications on tattoo inks sold or applied by tattooing artists were notified between 2007 and 2013 by Member States' market surveillance authorities. These authorities are entitled to also check stick-on tattoos.

Ensuring the safety of products, including tattoo products, is the responsibility of manufacturers and importers in the first instance, and Member States must ensure that they comply with this obligation.

Furthermore, if a Member State considers that a substance poses a risk to human health or the environment that is not adequately controlled and needs to be addressed, it should prepare a proposal for restriction in accordance with REACH ([4]).

Finally, several Member States have called for the establishment of specific EU legislation on tattoo products. The Commission is currently assessing the feasibility of this request.

([1]) http://ooe.arbeiterkammer.at/service/testsundpreisvergleiche/tests/Kinder-Tattoos.html
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/rapex/index_en.htm
([3]) Article 44 Directive 2009/48 EC ('Toys safety directive').
([4]) Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006, Article 69.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011056/13
to the Commission
Baroness Sarah Ludford (ALDE)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: LGBT rights in Lithuania

The Lithuanian parliament is scheduled to consider legislation later this year that would significantly infringe the rights of the Lithuanian LGBT community. The proposals include a ban on gender reassignment, a ban on same-sex adoption, the regulation of public events, and the legalisation of anti-gay hate speech.

If approved, the laws would exempt anti-gay hate speech from criminal charges, make organisers of Pride events liable to large fines and expenses, ban adoption for same-sex couples, citing the justification that every child needs a father and a mother, and ban gender reassignment surgery by claiming that gender is genetically determined at conception.

The European Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) found in April 2012 that 61% of LGBT people in Lithuania said they had been discriminated against or harassed, the highest percentage in the EU. As Lithuania currently holds the presidency of the Council, it is even more important that the country show respect for human rights and civil liberties by protecting the rights and needs of the LGBT community.

Does the Commission believe that Lithuania's enactment of these laws would constitute a breach of EU treaties and laws with respect to the protection of human rights, non-discrimination, equal rights and freedom of speech?

Answer given by Ms Reding on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The Commission is following very closely all developments that are of concern to LGBT people in all Member States of the European Union, including the proposed legislation under consideration in the Lithuanian Parliament, referred to by the Honourable Member.

In case the legislative proposals referred to by the Honourable Member will be adopted, the Commission is ready to assess, within the limits of the powers conferred to it by the Treaties, whether the implementation of European Union law is at stake.

In any event, outside the implementation of European Union law, it is for Member States, including their judicial authorities, to ensure that fundamental rights are effectively respected and protected in accordance with their international human rights obligations, including the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011058/13
do Komisji
Danuta Jazłowiecka (PPE)
(27 września 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Praktyczny poradnik dotyczący ustawodawstwa mającego zastosowanie do pracowników

Praktyczny poradnik Komisji dotyczący ustawodawstwa mającego zastosowanie do pracowników w UE, w Europejskim Obszarze Gospodarczym i w Szwajcarii został dobrze przyjęty przez państwa członkowskie i po przetłumaczeniu na wszystkie języki urzędowe UE cieszył się dużym zainteresowaniem.

Jednak tylko angielska wersja została zaktualizowana w związku ze zmianą rozporządzeń (WE) nr 883/2004 i 987/2009 z 28 lipca 2012 r. Poprawki dotyczą w szczególności części II poradnika.

Na stronie Komisji zamieszczono informację, że inne wersje językowe także zostaną w odpowiednim czasie uaktualnione. Po upływie prawie roku wersje w innych językach nadal nie są dostępne.

Kiedy można się spodziewać tłumaczenia praktycznego poradnika na pozostałe języki urzędowe UE?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza László Andora w imieniu Komisji
(8 listopada 2013 r.)

Komisja zakończyła już tłumaczenie zmienionej angielskiej wersji Praktycznego poradnika „Ustawodawstwo mające zastosowanie do pracowników w Unii Europejskiej (UE), Europejskim Obszarze Gospodarczym (EOG) i Szwajcarii” ([1]) na pozostałe języki urzędowe Unii Europejskiej.

Tłumaczenia przesłano do sprawdzenia odnośnym delegacjom państw członkowskich. Tłumaczenia zostaną opublikowane, kiedy tylko zakończy się ich sprawdzanie.

([1]) Poradnik dostępny na stronie internetowej: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=pl&catId=868

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011058/13
to the Commission
Danuta Jazłowiecka (PPE)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: Practical guide to the legislation that applies to workers

The Commission's practical guide to the legislation that applies to workers in the EU, the European Economic Area and Switzerland was well received by the Member States and attracted great interest, since it was translated into all the EU's official languages.

However, only the English version of the guide has been updated following the amendment of Regulations (EC) Nos 883/2004 and 987/2009 on 28 June 2012. The amendments particularly affect Part II of the guide.

The Commission's website states that the other language versions will be updated in due course. Almost a year later, the other language versions are not yet available.

When can the translation of the practical guide into the EU's other official languages be expected?

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

The Commission has finished translating the revised English version of the Practical Guide 'The legislation that applies to workers in the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) and in Switzerland' ([1]) into the other official languages of the European Union.

The translations have been sent to the Member State delegations concerned for them to check the versions in their own languages. They will be published as soon as those checks are completed.

([1]) Available at http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=868

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-011059/13
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(27. september 2013)

Om: Aluminium i kosmetik

En norsk undersøgelse viser, at nordmænd får for meget aluminium i deres hverdag, og at en stor del stammer fra deodoranter. Undersøgelsens hovedkonklusion er, at dagligt brug af antiperspiranter med stor sandsynlighed resulterer i en aluminiumseksponering, der overskrider det tolerable ugentlige indtag (fastsat af EFSA i 2008). Der er derfor også grund til at tro, at dette kan være tilfældet for andre nationer i Europa og dermed medlemsstater i EU.

Konsekvenserne af dette kan være alvorlige. Ophobes aluminium i kroppen over en længere periode, kan det give sygdomme i hjernen, og det kan påvirke evnen til at få raske børn. Aluminium kan ligeledes give allergi ved vaccination med en aluminiumholdig vaccine, hvilket betyder, at man efterfølgende risikerer ikke at kunne tåle eksempelvis solcremer og deodoranter, der indeholder selv ganske små mængder af aluminium.

EFSA har sat en grænse for, hvor meget aluminium, vi bør indtage ugentligt. I øjeblikket er det med andre ord op til forbrugerne selv at sørge for, at de ikke overskrider den anbefalede maksimumseksponering af aluminium, som både indtages gennem fødevarer, kosmetik og lægemidler.

Mine spørgsmål til Kommissionen er derfor følgende:

Skal det fortsat være forbrugernes eget ansvar ikke at blive udsat for større mængder aluminium end anbefalet?

Hvor langt er Kommissionen i arbejdet med at se nærmere på aluminium i kosmetik og med vurderingen af, hvorvidt indholdet af aluminium skal begrænses?

Hvilke initiativer bliver eventuelt overvejet i forsøget på at beskytte forbrugerne mod for store mængder aluminium i eksempelvis kosmetik?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Neven Mimica
(20. november 2013)

Kommissionen har kendskab til den norske undersøgelse, som det ærede medlem henviser til. Derfor har den anmodet Den Videnskabelige Komité for Forbrugersikkerhed om at gennemføre en risikovurdering for anvendelsen af aluminium i kosmetik, særligt i produkter som antiperspiranter, deodoranter, læbestift og tandpasta, idet eksponering fra andre kilder, som fødevarer og kosttilskud, tages i betragtning.

Hvis den skønnede eksponering for aluminium viser sig at give anledning til bekymring, har Kommissionen også anmodet Den Videnskabelige Komité for Forbrugersikkerhed om at anbefale en sikker koncentrationsgrænseværdi for aluminium i disse kosmetiske produkter.

Udtalelsen fra Den Videnskabelige Komité for Forbrugersikkerheds forventes afgivet senest i andet kvartal af 2014.

Afhængigt af konklusionerne i den videnskabelige vurdering vil Kommissionen forelægge forslag til alle foranstaltninger for at sikre fuldstændig beskyttelse af forbrugerne.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011059/13
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(27 September 2013)

Subject: Aluminium in cosmetic products

A Norwegian study shows that Norwegians are exposed to too much aluminium in their everyday lives, and that a large proportion of this comes from deodorants. The main conclusion of the study is that daily use of antiperspirants is very likely to result in an aluminium exposure that exceeds the tolerable weekly intake (established by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in 2008). There are therefore also grounds to believe that this may be the case for other nations in Europe, including EU Member States.

The consequences of this may be serious. If aluminium accumulates in the body over a long period of time it can result in diseases of the brain, and it can affect a person's ability to have healthy children. Aluminium can also cause allergies in the event of vaccination with a vaccine that contains aluminium, which means that there is a risk of the person in question subsequently being unable to tolerate sun creams and deodorants, for example, containing even very small quantities of aluminium.

EFSA has set a limit for what our weekly intake of aluminium ought to be. In other words, it is currently up to consumers themselves to ensure that they do not exceed the recommended maximum intake of aluminium, to which they are exposed through food, cosmetic products and medicinal products.

Should it remain the responsibility of consumers themselves to ensure that they are not exposed to greater quantities of aluminium than is recommended?

How much progress has the Commission made in connection with the task of looking more closely at aluminium in cosmetic products and with its assessment of whether the aluminium content should be limited?

What initiatives might be considered to attempt to protect consumers against exposure to too much aluminium in cosmetic products, for example?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

The Commission is aware of the Norwegian study referred to by the Honourable Member. In response, it has requested the Scientific Committee for Consumers Safety to carry out a risk assessment of the use of aluminium in cosmetics, in particular in products such as antiperspirants, deodorants, lipsticks and toothpastes, considering the exposure from other sources, such as food and food supplements.

In case the estimated exposure to aluminium is found to be of concern, the Commission has also asked the Scientific Committee for Consumers Safety to recommend a safe concentration limit for the presence of aluminium in those cosmetic products.

The opinion of the Scientific Committee for Consumers Safety is expected for the second quarter of 2014 at the latest.

Depending on the conclusions of scientific assessment, the Commission will propose all measures to ensure full protection of consumers.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej P-011061/13
do Komisji
Andrzej Grzyb (PPE)
(30 września 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Możliwe naruszenie przepisów na rynku przeglądarek internetowych

W ostatnich dziesięciu latach firma Microsoft Corporation została dwukrotnie ukarana za ograniczanie dostępu zewnętrznych przeglądarek do swojego systemu operacyjnego Windows.

W nowym systemie Windows RT, a także Windows 8 z interfejsem Metro, dostawcy przeglądarek mają tylko ograniczony dostęp do interfejsów programowania aplikacji (API), co jest niezbędne, aby przeglądarka była konkurencyjna, i co sprawia, że Internet Explorer jest jedyną opcją dotykową, z której można skorzystać w tym środowisku.

Podobnie Apple ogranicza możliwość wykorzystania Webkitu (narzędzia zwiększającego wydajność przeglądarki) przez inne przeglądarki, tym samym dając przewagę swojej własnej przeglądarce Safari.

Czy Komisji wiadomo o praktykach stosowanych przez te dwie korporacje?

Czy Komisja zamierza interweniować, podobnie jak w poprzednich przypadkach ograniczeń na rynku przeglądarek?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Joaquina Almunię w imieniu Komisji
(22 października 2013 r.)

W celu ustalenia naruszenia unijnych reguł konkurencji, o którym mowa w art. 102 Traktatu, należy najpierw wykazać, że przedsiębiorstwo posiada dominującą pozycję na danym rynku. W tym przypadku, jeśli chodzi o Windows RT i iOS, istnieje wiele konkurencyjnych mobilnych systemów operacyjnych posiadających funkcje podobne do produktów Microsoft i Apple. Wydaje się zatem, że jeśli chodzi o mobilne systemy operacyjne, na tym etapie ani Microsoft, ani Apple nie posiadają dominującej pozycji na rynku.

W odniesieniu do systemu Windows 8 zobowiązania, które Komisja uznała za wiążące na mocy swej decyzji z dnia 16 grudnia 2009 r. w sprawie COMP/C-39.530 – Microsoft (sprzedaż wiązana), mają zastosowanie do grudnia 2014 r. Zgodnie ze wspomnianymi zobowiązaniami Microsoft ma obowiązek terminowo ujawniać kompletne i precyzyjne informacje na temat interfejsów programowania aplikacji dla systemu Windows, w oparciu o które działa przeglądarka Internet Explorer, tak aby dostawcy konkurencyjnych przeglądarek internetowych projektujący nowe narzędzia w tym środowisku nie działali w warunkach mniej korzystnych niż Microsoft. Komisja nie posiada informacji wskazujących, że Microsoft nie wywiązuje się obecnie ze swoich zobowiązań.

Komisja ściśle monitoruje jednak wszystkie aspekty przestrzegania zobowiązań podjętych przez Microsoft, a także zmiany na rynku, tak aby zapewnić konkurencję między jego uczestnikami, możliwości innowacji oraz równe szanse.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011061/13
to the Commission
Andrzej Grzyb (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Possible infringement on the market in Internet browsers

In the last decade, Microsoft Corporation has been fined twice for restricting access for third-party browsers in its Windows operating systems.

In Microsoft's newly released Windows RT, as well as in the Metro version of Windows 8, third-party providers of browsers have only restricted access to the application programming interfaces (APIs) which are necessary for a browser to compete, thus making Internet Explorer the only touch-friendly option in those environments.

Similarly, Apple restricts usage of Webkit (a tool that can boost a browser's performance) for third-party providers, thus giving the advantage to its own Safari browser.

Is the Commission aware of these practices on the part of the two corporations?

Does the Commission intend to intervene, as it did in previous cases concerning restrictions affecting the browser market?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(22 October 2013)

In order to establish a violation of the EU competition rules under Article 102 of the Treaty, it first needs to be demonstrated that a company holds a dominant position in a relevant market. In this regard, with respect to Windows RT and the iOS, there are a number of competing mobile operating systems which provide similar functionalities to Microsoft's and Apple's. It therefore appears that neither Microsoft nor Apple hold a dominant position with respect to the mobile operating systems at this stage.

With regard to Windows 8, the commitments made binding by Commission decision of 16 December 2009 in Case COMP/C-39.530 — Microsoft (Tying) are applicable until December 2014. Pursuant to these commitments Microsoft is obliged to disclose Windows APIs on which Internet Explorer relies in a complete, accurate and timely manner, so that non-Microsoft web browser suppliers will not be at a competitive disadvantage compared to Microsoft when designing a web browser for Windows. The Commission has no indication that Microsoft is currently not complying with these commitments.

However, the Commission closely monitors all aspects of Microsoft's compliance with its commitments as well as the developments in the market so as to ensure that competition, innovation and a level playing field are preserved amongst all market players.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011065/13
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(30. September 2013)

Betrifft: Bankenunion — Bankenabwicklungsfonds — Budgethoheit

Für die Übergangsphase — solange die Finanzmittel des Bankenabwicklungsfonds durch die Bankabgaben ausreichen — sehen EU-Juristen sowie einzelne Mitgliedstaaten Probleme in der Budgethoheit der EU. Der von Kommissionsmitglied Barnier vorgestellten Lösung wird mangelnde Robustheit unterstellt, um eben diese Budgethoheit der Mitgliedstaaten zu gewährleisten, da einzelne Mitgliedstaaten im Abwicklungsgremium im Hinblick auf Gelder aus ihren jeweiligen Haushalten einfach überstimmt werden könnten. Dies scheint im gewissen Maße ein grundsätzliches Problem bei der Verallgemeinerung von Schulden zu sein — egal ob im öffentlichen oder privaten Sektor.

Kann die Kommission dazu folgende Fragen beantworten:

1. Wie gedenkt die Kommission auf diese offensichtlich berechtigte Kritik der EU-Juristen zu reagieren?

2. Welchen Einfluss haben die Ausgestaltung der Stimmrechtsregelungen des EZB-Rats (auch im Hinblick auf TARGET2) und die Ausgestaltung der Stimmrechtsregelungen beim ESM-Gouverneursrat auf die beim Abwicklungsgremium avisierten Regelungen?

3. Wieso erachtet es die Kommission als unbedingt notwendig, für diese Übergangsphase die Kompetenzen zur Abwicklung bei der EU-Kommission zu sammeln, statt sie aufgrund der bedenklichen Stimmrechtssituation nicht vielmehr bei den nationalen Aufsehern zu belassen, diese aber enger in Europa miteinander zu vernetzen?

4. Welche Zielsetzung verfolgt die Bankenabwicklungsbehörde im Hinblick auf die teils beträchtlichen ausstehenden Kredite, welche von der EZB in den letzten Jahren an diverse südeuropäische Banken vergeben wurden?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(26. November 2013)

Mit Hilfe des Bankenabwicklungsfonds soll ein einheitliches, stabiles und integriertes System für die Abwicklung von Bankenpleiten geschaffen werden. Der Fonds ist als Ergänzung des einheitlichen Aufsichtsmechanismus gedacht, der Ende 2014 einsatzbereit sein soll.

Die Überwachung und die Abwicklung der Banken müssen auf europäischer Ebene auf einander ausgerichtet und durchgeführt werden. Die jüngste Finanzkrise hat gezeigt, dass ein solider, zentraler und sich auf einen einheitlichen, vom Bankensektor finanzierten Bankenabwicklungsfonds stützender Beschlussfassungsmechanismus benötigt wird, um zu vermeiden, dass jede Bankenkrise automatisch eine Staatskrise nach sich zieht und um einen Ansturm auf die Banken zu verhindern. Selbst wenn es auf zwischenstaatlicher Ebene koordiniert würde, wäre ein Netz von nationalen Behörden dazu nicht hinreichend in der Lage.

Der Vorschlag der Kommission respektiert die Budgethoheit der Mitgliedstaaten. Er garantiert, dass die Mitgliedstaaten nicht durch einen Beschluss des Ausschusses für die einheitliche Abwicklung oder der Kommission zu einer außerordentlichen finanziellen Beteiligung verpflichtet werden können. Die Stimmrechtsregelungen dieses Ausschusses tragen der Notwendigkeit Rechnung, dass es jeweils sämtliche von einem Abwicklungsbeschluss betroffenen Mitgliedstaaten einzubinden gilt. Die Kommission ist gleichwohl gerne bereit, über eine Stärkung dieser Garantie Gespräche zu führen.

Das von der Kommission vorgeschlagene Verfahren für die Beschlussfassung des Ausschusses für die einheitliche Abwicklung unterscheidet sich vom geltenden Beschlussfassungsverfahren anderer EU-Organe durch die Notwendigkeit, ein einheitliches, unabhängiges, rasches und wirksames System einzuführen. Etwaige andere Vorschläge für die Stimmrechtsregelung müssten diesem fundamentalen Grundsatz entsprechen.

Die EZB vergibt im Austausch gegen Garantien Kredite an bestimmte Banken. Diese Maßnahme erfolgt im Rahmen ihres Auftrags, die Stabilität des Bankensystems sicherzustellen und rechtfertigt nicht die Einleitung eines Abwicklungsverfahrens.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011065/13
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Banking union — bank resolution fund — budget sovereignty

For the transitional phase — as long as the resources of the bank resolution fund provided through the bank charges are sufficient — EC lawyers as well as individual Member States see problems in relation to the budget sovereignty of the EU. It has been suggested that the solution presented by Commissioner Barnier lacks the robustness to guarantee this budget sovereignty of the Member States, as individual Member States could simply be outvoted in the resolution board with regard to funds from their own budgets. This seems to a certain extent to be a fundamental problem with the generalisation of debt — whether in the public or private sector.

1. How does the Commission intend to respond to this clearly justified criticism by the EC lawyers?

2. What influence do the nature of the voting rules of the Governing Council (also in relation to TARGET2) and those of the ESM Board of Governors have on the notified arrangements in the resolution board?

3. Why does the Commission consider it absolutely necessary to gather the competence for resolution within the Commission for this transitional phase instead of leaving it with the national supervisory authorities, while improving the links between these authorities in Europe, which would be preferable on account of the questionable voting situation?

4. What is the objective of the bank resolution authority in respect of the, in some cases considerable, outstanding loans that have been granted by the ECB in recent years to various southern European banks?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(26 novembre 2013)

Le mécanisme de résolution unique vise à instaurer un système unique, solide et intégré de gestion des défaillances bancaires. Il complètera le mécanisme de surveillance unique qui sera opérationnel à la fin de 2014.

Supervision et résolution bancaires doivent être alignées et exercées à un niveau européen. La récente crise financière a souligné le besoin d'un mécanisme solide et centralisé de prise de décision s'appuyant sur un Fonds de Résolution Unique alimenté par le secteur bancaire afin de rompre le lien entre crise des banques et des États et prévenir les paniques bancaires. Un réseau d'autorités nationales, même coordonné à un niveau intergouvernemental, ne serait pas suffisamment opérationnel.

La proposition de la Commission respecte la souveraineté budgétaire des États membres. Elle garantit qu'aucune décision du Conseil de Résolution ou de la Commission ne puisse leur imposer de fournir un soutien financier exceptionnel. Les règles de vote envisagées pour ce Conseil tiennent compte de la nécessité d'impliquer tous les États membres concernés par une décision de résolution. La Commission est toutefois prête à discuter du renforcement de cette garantie.

Le processus décisionnel de ce Conseil tel que proposé par la Commission se distingue de celui en vigueur au sein d'autres organes de l'Union européenne par la nécessité de mettre en œuvre un système décisionnel unique, indépendant, rapide et efficace. Toute autre proposition de règles de vote devrait respecter ce principe fondamental.

La BCE octroie de la liquidité à certaines institutions en échange de garanties. De telles interventions font partie de sa mission d'assurer la stabilité du système bancaire et ne justifient pas le déclenchement d'une procédure de résolution.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011066/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE/NGL)
(30 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Τα μέτρα οικονομικής λιτότητας υποβοηθούν την άνοδο ακροδεξιών φασιστικών οργανώσεων στην Ευρώπη

Η άνοδος ακραίων σωβινιστικών κινημάτων στην Ευρώπη δεν είναι καινούργιο φαινόμενο. Ωστόσο η συνολική μεγάλη αύξηση των ποσοστών τους είναι συνυφασμένη με την οικονομική ύφεση και τα σκληρά μνημονιακά μέτρα.

Ο φόβος και η απελπισία σπρώχνει τους ευρωπαίους πολίτες προς ακραίες ακροδεξιές/νεοναζιστικές λύσεις, ενώ τα περιστατικά ακροδεξιάς βίας αυξάνονται συνεχώς. Τελευταίο παράδειγμα η δολοφονία του αριστερού ακτιβιστή Παύλου Φύσσα που έγινε στην Αθήνα στις 18.9.2013. Ο δράστης της δολοφονίας φέρεται να ανήκει στην ακροδεξιά οργάνωση Χρυσή Αυγή.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Πώς την απασχολεί η άνοδος της ακροδεξιάς στην ΕΕ, την ίδια στιγμή που έρευνες ([1]) και δημοσκοπήσεις δείχνουν πως τα σκληρά μέτρα λιτότητας που προωθούνται από την τρόικα οδηγούν τους πολίτες στην απαξίωση του ευρωπαϊκού οικοδομήματος καθώς και στην συσπείρωση των ακροδεξιών και εθνικιστικών τάσεων απ' άκρη σ' άκρη στην Ευρώπη;

Απάντηση της κ. Reding εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(15 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει στη δήλωσή της τής 9ης Οκτωβρίου 2013 προς το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο σχετικά με την άνοδο του ακροδεξιού εξτρεμισμού στην Ευρώπη.

Η Επιτροπή υπενθυμίζει ότι η άνοδος του εξτρεμισμού και του λαϊκισμού είναι κρίσιμη και αποτελεί κοινό μέλημα για την ΕΕ στο σύνολό της. Τροφοδοτεί τον ρατσισμό, τη ξενοφοβία, την ομοφοβία και όλες τις μορφές μισαλλοδοξίας. Θίγει τα δικαιώματα του ανθρώπου και θέτει σε κίνδυνο την ελεύθερη κυκλοφορία στην ΕΕ.

Η ρατσιστική και ξενοφοβική συμπεριφορά δεν δικαιολογείται για κανέναν λόγο και οι δημόσιες αρχές πρέπει να καταδικάζουν απερίφραστα το φαινόμενο και να το καταπολεμούν ενεργά.

Σύμφωνα με την απόφαση-πλαίσιο 2002/629/ΔΕΥ του Συμβουλίου για την καταπολέμηση του ρατσισμού και της ξενοφοβίας, όλα τα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ υποχρεούνται να τιμωρούν την εκ προθέσεως δημόσια υποκίνηση βίας ή μίσους που στρέφεται κατά ομάδας προσώπων ή μέλους ομάδας, που προσδιορίζεται βάσει της φυλής, του χρώματος, της θρησκείας, των γενεαλογικών καταβολών ή της εθνικής ή εθνοτικής καταγωγής. Η Επιτροπή θα δημοσιεύσει έκθεση σχετικά με τα εκτελεστικά μέτρα που έλαβαν τα κράτη μέλη τον Δεκέμβριο του 2013.

Η Επιτροπή δεν έχει στη διάθεσή της συγκεκριμένα στοιχεία σχετικά με την ύπαρξη άμεσης σχέσης μεταξύ της οικονομικής κρίσης και του εξτρεμισμού.

([1]) Standard Eurobarometer 79, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb79/eb79_first_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011066/13
to the Commission
Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE/NGL)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Economic austerity measures and the rise of extreme right-wing fascist movements in Europe

The rise of extreme chauvinistic movements in Europe is nothing new. However, the quantum leap in support for them has been triggered by the economic recession and the harsh measures imposed under the memoranda.

Fear and desperation are pushing European citizens into the arms of extreme right-wing/neo-Nazi parties and the number of incidents of violence by extreme right-wing groups is on the rise. The most recent example was the murder of the left-wing activist Pavlos Fyssas in Athens on 18 September 2013. He appears to have been murdered by a member of the extreme right-wing organisation Golden Dawn.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

How does it view the rise of the far right in the EU, given that surveys ([1]) and opinion polls report that the harsh austerity measures being imposed by the Troika are pushing citizens to turn their back on the European construct and rally with extreme right-wing and nationalistic movements from one end of Europe to the other?

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

The Commission refers to its statement of 9 October 2013 to the European Parliament about the rise of right-wing extremism in Europe.

The Commission recalls that the rise of extremism and populism is a critical and common concern for the EU as a whole. It fuels racism, xenophobia, homophobia and all forms of intolerance. It affects human rights and it endangers the freedom of movement within the EU.

Racist and xenophobic behaviour can never be justified on any grounds and public authorities should strongly condemn the phenomenon and actively fight against it.

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 Commission will publish a report on Member States' implementing measures in December 2013.

The Commission does not have concrete data about a direct link between the economic crisis and extremism.

([1]) Standard Eurobarometer 79, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb79/eb79_first_en.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011067/13
προς το Συμβούλιο
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(30 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Κατάσταση στο Τραπεζικό Σύστημα της Κύπρου

Σύμφωνα με τα τελευταία στοιχεία της Κεντρικής Τράπεζας της Κύπρου (Αύγουστος 2013), η κατάσταση στο τραπεζικό σύστημα της Κύπρου συνεχίζει να επιδεινώνεται με γρήγορους ρυθμούς. Συγκεκριμένα, οι καταθέσεις των Κυπρίων καταθετών μειώθηκαν από 43,3 δις ευρώ, τον Δεκέμβριο του 2012, σε 33,6 δις ευρώ, τον Αύγουστο του 2013. Την ίδια περίοδο το σύνολο των καταθέσεων μειώθηκε από 70,2 δις ευρώ σε 48,3 δις ευρώ. Ακόμα και μετά το κούρεμα του Απριλίου 2013 και παρά την επιβολή σκληρών περιοριστικών μέτρων στην διακίνηση κεφαλαίων, οι καταθέσεις του συστήματος συνεχίζουν να συρρικνώνονται ταχύτατα.

Ερωτάται το Συμβούλιο:

1. Με τέτοιες εξελίξεις στο τραπεζικό σύστημα της χώρας, τι εισηγείται για να επιτευχθεί η επανεκκίνηση της οικονομικής δραστηριότητας και να υποστηριχτεί η ανάπτυξη;

2. Μήπως έφτασε η στιγμή να γίνει παραδεκτό ότι η συνταγή που επιβλήθηκε στην Κύπρο δεν αποδίδει και κατά συνέπεια θα πρέπει να αναζητηθούν άλλοι τρόποι για αντιμετώπιση των προβλημάτων της χώρας;

Απάντηση
(16 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Το άρθρο 2 παράγραφος 1 της εκτελεστικής απόφασης 2013/463/ΕΕ του Συμβουλίου, της 13ης Σεπτεμβρίου 2013, για την έγκριση προγράμματος μακροοικονομικής σταθερότητας για την Κύπρο και την κατάργηση της απόφασης 2013/236/ΕΕ ([1]), προβλέπει ότι οι βασικοί στόχοι του κυπριακού προγράμματος είναι: η αποκατάσταση της ευρωστίας του κυπριακού τραπεζικού τομέα, η συνέχιση της διεξαγόμενης διαδικασίας δημοσιονομικής εξυγίανσης και η εφαρμογή των διαρθρωτικών μεταρρυθμίσεων για τη στήριξη της ανταγωνιστικότητας και της βιώσιμης και ισόρροπης ανάπτυξης.

Το άρθρο 2 παράγραφος 5 προβλέπει ότι, με στόχο την αποκατάσταση της ευρωστίας του χρηματοπιστωτικού της τομέα, η Κύπρος συνεχίζει την εις βάθος μεταρρύθμιση και αναδιάρθρωση του τραπεζικού τομέα και την ενίσχυση των βιώσιμων τραπεζών, αποκαθιστώντας το κεφάλαιό τους, αντιμετωπίζοντας την κατάσταση της ρευστότητάς τους και ενισχύοντας την εποπτεία τους. Το πρόγραμμα μεριμνά, μεταξύ άλλων, για την εξασφάλιση στενής παρακολούθησης της κατάστασης ρευστότητας του τραπεζικού τομέα.

Σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 2 παράγραφος 4, η Κύπρος συνεχίζει την ορθή εφαρμογή των διαρθρωτικών ταμείων και άλλων ταμείων της ΕΕ, τηρώντας τους δημοσιονομικούς στόχους του προγράμματος. Για να εξασφαλισθεί η αποτελεσματική χρήση των ταμείων της ΕΕ, η κυπριακή κυβέρνηση εξασφαλίζει ότι εξακολουθούν να είναι διαθέσιμα τα αναγκαία εθνικά κεφάλαια για την κάλυψη των εθνικών συνεισφορών, περιλαμβανομένων των μη επιλέξιμων δαπανών, στο πλαίσιο των ευρωπαϊκών διαρθρωτικών και επενδυτικών ταμείων για τις περιόδους προγραμματισμού 2007-2013 και 2014-2020, λαμβάνοντας παράλληλα υπόψη τη διαθέσιμη χρηματοδότηση της Ευρωπαϊκής Τράπεζας Επενδύσεων (ΕΤΕπ).

Στη δήλωσή της της 13ης Σεπτεμβρίου 2013 ([2]), η Ευρωομάδα εξέφρασε την ικανοποίησή της για το ότι οι κυπριακές αρχές επρόκειτο να συνεχίσουν να ελαφρύνουν σταδιακά τα διοικητικά μέτρα που είχαν τεθεί σε ισχύ για την μοναδική και εξαιρετική συγκυρία του χρηματοπιστωτικού τομέα της Κύπρου, και έκρινε ότι η περαιτέρω ελάφρυνση θα ευθυγραμμίζεται με το χάρτη πορείας των εργασιών της 8ης Αυγούστου 2013.

([1]) ΕΕ L 250 της 20.9.2013, σ. 40.
([2]) Οι δηλώσεις της Ευρωομάδας είναι διαθέσιμες στην ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση: http://www.eurozone.europa.eu/eurogroup

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011067/13
to the Council
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: State of the banking system in Cyprus

According to the most recent statistics published by the Central Bank of Cyprus (August 2013), the banking system in Cyprus is deteriorating rapidly. In fact, deposits by Cypriot customers fell from EUR 43.3 billion in December 2012 to EUR 33.6 billion in August 2013 and overall deposits fell from EUR 70.2 billion to EUR 48.3 billion over the same period. Despite the haircut in April 2013 and the severe restrictions imposed on capital movements, deposits in the system are still shrinking rapidly.

In view of the above, will the Council say:

1. In light of these developments in the banking system in Cyprus, what action does it recommend in order to kick-start economic activity and support growth?

2. Perhaps the time has come to accept that the measures imposed on Cyprus have failed and that other ways of addressing the country's problems need to be found.

Reply
(16 December 2013)

Article 2(1) of Council Implementing Decision 2013/463/EU of 13 September 2013 on approving the macroeconomic adjustment programme for Cyprus and repealing Decision 2013/236/EU ([1]), provides that the key objectives of the programme are as follows: to restore the soundness of the Cyprus banking sector; to continue the ongoing process of fiscal consolidation; and to implement structural reforms to support competitiveness and sustainable and balanced growth.

Article 2(5) provides that with a view to restoring the soundness of its financial sector, Cyprus shall continue to thoroughly reform and restructure the banking sector and reinforce viable banks by restoring their capital, addressing their liquidity situation and strengthening their supervision. The programme shall provide for, *inter alia*, ensuring that the liquidity situation of the banking sector shall be closely monitored.

According to Article 2(4) Cyprus shall preserve the good implementation of Structural and other EU Funds, in respect of the programme's budgetary targets. In order to ensure the effective implementation of EU funds, the government will ensure that the necessary national funds remain available to cover national contributions, including non-eligible expenditure, under the European Structural and Investment Funds in the framework of the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programme periods, while taking into account available European Investment Bank funding.

In its statement of 13 September 2013 ([2]), the Eurogroup welcomed the fact that the Cyprus authorities would continue to gradually relax the administrative measures that had been put in place in view of the unique and exceptional situation of Cyprus' financial sector, and considered that further relaxation would be in line with the roadmap of 8 August 2013.

([1]) OJ L 250, 20.9.2013, p. 40.
([2]) Eurogroup statements can be found at http://www.eurozone.europa.eu/eurogroup

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011068/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(30 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Κατάσταση στο Τραπεζικό Σύστημα της Κύπρου

Σύμφωνα με τα τελευταία στοιχεία της Κεντρικής Τράπεζας της Κύπρου (Αύγουστος 2013), η κατάσταση στο τραπεζικό σύστημα της Κύπρου συνεχίζει να επιδεινώνεται με γρήγορους ρυθμούς. Συγκεκριμένα, οι καταθέσεις των Κυπρίων καταθετών μειώθηκαν από 43,3 δις ευρώ, τον Δεκέμβριο του 2012, σε 33,6 δις ευρώ, τον Αύγουστο του 2013. Την ίδια περίοδο το σύνολο των καταθέσεων μειώθηκε από 70,2 δις ευρώ σε 48,3 δις ευρώ. Ακόμα και μετά το κούρεμα του Απριλίου 2013 και παρά την επιβολή σκληρών περιοριστικών μέτρων στην διακίνηση κεφαλαίων, οι καταθέσεις του συστήματος συνεχίζουν να συρρικνώνονται ταχύτατα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Με τέτοιες εξελίξεις στο τραπεζικό σύστημα της χώρας, τι εισηγείται για να επιτευχθεί η επανεκκίνηση της οικονομικής δραστηριότητας και να υποστηριχτεί η ανάπτυξη;

2. Παραδέχεται ότι η συνταγή που επιβλήθηκε στην Κύπρο, δηλαδή το πρωτοφανές κούρεμα καταθέσεων, δεν αποδίδει και κατά συνέπεια θα πρέπει να αναζητηθούν άλλοι τρόποι για αντιμετώπιση των προβλημάτων της χώρας; Τι προτείνει η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή συγκεκριμένα;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(4 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

1. Οι κυπριακές αρχές, με τη βοήθεια των διεθνών εταίρων τους, έχουν σχεδιάσει ένα ολοκληρωμένο πρόγραμμα οικονομικής προσαρμογής, το οποίο βρίσκεται τώρα στο στάδιο της εφαρμογής και έχει ήδη δρομολογηθεί. Βασίζεται σε μεταρρυθμίσεις σε τρεις βασικούς τομείς: διαρθρωτικές πολιτικές, φορολογικές πολιτικές και χρηματοπιστωτικός τομέας. Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί τακτικά την πρόοδο όσον αφορά την εφαρμογή των δεσμεύσεων που έχουν αναληφθεί από τις κυπριακές αρχές. Η αξιολόγησή της αντικατοπτρίζεται σε τακτικές τριμηνιαίες εκθέσεις ανασκόπησης, η τελευταία από τις οποίες θα μπορούσε να αναζητηθεί στην ακόλουθη διεύθυνση:
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp161_en.pdf

2. Η μετατροπή μέρους των ανασφάλιστων καταθέσεων σε μετοχές επηρέασε την Τράπεζα της Κύπρου, ενώ οι ανασφάλιστες καταθέσεις της Cyprus Popular Bank θα υποστούν ζημία στο πλαίσιο της αφερεγγυότητάς της. Τα υπόλοιπα δύο χρηματοπιστωτικά ιδρύματα που έχουν υπαχθεί ή θα προβούν σε ανακεφαλαιοποίηση, δηλαδή η Ελληνική Τράπεζα και ο τομέας των συνεταιριστικών πιστωτικών ιδρυμάτων, δεν επηρεάστηκαν από τη διάσωση με ίδια μέσα (bail-in) των καταθετών. Η συνεχιζόμενη, αν και πρόσφατα βραδύτερη, μείωση των συνολικών καταθέσεων, η οποία είναι πραγματικότητα, συνέπεσε με τη συρρίκνωση των τραπεζικών δανείων που οφείλονται στην επιστροφή των τελευταίων. Ως εκ τούτου, ο δανεισμός του Ευρωσυστήματος παρέμεινε σχεδόν σταθερός τους τελευταίους πέντε μήνες. Πρόκειται για μια πρώτη ένδειξη επανόδου στη σταθεροποίηση, όπως θα μπορούσε να αναμένεται προκειμένου περί ενός προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής με διεθνή στήριξη. Η διατήρηση ικανοποιητικών επιδόσεων αποτελεί βασική προϋπόθεση για την αποτελεσματική αντιμετώπιση των προβλημάτων που αντιμετωπίζει η Κύπρος.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011068/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: State of the banking system in Cyprus

According to the most recent statistics published by the Central Bank of Cyprus (August 2013), the banking system in Cyprus is deteriorating rapidly. In fact, deposits by Cypriot customers fell from EUR 43.3 billion in December 2012 to EUR 33.6 billion in August 2013 and overall deposits fell from EUR 70.2 billion to EUR 48.3 billion over the same period. Even after the haircut in April 2013 and the severe restrictions imposed on capital movements, deposits in the system are still shrinking rapidly.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. In light of these developments in the banking system in Cyprus, what action does itrecommend in order to kick-start economic activity and support growth?

2. Does it accept that the measures imposed on Cyprus, in the form of the unprecedentedhaircut to deposits, have failed and that other ways of addressing the country's problemsneed to be found? What exactly does the European Commission propose?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

1. The Cypriot authorities, with the help of their international partners, have designed a comprehensive Economic Adjustment Programme, which is now in the process of being implemented and is on track. It is based on reforms in three key fields: structural policies, fiscal policies and the financial sector. The Commission is monitoring regularly progress with the implementation of the commitments taken by the Cypriot authorities. Its assessment is reflected in regular quarterly review reports, the latest of which could be consulted here:
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp161_en.pdf

2. The conversion of a portion of uninsured deposits into shares, has affected Bank of Cyprus, while the uninsured deposits of Cyprus Popular Bank will suffer a loss in its insolvency. The remaining two financial institutions that have been or will be recapitalised, namely Hellenic Bank and the sector of the credit cooperative institutions, have not been affected by the bail-in of depositors. The continued, albeit recently slower, decline in aggregate deposits, which is indeed a reality, has coincided with a contraction of banks' loans due to the latter's repayment. As a result, Eurosystem borrowing has remained virtually constant for the last five months. This is a first indication of a return to stabilisation, as could be expected in the case of an internationally sponsored economic adjustment programme. Maintaining good performance is a key to deliver and address the challenges Cyprus faces.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011069/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(30 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Αναθεώρηση της οδηγίας για καπνικά προϊόντα

Θα ήθελα να θέσω υπόψη της Επιτροπής τις σοβαρές ανησυχίες που εκφράζονται από το Κυπριακό Εμπορικό και Βιομηχανικό Επιμελητήριο (ΚΕΒΕ), αναφορικά με την πρόταση της Επιτροπής για αναθεώρηση της οδηγίας για τα καπνικά προϊόντα.

Σε σχετική επιστολή που μου απέστειλε ο Πρόεδρος του ΚΕΒΕ κ. Φειδίας Πηλείδης, τονίζεται, μεταξύ άλλων, ότι:

«Σε αντίθεση με την δέσμευση της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης να θέσει τις μικρομεσαίες επιχειρήσεις στο κέντρο της νομοθετικής ατζέντας, ώστε να υποστηρίξει την ανάπτυξη και την δημιουργία θέσεων εργασίας στην Ευρώπη, η πρόταση θα έχει δυσανάλογη επίδραση στις πολλές μικρομεσαίες επιχειρήσεις που συνεισφέρουν ή/και εξαρτώνται από τη βιομηχανία των καπνικών προϊόντων, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των μεταπωλητών, τυπογράφων, διανομέων, κ.λπ.».

Επιπλέον αναφέρεται ότι:

«Με αυτές τις ενέργειες υπάρχει σοβαρός κίνδυνος να διευκολυνθούν οι παράνομοι στο να συνεχίσουν να ικανοποιούν τις ανάγκες των καπνιστών, αφού οι νόμιμες επιχειρήσεις θ' αδυνατούν λόγω της νομοθεσίας. Έτσι, πολλές μικρές επιχειρήσεις θα εξαφανιστούν.».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Συμμερίζεται, και σε ποιό βαθμό, τους πιο πάνω φόβους και ανησυχίες του ΚΕΒΕ;

2. Ποιοι παράγοντες συνηγορούν υπέρ της αναθεώρησης της οδηγίας και έπεισαν την Επιτροπή να προχωρήσει προς αυτή την κατεύθυνση;

3. Πόση βαρύτητα έχουν, κατά την άποψη της Επιτροπής, οι λόγοι που συνηγορούν υπέρ της αναθεώρησης, σε σύγκριση με τα προβλήματα που, κατά την εκτίμηση του ΚΕΒΕ, πιθανόν να δημιουργηθούν;

Απάντηση του κ. Borg εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(21 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Ο καπνός αποτελεί τη μεγαλύτερη απειλή για την υγεία που θα μπορούσε να αποφευχθεί. Ευθύνεται για περισσότερους από 700 000 πρόωρους θανάτους το χρόνο, που θα μπορούσαν να είχαν αποφευχθεί. Οι καπνιστές υποφέρουν από περισσότερα χρόνια ζωής με κακή υγεία, η οποία κοστίζει στην ευρωπαϊκή οικονομία — με συντηρητική εκτίμηση — 25 δισ. ευρώ για έξοδα ιατροφαρμακευτικής περίθαλψης και άλλα 8 δισ. ευρώ για απώλεια παραγωγικότητας.

Κατά την προετοιμασία της νομοθετικής πρότασης, η Επιτροπή ανέλυσε πολύ προσεκτικά τις δυνητικές επιπτώσεις σε όλους τους ενδιαφερομένους, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των μικρών και μεσαίων επιχειρήσεων. Η Επιτροπή κατέληξε στο συμπέρασμα ότι η αναμενόμενη μείωση κατά 2% της κατανάλωσης καπνού σε ορίζοντα πενταετίας δεν θα προκαλέσει δυσανάλογη επιβάρυνση για τις εν λόγω εταιρείες.

Σε ορισμένους τομείς η πρόταση της Επιτροπής περιέχει λιγότερο αυστηρά μέτρα για τα πούρα, τα πουράκια και τον καπνό πίπας, δηλαδή για προϊόντα που παράγονται κυρίως από μικρές και μεσαίες επιχειρήσεις. Επιπλέον, η πρόταση της Επιτροπής προβλέπει μεγαλύτερες μεταβατικές περιόδους για τις εν λόγω εταιρείες, όσον αφορά την καθιέρωση ενός συστήματος εντοπισμού και ιχνηλάτησης.

Συμπερασματικά, η Επιτροπή θεωρεί ότι η πρότασή της είναι ισορροπημένη και ότι λαμβάνονται υπόψη — με τον ενδεδειγμένο τρόπο — τα συμφέροντα των μικρών και μεσαίων επιχειρήσεων.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011069/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Revision of tobacco products directive

I should like to bring the Commission's attention to the serious concerns expressed by the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry concerning the Commission proposal to revise the tobacco products directive.

The president of the Chamber, Mr Feidias Pileidis, states in a letter on the matter:

'Contrary to the European Union's undertaking to put small and medium-sized enterprises at the top of the legislative agenda, in order to support growth and create jobs in Europe, the proposal will have a disproportionate impact on numerous small and medium-sized enterprises that contribute to or depend on the tobacco industry, including dealers, printers, distributors and so on.'

He also states:

'This move harbours the serious risk of making it easier for smugglers to continue satisfying smokers' needs, as the legislation will prevent legal companies from doing so. As a result, numerous small enterprises will go out of business.'

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does it share the above fears and concerns of the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce andIndustry and, if so, to what degree?

2. What factors mitigate in favour of a revision of the directive and convinced theCommission to make this move?

3. How compelling, in the Commission's opinion, are the grounds for revision comparedwith the problems which the Chamber feels it will create?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

Tobacco is the largest avoidable heath threat responsible for more than 700,000 avoidable premature deaths every year. Smokers suffer from more life years in poor health, which costs the European economy — on a conservative estimate — EUR 25 billion in healthcare costs and another EUR 8 billion in productivity losses.

When preparing the legislative proposal the Commission analysed very carefully the potential impact on all stakeholders concerned, including small and medium-sized enterprises. The Commission came to the conclusion that the expected 2% reduction in tobacco consumption over 5 years will not put a disproportionate burden on the companies concerned.

In a number of areas the Commission proposal contains less stringent measures for cigars, cigarillos and pipe tobacco, i.e. products which are primarily produced by small and medium-sized enterprises. In addition, the Commission proposal foresees longer transitional periods for these companies when it comes to introducing a tracking and tracing system.

In conclusion the Commission considers its proposal to be balanced, taking into account — in an adequate manner — the interests of small and medium enterprises.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011070/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(30 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Λαθρεμπόριο προϊόντων καπνού στην Ευρώπη

Στις αρχές Ιουνίου 2013, η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή κατέθεσε προτάσεις για την καταπολέμηση του λαθρεμπορίου τσιγάρων και προϊόντων καπνού. Κατά τις εκτιμήσεις της Επιτροπής, η Ευρώπη χάνει κάθε χρόνο 10 δισ. ευρώ σε έσοδα και στόχος είναι τα κράτη-μέλη της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης να καταλήξουν σε μια συμφωνία, με βάση τις προτάσεις της, μέχρι τα τέλη του 2015.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Είναι σε θέση να με ενημερώσει για τις κυριότερες χώρες προέλευσης των λαθραίων τσιγάρων και τους βασικούς προορισμούς τους στην ΕΕ;

2. Διαθέτει συγκεκριμένα στοιχεία σχετικά με τις εκτιμώμενες ποσότητες παραγωγής και διάθεσης παράνομων προϊόντων καπνού εντός της ΕΕ;

Απάντηση της κ. Malmström εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

1. Σύμφωνα με τα διαθέσιμα δεδομένα, οι κυριότερες χώρες προέλευσης λαθραίων προϊόντων καπνού είναι, κατά σειρά σπουδαιότητας: η Κίνα, τα ΗΑΕ ([1]), το Βιετνάμ, η Μαλαισία, η Ρωσική Ομοσπονδία, η Σιγκαπούρη, η Λευκορωσία και η Ουκρανία. Η Κίνα εξακολουθεί να είναι η χώρα από την οποία προέρχεται η πλειονότητα των κατασχεθέντων τσιγάρων.

Η Ελλάδα φαίνεται να αποτελεί σημαντικό στόχο για την είσοδο φορτίων από την Κίνα και τα ΗΑΕ.

Το σχέδιο δράσης κατά του λαθρεμπορίου στα ανατολικά σύνορα της ΕΕ ([2]) είχε ήδη ορισμένα θετικά αποτελέσματα. Τα περιστατικά λαθρεμπορίου και οι εισροές λαθραίων τσιγάρων στην περιοχή αυτή έχουν μειωθεί. Ωστόσο, τα ανατολικά σύνορα της ΕΕ, και ιδίως η περιοχή της Βαλτικής, εξακολουθούν να αποτελούν στόχο του λαθρεμπορίου. Οι κυριότερες χώρες προέλευσης είναι η Ρωσία, η Ουκρανία και, όλο και περισσότερο, η Λευκορωσία.

Παρά τις προσπάθειες που καταβλήθηκαν, το λαθρεμπόριο αυξάνεται στην ΕΕ. Η Επιτροπή εξετάζει το πρόβλημα αυτό στην ανακοίνωσή της με τίτλο: Ενίσχυση της καταπολέμησης του λαθρεμπορίου τσιγάρων και άλλων μορφών παράνομου εμπορίου προϊόντων καπνού — Μια συνολική στρατηγική της ΕΕ ([3]).

Σχεδόν όλα τα κράτη μέλη, ιδίως μάλιστα η Ιρλανδία και το ΗΒ, μπορούν να θεωρηθούν ως τελικός προορισμός του λαθρεμπορίου τσιγάρων. Άλλες χώρες, κυρίως η Ελλάδα, η Ισπανία, η Ιταλία και η Πολωνία, είναι χώρες τόσο διαμετακόμισης όσο και τελικού προορισμού.

2. Πιθανώς, σημαντικές ποσότητες τσιγάρων παράγονται επίσης παράνομα εντός της ΕΕ. Εντοπίζονται παράνομα εργοστάσια τσιγάρων και η αστυνομία κάνει εφόδους σε αυτά. Το 2010 εντοπίστηκαν πέντε παράνομα εργοστάσια τσιγάρων, ενώ το 2011 τα κράτη μέλη εντόπισαν εννέα παράνομα εργοστάσια τσιγάρων, τα οποία εκτιμάται ότι είχαν ικανότητα παραγωγής άνω των 9 εκατομμυρίων τσιγάρων ημερησίως.

Τα κράτη μέλη ανακοίνωσαν κατασχέσεις περίπου 4,5 δισεκατομμυρίων τσιγάρων ετησίως την περίοδο 2005-2011 και 3,79 δισεκατομμυρίων τσιγάρων το 2012.

([1]) Ηνωμένα Αραβικά Εμιράτα.
Στην Κίνα, τα κράτη μέλη επισήμαναν κυρίως τους λιμένες: Shekou, Xiamen, Guang, Zho, Huang Pou, Ningbo και Yantian. Στα ΗΑΕ, οι λιμένες που επισημάνθηκαν είναι το Jebel Ali και το Ντουμπάι.
([2]) SEC(2011)791.
([3]) COM(2013)324.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011070/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Contraband tobacco products in Europe

At the beginning of June 2013, the European Commission proposed action to combat contraband cigarettes and tobacco products. According to the Commission's estimates, Europe loses EUR 10 billion a year in revenue. The objective is for the Member States of the European Union to reach an agreement, based on the Commission proposal, by the end of 2015.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Is it able to tell me the main countries of origin of contraband cigarettes and their main destinations in the EU?

2. Does it have specific data on the estimated quantities of contraband tobacco products produced and distributed within the EU?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2013)

1. According to available data, the main countries of provenance for smuggled tobacco products are, in the order of importance: China, UAE ([1]), Vietnam, Malaysia, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Belarus and Ukraine. China continues to be the source country for the majority of seized cigarettes.

Greece appears to be a major target for entries of shipments from China and UAE.

The EU Eastern Border Anti-Smuggling Action Plan ([2]) has had already some positive impacts; the share of illicit trade and inflows of illicit cigarettes in this region has decreased. However, the EU Eastern border continues to be a target for illicit trade, particularly the Baltic region. The main countries of provenance there are Russia, Ukraine and, increasingly, Belarus.

Despite of all efforts, illicit trade is increasing in the EU. The Commission addresses this problem in its communication: Stepping-up the fight against cigarette smuggling and other forms of illicit trade in tobacco products — A comprehensive EU strategy ([3]).

Almost all Member States can be considered as final destination of the contraband cigarettes, in particular Ireland and UK. Other countries, especially Greece, Spain, Italy and Poland are both transit countries and final destination.

2. Significant amounts of cigarettes are probably also produced illegally inside the EU. Illegal cigarette factories are discovered and raided. In 2010, five illegal factories were discovered; in 2011, Member States discovered nine illegal factories estimated to have a combined production capacity of more than 9 million cigarettes per day.

Seizures reported by the Member States represented an average of about 4.5 billion sticks per year in the period 2005-2011, 3.79 billion sticks in 2012.

([1]) UAE the United Arab Emirates.
In China, the ports of Shekou, Xiamen, Guang, Zho, Huang Pou, Ningbo and Yantian were signalled most often by the Member States; in the UAE the ports signalled are those of Jebel Ali and Dubai.
([2]) SEC(2011) 791.
([3]) COM(2013) 324.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011072/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(30 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Πρόοδος της υλοποίησης του επιχειρησιακού προγράμματος «Εκπαίδευση και δια βίου μάθηση» στην Ελλάδα

Το επιχειρησιακό πρόγραμμα «Εκπαίδευση και δια βίου μάθηση» αποτελεί ένα από τα επιχειρησιακά προγράμματα του Εθνικού Στρατηγικού Πλαισίου Αναφοράς (ΕΣΠΑ), μέσω του οποίου χρηματοδοτούνται δράσεις για την εκπαίδευση, σε όλες τις βαθμίδες του εκπαιδευτικού συστήματος, αλλά και παράλληλα με το εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα, τη σύνδεση της εκπαίδευσης με την αγορά εργασίας, τη δια βίου μάθηση και την έρευνα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Είναι σε θέση να με ενημερώσει για το ποσοστό αξιοποίησης των πόρων από το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο για το συγκεκριμένο πρόγραμμα, σε σύγκριση με τα αντίστοιχα ποσοστά του φθινοπώρου του 2012 και 2011;

2. Οι μέχρι σήμερα νομικές δεσμεύσεις και δαπάνες ανταποκρίνοται στους στόχους που είχαν τεθεί από την Ελλάδα για την τρέχουσα περίοδο;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(18 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

1. Σύμφωνα με τις πληροφορίες που παρείχε η διαχειριστική αρχή του επιχειρησιακού προγράμματος «Εκπαίδευση και διά βίου μάθηση» (EDULLL OP), έως το τέλος Σεπτεμβρίου του 2013, η απορροφητικότητα του ΕΠ ανήλθε σε 45,30% του συνολικού προϋπολογισμού του ΕΠ, δηλαδή 1 694,12 εκατομμύρια ευρώ δημόσιας δαπάνης. Πρόκειται για σημαντική αύξηση σε σύγκριση με το ποσοστό απορρόφησης της περιόδου έως τον Σεπτέμβριο του 2012, δηλαδή 29,5% και το ποσοστό απορρόφησης της περιόδου έως τον Σεπτέμβριο του 2011, δηλαδή 18,7%.

2. Σύμφωνα με πληροφορίες που παρείχε η διαχειριστική αρχή του EDULLL OP, ο στόχος που τέθηκε από την Ελλάδα όσον αφορά τις νομικές δεσμεύσεις έως τον Σεπτέμβριο του 2013 ανερχόταν σε 1 687,2 εκατομμύρια ευρώ και ο στόχος όσον αφορά τις δαπάνες στα 845,9 εκατομμύρια ευρώ. Ο πρώτος επετεύχθη κατά 98,9%, ήτοι το ποσό των 1 667,8 εκατομμυρίων ευρώ και ο δεύτερος κατά 90,5%, ήτοι το ποσό των 765,7 εκατομμυρίων ευρώ. Επιπλέον, όσο η εφαρμογή διατηρείται στα εν λόγω υψηλά επίπεδα, αναμένεται ότι θα επιτευχθούν οι γενικοί και ειδικοί στρατηγικοί στόχοι του προγράμματος.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011072/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Progress in 'Education and Lifelong Learning' operational programme in Greece

The 'Education and Lifelong Learning' Operational Programme is an operational programme under the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) which is used to finance educational measures at all levels of the education system and the education system itself, the link between education and the job market, lifelong learning and research.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Is it able to tell me what percentage of European Social Fund financing has been taken up for this particular programme, compared to the funds taken up in autumn 2012 and 2011?

2. Are legal commitments and expenditure to date in line with the objectives set by Greece for the current period?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

1. According to information provided by the Managing Authority of the Operational Programme 'Education and Lifelong Learning' (EDULLL OP), until the end of September 2013 the take-up rate of the OP stood at 45.30% of the total budget of the OP, i.e. EUR 1,694.12 million public expenditure. This represents an important increase compared to the take-up rate of the period until September 2012, i.e. 29.5%, and the take up rate of the period until September 2011, i.e. 18.7%.

2. According to information provided by the Managing Authority of the EDULLL OP the target set by Greece as regards legal commitments until September 2013 was EUR 1,687.2 million and the target as regards expenditure was EUR 845.9 million. The former was met by 98.9% i.e. EUR 1,667.8 million and the latter by 90.5% i.e. EUR 765.7 million Furthermore, as long as implementation is maintained at these high levels, it is expected that the general and specific strategic objectives of the programme will be achieved.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011073/13
to the Commission
Rebecca Taylor (ALDE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Airport body scanners

The Commission promised that it would inform Parliament of the conclusions of its legal assessment of the UK's 'no scan, no fly' policy concerning airport body scanners.

Given that the assessment was completed in July 2013, when does the Commission plan to inform Parliament and the other Member States of its conclusions, and how long has it given the UK Government to take corrective action before it begins legal infringement proceedings?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

The Commission has completed its legal assessment and concluded that the current UK measure of not offering passengers and crew departing as passengers an alternative screening method to a security scanner and to deny boarding to anyone refusing to be screened by a security scanner is not consistent with Regulation 185/2010, as amended by Commission Regulation (EU) 1147/2011.

The Commission therefore invited the UK authorities to comment on the Commission's assessment by the end of October 2013. Subject to their response, or in the absence of a satisfactory reply, the Commission may decide to initiate an infringement procedure under Article 258 of the Treaty for incorrect implementation of Regulation 185/2010, as amended by Commission Regulation (EU) 1147/2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011074/13
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Antwerp City Council

Following my Written Question E-003328/2013, could the Commission let me know what results have come out of its talks with the Belgian authorities and whether the Commission intends to make a judgment so that people who are affected by any further increase of the registration fee by Antwerp City Council know where they stand?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2013)

The Commission contacted the Belgian authorities in March 2013 regarding the decision taken in February by the commune of Antwerp to massively increase registration fees for non-Belgians and its compatibility with EC law.

Following an exchange between the Commission and the Belgian authorities, the latter confirmed that the contested decision had definitively been revoked and that it had to be considered as never having been taken.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011075/13
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Appropriation of private pension funds by the Polish Government

At the beginning of September, the Polish Government announced that it intends to transfer to the state balance sheet many of the assets held by local and foreign private pension funds. It is argued that such an appropriation could be unconstitutional, since the government does not intend to compensate holders for their losses.

Does the Commission believe this act to be compliant with relevant Union law?

If not, does the Commission intend to initiate proceedings against the Polish Government?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2013)

Under Article 153(4) TFEU, Member States are free to define the fundamental principles of their social security systems.

The pension funds in question are managed by so-called pension societies. According to judgments of the Polish Supreme Court from 2008 and 2013, the assets in pension funds constitute a limited ownership right for the members of the pension funds. The assets are registered on individual accounts and can be inherited and transferred to another pension fund. Members cannot refuse to pay their contributions and cannot withdraw the accumulated amounts unless they reach the retirement age.

On the basis of the information currently available to the Commission, the transfer of assets from the pension funds to the social security fund would therefore not seem to affect property rights of shareholders of pension societies. The Commission is nevertheless in close contact with the Polish authorities concerning the proposed legislation which is foreseen for final adoption shortly. If any breach of Union law is detected, the Commission will take action, as appropriate.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011076/13
to the Commission
Chris Davies (ALDE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Daimler's law-breaking strategy

Will the Commission confirm that refrigerant HFC152a has a global warming potential of 120, that it has been commercially available ever since the Mobile Air-Conditioning (MAC) Directive became law in 2006, and that its use by manufacturers in mobile air-conditioning systems in new model cars would comply with EU legislation?

If this is the case, will the Commission explain why it has allowed the German manufacturer Daimler to humiliate Commissioner Tajani and ignore the requirements of EC law while using alleged problems with refrigerant HFO-1234yf as an excuse?

If a refrigerant that would permit compliance with the MAC Directive has indeed been available since 2006, why has the Commission allowed Daimler to pursue its law-breaking strategy for so long?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

Directive 2006/40/EC on mobile air-conditioning (MAC) stipulates that, as of 1 January 2011, MAC of newly approved types of vehicles may not to be filled with a refrigerant with a GWP higher than 150. It does not prescribe a specific refrigerant to be used to fulfil this obligation. This choice is of the sole responsibility of vehicle manufacturers. According to information available to the Commission, before 2009, industry considered several options, including the refrigerant HFC152a, which has a GWP of 120 and would therefore comply with the referred requirement. Nevertheless, this refrigerant is highly flammable and 'EPA (the US Environmental Protection Agency)' established strict conditions for its use in MAC systems. The Commission was also informed that, among the different options, in 2009, industry decided to use the refrigerant R1234yf and only MAC systems with this gas were developed.

Regarding the actions of one manufacturer, Daimler, the Commission wishes to remind the Honourable Member of the reply to his Question P-6140/2013, where it informed that the information at the disposal of the Commission points to a situation where several models produced by Daimler have been put on the market not complying with their type-approval as regards the obligations stemming from the entry into force of the MAC Directive. The Commission opened an investigation on 10 June 2013 with the German authorities. Germany replied, in due time (14 August 2013). The Commission analysed the elements provided and will decide on the adequate measures to be taken.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011078/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Sicurezza stradale in Europa

Lo scorso 18 settembre 2013 a Roma l'ANIA (Fondazione per la sicurezza stradale) e l'ETSC (Consiglio europeo per la sicurezza dei trasporti) hanno discusso insieme a esperti internazionali gli obiettivi, le priorità e le misure che potrebbero essere promossi per migliorare la sicurezza sulle strade europee.

Nonostante i notevoli progressi registrati negli ultimi anni, i dati disponibili più recenti dimostrano chiaramente che in Europa gli incidenti stradali continuano a uccidere almeno 3 persone l'ora, 70 al giorno, per un totale di quasi 30 mila vittime l'anno. A questi numeri già spaventosi, si aggiungono le oltre 250 mila persone che, coinvolte in incidenti stradali, restano gravemente ferite.

Ogni cittadino comunitario ha il diritto di essere adeguatamente e ugualmente protetto sulle strade comunitarie. Numerose associazioni europee invocano da anni incessantemente, per una questione di «pari opportunità», un Codice della strada unico in tutta l'UE. Con il terzo Programma d'azione per la sicurezza stradale, la Commissione ha pubblicato la Comunicazione «Verso uno spazio europeo della sicurezza stradale: orientamenti 2011-2020 per la sicurezza stradale», COM(2010)389 def., che definisce un quadro generale nel cui ambito possano essere avviate azioni concrete a livello europeo, nazionale, regionale o locale nel periodo 2011-2020.

Alla luce di quanto sopra, la Commissione:

1. può spiegare perché non sono ancora stati adottati provvedimenti concreti e uguali per tutti per garantire sicurezza sulle strade di tutta l'Europa?

2. intende avviare un'azione di coordinamento delle norme e delle sanzioni che regolano la circolazione al fine di predisporre un quadro di riferimento unitario e chiaro per gli addetti ai lavori, i singoli cittadini, i media e le istituzioni nazionali e locali?

3. intende adottare un unico Codice della strada europeo, applicabile e armonizzato con regole e sanzioni comuni a tutta l'UE?

Risposta di Siim Kallas a nome della Commissione
(25 novembre 2013)

1. La Commissione ha effettivamente intrapreso un'azione legislativa e ha proposto misure concrete in materia di veicoli, infrastrutture e sicurezza degli utenti ([1]). Queste misure continuano ad avere un impatto positivo sulla sicurezza stradale, anche nella riduzione del numero delle vittime di incidenti stradali. Tra le recenti proposte della Commissione in questo ambito rientrano le direttive in materia di gestione della sicurezza delle infrastrutture, controlli tecnici, applicazione transfrontaliera delle norme e patenti di guida. Inoltre, la Carta europea della sicurezza stradale mira a promuovere la partecipazione della società civile alle questioni relative alla sicurezza stradale a livello dell'Unione.

2.-3. Le norme della circolazione e le relative sanzioni rientrano tra le responsabilità primarie degli Stati membri, in conformità al principio di sussidiarietà. L'attuazione della direttiva sull'applicazione transfrontaliera in materia di infrazioni stradali consente agli Stati membri di scambiare informazioni sulle infrazioni in materia di sicurezza stradale.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/news/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011078/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Road safety in Europe

On 18 September 2013, ANIA (Foundation for Road Safety) and ETSC (European Transport Safety Council) met in Rome, together with international experts, to discuss the objectives, priorities and measures which could be promoted to improve the safety of Europe's roads.

Despite the significant progress made in recent years, the most recent available data clearly show that road accidents in Europe continue to kill almost 3 people per hour and 70 people per day, totalling almost 30 000 victims per year. These figures are already shocking, but in addition, over 250 000 people are seriously injured in road accidents.

Each EU citizen has the right to adequate and equal protection on EU roads. For years, countless European associations have been constantly calling for a single highway code in the EU, as a question of 'equal opportunities'. Following the 3rd road safety action programme, the Commission published the communication entitled 'Towards a European road safety area: policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020', COM(2010) 389 final, which lays out a general framework under which practical actions may be implemented at EU, national, regional or local level in the 2011-2020 period.

1. Can the Commission explain why no practical measures, which are equal for everyone, have yet been adopted to ensure road safety throughout Europe?

2. Will it launch an action to coordinate traffic rules and penalties in order to prepare a single, clear reference framework for those working in the field, individuals, the media and national and local institutions?

3. Does it intend to adopt a single European highway code that is harmonised with common rules and penalties and applicable across the EU?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

1. The Commission has indeed taken legislative action and proposed concrete measures in the field of vehicle, infrastructure and user's safety ([1]). These measures continue to have a positive impact on road safety, also in reducing the number of fatalities on the road. Recent proposals by the Commission in this area include the directives on infrastructure safety management, roadworthiness tests, cross border enforcement and driving licences. In addition, the European Road Safety Charter aims to further involve civil society in road safety issues at an EU level.

2 and 3. Traffic rules and penalties fall under the primary responsibility of the Member States, in accordance with the subsidiarity principle. Implementation of the directive on the cross-border enforcement of road traffic offences enables the Member States to exchange information on road safety-related traffic offences.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/news/index_en.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011079/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Crisi dell'eurozona e superamento dell'attuale «sistema euro»

Rispondendo all'interrogazione E-004398/2012 sulla possibilità per gli Stati membri dell'unione economica e monetaria (UEM) di ottenere regole chiare che disciplinino l'eventuale abbandono della moneta unica, il commissario europeo Olli Rehn ha affermato che «[…] la Commissione si sta impegnando, in stretta collaborazione con altri soggetti interessati tra cui il Parlamento, a rafforzare la governance economica e la stabilità finanziaria della zona euro».

Mentre l'articolo 50 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea (TFUE) prevede un meccanismo di recesso volontario e unilaterale dall'Unione europea, non è invece previsto un simile meccanismo per gli Stati membri dell'eurozona che volessero uscire dall'euro senza uscire dall'UE.

La debolezza manifestata dall'eurozona davanti alla crisi economica e finanziaria impone certamente una revisione del «sistema euro»: l'euro, entrato in vigore in un contesto economico e sociale ancora profondamente disomogeneo, doveva essere il punto di arrivo di un processo di convergenza per unire popoli e territori.

Preso atto che una buona parte della comunità scientifica internazionale suggerisce il ritorno al modello di Europa a due velocità discusso prima dell'entrata in vigore dell'euro per sostenere la competitività delle economie più deboli dell'eurozona e quindi per facilitare la convergenza; considerato che l'euro deve diventare una moneta democratica capace di mettersi al servizio dei cittadini e dei territori; può la Commissione, impegnata nel rafforzamento della governance e della stabilità finanziaria dell'UEM, far sapere se, per rilanciare la crescita dei paesi dell'eurozona:

1. intende valutare il superamento dell'attuale «sistema euro» tramite la rinegoziazione dei trattati al fine di realizzare una moneta aderente alle esigenze dell'economia reale dei territori;

2. ha valutato, tra le possibilità di intervento, quella di introdurre un doppio euro: un euro per i paesi e le regioni con economie forti e un euro, espressione delle caratteristiche socio-economiche di territori omogenei, per le economie deboli gravate da problemi di finanza pubblica e che con una moneta svalutata potrebbero recuperare in competitività?

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(28 novembre 2013)

La Commissione non intende proporre una rinegoziazione dei trattati al fine di creare una nuova moneta e non ha preso in considerazione l'ipotesi dell'introduzione di un «doppio euro».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011079/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Crisis in the euro area and replacing the current 'euro system'

In response to Question E-004398/2012 on the possibility of Member States of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) to obtain clear rules on abandoning the single currency, Commissioner Olli Rehn stated that 'the Commission is working closely with other stakeholders, including the Parliament, to enhance economic governance and financial stability in the euro area'.

Whereas Article 50 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provides for a mechanism for voluntary and unilateral withdrawal from the European Union, no similar mechanism is provided for Member States of the euro area which wish to leave the euro without leaving the EU.

The euro area's weakness in the face of the economic and financial crisis clearly calls for a review of the 'euro system'. The euro, which was introduced when economic and social circumstances were still extremely disparate, was supposed to mark the finishing line in a convergence process to unite peoples and lands.

A large part of the international scientific community is suggesting a return to the two-speed European model discussed prior to the introduction of the euro in order to sustain the competitiveness of the weakest economies of the euro area, and, therefore, to facilitate convergence. The euro must become a democratic currency capable of serving citizens and territories. Can the Commission, which is engaged in strengthening the governance and financial stability of the EMU, state whether, in order to boost growth in the euro area countries:

1. it plans to replace the current euro system through renegotiation of the Treaties in order to create a currency that meets the needs of the territories' real economy;

2. it has considered, among the options for intervention, the introduction of a dual euro: one euro for countries and regions with strong economies, and one euro — the expression of the social and economic characteristics of homogenous territories — for weak economies burdened by budgetary problems and which could again become competitive with a devalued currency?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

The Commission does not intend to propose a renegotiation of the Treaties in order to create a new currency and it has not considered the introduction of a 'dual euro'.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011080/13
à la Commission
Rachida Dati (PPE)
(30 septembre 2013)

Objet: Compétitivité industrielle et objectifs Énergie-climat

Le vice-président Tajani a présenté mercredi dernier les résultats des rapports sur la compétitivité industrielle des pays de l'Union européenne. Malgré tous les efforts du vice-président Tajani, ces résultats sont décevants. Notre base industrielle continue de s'éroder, nous éloignant toujours plus de l'objectif ambitieux de voir ce secteur représenter 20 % de notre PIB en 2020. Pire, un processus de désindustrialisation est en cours dans la plupart des États membres.

Face à ce constat, il est urgent de cesser de freiner la croissance de l'industrie par une politique énergétique inadaptée et rigide. Au lieu de favoriser la rationalisation de notre action, comme nous le faisons pourtant dans l'ensemble de nos domaines d'action, chacune des propositions mises sur la table à ce jour ne fait que multiplier les objectifs en matière d'énergie, environnement, climat, etc., quitte parfois à ce qu'ils se neutralisent les uns les autres! La Commission le reconnaît, lorsqu'elle estime dans son Livre vert intitulé «Un cadre pour les politiques en matière de climat et d'énergie à l'horizon 2030» qu'un «cadre pour 2030 comportant de multiples objectifs devra traiter expressément ces interactions».

2030? Nous avons déjà des objectifs pour 2020, concentrons-nous d'abord sur eux. Il sera bien temps de penser à des objectifs pour 2030 quand nous verrons les résultats de nos efforts actuels. Autrement, nous continuerons à les modifier en continu, comme nous le faisons actuellement, sans résultat satisfaisant.

L'incertitude et l'incohérence avec les mécanismes de marché caractérisent aujourd'hui notre politique énergétique, qui handicape notre compétitivité dans le monde. Le marché énergétique a connu des bouleversements rapides ces dernières années et notre cadre réglementaire est trop rigide et complexe pour permettre à nos entreprises d'y faire face. Il ne s'agit pas d'opposer nos objectifs industriels à nos objectifs en matière d'environnement et de climat, bien au contraire: il nous faut des objectifs clairs et précis débouchant sur des résultats à même de satisfaire à la fois nos objectifs environnementaux et industriels.

La Commission européenne ne pense-t-elle pas que nous devrions nous concentrer sur l'objectif de réduction des émissions de CO_2 par le marché des quotas d'émissions pour atteindre nos objectifs en 2020, plutôt que de multiplier les cibles?

Réponse donnée par M. Oettinger au nom de la Commission
(22 novembre 2013)

L'Union a défini un cadre clair en matière d'énergie et de climat jusqu'en 2020, qui comprend trois grands objectifs en ce qui concerne la réduction des émissions de GES, les énergies renouvelables et les économies d'énergie. Parallèlement, l'Union a mis en place un cadre réglementaire pour la création d'un marché unique de l'énergie ouvert, intégré et compétitif, promouvant la sécurité de l'approvisionnement énergétique.

L'Union progresse bien dans la réalisation des objectifs fixés pour 2020, mais il est nécessaire de mettre en place un nouveau cadre pour 2030 pour trois raisons, à savoir offrir une certaine sécurité aux investisseurs, encourager les progrès sur la voie d'une économie compétitive et d'un système énergétique sûr et déterminer le niveau d'ambition de l'Union pour 2030 en ce qui concerne la réduction des GES dans la perspective d'un nouvel accord international sur le changement climatique prévu pour 2015.

Dans le cadre pour 2030, une combinaison d'instruments sera sans doute nécessaire pour atteindre les différents objectifs visés et surmonter les obstacles sur le marché. Étant donné que ces instruments interagiront les uns avec les autres, il est important de garantir une cohérence d'ensemble.

La compétitivité est un des objectifs fondamentaux de la politique énergétique de l'Union et le cadre pour 2030 mettra l'accent sur cet aspect. Il est essentiel de parvenir à la décarbonisation du système énergétique de l'Union tout en assurant la sécurité de l'approvisionnement énergétique et en maintenant les prix de l'énergie sous contrôle. Afin d'atteindre ces trois objectifs, l'Union peut s'appuyer sur plusieurs moyens disponibles comme le marché intérieur de l'énergie ([1]), la diversification des sources et des voies d'importation ([2]), le renforcement du soutien en faveur de la recherche, du développement et de l'innovation et du développement des infrastructures ([3]), ainsi que sur d'autres instruments permettant d'améliorer l'efficacité énergétique.

([1]) L'Union a pour objectifs d'intégrer pleinement les marchés nationaux de l'énergie d'ici à 2014, d'offrir aux consommateurs et aux entreprises davantage de produits et services de meilleure qualité, de renforcer la concurrence et d'assurer des approvisionnements plus sûrs. Dans cette optique, la Commission publiera au cours des prochaines semaines une communication sur l'optimisation des interventions publiques en mettant l'accent sur les mécanismes portant sur les capacités, les régimes d'aide en faveur des énergies renouvelables et la gestion de la demande.

([2]) Le 13 septembre 2013, la Commission a adopté un rapport sur la mise en œuvre de la communication de septembre 2011 sur la sécurité de l'approvisionnement énergétique et la coopération internationale [COM(2013) 0638 final]: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52013DC0638:FR:NOT

([3]) Le 14 octobre 2013, la Commission européenne a adopté une liste sur laquelle figurent 248 projets essentiels d'infrastructure dans le secteur de l'énergie. Ceux-ci pourront également bénéficier d'un soutien financier du mécanisme pour l'interconnexion en Europe (MIE), au titre duquel un budget de 5,85 milliards d'euros a été affecté à l'infrastructure énergétique transeuropéenne pour la période 2014-2020: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/infrastructure/pci/pci_fr.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011080/13
to the Commission
Rachida Dati (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Industrial competitiveness and climate/energy targets

Last Wednesday Commission Vice-President Tajani presented findings of reports on the industrial competitiveness of EU Member States. Despite all Vice-President Tajani's efforts, these results are disappointing. Our industrial base is continuing to erode, taking us ever further away from meeting the ambitious target of seeing this sector account for 20% of our GDP in 2020. Worse still, the trend in most Member States is away from manufacturing altogether.

In the light of this, we urgently need to stop stifling industrial growth by implementing an unsuitable and inflexible energy policy. Far from promoting the more focused approach favoured in other policy areas, every proposal put forward to date has only added to the plethora of objectives concerning energy, environment, climate, etc., objectives which sometimes even cancel each other out! The Commission has acknowledged this, asserting in its Green Paper entitled 'A 2030 framework for climate and energy policies' that 'a 2030 framework with multiple targets will have to recognise these interactions explicitly'.

A 2030 framework? We already have targets for 2020, so let's concentrate on them first. The time to consider goals for 2030 will be when we see the results of our current efforts. Otherwise, we will carry on modifying them time and time again, with unsatisfactory results.

This uncertainty and the failure to take account of the way markets work sums up our energy policy today, one which is hindering our global competitiveness. The energy market has undergone rapid upheavals in recent years and our businesses cannot cope with the rigidity and complexity of our regulatory framework. This does not mean that our industrial targets must necessarily conflict with our environmental and climate goals, quite the reverse: we need clear and precise targets which lead to results that meet both our environmental and industrial objectives.

Does the Commission not think that we should focus on meeting by 2020 our goal for reducing CO_2 emissions using the market for emissions allowances, rather than simply increasing the number of policy targets?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2013)

The EU has set a clear energy and climate framework up to 2020 including three headline targets for GHG emission reductions, renewable energy and energy savings. In parallel, the EU has put in place a regulatory framework for the creation of an open, integrated and competitive single market for energy promoting the security of energy supply.

While the EU is making good progress towards meeting the 2020 targets there is a need to develop a new 2030 framework for three reasons: to provide certainty for investors, to support progress towards a competitive economy and a secure energy system and to establish the EU's 2030 ambition level for GHG reductions in view of a new international agreement on climate change foreseen for 2015.

In the 2030 framework a combination of instruments is likely to be needed to address the different policy goals and market barriers. Given that these instruments will interact with one another, it is important to ensure overall consistency.

Competitiveness is a fundamental objective of EU energy policy and the 2030 framework will put emphasis on this. The decarbonisation of our energy system has to be achieved while ensuring energy supply security and keeping energy prices in check. In order to achieve these three objectives, the EU can rely on several available means such as the Internal Energy Market ([1]), the diversification of import sources and routes ([2]), the increased support to R&D&I and infrastructure development ([3]), and further tools to improve energy efficiency.

([1]) The EU aims to fully integrate national energy markets by 2014, to give consumers and businesses more and better products and services, more competition, and more secure supplies. In this vein, in the coming weeks the Commission will publish a communication on the optimization of public interventions focusing on capacity mechanisms, renewable support schemes and demand side management.

([2]) On 13 September 2013, the Commission adopted a report on the implementation of the September 2011 Communication on security of energy supply and international cooperation (COM/2013/0638) final
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52013DC0638:EN:NOT

([3]) On 14 October 2013, the European Commission has adopted a list of 248 key energy infrastructure projects. These may also have access to financial support from the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), under which a EUR 5.85 billion budget has been allocated to trans-European energy infrastructure for the period 2014-20.
http://ec.europa.eu/energy/infrastructure/pci/pci_en.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011081/13
à la Commission
Rachida Dati (PPE)
(30 septembre 2013)

Objet: Quel avenir pour l'égalité hommes-femmes sur le marché du travail européen?

Alors que la réunion du groupe de travail de haut niveau sur l'égalité des sexes s'est tenue à Vilnius au début du mois de septembre, il convient de rappeler que la persistance des inégalités entre les hommes et les femmes reste alarmante: si, dans l'Union européenne, le taux de femmes ayant une formation universitaire est supérieur à celui des hommes, l'écart de rémunération entre hommes et femmes pour un travail égal reste à 16,2 %.

La question de l'égalité des sexes face à l'emploi peut et doit plus que jamais être prise à bras-le-corps. Les citoyens européens attendent de l'Union qu'elle prenne la mesure de ces chiffres alarmants. Les programmes de financement de l'Union permettent d'apporter des solutions concrètes et ciblées. De ce point de vue, l'égalité hommes-femmes au sein de l'Union repose en majeure partie sur le programme Progress pour la période 2007-2013. Mais la question de l'égalité des sexes sera retirée du programme Progress pour l'exercice 2014-2020 afin d'être intégrée au programme intitulé «Droits fondamentaux et citoyenneté». Le programme pour le changement social et l'innovation sociale (PCSIS), appelé à remplacer le programme Progress, ne prendra en compte l'égalité des sexes que de façon transversale.

Il est impératif de continuer à associer les thématiques de l'égalité des sexes et de l'emploi. Sous couvert de rationalisation de ses programmes, l'Europe risque de ne pas apporter de solutions ciblées dans ce cadre.

La Commission peut-elle nous fournir des précisions concrètes sur la complémentarité des programmes PCSIS et «Droits fondamentaux et citoyenneté» en matière d'emploi des femmes?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Reding au nom de la Commission
(20 novembre 2013)

Les crédits pour les activités du programme Progress 2007-2013 ont été affectés à cinq sections différentes, dont les sections «emploi» et «égalité des sexes». De plus, les objectifs généraux du programme Progress prévoient de promouvoir les politiques d'intégration de la dimension du genre dans toutes les sections et activités relevant du programme.

Dans les perspectives financières 2014-2020, un des objectifs spécifiques du futur programme «droits, égalité et citoyenneté» est de promouvoir l'égalité entre hommes et femmes et de progresser dans l'intégration de la dimension du genre. Les actions financées au titre de ce programme doivent tendre à la réalisation de cet objectif et inclure la promotion de l'égalité entre sexes sur le lieu de travail et le marché de l'emploi.

En ce qui concerne le futur programme pour l'emploi et l'innovation sociale, il vise à soutenir, entre autres activités, celles visant à promouvoir un taux élevé d'emplois de qualité et durables, la protection sociale, la lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion et l'amélioration des conditions de travail. En poursuivant de tels objectifs, ce programme assurera la promotion de l'égalité entre hommes et femmes sous toutes ses dimensions dans les actions pertinentes.

Les services de la Commission veilleront à assurer la complémentarité et la cohérence des activités et des politiques mises en œuvre au titre de chacun de ces programmes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011081/13
to the Commission
Rachida Dati (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Prospects for gender equality on the European job market

Following the meeting of the High-Level Working Group on Gender Equality held in Vilnius in early September, now seems an appropriate time to look again at the alarming inequalities which continue to exist between men and women in the workplace. Although a greater proportion of women than men have completed higher education in the European Union, women are still paid an average of 16.2% less than men for doing the same job.

Now more than ever, the gender gap in the area of employment can and must be dealt with, and Europeans are waiting for the EU to tackle the problem behind these worrying figures. Concrete, targeted action can be taken under a number of EU funding programmes. More specifically, action on gender equality in the EU is taken through the PROGRESS programme 2007-2013. However, the gender equality strand will be hived off from that programme for the period 2014-2020 and incorporated into a different financial instrument, entitled 'Fundamental Rights and Citizenship'. The Programme for Social Change and Innovation (PSCI), which is set to replace the PROGRESS programme, will not focus specifically on the gender equality issue.

It is vital to continue highlighting the link between gender equality and employment. In seeking to reorganise these programmes, Europe may be depriving itself of the ability to address this problem in a meaningful way.

Can the Commission explain in detail how the measures on female employment taken under the PSCI and 'Fundamental Rights and Citizenship' programmes will complement one another?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

Under the 2007-2013 PROGRESS Programme activities were funded under five different sections; two of them are the Employment Section and the Gender Equality Section. Additionally, the general objectives of the PROGRESS Programme foresaw that gender mainstreaming shall be promoted in all sections of and activities under the Programme.

Under the 2014-2020 Financial Perspective one of the specific objectives of the future Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme is to promote equality between women and men and advance gender mainstreaming. Actions funded under this Programme should focus on achieving this objective and will include promotion of equality between women and men in the workplace and the employment market.

The future Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) Programme will support, among others, activities to promote a high level of quality and sustainable employment, social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty and improving working conditions. In pursuing its objectives, the Programme will promote equality between women and men in all axes and relevant actions.

The Commission services will ensure complementarity and consistency of the activities and policies developed under each programme.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011082/13
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Interpretazione dell'articolo 27 del FEP — Aiuti in materia di compensazione economica

Tra le misure previste dal Titolo IV del FEP, all'articolo 27, vi è l'erogazione di pagamenti compensativi e premi a favore dei pescatori professionali, mirati alla compensazione degli effetti derivanti dalle azioni di contenimento dello sforzo di pesca, con particolare riferimento all'arresto definitivo delle unità da pesca. La Regione Puglia ha attivato solo a dicembre 2012 il Bando regionale relativo alla Misura 1.5 — Aiuti in materia di compensazione economica, approvato con determinazione dirigenziale 388/2012 e pubblicato sul BURP 176 del 6.12.2012. Questa misura si riferisce a compensazioni erogate oggi a seguito di arresti definitivi avvenuti dal 2009 all'anno 2011, quindi a procedure di arresto definitivo già ampiamente concluse e con pescatori che hanno già scontato gli effetti della perdita del lavoro o della temporanea espulsione dal settore. Il Bando recita testualmente: «La compensazione una tantum è calcolata nella misura massima pari a 12 mensilità del minimo monetario garantito, ai sensi dei Contratti Collettivi Nazionali di Lavoro. Il premio, previa dimostrazione della sospensione dell'attività di pesca, è corrisposto pro rata temporis in funzione del periodo di inattività. Qualora il pescatore riprenda la sua attività professionale prima che sia passato un anno dal ricevimento della compensazione una tantum, quest'ultima deve essere rimborsata pro rata temporis».

Applicando alla lettera il Bando regionale, un pescatore professionale che ha già perso il lavoro a causa dell'arresto definitivo dell'unità da pesca sulla quale lavorava, e chiede oggi l'erogazione dell'indennità compensativa prevista dalla Misura 1.5, si vedrà commisurare detto pagamento al periodo effettivo di interruzione del lavoro. Lo stesso, però, per conservare la compensazione ricevuta, sarà obbligato a non lavorare per ulteriori 12 mesi, decorrenti dal momento del pagamento compensativo ricevuto.

Si chiede perciò alla Commissione:

1. In considerazione dello spirito dell'articolo 27 del FEP e degli effetti distorsivi dovuti ai ritardi della Regione Puglia nella stesura del bando, può essere fornita un'interpretazione chiara della normativa affinché i fondi previsti per i pescatori professionali che hanno interrotto definitivamente la loro attività gli siano erogati come da obiettivo del FEP?

2. Può la Regione, in applicazione dell'articolo 27 del FEP, erogare i pagamenti compensativi per i pescatori professionali che a partire dal 1° gennaio 2007 hanno sospeso l'attività per più di 12 mesi senza poi pretendere al momento dell'erogazione che il pescatore debba nuovamente interrompere l'attività per un ulteriore anno per conservare l'intero beneficio?

Risposta di Maria Damanaki a nome della Commissione
(27 novembre 2013)

Le autorità nazionali devono attuare le misure del FEP in conformità del regolamento n. 1198/2006 relativo al Fondo europeo per la pesca.

A norma dell'articolo 27, lettera e), del regolamento (CE) n. 1198/2006, la compensazione è rimborsata pro rata temporis se i beneficiari riprendono l'attività di pescatori entro un periodo inferiore ad un anno dalla data di ricevimento della stessa, a prescindere dalla data di arresto definitivo delle attività di pesca del peschereccio a bordo del quale avevano lavorato fino al momento dell'arresto definitivo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011082/13
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Interpretation of Article 27 of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) Regulation — Aid relating to financial compensation

Among the measures laid down in Article 27 in Title IV of the EFF Regulation, is the granting of compensation payments and premiums to professional fishers, intended to compensate for the effects of actions to contain fishing effort, with particular reference to the permanent cessation of fishing by vessels. It was only in December 2012 that the Regional Government of Apulia launched the regional notice relating to Measure 1.5 — Aid relating to financial compensation, approved under executive decision 388/2012 and published in Official Gazette of the Region of Apulia No 176 of 6 December 2012. This measure refers to compensation granted today following permanent cessations that occurred between 2009 and 2011, and thus to permanent cessation procedures already largely ended, and with fishers who have already experienced the effects of the loss of work or temporary expulsion from the sector. The notice states: 'The non-renewable compensation is calculated as the maximum portion equal to 12 monthly payments of the guaranteed financial minimum, under the national collective labour contracts. Once it has been shown that fishing activity has been suspended, the premium is paid pro rata in accordance with the period of inactivity. Where the fisher returns to work within less than a year of receiving the non-renewable compensation, it must be repaid on a pro-rata basis for the relevant period'.

If the regional notice is applied literally, a professional fisher who has already lost his job as a result of the permanent cessation of fishing by the vessel on which he worked, and now asks to be paid the compensation laid down under Measure 1.5, will be paid that payment for the actual period for which work was suspended. However, in order to keep the compensation he has received, he will be obliged not to work for a further 12 months, starting from the time he receives the compensation payment.

1. In view of the spirit of Article 27 of the EFF Regulation and the distorting effects caused by the Regional Government of Apulia's delay in issuing the notice, can a clear interpretation of the regulations be provided so that the funds allocated for professional fishers that have definitively stopped working may be granted to them, as is the EFF's aim?

2. Can the Regional Government, under Article 27 of the EFF Regulation, grant compensation payments for professional fishers who stopped working for over 12 months starting from 1 January 2007 without then requiring, when granting the payment, the fisher to stop working once again for a further year in order to retain the full payment?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(27 November 2013)

National Authorities shall implement the EFF measures in accordance with Regulation No 1198/2006, on the European Fisheries Fund.

Article 27(e) of Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006 provides that compensation shall be refunded on *pro rata temporis* where a beneficiary returns to work as a fisher within a period of less than one year after receiving this compensation, no matter the date of permanent cessation of the fishing vessel on which the beneficiary used to work until it permanently ceased its fishing activities.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011083/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(30 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Παιδιά με σύνδρομο DOWN

Στις 18 Απριλίου 2012, το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο ζήτησε με δήλωσή του (P7_DCL(2011)0052) από την Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, το Συμβούλιο και τα κράτη μέλη να συμβάλουν στην κοινωνική ένταξη των παιδιών με σύνδρομο DOWN, μέσω μιας εκστρατείας ευαισθητοποίησης σε εθνικό και ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο, να προωθήσουν την πανευρωπαϊκή έρευνα για την αντιμετώπιση της πάθησης αυτής και να οργανώσουν πανευρωπαϊκή στρατηγική για την προστασία των δικαιωμάτων τους στην ΕΕ.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Έχει αναλάβει πρόσφατες πρωτοβουλίες σχετικά με την ενίσχυση των εκπαιδευτικών δομών και τον χώρο φιλοξενίας των ατόμων αυτών σε εθνικό και τοπικό επίπεδο; Διαθέτει στοιχεία για το εάν έχει επηρεαστεί η παρεχόμενη εκπαίδευση στα άτομα αυτά λόγω της πρωτοφανούς οικονομικής κρίσης;

Απάντηση της κ. Βασιλείου εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(25 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή δεν έχει αναλάβει πρωτοβουλίες, ειδικά επικεντρωμένες στην εκπαίδευση παιδιών με σύνδρομο Down, για την οποία, όπως για την εκπαίδευση γενικά, είναι πρωτίστως αρμόδιες οι εθνικές αρχές. Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση έχει επικυρώσει τη «Σύμβαση των Ηνωμένων Εθνών για τα δικαιώματα των ατόμων με αναπηρίες», η οποία περιλαμβάνει δέσμευση για την εκπαίδευση χωρίς αποκλεισμούς.

Εντός του στρατηγικού πλαισίου εκπαίδευσης και κατάρτισης 2020, οι προτεραιότητες που συμφωνήθηκαν από τα κράτη μέλη περιλαμβάνουν βελτιωμένη υποστήριξη μέσα στο σύστημα της κανονικής εκπαίδευσης για μαθητές με ειδικές ανάγκες. Τον Μάιο 2010, στα «Συμπεράσματα του Συμβουλίου σχετικά με την κοινωνική διάσταση της εκπαίδευσης και της κατάρτισης», οι υπουργοί αναγνώρισαν ότι πρέπει να δοθεί ιδιαίτερη προσοχή στις ανάγκες των ατόμων με ειδικές εκπαιδευτικές ανάγκες. Το 2013 η «Σύσταση της Επιτροπής σχετικά με την επένδυση στα παιδιά — σπάζοντας τον κύκλο της μειονεξίας» καθοδηγεί τα κράτη μέλη να φροντίσουν για την ένταξη όλων των μαθητών, αν χρειάζεται με την παροχή πόρων και ευκαιριών με στόχο τους πλέον μειονεκτούντες, και με τη σωστή παρακολούθηση των αποτελεσμάτων· με την ενθάρρυνση των πολιτικών κατάργησης του διαχωρισμού που ενισχύουν το ενιαίο σχολείο· και με την παροχή, αν χρειάζεται, εξατομικευμένης υποστήριξης για την αντιστάθμιση των ειδικών μειονεκτημάτων.

Η Επιτροπή συνεργάζεται στενά με τον Ευρωπαϊκό Οργανισμό για την Ανάπτυξη της Ειδικής Αγωγής (EADSNE), ο οποίος παρέχει στοιχεία και πληροφορίες σχετικά με την εκπαίδευση χωρίς αποκλεισμούς σε όλη την Ευρώπη, συστάσεις για την πολιτική και την πρακτική και εργαλεία για την αξιολόγηση και την παρακολούθηση της προόδου στον τομέα αυτόν.

Ούτε η Επιτροπή ούτε ο EADSNE έχουν συγκεκριμένες πληροφορίες σχετικά με τον τρόπο με τον οποίο η εκπαίδευση των παιδιών με σύνδρομο Down επηρεάστηκε από την οικονομική κρίση. Η Επιτροπή εξετάζει επί του παρόντος τρόπους για την ανάπτυξη καλύτερων δεικτών για την παρακολούθηση της ευημερίας των παιδιών σε όλη την Ευρώπη.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011083/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Children with Down syndrome

On 18 April 2012, the European Parliament called in Declaration P7_DCL(2011)0052 for the European Commission, the Council and the Member States to contribute to the social inclusion of children with Down syndrome by means of awareness-raising campaigns at national and European level, by promoting pan-European research into this condition and by drawing up a Europe-wide strategy for protecting their rights in the EU.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— Has it taken recent initiatives to ensure that education structures and centres for these children are supported at national and local level? Does it know if the education provided for these children has been affected by the unprecedented economic crisis?

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

The Commission has not taken initiatives specifically focused on the education of children with Down syndrome, for which, as with education generally, national authorities are primarily responsible. The European Union has ratified the 'UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities', which includes a commitment to inclusive education.

Within the Education and Training 2020 strategic framework, the priorities agreed by Member States include improved support within mainstream schooling for learners with special needs. In May 2010 'Council Conclusions on the social dimension of education and training', ministers recognised that particular attention should be paid to the requirements of persons with special educational needs. The 2013 'Commission Recommendation on investing in children — breaking the cycle of disadvantage' guides Member States to provide for the inclusion of all learners, where necessary by targeting resources and opportunities to the more disadvantaged, and adequately monitor results; foster desegregation policies that strengthen comprehensive schooling; and provide if necessary personalised support to compensate for specific disadvantages.

The Commission works closely with the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EADSNE) which provides evidence and information about inclusive education across Europe, recommendations for policy and practice and tools to evaluate and monitor progress in this field.

Neither the Commission nor EADSNE have specific information on how the education of children with Down syndrome has been affected by the economic crisis. The Commission is currently exploring ways to develop better indicators to monitor child well-being across Europe.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011084/13
προς την Επιτροπή (Αντιπρόεδρος/Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος)
Georgios Toussas (GUE/NGL)
(30 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: VP/HR — Απελευθέρωση των Κουβανών πατριωτών

Οι Κουβανοί πατριώτες Gerardo Hernandez, Ramon Labanino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando Gonzalez εξακολουθούν να κρατούνται από το 1998, στις φυλακές των ΗΠΑ, γιατί αποκάλυψαν εγκληματικές ενέργειες αντεπαναστατικών συμμοριών, ενάντια στην Κούβα και το λαό της. Πλήθος αποδεικτικών στοιχείων αποκαλύπτουν με αναμφισβήτητο τρόπο ότι οι εναντίον τους κατηγορίες είναι χαλκευμένες, ενώ η δικαστική διαδικασία σε βάρος τους υπήρξε διάτρητη. Παρά την κατάρρευση των κατηγοριών εναντίον τους, τις αντιδράσεις διεθνών οργανισμών και το τεράστιο κύμα αλληλεγγύης που έχει ξεσηκωθεί παγκόσμια από το εργατικό κίνημα για την απελευθέρωσή τους, παραμένουν φυλακισμένοι, κάτω από σκληρές και απάνθρωπες συνθήκες. Ο Rene Gonzalez, που αποφυλακίστηκε, υποβλήθηκε σε εξοντωτικούς περιορισμούς, που έθεσαν σε κίνδυνο τη ζωή και τη σωματική του ακεραιότητα, από τις αντικουβανικές ομάδες που δρουν στο Μαϊάμι.

Η συνεχιζόμενη παράνομη φυλάκιση των Κουβανών πατριωτών εντάσσεται στην ιμπεριαλιστική πολιτική των ΗΠΑ ενάντια στη σοσιαλιστική Κούβα και το λαό της.

Η ΕΕ, με την Κοινή Θέση της, συνεχίζει και ασκεί έντονες πιέσεις στα εσωτερικά της Κούβας.

Ερωτάται η Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος για την Εξωτερική Πολιτική της ΕΕ και αντιπρόεδρος της Επιτροπής:

Πώς τοποθετείται στο δίκαιο αίτημα του διεθνούς εργατικού κινήματος που απαιτεί την άμεση απελευθέρωση των Κουβανών πατριωτών;

Τι θέση παίρνει απέναντι στον αποκλεισμό της Κούβας από τις ΗΠΑ και τις ανοιχτές ιμπεριαλιστικές επεμβάσεις τους στα εσωτερικά της Κούβας;

Πώς τοποθετείται στο ζήτημα της κατάργησης της Κοινής Θέση της ΕΕ για τη Κούβα;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(20 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Οι τέσσερις κουβανοί κρατούμενοι στους οποίους αναφέρεται το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου καταδικάστηκαν από δικαστήρια των ΗΠΑ το 2005. Το 2008, κατόπιν προσφυγής στο εφετείο διατηρήθηκαν μεν οι καταδίκες αλλά οι ποινές μειώθηκαν. Το 2009 απορρίφθηκε προσφυγή ενώπιον του Ανώτατου Δικαστηρίου των ΗΠΑ. Μπορεί να γίνει νέα προσφυγή στη δικαιοσύνη, εφόσον προσκομιστούν νέα αποδεικτικά στοιχεία. Η ΕΕ έχει επανειλημμένως απευθύνει έκκληση για τον σεβασμό των οικουμενικών και αναφαίρετων δικαιωμάτων του ανθρώπου. Πρέπει να τηρούνται σε όλες τις χώρες του κόσμου οι ελάχιστες προδιαγραφές όσον αφορά τις συνθήκες κράτησης.

Η ΕΕ θεωρεί ότι η αμερικανική εμπορική πολιτική έναντι της Κούβας είναι κατά βάση διμερές ζήτημα. Ωστόσο, η ΕΕ έχει ανέκαθεν επικρίνει έντονα τα εξωεδαφικά μέτρα, όπως ο νόμος Helms Burton για την επέκταση των επιπτώσεων του εμπάργκο των ΗΠΑ σε τρίτες χώρες.

Η κοινή θέση θα παραμείνει σε ισχύ μέχρις ότου τα κράτη μέλη συμφωνήσουν ομόφωνα για την κατάργησή της. Η ΕΕ εξετάζει επί του παρόντος τρόπους για να βοηθήσει τη διαδικασία μεταρρύθμισης στην Κούβα.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011084/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Georgios Toussas (GUE/NGL)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Release of Cuban patriots

The Cuban patriots Gerardo Hernandez, Ramon Labanino, Antonio Guerrero and Fernando Gonzalez have been in prison in the US since 1998, because they blew the whistle on criminal activities by anti-revolutionary gangs fighting against Cuba and its people. There is a wealth of evidence proving beyond all doubt that the charges filed against them were concocted and that the legal proceedings against them were riddled with holes. Even though the charges against them collapsed and despite reactions by international organisations and the huge wave of support by workers' movements the world over seeking their release, they are still being held in custody under harsh and inhumane conditions. Rene Gonzalez, who has been released, has been subjected by anti-Cuban groups active in Miami to crushing restrictions that have put his life and physical integrity in danger.

The continuing illegal imprisonment of the Cuban patriots forms part of the imperialist policy of the US against socialist Cuba and its people.

The EU continues to exert heavy pressure on Cuba's internal affairs in its Common Position.

Will the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Vice-President of the Commission say:

What is her position on the fair demand by the international working-class movement that the Cuban patriots should be released immediately?

What is her position on the isolation of Cuba by the US and its open imperialist interventions in Cuba's internal affairs?

What is her position on the demand for the EU Common Position on Cuba to be withdrawn?

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

The four Cuban prisoners referred to by the Honourable Member of Parliament were convicted by US Courts in 2005. In 2008, the convictions were upheld but sentences overturned and reduced in an appeal procedure.An appeal to the US Supreme Court was denied in 2009. Further legal action can be taken presenting new evidence. The EU has consistently called for the respect of universal and inalienable human rights. Minimum prison conditions need to be respected all over the world.

Concerning US trade policy towards Cuba, the EU considers this is fundamentally a bilateral issue. However, the EU has firmly and continously opposed extraterritorial measures, such as the Helms Burton Act extending the effects of the US embargo to third-party countries.

The Common Position will remain in force, until Member States agree unanimously to repeal it. The EU is currently discussing ways to accompany the reform process in Cuba.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011085/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Tutela dei panificatori artigianali

Il panificio, da sempre simbolo delle piccole comunità, perde oggi quote di mercato rispetto alla grande distribuzione. I supermercati, costruendo aree interne dedicate alla vendita dei prodotti da forno, creano l'illusione dell'acquisto del pane fresco rivendendo invece spesso soltanto prodotti surgelati.

Mentre i panificatori artigianali si attengono ai rigorosi disciplinari di produzione dei pani DOP o di quelli tradizionali, nel rispetto delle norme igienico-sanitarie e privilegiando materie prime autoctone, i grandi gruppi distribuiscono a bassissimo prezzo pane surgelato che arriva dai paesi dell'est: dalla Romania, dalla Moldavia e dalla Slovenia. Poiché in Italia non esiste l'obbligo di scrivere sull'etichetta la provenienza del prodotto, il consumatore non è consapevole del fatto che quello che acquista non è un prodotto italiano e nemmeno immagina che per la sua produzione potrebbero essere state utilizzate materie prime di scarsa qualità e sicurezza per la salute.

Preso atto che in alcuni paesi come la Francia esistono precisi dispositivi normativi sull'identificazione del pane fresco e dei suoi ingredienti; considerato che la direttiva 2000/13/CE concernente l'etichettatura e la presentazione dei prodotti alimentari stabilisce che l'indicazione dell'origine dei prodotti alimentari non costituisce un'informazione obbligatoria, a meno che la sua omissione possa trarre in inganno l'acquirente; preso atto, infine, che la crisi sta penalizzando i piccoli forni artigianali italiani già sottoposti a un gravoso regime fiscale, a restrizioni di accesso al credito, alla diminuzione dei consumi, a complesse e rigide procedure burocratiche, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. come intende tutelare i panificatori artigianali italiani dalla concorrenza sleale della grande distribuzione europea che commercializza pane precotto e congelato, in molti casi senza rispettare le normative vigenti in materia di etichettatura e tracciabilità, facendo passare per pane appena sfornato ciò che in realtà non è?

2. se l'Europa intende uniformare la normativa degli Stati membri e imporre l'obbligo di indicare in etichetta se si tratta di pane fresco o surgelato, la provenienza del prodotto e i suoi ingredienti?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(15 novembre 2013)

La Commissione rinvia l'onorevole parlamentare alla propria risposta all'interrogazione scritta P-000742/2012 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011085/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Protection of artisan bakers

The bakery, which has always been the symbol of small communities, is today losing market share to supermarkets. By constructing internal areas for the sale of bakery products, supermarkets are creating the illusion that customers are buying fresh bread, but instead they are often just selling frozen products.

While artisan bakers abide by the rigorous product specifications of PDO breads or traditional breads, adhering to hygiene and health standards and prioritising local raw materials, the large retail groups sell frozen bread at very low prices, coming from eastern European countries: Romania, Moldova and Slovenia. Since in Italy there is no obligation to indicate the product's origin on the label, consumers are unaware of the fact that what they are buying is not an Italian product, nor do they imagine that the raw materials used to produce them could be of low quality and offer a low level of safety in terms of health.

In certain countries, such as France, there are specific legislative provisions on the identification of fresh bread and its ingredients. Directive 2000/13/EC relating to the labelling and presentation of foodstuffs states that an indication of the origin of foodstuffs is not compulsory, unless omitting it could mislead purchasers. Finally, the crisis is particularly harmful to small Italian artisan bakeries, which are already subject to a burdensome tax regime, restrictions on access to credit, a fall in consumption and complex and inflexible bureaucratic procedures.

1. How does the Commission intend to protect Italian artisan bakers from unfair competition from European large-scale retailers selling pre-cooked and frozen bread, in many cases without complying with the rules applicable to labelling and traceability, passing off products as freshly baked bread when in fact they are not?

2. Does the EU intend to standardise the legislation of the Member States and impose an obligation to indicate on the label whether bread is fresh or frozen, the origin of the product and its ingredients?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its reply to Written Question P-000742/2012 ([1]).

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

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011087/13
adresată Comisiei
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(30 septembrie 2013)

Subiect: Protejarea intereselor financiare ale Uniunii — cazurile de corupție raportate în 2012

Raportul anual 2012 privind „Protejarea intereselor financiare ale Uniunii Europene — combaterea fraudei" afirmă că în 2012 au fost raportate nouă cazuri de corupție în domeniul politicii de coeziune, ce au avut loc în patru state membre (Italia, Cipru, Estonia și Spania) .

Pentru fiecare dintre aceste nouă cazuri:

1. ce tipuri de proiecte au fost implicate: construcția de drumuri, infrastructuri urbane sau cursuri de pregătire?

2. despre ce sume este vorba și dacă au fost recuperate integral?

Răspuns dat de dl Šemeta în numele Comisiei
(20 noiembrie 2013)

Comisia invită distinsul membru să consulte răspunsul Comisiei la întrebarea P-11088/2013.

1. Cazurile menționate de distinsul membru se referă la proiecte de transport din Italia și Estonia, la un proiect de formare din Spania și la un proiect legat de societatea informațională din Cipru.

2. Cu privire la cazul din Spania, autoritățile naționale au raportat recuperarea integrală a sumei de 77 000 EUR. În ceea ce privește cazul din Cipru, având în vedere faptul că proiectele afectate au fost excluse din lista de certificare, nu mai sunt implicate fonduri ale UE.

În ceea ce privește restul cazurilor (din Italia și din Estonia), informațiile trimise Comisiei de către autoritățile naționale arată că aceste cazuri sunt încă în curs de investigare. Prin urmare, în acest stadiu, nu sunt disponibile informații suplimentare cu privire la acest subiect.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011087/13
to the Commission
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Protection of the Union's financial interests — reported cases of corruption in 2012

The 2012 Annual Report on 'Protection of the European Union's financial interests — Fight against fraud' states that nine cases of corruption were reported in 2012, and that they took place in four Member States (Italy, Cyprus, Estonia and Spain) in the area of cohesion policy.

For each of these nine cases:

1. which type of projects were involved: road construction, urban infrastructure or training?

2. what were the amounts involved, and have they been fully recovered?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its reply to Question P-11088/2013.

1. The cases to which the Honourable Member refers concern transport projects in Italy and Estonia, a training project in Spain and a project in relation to Information Society in Cyprus.

2. With regard to the Spanish case, full recovery of EUR 77.000 has been reported by the national authorities. In relation to the case from Cyprus, as the affected project has been excluded from the certification list, no more EU funds are involved.

In relation to the remaining cases (from Italy and Estonia), the information referred to the Commission by national authorities reveals that these cases are still under investigation. Therefore, no further information is available on this matter at this stage.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris P-011088/13
adresată Comisiei
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(30 septembrie 2013)

Subiect: Protejarea intereselor financiare ale Uniunii — acțiunile întreprinse în urma cazurilor de corupție raportate în 2012

Raportul anual 2012 referitor la Protejarea intereselor financiare ale Uniunii Europene — combaterea fraudei afirmă că în 2012 au fost raportate nouă cazuri de corupție în domeniul politicii de coeziune, ce au avut loc în patru state membre (Italia, Cipru, Estonia și Spania) .

Pentru fiecare dintre aceste nouă cazuri:

1. au fost persoanele responsabile aduse în fața justiției?

2. a întocmit Comisia o listă neagră cu contractanții implicați în practici corupte pentru a fi avuți în vedere în viitor?

Răspuns dat de dl. Šemeta în numele Comisiei
(20 noiembrie 2013)

Comisia invită distinsa membră să consulte răspunsul Comisiei la întrebarea E-11087/13.

Regulamentul (CE) nr. 1828/2006 al Comisiei ([1]), care prevede raportarea neregulilor, impune statelor membre să raporteze, cât mai repede posibil, cazurile de nereguli detectate, indicând dacă practica respectivă dă naștere unei suspiciuni de fraudă. Mai precis, trebuie raportate cazurile pentru care au fost inițiate proceduri administrative sau penale pentru a se stabili dacă s-au produs fraude.

Același regulament indică faptul că, având în vedere, de exemplu, aspectele de confidențialitate legate de investigațiile în curs, nu toate informațiile enumerate în regulament trebuie comunicate.

Prin urmare, datele publicate în raportul anual al Comisiei pentru un anumit an se pot referi la investigații sau proceduri penale în curs, pentru care nu s-a pronunțat încă o hotărâre definitivă.

Comisia a instituit baza de date centrală a excluderilor ([2]) cu scopul de a proteja interesele financiare ale UE prin includerea în această bază de date a entităților care sunt excluse de la finanțarea UE ([3]).

Comunicarea numelor persoanelor juridice sau fizice care trebuie incluse în baza de date centrală a excluderilor este responsabilitatea statelor membre.

Pentru cele nouă cazuri menționate, autoritățile naționale competente au furnizat următoarele informații:

— cele șase cazuri raportate de Italia fac obiectul aceleiași investigații, care este în curs;

— pentru cazul din Cipru: autoritățile cipriote au comunicat că procedura s-a încheiat, dar nu au fost furnizate informații privind sancțiunile penale;

— pentru cazul din Estonia: procedura penală este în curs;

— pentru cazul din Spania: s-a raportat faptul că sumele în cauză au fost recuperate integral, însă nu sunt încă disponibile informații privind procedurile penale.

Comisia a contactat statele membre în cauză pentru a obține informațiile care lipsesc.

([1]) Regulamentul (CE) nr. 1828/2006 al Comisiei din 8 decembrie 2006 de stabilire a normelor de aplicare a Regulamentului (CE) nr. 1083/2006 al Consiliului de stabilire a anumitor dispoziții generale privind Fondul european de dezvoltare regională, Fondul social european și Fondul de coeziune și a Regulamentului (CE) nr. 1080/2006 al Parlamentului European și al Consiliului privind Fondul european de dezvoltare regională (JO L 371, 27.12.2006, p. 1). A se vedea, în special, articolele 27 și 28.

([2]) Baza de date centrală a excluderilor: Regulamentul (CE, Euratom) nr. 1302/2008 al Comisiei din 17 decembrie 2008 privind baza de date centrală a excluderilor (JO L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 12).

([3]) O entitate este inclusă în baza de date centrală a excluderilor dacă este condamnată printr-o hotărâre definitivă în instanță pentru fraudă, corupție, spălare de bani și participare la o organizație criminală, fapte care aduc atingere intereselor financiare ale UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011088/13
to the Commission
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Protection of the Union's financial interests — action taken following reported cases of corruption in 2012

The 2012 Annual Report on 'Protection of the European Union's financial interests — Fight against fraud' states that nine cases of corruption were reported in 2012, and that they took place in four Member States (Italy, Cyprus, Estonia and Spain) in the area of cohesion policy.

For each of these nine cases:

1. were the people responsible brought to justice?

2. has the Commission put the contractors involved in corrupt practices on a blacklist for the future?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its reply to Question E-11087/13.

Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 ([1]) providing for the reporting of irregularities foresees that Member States should report, at the earliest possible moment, detected cases of irregularities, indicating whether the practice gives rise to a suspicion of fraud, *i.e.* cases for which administrative or criminal proceedings have been initiated to establish if fraud has occurred.

The same Regulation indicates that, due e.g. to confidentiality reasons linked to ongoing investigations, not all information listed in the regulation needs be communicated.

Therefore, data published in the Commission annual Report in a given year may refer to ongoing investigations or criminal proceedings where no definitive sentence has yet been decided.

The Commission has established the CED ([2]) with the purpose of protecting the EU's financial interests by listing entities which are excluded from EU funding ([3]).

Communication of legal or natural persons to be inserted in the CED is a responsibility of Member States.

For the nine cases mentioned the following information has been provided by the competent national authorities :

— The six cases reported by Italy relate to a single investigation and the investigation is ongoing.

— For the Cypriot case: the Cypriot authorities have indicated that the procedure is closed but no information has been provided on criminal sanctions.

— For the Estonian case: the criminal procedure is ongoing.

— For the Spanish case: full recovery has been reported, but no information is yet available in relation to the criminal proceedings.

The Commission has contacted the Member States in question to obtain the missing information.

([1]) Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 of 8 December 2006 setting out rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Regional Development Fund (OJ L 371, 27.12.2006, p. 1). See Article 27, 28 in particular.

([2]) Central Exclusion Database: Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1302/2008 of 17 December 2008 on the central exclusion database (OJ L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 12).

([3]) An entity shall be listed in the CED if it is convicted for fraud, corruption, money laundering and involvement in a criminal organisation detrimental to the EU's financial interests by a final court judgment.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011648/13
a la Comisión
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(11 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Situación de esclavitud en Qatar: Campeonato Mundial de Fútbol de 2022

El pasado día 25 de Septiembre, el diario *The Guardian*, entre otros, denunciaba la actual situación laboral de los trabajadores inmigrantes en Qatar que participan en la construcción de las infraestructuras necesarias para el Campeonato Mundial de Fútbol de 2022 ([1]).

La situación es crítica, ya que cientos de miles de trabajadores —un 40 % de ellos de origen nepalí— son forzados a trabajar en condiciones que rozan la esclavitud. Las empresas que contratan a los inmigrantes abusan de su situación precaria y por ello no les garantizan ningún tipo de seguridad laboral, no les pagan sus salarios a final de mes y en ciertos casos les confiscan sus pasaportes. La alerta ha saltado este verano al registrarse una media de un trabajador fallecido al día en su jornada laboral.

Estas condiciones laborales transgreden el artículo 4 de la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos, así como también los Convenios 105, 29 y 95 de la OIT relativos a trabajos forzados y protección de salarios, ratificados por Qatar al ser miembro de la OIT.

Considerando además que el objeto de este trabajo forzado es la celebración de un torneo de la FIFA, una federación con 209 países miembros —52 de los cuales son europeos—, con millones de espectadores y patrocinadores internacionales, y que aún quedan muchas infraestructuras por construir,

1. ¿Tiene conocimiento la Comisión de esta situación y pretende seguir de cerca el supuesto desarrollo favorable de las condiciones laborales que ha prometido el Gobierno de Qatar?

2. ¿Considera la Comisión que este escenario es el adecuado para celebrar un evento de este calibre, el cual catalizará un cambio positivo para Qatar aunque a expensas de la libertad y la dignidad de los trabajadores?

Respuesta conjunta de la alta representante y vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(29 de noviembre de 2013)

La alta representante y vicepresidenta es plenamente consciente de la cuestión de los derechos de los trabajadores inmigrantes en Qatar y en la región del Golfo, y ha tomado nota con inquietud de los informes de prensa sobre presuntos maltratos contra los trabajadores inmigrantes extranjeros (especialmente nepaleses) empleados en Qatar.

La alta representante y vicepresidenta acoge con satisfacción la iniciativa de las autoridades qataríes de investigar a fondo estas acusaciones y espera con interés sus conclusiones, que deben ayudar a las autoridades a hacer frente a las deficiencias existentes. Aun cuando la construcción de instalaciones directamente relacionadas con la Copa del Mundo de la FIFA no ha comenzado aún, la UE acoge con satisfacción el compromiso del Comité Supremo de Qatar 2022 de ofrecer un trato adecuado a los trabajadores y seguirá de cerca la evolución futura.

El respeto de la dignidad humana es el núcleo de los valores de la UE y sigue constituyendo un elemento esencial de sus relaciones con los terceros países, incluidos los del Golfo. La UE ha defendido siempre que los socios de la UE en el Golfo deben adoptar una legislación y unas medidas de aplicación más firmes para abordar la situación de los trabajadores inmigrantes, la cual, a pesar de los progresos realizados en los últimos años, todavía necesita algunas mejoras de conformidad con los convenios de la OIT y con la colaboración de los países de origen de los trabajadores extranjeros, en particular en lo que se refiere a la aplicación de la legislación existente.

([1]) www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/25/revealed-qatars-world-cup-slaves

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011649/13
à la Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(11 octobre 2013)

Objet: Exploitation des travailleurs népalais au Qatar

L'organisation d'un Mondial de football est un événement de prestige offrant de nombreuses retombées médiatiques au pays accueillant ce tournoi. Néanmoins, les préparatifs de la coupe du monde 2022 sont d'ores et déjà entachés par l'exploitation de travailleurs népalais pour la construction des stades accueillant les manifestations sportives.

En effet, l'ambassade du Népal à Doha a révélé à la fin du mois de septembre qu'au moins 44 ouvriers népalais employés sur des chantiers de construction des sites de la coupe du monde 2022 au Qatar sont morts entre le 4 juin et le 8 août 2013. Ils ont pour la plupart été victimes d'insuffisances cardiaques ainsi que d'accidents du travail. Leurs conditions d'exploitation s'apparenteraient à de l'esclavage moderne en les soumettant à un travail forcé sous une forte chaleur avec un refus d'accès à l'eau potable, des conditions sanitaires alarmantes et des violations multiples des normes internationales en matière de droit des travailleurs. La confédération internationale des syndicats a alors estimé qu'à un tel rythme 4 000 ouvriers pourraient mourir sur ces chantiers avant 2022.

La coupe du monde de football, qui est un événement de renommée mondiale, auquel participent plusieurs équipes européennes, se doit d'être organisée en harmonie avec le respect du droit international.

Aussi, la Commission entend-elle entreprendre des démarches pour dénoncer cette pratique du travail forcé pour l'organisation d'un événement qui a vocation à rassembler les peuples autour d'un même sport et de montrer un exemple de fraternité?

Réponse commune donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(29 novembre 2013)

La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante est très attentive à la question des droits des travailleurs migrants au Qatar et dans la région du Golfe. Elle a pris note avec inquiétude des articles de presse rapportant les mauvais traitements dont seraient victimes les travailleurs étrangers et migrants (en particulier originaires du Népal) engagés au Qatar.

La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante se félicite de l'initiative des autorités qatariennes de mener une enquête approfondie sur ces allégations et attend avec impatience ses conclusions, qui devraient permettre aux autorités de remédier aux dysfonctionnements dénoncés. Alors que les travaux de construction directement liés à l'organisation de la coupe du monde de la FIFA doivent encore commencer, l'UE se félicite de l'engagement du comité suprême de Qatar 2022 d'assurer le traitement décent des travailleurs et suivra avec attention l'évolution de la situation.

Le respect de la dignité humaine est au cœur des valeurs de l'Union européenne et demeure un élément central de ses relations avec les pays tiers, notamment dans les pays du Golfe. L'Union européenne préconise depuis longtemps que ses partenaires du Golfe adoptent une législation et des mesures exécutoires plus énergiques pour régler la situation des travailleurs migrants. En dépit des progrès accomplis ces dernières années, quelques améliorations doivent encore être apportées conformément aux conventions de l'OIT et en collaboration avec les pays d'origine des travailleurs étrangers, notamment en ce qui concerne l'application de la législation existante.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande P-011553/13
till kommissionen
Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL)
(9 oktober 2013)

Angående: Byggande av fotbollsstadium i Qatar inför VM 2022

Tidningen *The Guardian* avslöjade nyligen att 44 migrantarbetare från Nepal dött i arbetsplatsolyckor i samband med byggandet av en fotbollsstadium i Qatar inför VM 2022 under tiden 4 juni–8 augusti i år. Fackliga organisationer varnar för att upp till 4 000 arbetare kan förlora livet om det inte vidtas åtgärder mot de vidriga arbetsvillkoren för migrantarbetare i Qatar.

The Guardian avslöjar att migrantarbetarna arbetar 12 timmar om dagen, att många av dem inte har fått betalt på flera månader, att de saknar fackliga rättigheter, att deras pass beslagtagits och att de ofta nekas dricksvatten i den extrema hettan.

I Qatar finns 1,2 miljoner migrantarbetare. De utgör en stor majoritet av landets befolkning, men behandlas ofta extremt dåligt och har mycket låga löner. Medelinkomsten per capita bland landets infödda är 102 000 US-dollar. Migrantarbetarnas genomsnittsinkomst är 2 500 dollar.

Qatar har ratificerat ILO:s konvention mot tvångsarbete men gör enligt ILO:s expert Azfar Khan ingenting för att säkra att konventionen följs i det egna landet. Det är sedan tidigare ILO-rapporter känt att också många ”domestic workers” i Qatar, varav 40 000 är kvinnor som kommer från Filippinerna, har extremt långa arbetsdagar och mycket dåliga löner. De är ofta också utsatta för olika sorters övergrepp från sina arbetsgivare.

1. Vilka åtgärder avser kommissionen att vidta mot Qatars regering för att protestera mot de svåra missförhållandena för migrantarbetarna i landet?

2. Anser kommissionen att VM i fotboll 2022 bör flyttas till ett annat land om inte Qatar snarast visar respekt för migrantarbetarna och till punkt och pricka börjar följa de av ILO fastslagna grundläggande rättigheterna för arbetare?

3. Avser kommissionen att framföra krav till Qatars regering att också ratificera ILO konventionen C 189 gällande rättigheter för ”domestic workers”?

Samlat svar från vice ordföranden/den höga representanten Catherine Ashton på kommissionens vägnar
(29 november 2013)

Vice ordföranden/den höga representanten är väl medveten om problemet med migrerande arbetstagares rättigheter i Qatar och regionen runt Persiska viken. Hon har med oro noterat rapporter i pressen om påstådd misshandel av utländska migrerande arbetare (särskilt nepaleser) i Qatar.

Vice ordföranden/den höga representanten välkomnar de qatariska myndigheternas initiativ att göra en noggrann utredning av dessa påståenden och ser fram emot slutsatserna av utredningen, som bör hjälpa myndigheterna att åtgärda bristerna. Innan de byggnadsarbeten som direkt hänger samman med Världscupen i fotboll har börjat har den högsta kommittén för fotbolls-VM i Qatar 2022 utlovat korrekt behandling av arbetarna. EU välkomnar detta och kommer att följa utvecklingen noga.

Respekt för mänsklig värdighet hör till EU:s grundläggande värderingar och förblir ett centralt inslag i EU:s förbindelser med tredjelandspartner, bland annat kring Persiska viken. EU har konsekvent förespråkat att EU:s partnerländer kring Persiska viken bör införa beslutsammare lagstiftning och tillsynsåtgärder för att ta itu med de migrerande arbetstagarnas situation, som trots de senaste årens framsteg fortfarande kräver vissa förbättringar i enlighet med ILO-konventioner och i samarbete med de utländska arbetstagarnas ursprungsländer, särskilt när det gäller att genomföra befintlig lagstiftning.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011091/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Jill Evans (Verts/ALE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Treatment of migrant workers in Qatar

When it was announced that Qatar had won the bid to host the 2022 football World Cup, the news met with much controversy. Many were angry that a country in which homosexuality between men is illegal and freedom of expression is restricted had been picked to host the prestigious competition. There were also many questions over the rights of the workers who were to work on the ambitious project of constructing a city from scratch.

FIFA had stated that it would ensure that the workers' rights were protected. Nevertheless, this summer migrant workers from Nepal working on constructing the city were dying at the rate of one per day, totalling 44 deaths between 4 June and 8 August 2013. The workers are forced to live in appalling conditions in labour camps and often go months without being paid; in effect, they have become slaves to their employers.

It is estimated that by the time the World Cup kicks off, 4 000 workers will have died.

1. Does the Vice-President/High Representative condemn the treatment of these migrant workers?

2. What steps will the Vice-President/High Representative take in order to address the human rights abuses in Qatar?

3. Will the Vice-President/High Representative hold talks with Qatar in order to try and resolve the situation?

4. Will the Vice-President/High Representative hold talks with FIFA in order to try and resolve the situation?

Question for written answer P-011553/13
to the Commission
Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Construction of football stadium in Qatar for the 2022 World Cup

The Guardian newspaper recently revealed that, between 4 June and 8 August this year, 44 migrant workers from Nepal had died in occupational accidents connected with the construction of a football stadium in Qatar for the 2022 World Cup. Trade unions warn that up to 4 000 workers might lose their lives unless measures are taken against the appalling working conditions for migrant workers in Qatar.

The Guardian reveals that migrant workers work for 12 hours a day, that many of them have not been paid for several months, that they do not enjoy trade union rights, that their passports have been confiscated and that they are often denied drinking water in the extreme heat.

There are 1.2 million migrant workers in Qatar. They constitute the vast majority of the country's population, but are often treated extremely badly and receive very low wages. The average per capita income of the indigenous population is USD 102 000. The average income of migrant workers is USD 2 500.

Qatar has ratified the ILO Convention against forced labour, but, according to the ILO expert Azfar Khan, is not doing anything to enforce the Convention within its own territory. It has been known since previous ILO reports that many domestic workers in Qatar, including 40 000 women from the Philippines, also work extremely long days for very low wages. In addition, they are often victims of various types of abuse by their employers.

1. What measures will the Commission take in relation to the Government of Qatar to protest about the serious abuses affecting migrant workers in the country?

2. Does the Commission consider that the 2022 football World Cup should be moved to a different country unless Qatar without delay starts to display respect for migrant workers and to fully enforce the fundamental workers' rights laid down by the ILO?

3. Will the Commission demand that the Government of Qatar also ratify ILO Convention C 189 on the rights of domestic workers?

Question for written answer E-011648/13
to the Commission
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(11 October 2013)

Subject: Slavery situation in Qatar relating to the 2022 football World Cup

On 25 September 2013, several newspapers, including the British-based *The Guardian*, reported on the current employment situation of immigrant works in Qatar, who are helping to build infrastructure for the FIFA World Cup in 2022 ([1]).

The situation is critical, since hundreds of thousands of workers, 40% of them of Nepalese origin, are being forced to work in conditions bordering on slavery. The companies employing the immigrants are abusing their precarious situation and they are thus failing to provide them with any job security or to pay their wages at the end of the month, and in some cases are confiscating their passports. Concern has escalated following the discovery that workers are dying at a rate of one a day on average.

Such working conditions violate Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions 29, 95 and 105 concerning forced labour and the protection of wages, ratified by Qatar through its membership of the ILO.

Moreover, the purpose of this forced labour is a football tournament organised by FIFA, a federation with 209 member countries, 52 of which are European, with millions of spectators and international sponsors, and there is still a large amount of infrastructure yet to be built.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation and does it intend to closely monitor the supposed improvement in labour conditions promised by the Qatari Government?

2. Does the Commission consider this an appropriate setting to hold an event of this calibre, which will instigate positive change for Qatar but at the expense of the freedom and dignity of the workers?

Question for written answer E-011649/13
to the Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(11 October 2013)

Subject: Exploitation of Nepali workers in Qatar

The World Cup is a highly prestigious event which generates a great deal of media coverage for the host country. Regrettably, the preparations for the 2022 World Cup have already been tainted by the revelation that Nepali workers involved in building stadiums for the tournament are being exploited.

The Nepalese Embassy in Doha revealed in late September that at least 44 Nepali workers working at World Cup construction sites in Qatar died between 4 June and 8 August 2013. Most of them died from heart failure or work-related accidents. The conditions at the sites have been said to amount to modern-day slavery, with workers being forced to work in sweltering heat without access to drinking water, in appalling sanitary conditions and in breach of numerous international labour standards. The International Trade Union Confederation has warned that, if this continues, 4 000 workers could die on the construction sites before 2022.

The World Cup is a world-famous sporting event in which several European teams participate, and it must be organised in accordance with international law.

Accordingly, does the Commission intend to condemn the use of forced labour during the preparations for this event, which should be about bringing people together and setting an example of solidarity?

([1]) www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/25/revealed-qatars-world-cup-slaves

Joint answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2013)

The HR/VP is well aware of the issue of migrant workers' rights in Qatar and in the Gulf region. She has noted with concern press reports about alleged mistreatment of foreign migrant workers (especially Nepalese) employed in Qatar.

The HR/VP welcomes the initiative of the Qatari authorities to conduct a thorough investigation into these allegations and looks forward to its conclusions, which should help the authorities to address shortcomings. While construction directly related to the FIFA World Cup has yet to begin, the EU welcomes the Qatar 2022 Supreme Committee's commitment to providing proper treatment for workers and will closely monitor further developments.

The respect of human dignity is at the core of EU values and remains a central element in its relations with third partners, including in Gulf countries. The EU has consistently advocated for more decisive legislation and enforcement measures to be taken by the EU's Gulf partners to address the situation of migrant workers, which, in spite of progress in recent years, still requires some improvement in accordance with ILO conventions and in collaboration with countries of origin of foreign workers, in particular as regards implementation of existing legislation.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011092/13
do Komisji
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(30 września 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Zasada mniejszego cła w przemyśle nawozowym

Przemysł nawozowy w Polsce jest jedną z najważniejszych gałęzi w kraju i zatrudnia ponad 10 tysięcy osób. Polska Izba Przemysłu Chemicznego zwraca uwagę na trudną sytuacje przemysłu nawozowego, która spowodowana jest napływem nawozów zza wschodniej granicy. Zdaniem członków Izby ceny tych nawozów są dumpingowe z powodów choćby nierynkowych cen gazu w Rosji. W prowadzonej w Polsce dyskusji kładzie się nacisk na rezygnację z zasady mniejszego cła dla obszarów o udowodnionych nierównowagach w cenach surowców.

W związku z powyższym proszę o odpowiedź:

Czy Komisja Europejska rozważa rezygnację z zasady mniejszego cła w przemyśle nawozowym odnosząc się do opisanej wyżej sytuacji?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Karela De Guchta w imieniu Komisji
(11 listopada 2013 r.)

W przypadkach, gdy nieuczciwa konkurencja w postaci przywozu po cenach dumpingowych lub subsydiowanych powoduje szkody dla przemysłu Unii Europejskiej, mogą zostać nałożone antydumpingowe lub antysubsydyjne opłaty celne, po przeprowadzeniu dochodzenia przez Komisję Europejską i pod warunkiem, że spełnione są odpowiednie kryteria.

Stawka takich ceł nie może być wyższa niż ustalony margines dumpingu lub subsydiowania. Niemniej jednak może ona być niższa, jeżeli takie niższe cło jest wystarczające, aby umożliwić naprawienie szkody poniesionej przez przemysł UE. Jest to tzw. „zasada niższego cła". W obecnym systemie UE zasada niższego cła jest konsekwentnie stosowana we wszystkich przypadkach.

Komisja podjęła niedawno inicjatywę mającą na celu przedłożenie wniosku ustawodawczego, mającego na celu unowocześnienie instrumentów ochrony handlu UE ([1]). Jedna z propozycji Komisji w tym kontekście ma na celu, aby więcej nie stosować zasady niższego cła w przypadkach strukturalnych zakłóceń handlu surowcami (w sprawach antydumpingowych) i subsydiowania (w sprawach antysubsydyjnych). Wniosek ten, jeśli zostanie przyjęty przez Parlament Europejski i Radę, mógłby mieć znaczny wpływ na sektor produkcji nawozów, jako że stosowanie podwójnego cennika na gaz uważane by było za strukturalne zakłócenie handlu surowcami. W związku z powyższym zasada niższego cła nie byłaby w takich przypadkach stosowana. Mogłoby to ostatecznie prowadzić do wyższych ceł.

Niniejszy wniosek jest zgodny z innymi inicjatywami Komisji dotyczącymi dostępu do surowców, takimi jak zwiększona dyscyplina w umowach o wolnym handlu lub podjęcie działań w ramach Światowej Organizacji Handlu przeciw szkodliwym praktykom w handlu surowcami (takich jak np. skarga przeciw nieuczciwym praktykom Chin w związku z wywozem pierwiastków ziem rzadkich ([2])).

([1]) COM (2013 192 final, Wniosek dotyczący rozporządzenia Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady zmieniającego rozporządzenie Rady (WE) nr 1225/2009 w sprawie ochrony przed przywozem produktów po cenach dumpingowych z krajów niebędących członkami Wspólnoty Europejskiej i rozporządzenie Rady (WE) nr 597/2009 w sprawie ochrony przed przywozem towarów subsydiowanych z krajów niebędących członkami Wspólnoty Europejskiej.

([2]) Chiny – Środki związane z wywozem ziem rzadkich, wolframu i molibdenu (WT/DS 432).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011092/13
to the Commission
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: 'Lesser duty' rule in the fertiliser industry

Poland's fertiliser industry is one of the country's most important industrial sectors, employing more than 10 000 people. The Polish Chamber of Chemical Industry (PIPC) has highlighted the difficult situation in which the fertiliser industry finds itself as a result of the influx of fertilisers from countries to the east. According to the PIPC's members, one of the reasons why these can be sold at dumping prices is that gas is sold at non-market prices in Russia. The discussion in Poland centres on the need to abandon the 'lesser duty' rule where there are clear imbalances in raw material prices.

Is the Commission considering suspending application of the 'lesser duty' rule in the fertiliser industry, given the above situation?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(11 November 2013)

In cases where unfair competition in form of dumped or subsidised imports causes injury to the industry of the European Union, anti-dumping or anti-subsidy duties may be imposed, after investigation by the European Commission and provided that the necessary criteria are fulfilled.

The level of such duties may never be higher than the dumping or subsidy margin found. It can however be lower if such lower duty is sufficient to remedy the injury suffered by the EU industry. This is called the 'lesser duty rule'. In the EU's current system, the lesser duty rule is applied consistently in all cases.

The Commission has recently taken the initiative to table a legislative proposal aimed at modernising the EU Trade Defence Instruments ([1]). One of the Commission's proposals in this context aims at no longer applying the lesser duty rule in cases of structural raw material distortions (in anti-dumping cases) and subsidisation (in anti-subsidy cases). This proposal, if adopted by the European Parliament and the Council, would have a significant impact on the fertiliser industry since dual pricing of gas would fall under the concept of structural raw material distortions. As a result the lesser duty rule would not be applied in such cases. This could ultimately lead to higher duties.

This proposal is in line with the Commission's other initiatives regarding access to raw materials, such as increased disciplines in Free Trade Agreements or action in the World Trade Organisation against distortive practices in trade in raw materials (such as for instance the complaint against unfair practices by China on exports of rare earths ([2])).

([1]) COM(2013 192 final, Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1225/2009 on protection against dumped imports and Council Regulation (EC) 597/2009 on protection against subsidised imports from countries not members of the European Community.

([2]) China — Measures related to the Exportation of Rare Earths, Tungsten and Molybdenum (WT/DS 432).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011093/13
a la Comisión
Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto (S&D)
(30 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Estrategia de devaluación salarial en España como única vía para ganar competitividad

Tal y como señala la OIT en su Informe Mundial sobre Salarios 2012-2013, el crecimiento de los salarios continúa siendo muy inferior al período anterior a la crisis en la Unión Europea. Las divergencias entre el aumento salarial y la productividad laboral, y entre las personas con mayores ingresos y las que menos perciben, son cada vez mayores, al tiempo que disminuye la proporción de rentas del trabajo. Esta inquietante situación conlleva graves consecuencias sociales, al tiempo que repercute negativamente en los elementos clave de la demanda agregada, en particular el consumo, la inversión y las exportaciones netas, necesarios para la recuperación y el crecimiento económico.

Pese a ello, el Comisario de Asuntos Económicos y Monetarios y Euro Olli Rehn continúa persistiendo en sus recomendaciones de devaluación salarial como única estrategia para ganar competitividad y generar crecimiento y empleo. El pasado mes de agosto defendió la celebración de un pacto en España con arreglo al cual los trabajadores aceptarían una rebaja de sueldo del 10 % en dos años a cambio de que las empresas se comprometieran a crear empleo de forma significativa.

Desde 2010, los salarios reales en España, una vez descontada la inflación, han caído un 6,3 %, sin que ello haya contribuido a la creación de empleo. ¿Puede explicar la Comisión en qué datos se basa para seguir persistiendo en una estrategia que agrava sistemáticamente el poder adquisitivo de numerosos hogares españoles y tiene como resultado un aumento de la pobreza y la exclusión social en España? ¿No cree la Comisión que hay formas mucho más justas, eficaces y sostenibles de ganar competitividad que la bajada de salarios?

El Comisario de Empleo, Asuntos Sociales e Industria Laszlo Andor puso en marcha en abril de 2012 una serie de medidas para impulsar la recuperación económica conocidas como «paquete de empleo» entre las que se incluyó la propuesta de establecer un salario mínimo en todos los Estados miembros, así como la subida de salarios con carácter general como instrumento de estímulo a la demanda interna y por ende del crecimiento económico en la Unión. ¿No cree que la Comisión evidencia que no tiene una estrategia clara ni de consenso para salir de la crisis?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(19 de noviembre de 2013)

Junto con una abrupta caída del empleo, una tasa de desempleo muy elevada y la necesidad de reequilibrar la economía tanto externa como internamente después del *boom*, España ha registrado en los últimos años un importante descenso de los costes laborales unitarios nominales (CLU). Hasta hace poco, este ajuste de los CLU se derivaba principalmente de la destrucción de empleo, pero últimamente la moderación salarial, apoyada por el acuerdo de los interlocutores sociales nacionales de enero de 2012, también ha contribuido a ello. En el paquete de empleo aprobado en abril de 2012, la Comisión puso de relieve la importancia de alinear, de conformidad con las prácticas nacionales de negociación colectiva, los salarios con la evolución de la productividad. La Comisión también hizo hincapié en la importancia de unos salarios dignos y sostenibles con el fin de luchar contra la pobreza de los ocupados.

La evaluación y las recomendaciones políticas para España se resumen en las recomendaciones específicas por país de 2013 ([1]), y en el documento de trabajo de los servicios de la Comisión que las acompaña ([2]), que resulta de la estrecha vigilancia de la evolución y reformas de los mercados económico, social y laboral españoles. La Comisión considera que el saneamiento presupuestario debe ir acompañado de reformas estructurales ambiciosas, incluido el fortalecimiento de la eficiencia y la eficacia de las políticas activas del mercado laboral, para restaurar la competitividad, impulsar el crecimiento a medio plazo, luchar contra el desempleo, en particular el desempleo juvenil, y reducir el riesgo de pobreza y exclusión.

Los paquetes de empleo e inversión social están orientados a apoyar las políticas encaminadas a aumentar las inversiones en las cualificaciones y capacidades de las personas, apoyar su plena participación en el empleo y en la vida social.

([1]) http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/es/13/st10/st10656-re01.es13.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/swd2013_spain_es.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011093/13
to the Commission
Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto (S&D)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Strategy of wage cuts in Spain as the only way to increase competitiveness

As the ILO indicates in its Global Wage Report 2012-2013, wage growth continues to be much lower than it was prior to the crisis in the European Union. A growing divergence exists between wage increases and labour productivity, and between people with higher incomes and those who earn less, while the labour income share is declining. This disturbing situation has serious social consequences, and it also negatively affects the main components of aggregate demand, particularly consumption, investment and net exports, which are necessary for recovery and economic growth.

Nevertheless, the Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Euro Olli Rehn persists in recommending wage cuts as the only strategy to increase competitiveness and generate growth and jobs. In August, he defended the conclusion of an agreement in Spain according to which workers would accept a 10% pay cut in two years, in exchange for companies' commitment to create significant jobs.

Since 2010, real wages in Spain, after accounting for inflation, have fallen by 6.3%, but this decline has not contributed to job creation. Can the Commission explain what data form the basis for its continued focus on a strategy that systematically damages the purchasing power of many Spanish households and results in an increase in poverty and social exclusion in Spain? Does the Commission not believe that there are much fairer, more effective and more sustainable ways to increase competitiveness than by cutting wages?

In April 2012, the Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Laszlo Andor implemented a series of measures to promote economic recovery, known as the 'employment package'. These measures included the proposal to establish a minimum wage in all Member States, as well as a general increase in wages as a means of stimulating domestic demand and thus economic growth in the Union. Does the Commission not believe that it has demonstrated a lack of a clear strategy or consensus for emerging from the crisis?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

Consistent with sharply falling employment, a very high unemployment rate and the need to rebalance the economy externally and internally after the boom, Spain recorded in the past few years a significant decline in nominal unit labour costs (ULC). Until recently, this adjustment in ULC derived mainly from labour shedding, but recently wage moderation, supported by the national social partners' agreement of January 2012, has also contributed to it. In the Employment Package adopted in April 2012, the Commission highlighted the importance of aligning, in accordance with national practices of collective bargaining, wages with productivity developments. The Commission also stressed the importance of decent and sustainable wages in order to fight in-work poverty.

The assessment and policy recommendations to Spain are summarised in the 2013 country-specific recommendations ([1]), and the accompanying Commission Staff Working Document ([2]), which results from the close monitoring of the Spanish economic, social and labour market developments and reforms. The Commission believes that fiscal consolidation needs to be accompanied by ambitious structural reforms, including reinforcing the efficiency and effectiveness of active labour market policies, to restore competitiveness, boost medium-term growth, fight unemployment, in particular youth unemployment, and reduce the risk of poverty and exclusion.

The Employment and the Social Investment Packages are geared to support policies aimed at raising investments in people's skills and capacities, supporting them to participate fully in employment and social life.

([1]) http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/13/st10/st10656-re01.en13.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/swd2013_spain_en.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011095/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(30 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Μεταρρύθμιση χρηματοπιστωτικού τομέα

Σύμφωνα με στοιχεία που παρουσιάστηκαν ενώπιον του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και σύμφωνα με σχετικά ψηφίσματα που εγκρίθηκαν από το Κοινοβούλιο (P7_TA(2013)0371 και P7_TA(2013)0372), παρατηρείται ότι ο ρυθμός της μεταρρύθμισης του τομέα των χρηματοπιστωτικών υπηρεσιών και της επίτευξης της Τραπεζικής Ένωσης είναι πολύ αργός. Οι καθυστερήσεις αυτές δημιουργούν αβεβαιότητα, ενώ πλήττουν τη βιωσιμότητα της οικονομικής ανάπτυξης και τη δημιουργία θέσεων εργασίας, που είναι σήμερα απόλυτα αναγκαίες για την ευρωπαϊκή οικονομία. Για την καθυστέρηση αυτή επιρρίπτονται ευθύνες τόσο στο Συμβούλιο και τα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ όσο και στην Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή.

Καλείται η Επιτροπή να απαντήσει στα πιο κάτω ερωτήματα:

1. Θεωρεί η Επιτροπή ότι η μεταρρύθμιση του χρηματοπιστωτικού τομέα και η επίτευξη μιας πραγματικής Τραπεζικής Ένωσης είναι απαραίτητη για την ευρωπαϊκή οικονομία και ότι θα αποβεί προς όφελος της Ένωσης και των κρατών μελών;

2. Υπάρχει όντως καθυστέρηση στην προώθηση των σχετικών διαδικασιών και, αν ναι, σε ποιους παράγοντες οφείλεται αυτή;

3. Θεωρεί η Επιτροπή ότι υπάρχουν ευθύνες των κρατών μελών και του Συμβουλίου για την καθυστέρηση; Αν ναι, μπορεί η Επιτροπή να κατονομάσει τα κράτη και τα μέλη του Συμβουλίου που θεωρούνται υπεύθυνα για τις καθυστερήσεις;

4. Αναγνωρίζει η Επιτροπή ότι υπάρχουν και δικές της ευθύνες για τη σημειούμενη καθυστέρηση, όπως αναφέρεται στο ψήφισμα του ΕΚ;

5. Τι προτίθεται να πράξει η Επιτροπή για επίσπευση των σχετικών διαδικασιών;

Απάντηση του κ. Barnier εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(29 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή έχει δεσμευθεί για τη μεταρρύθμιση του χρηματοπιστωτικού τομέα, προκειμένου να υπάρχει ένα σταθερό, διαφανές και υπεύθυνο χρηματοπιστωτικό σύστημα που θα στηρίζει την πραγματική οικονομία. Η Επιτροπή δεν συμφωνεί με τον ισχυρισμό της κας Βουλευτή σχετικά με τις ενδεχόμενες αδικαιολόγητες καθυστερήσεις στη μεταρρύθμιση του χρηματοπιστωτικού τομέα. Η Επιτροπή έχει υποβάλει έναν άνευ προηγουμένου αριθμό προτάσεων στον τομέα αυτόν, πολλές από τις οποίες έχουν ήδη εγκριθεί από τους συν-νομοθέτες, ή πρόκειται να εγκριθούν σύντομα. Αν και είναι σημαντική η ταχεία έγκριση, πρόκειται για περίπλοκα θέματα που απαιτούν κατάλληλο επίπεδο ελέγχου.

Η Τραπεζική Ένωση είναι πολύ σημαντική. Αποτελεί βασικό στοιχείο για τη συμπλήρωση της Οικονομικής και Νομισματικής Ένωσης και για την αποκατάσταση της εμπιστοσύνης στο τραπεζικό σύστημα. Ο κανονισμός (ΕΕ) αριθ. 1024/2013 του Συμβουλίου ([1]) είναι σε ισχύ και η ΕΚΤ αναμένεται να εκτελεί πλήρως τα καθήκοντά της από τον Νοέμβριο του 2014. Οι διαπραγματεύσεις για τον δεύτερο πυλώνα, τον ενιαίο μηχανισμό εξυγίανσης (ΕΜΕ), προχωρούν γρήγορα με σκοπό να επιτευχθεί τελική συμφωνία πριν από το τέλος της τρέχουσας κοινοβουλευτικής θητείας. Το Ευρωπαϊκό Συμβούλιο ζήτησε να επιτευχθεί συμφωνία επί των προτάσεων σχετικά με την ανάκαμψη και την εξυγίανση των τραπεζών (ΟΑΕ) και τα συστήματα εγγύησης των καταθέσεων (ΣΕΚ) έως το τέλος του τρέχοντος έτους.

Η Επιτροπή ενέκρινε πολύ πρόσφατα το Πρόγραμμα Εργασίας της (ΠΕΕ) για το 2014, το οποίο για πρώτη φορά περιλαμβάνει κατάλογο νομοθετικών προτάσεων που έχουν ήδη εγκριθεί και στις οποίες η Επιτροπή θεωρεί ότι θα πρέπει να δοθεί ιδιαίτερη προσοχή, λόγω της σημασίας τους και του γεγονότος ότι έχουν προχωρήσει επαρκώς ώστε να εκδοθούν κατά τους προσεχείς μήνες. Το ΠΕΕ περιλαμβάνει επίσης περιορισμένο αριθμό νέων πρωτοβουλιών προτεραιότητας, όπως η μακροπρόθεσμη χρηματοδότηση της πραγματικής οικονομίας και η εξυγίανση χρηματοπιστωτικών ιδρυμάτων εκτός των τραπεζών.

([1]) Κανονισμός (ΕΕ) αριθ. 1024/2013 του Συμβουλίου, της 15ης Οκτωβρίου 2013, για την ανάθεση ειδικών καθηκόντων στην ΕΚΤ σχετικά με πολιτικές που αφορούν την προληπτική εποπτεία των πιστωτικών ιδρυμάτων (ΕΕ L 287, σ. 63).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011095/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Financial sector reform

According to information presented to the European Parliament and resolutions adopted by Parliament (P7_TA(2013)0371 and P7_TA(2013)0372), the rate of reform of the financial services sector and progress in banking union are very slow. These delays are causing uncertainty and undermining the viability of economic development and job creation, which are vital today to the European economy. Both the Council and Member States of the EU and the European Commission are being blamed for this delay.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does the Commission consider that reform of the financial sector and real banking union are necessary to the European economy and will prove to be beneficial to the Union and the Member States?

2. Is there truly a delay in expediting the necessary procedures and, if so, what are the causes?

3. Does the Commission think that the Member States and the Council are to blame for the delay? If so, can the Commission say which Member States and Council members it considers to be responsible for the delays?

4. Does the Commission acknowledge that it too is responsible for the delay, as stated in the European Parliament resolution?

5. What does the Commission intend to do to expedite the necessary procedures?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2013)

The Commission is committed to reforming the financial sector in order to have a stable, transparent and responsible financial system supporting the real economy. The Commission does not agree with the assertion made by the Honourable Member on possible undue delays in reforming the financial sector. An unprecedented number of proposals in this field have been put forward by the Commission, many of which have already been adopted by co-legislators, or are close to adoption. While swift adoption is important, these are complex matters which require an appropriate degree of scrutiny.

The banking union is of highest importance. It is a key element to complement the Economic and Monetary Union and restore confidence in the banking system. Council Regulation (EU) No 1024/2013 ([1]) is in force and the ECB is expected to fully carry out its tasks as of November 2014. Negotiations on the second pillar, the Single Resolution Mechanism (SRM), are advancing fast with view of reaching a final agreement before the end of this Parliamentary cycle. The European Council has called for an agreement on the proposals on bank recovery and resolution (BRRD) and Deposit Guarantee Schemes (DGS) by the end of this year.

The Commission just adopted its Work Programme (CWP) for 2014 which includes for the first time a list of already-adopted legislative proposals which the Commission believes deserve special attention, given their importance and given that they are sufficiently advanced to be adopted in the coming months. The CWP also includes a limited number of new priority initiatives such as the long term financing of the real economy or the resolution of financial institutions other than banks.

([1]) Council Regulation (EU) No 1024/2013of 15 October 2013 conferring specific tasks on the ECB concerning policies relating to the prudential supervision of credit institutions (OJ L287 p. 63).

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-011096/13
Komisi
Jiří Maštálka (GUE/NGL)
(30. září 2013)

Předmět: Jak podpořit dárcovství orgánů v Evropě

V posledních desetiletích se počet případů transplantace orgánů zvýšil a stává se stále rozšířenější formou léčby, neboť je zásadní pro léčbu některých nemocí a má často pozitivní přínosy v podobě dalších let života navíc a zlepšení kvality života. V některých případech je transplantace jedinou možností, jak zachránit pacientův život.

Členské státy však čelí vážnému nedostatku dárců orgánů a zároveň se potýkají se zvýšenou poptávkou po orgánech. Každý den zemře v EU 12 pacientů, kteří jsou zapsáni na čekací listinu pro transplantaci orgánů, protože není dostatek vhodných orgánů.

Vzhledem k tomu, že dárcovství orgánů a transplantace jsou citlivá témata, se kterými se napříč EU zachází různě v závislosti na různých kulturních hodnotách a právních, správních a organizačních úpravách jednotlivých členských států, jak může Komise přispět k větší efektivitě a přístupnosti systémů transplantace orgánů?

Jak Komise podporuje rovný přístup k transplantaci?

Má Komise v úmyslu podpořit školení a zaměstnávání pracovníků ve zdravotnictví, kteří by se zabývali identifikací možných dárců orgánů a procesem dárcovství orgánů?

Jaká konkrétní opatření Komise přijala, aby podpořila členské státy ve vzájemné spolupráci při vytváření účinných systémů zaměřených na identifikaci osob, které by byly po smrti ochotné darovat své orgány?

Zahrnují tato opatření i země mimo EU, například země bývalého Sovětského svazu?

Odpověď Tonia Borga jménem Komise
(20. listopadu 2013)

Komise si dovoluje odkázat váženého pana poslance na své odpovědi na otázky E-007300/13, E-000513/13, E-000780/13, E-001680/12 a E-010591/2011 ([1]).

Právní mandát EU se zaměřuje na aspekty jakosti a bezpečnosti orgánů k transplantaci ([2]). S cílem pomoci členským státům zvýšit dostupnost orgánů a zefektivnit a zpřístupnit transplantační systémy přijala Komise akční plán ([3]), který usnadňuje výměnu osvědčených postupů prostřednictvím pracovních skupin a projektů v rámci programu v oblasti zdraví ([4]).

V letech 2007 až 2012 se počet transplantací v EU zvýšil z 24 941 na 30 274. Osvědčené postupy se stále více rozvíjejí, například v oblasti identifikace dárců a co nejlepšího využití orgánů. Na základě dohod země EU provádějí výměnu orgánů nebo léčí pacienty z ostatních zemí. Aby se spolupráce dále zlepšovala, Komise v současné době financuje projekt FOEDUS ([5]).

S cílem vyškolit zdravotníky v oblasti identifikace dárců Komise poskytla finanční prostředky na několik projektů, např. na evropský vzdělávací kurz koordinace dárců transplantátů a na projekt ACCORD ([6]), který se mimo jiné zaměřuje na budování kapacit prostřednictvím twinningových projektů.

Zatímco většina prvků transplantace, včetně systémů pro udělování souhlasu, spadá do pravomoci jednotlivých států, směrnice, akční plány a projekty financované EU zavádějí nástroje pro zlepšení transplantačních systémů. Členské státy se vyzývají k tomu, aby tyto požadavky a doporučení plnily, jak se uvádí v nedávných závěrech Rady ([7]). Prostřednictvím grantu Radě Evropy a grantů TAIEX se mohou na tomto úsilí podílet také země, které nejsou členy EU.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/cs/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Úř. věst. L 207, 6.8.2010. Směrnice Evropského parlamentu a Rady 2010/53/EU ze dne 7. července 2010 o jakostních a bezpečnostních normách pro lidské orgány určené k transplantaci.
([3]) Sdělení Komise – Akční plán pro dárcovství a transplantaci orgánů (2009-2015): posílená spolupráce mezi členskými státy, KOM(2008) 819/3.
([4]) Seznam projektů je k dispozici na adrese http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/projects/database.html
([5]) Společná akce o usnadnění výměny orgánů darovaných v členských státech EU, http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/news/news232.html
([6]) Dosažení celkové koordinace dárcovství orgánů v celé Evropské unii, http://www.accord-ja.eu/.
([7]) Závěry Rady o dárcovství a transplantaci orgánů (2012/C 396/03).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011096/13
to the Commission
Jiří Maštálka (GUE/NGL)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: How to support organ donation in Europe

Over the past decades organ transplantation has increased and has become a more and more widespread form of treatment, which is necessary for treating certain diseases and often has positive results in terms of the number of years gained and the improvement in quality of life it engenders. In some cases, transplantation is the only possibility for saving a person's life.

However, the Member States are facing a serious shortage of organ donors and at the same time there is an increase in the demand for organs. Every day 12 patients on waiting lists for organ transplants in the EU die because of a lack of suitable organs.

Bearing in mind that organ donation and transplantation are sensitive topics, which are dealt with in different ways throughout the EU according to the different cultural values and legal, administrative and organisation arrangements of each Member State, how can the Commission make organ transplantation systems more efficient and accessible?

How does the Commission support equal access to transplantation?

Does the Commission intend to support the training and employment of health professionals involved in the identification of potential organ donors and the organ donation process?

What concrete measures has the Commission adopted to encourage Member States to work together to establish efficient systems aimed at identifying individuals who would be willing to donate their organs once deceased?

Do these measures include non-EU countries, for example, those from the former Soviet Union?

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

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to questions E-007300/13, E-000513/13, E-000780/13, E-001680/12 and E-010591/2011 ([1]).

The EU legal mandate focuses on quality and safety aspects of organs for transplantation ([2]). To help Member States increase organ availability and make transplantation systems more efficient and accessible, the Commission adopted an Action Plan ([3]) that facilitates the exchange of best practices, via working groups and projects under the Health Programme ([4]).

From 2007 to 2012 the number of transplants in the EU increased from 24 941 to 30 274. Best practices are increasingly developed for example on donor identification and best use of organs. Via agreements, EU countries exchange organs or treat each others' patients. To further improve cooperation, the Commission is currently funding the FOEDUS project ([5]).

To train health professionals in donor identification, the Commission has funded several projects, e.g. a European Training Course in Transplant Donor Coordination, and ACCORD ([6]) which includes capacity building via twinnings.

While most elements of transplantation, including consent systems, fall under national competence, the directive, Action Plan and EU-funded projects provide tools to help improve transplant systems. Member States are invited to follow these requirements and recommendations, as stated in recent Council conclusions ([7]). Via a Grant to the Council of Europe and TAIEX grants, non-EU countries can be associated to these efforts.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) OJ L 207, 6.8.2010. Directive 2010/53/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on standards of quality and safety of human organs intended for transplantation.
([3]) Communication from the Commission 'Action Plan on organ donation and transplantation (2009-2015): Strengthened Cooperation between Member States', COM(2008) 819/3.
([4]) The list of projects is available at http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/projects/database.html
([5]) Joint Action on Facilitating exchange of organs donated in EU Member States; http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/news/news232.html
([6]) Achieving Comprehensive Coordination in Organ Donation throughout the European Union, http://www.accord-ja.eu/
([7]) Council conclusions on organ donation and transplantation (2012/C 396/03).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011097/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Deforestazione e obiettivi 2020 irrealistici: le importazioni dell'UE sono la principale causa del fenomeno globale

La deforestazione rappresenta una problematica internazionale rilevante sotto vari punti di vista. Gli effetti derivanti da tale fenomeno sono noti: erosione, scarsa permeabilità del terreno, ruscellamento delle piogge e soprattutto riduzione dell'assorbimento naturale dei gas serra e conseguente accelerazione del surriscaldamento globale. Il rapporto della Commissione «The impact of EU consumption on deforestation» evidenzia un dato allarmante: la maggior parte delle forniture agricole importate dall'UE proviene dallo sfruttamento di terreni di recente deforestazione. In altre parole, l'UE importa prodotti derivanti dalla deforestazione in quantità superiore a quella prevista, e tale fenomeno riguarda soprattutto beni di consumo legati all'abbattimento delle foreste (come carne, latte, caffè). Di fatto dunque i dati mostrano che l'incidenza dell'UE sulla deforestazione risulta di gran lunga superiore rispetto a quella di altre regioni industrializzate: rispetto alla Cina, l'UE ha un impatto sulla deforestazione quattro volte superiore e rispetto al Nord America il rapporto è di 3 a 1 per l'Europa. Fuori dall'Europa un possibile modello di best practice può arrivare dal caso dell'Ecuador che, recentemente, ha avviato un programma di riforestazione con fini commerciali, per far in modo che l'industria abbia a disposizione materia prima per la lavorazione senza danneggiare le foreste. Nella stessa direzione vanno tutti gli effetti positivi collegati alla diffusione del consumo locale e stagionale, rispetto al ricorso all'importazione di prodotti alimentari provenienti, appunto, da aree distanti ed esposti ai rischi di interventi non sostenibili.

Considerato che:

— gli obiettivi dell'UE sono la riduzione del 50 % della deforestazione tropicale e l'eliminazione di quella globale entro il 2030;

— la Commissione stessa è consapevole che l'UE è ben lontana da tali obiettivi;

— la consistente incidenza delle importazioni dell'UE sulla deforestazione indiretta rende irrealistici e non effettivi gli impegni dichiarati dall'Europa;

si chiede alla Commissione:

1. se intende realizzare studi per approfondire l'impatto del settore alimentare su tale fenomeno;

2. quali azioni intende intraprendere al fine di sensibilizzare i consumatori, orientandoli verso l'acquisto di prodotti alimentari sani, sicuri e sostenibili, oltre che per quelli dell'industria cartaria, del legno e per i prodotti energetici;

3. se ritiene opportuno avviare campagne di informazione per l'utilizzo di prodotti certificati FSC (principale meccanismo di garanzia sull'origine del legno o della carta).

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(26 novembre 2013)

1. Nel quadro del programma generale di azione dell'Unione in materia di ambiente fino al 2020, la Commissione ha deciso di valutare l'impatto sull'ambiente, in un contesto globale, dei consumi di cibo e beni non alimentari all'interno dell'Unione e, se del caso, formulare proposte d'intervento per tener conto degli esiti di tali valutazioni, nonché prendere in esame lo sviluppo di un piano d'azione dell'Unione in materia di deforestazione e degrado delle foreste.

2. Al momento la Commissione non prevede nessuna nuova iniziativa in quest'ambito, ma continuerà a raccogliere idee e a trarre insegnamenti dalle numerose iniziative attualmente in corso che riguardano le cause all'origine della deforestazione e del degrado forestale.

3. Il regime di certificazione forestale FSC, così come altri regimi privati di certificazione nel settore delle foreste e del legname, è un sistema volontario basato sul mercato atto a garantire che i prodotti del legno provengano da foreste adeguatamente gestite e/o da catene di approvvigionamento controllate. Dal momento che l'adesione al regime è volontaria e che sul mercato sono disponibili altri regimi, la Commissione non prevede alcuna iniziativa specifica per promuovere questo regime in particolare. Il piano d'azione FLEGT dell'Unione europea, pubblicato nel 2003 ([1]), stabilisce le azioni per prevenire le importazioni di legno illegale nell'UE, per migliorare la fornitura di legno legale e aumentare la domanda di legname da foreste gestite in modo responsabile. L'obiettivo a lungo termine del piano d'azione è, tra l'altro, la gestione sostenibile delle foreste. Nell'UE e in numerosi paesi terzi produttori di legname sono organizzate regolarmente sessioni di informazione, inoltre, la Commissione finanzia azioni nel contesto della sua politica di cooperazione allo sviluppo per promuovere una gestione sostenibile delle risorse forestali nei paesi della foresta tropicale che registrano tassi elevati di deforestazione e sostiene iniziative globali come il programma REDD+ ([2]).

([1]) COM(2006)302 def.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/forests/redd/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011097/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Deforestation and unrealistic 2020 objectives: EU imports are the main cause of the global phenomenon

Deforestation is a significant global problem for various reasons. The effects of the phenomenon are well known: erosion, low soil permeability, rain run-off and, above all, reduced natural absorption of greenhouse gases leading to accelerated global warming. The Commission report 'The impact of EU consumption on deforestation' includes an alarming finding: most of the agricultural commodities imported into the EU come from the exploitation of recently deforested land. In other words, the EU imports more goods associated with deforestation than expected, and this problem mainly concerns consumer goods linked to forest clearing, such as meat, milk and coffee. The data therefore show that the EU's impact on deforestation is far greater than that of other industrialised regions: it is four times greater than China's and three times greater than North America's. Outside Europe, Ecuador may serve as a model of best practice. Recently it launched a commercial reforestation programme to ensure that industry can access raw materials for manufacturing without damaging forests. In the same vein, there are all the positive effects associated with more people consuming locally produced and seasonal goods as opposed to resorting to imported foodstuffs that come from distant regions and which may have been produced unsustainably.

Given that the EU's objectives are to reduce gross tropical deforestation by 50% and to halt global deforestation by 2030; that the Commission itself is aware that the EU is still nowhere near achieving those objectives; and that the significant impact that EU imports have on indirect deforestation means that the commitments made by Europe are unrealistic and impractical, can the Commission say:

1. whether it will carry out studies to look more closely at the food industry's impact on deforestation;

2. what action it will take in order to raise consumers' awareness, encouraging them to buy wholesome, safe and sustainable food products, and to do the same for paper, wood and energy products;

3. whether it believes that information campaigns should be launched on the use of products with FSC certification (the main mechanism for guaranteeing the origin of wood and paper)?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2013)

1. The Commission has agreed, in the General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 to assess the environmental impact, in a global context, of the Union consumption of food and non-food commodities and, if appropriate, develop policy proposals to address the findings of such assessments, and consider the development of a Union action plan on deforestation and forest degradation.

2. The Commission is not currently planning any new initiative in this area. It will continue to gather ideas and learn from the many initiatives currently underway dealing with the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation.

3. FSC certification, like other private existing schemes of certification in the forest/timber sector, is a market-based, voluntary system for ensuring that wood products come from well-managed forests and/or controlled supply chains. As it is voluntary in nature and also considering that other schemes are available on the market, the Commission does not plan any specific initiative to promote this scheme in particular. The EU FLEGT Action Plan, published in 2003 ([1]), sets out actions to prevent the import of illegal wood into the EU, to improve the supply of legal timber and to increase demand for wood coming from responsibly managed forests. The long-term aim of the action plan is sustainable forest management amongst others. Information sessions are organised regularly in the EU and in a number of timber producing third countries. In addition, the Commission finances actions in the context of its development cooperation to encourage sustainable forest management in tropical forest countries affected by high deforestation rates and support global initiatives as REDD+ ([2]).

([1]) COM(2006) 302 final.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/forests/redd/index_en.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011098/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Utilizzo medico dell'ormone della crescita per combattere lo scompenso cardiaco

L'insufficienza cardiaca cronica, meglio conosciuta come scompenso cardiaco, è una patologia molto frequente che interessa circa un individuo su dieci tra le persone di età superiore ai 65 anni.

Attualmente la terapia per questo genere di disfunzione prevede la somministrazione di:

— farmaci vasodilatatori per ridurre la congestione polmonare e aumentare la gittata cardiaca (volume di sangue espulso dal ventricolo in un minuto),

— farmaci ACE-inibitori o sartani i quali riducono la costrizione dei vasi arteriosi diminuendo la pressione arteriosa,

— digossina utile nello scompenso da marcata disfunzione sistolica (bassa frazione di eiezione),

— beta-bloccanti, che riducono il carico di lavoro del cuore, diminuendo la frequenza cardiaca,

— farmaci diuretici per controllare l'eccessiva ritenzione di liquidi.

Gli effetti collaterali di tali terapie possono essere molto pesanti, come tosse, ipotensione, danno renale, ipopotassiemia, ipomagnesemia, alcalosi metabolica e iperkaliemia.

In un recente studio realizzato presso l'Azienda Ospedaliera Universitaria Federico II di Napoli sono stati valutati gli effetti della terapia ormonale con ormone della crescita (GH) nei pazienti con scompenso cardiaco.

Occorre considerare che in precedenti ricerche, gli scienziati avevano già dimostrato come il 30-40 % dei pazienti affetti da scompenso cardiaco cronico presenti un deficit di GH. Inoltre, i pazienti che nel citato studio hanno assunto il GH hanno mostrato un aumento della capacità di esercizio fisico pari a circa il 50 % (il più importante indice di sopravvivenza di questa popolazione di pazienti) e hanno ottenuto anche un miglioramento della funzione di pompa cardiaca di circa il 33 %. La somministrazione di GH si è mostrata sicura e non ha causato effetti collaterali.

Intende la Commissione acquisire e valutare i risultati di tale studio? Prevede di investire nello sviluppo delle innovazioni in tale campo?

Risposta di Máire Geoghegan-Quinn a nome della Commissione
(15 novembre 2013)

La Commissione è a conoscenza dello studio citato dall'onorevole deputato, pubblicato sul Journal of the American College of Cardiology ([1]), che analizza il trattamento dei pazienti affetti da scompenso cardiaco e deficit di ormone della crescita. La prassi non prevede che la Commissione valuti i risultati di ricerche non direttamente correlate alle sue attività di finanziamento.

Attraverso il settimo programma quadro di attività di ricerca, sviluppo tecnologico e dimostrazione (7° PQ/2007-2013), la Commissione ha destinato circa 173 milioni di euro al sostegno alla ricerca sull'insufficienza cardiaca.

Anche Orizzonte 2020, il programma quadro di ricerca e innovazione (2014-2020), aprirà nuove prospettive allo sviluppo di terapie per il trattamento delle malattie cardiovascolari, in particolare attraverso il capitolo sulle priorità sociali «Salute, evoluzione demografica e benessere».

([1]) Cittadini A, et al «Growth hormone replacement delays the progression of chronic heart failure combined with growth hormone deficiency» J Am Coll Cardiol 2013; DOI: 10.1016/j.jchf.2013.04.003.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011098/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Use of growth hormone in medicine to prevent heart failure

Chronic cardiac insufficiency, better known as heart failure, is a very common disease affecting around one in ten people over the age of 65.

The treatment for this type of disorder currently consists in administering:

— vasodilators to reduce pulmonary congestion and increase cardiac output (the volume of blood pumped by the heart per minute);

— ACE inhibitors or sartans, which decrease the tension of blood vessels, thus lowering blood pressure;

— digoxin, which is useful for treating heart failure due to marked systolic dysfunction (low ejection fraction);

— beta blockers, which reduce the workload of the heart, thus lowering the heart rate;

— and diuretics to control excess fluid retention.

These treatments can cause very serious side effects, such as coughs, low blood pressure, kidney damage, hypokalaemia, hypomagnesaemia, metabolic alkalosis and hyperkalaemia.

A recent study by the Federico II University Hospital in Naples looked at the effects of growth hormone (GH) therapy in patients with heart failure.

It should be pointed out that scientists had already shown in previous studies that 30-40% of patients with chronic heart failure have a GH deficiency. Moreover, patients who took GH during the study saw their physical exercise capacity increase by around 50% (the most important indicator of survival in this patient population) and their cardiac function improve by around 33%. GH administration was shown to be safe and did not cause any side effects.

Does the Commission intend to obtain and assess the results of this study? Will it invest in the development of innovative treatments in this field?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

The Commission is aware of the study referred to by the Honourable Member, which investigates the treatment of heart failure patients with growth hormone deficiency and was published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology ([1]). It is not Commission policy to assess research results that do not directly relate to its funding activities.

Through its Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7, 2007- 2013), the Commission is currently devoting some EUR 173 million to support for research on heart failure.

Through *inter alia* the 'Health, demographic change and well-being' societal challenge, Horizon 2020 — The framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) will offer new opportunities to address the development of new treatments for cardiovascular diseases.

([1]) Cittadini A, et al 'Growth hormone replacement delays the progression of chronic heart failure combined with growth hormone deficiency' J Am Coll Cardiol 2013; DOI: 10.1016/j.jchf.2013.04.003.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011099/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Modalità innovative di gestione dei rifiuti

In tema di gestione dei rifiuti sono state elaborate delle modalità all'avanguardia. In primo luogo, una prestigiosa università statunitense ha inventato il «trash track», ossia un chip posto sui rifiuti di origine domestica che invia il segnale a un server, consentendo di conoscere l'intero percorso del rifiuto. Sono stati eseguiti esperimenti a New York, Londra e Seattle, scoprendo ad esempio che una cartuccia d'inchiostro aveva viaggiato per 6 152 kilometri prima di arrivare a destinazione.

Un'idea simile proviene da un altro istituto, che ha elaborato un sistema che consente sia la tracciabilità dei percorsi che l'individuazione dei luoghi di carico e scarico. Tale sistema, composto di un'unità transponder GPS/GPRS/GSM da montare sui mezzi di trasporto dei rifiuti, comunica a un sistema centrale la posizione del veicolo come pure le variazioni di peso e di rotta.

Un'azienda italiana, invece, ha predisposto dei sacchetti «intelligenti»: all'atto della consegna alla famiglia, il distributore registra il codice a barre del kit di buste e il codice fiscale della famiglia, trasmettendo i dati a un sistema centrale. In tale modo è possibile monitorare il comportamento «ecologico» del nucleo familiare.

Considerato che:

— in particolar modo in Italia, lo smaltimento illegale di rifiuti pericolosi è una delle fonti di approvvigionamento delle ecomafie e dunque tracciarne il percorso significherebbe interrompere la tratta;

— le persone in generale dovrebbero prendere più consapevolezza di cosa accade ai rifiuti, senza pensare che essi «scompaiano» una volta che sono stati gettati nel bidone;

— la produzione di rifiuti nell'area UE tende ad aumentare;

può la Commissione far sapere se:

1. intenda esaminare le suddette modalità di tracciamento dei rifiuti;

2. ritenga sia opportuno supportare gli Stati membri nell'implementazione di un tale sistema al fine di arrivare al 100 % di rifiuti riciclati?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(19 novembre 2013)

La Commissione sostiene gli Stati membri nell'attuazione della legislazione UE sui rifiuti, tra l'altro nel raggiungimento degli obiettivi di riciclaggio ([1]).

Ciononostante, la pertinenza, l'utilità concreta, i costi e l'efficacia delle diverse tecnologie per la gestione dei rifiuti dipendono in grande misura dall'approccio adottato dalle autorità nazionali, regionali o locali, dal contesto locale e dai requisiti relativi alle imprese che se ne occupano. Contrastare le attività illecite legate al traffico dei rifiuti rientra tra le competenze delle autorità nazionali di polizia.

Il sostegno finanziario dell'Unione a queste tecnologie può essere concesso attraverso i Fondi strutturali e di coesione, lo strumento LIFE o il Programma quadro per l'innovazione e la competitività — Programma per lo spirito imprenditoriale e l'innovazione (CIP-EIP).

Inoltre, la Commissione fornisce sostegno finanziario a favore delle attività di ricerca e sviluppo nell'ambito del 7° programma quadro (7PQ) per tecnologie applicabili alla gestione dei rifiuti, quali il sistema di identificazione a radio frequenza (RFID) e «l'Internet degli oggetti». La ricerca in questo campo sarà ulteriormente approfondita nell'ambito del programma di ricerca e innovazione Orizzonte 2020 e attraverso il partenariato europeo per l'innovazione concernente le materie prime.

([1]) Cfr. http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/framework/support_implementation.htm

Infine, nell'ambito dell'attuale riesame della legislazione sui rifiuti, la Commissione sta esaminando i registri centralizzati creati dai diversi Stati membri al fine di raccogliere in modo più affidabile e semplificato i dati sulla gestione dei rifiuti forniti dai vari operatori, basandosi tra l'altro sui dati E-PRTR ([2]). La creazione di tali registri in tutti gli Stati membri potrebbe essere uno strumento efficace per migliorare l'attuazione delle disposizioni in materia (ad esempio il controllo del rispetto degli obiettivi e il controllo della gestione dei rifiuti pericolosi).

([2]) E-PTRP è il registro europeo delle emissioni e dei trasferimenti di sostanze inquinanti.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011099/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Innovative methods of managing waste

State-of-the-art methods of managing waste have been developed. Firstly, a prestigious US university has invented the 'trash track', namely a chip affixed to household waste which sends a signal to a server, enabling the entire journey of the waste to be tracked. Experiments have taken place in New York, London and Seattle, discovering, for example, that an ink cartridge travelled 6 152 kilometres before reaching its destination.

Another institute came up with a similar idea and developed a system allowing journeys to be tracked and pick-up and disposal points to be identified. This system consists of a GPS/GPRS/GSM transponder unit fitted to waste transport vehicles. It signals the vehicle's position, as well as weight variations and route changes, to a central system.

An Italian company has instead developed smart bags. When the distributor delivers them to a family, he records the barcode from the set of bags together with the family's tax code, and sends the data to a central system. The family's 'green' behaviour can therefore be monitored.

Given that:

— in Italy in particular, the illegal disposal of hazardous waste is a source of supply for ecomafias, so tracking its journey would halt this trafficking;

— in general, people need to be more aware of what happens to waste, without thinking that it just disappears once it has been thrown in the bin;

— the amount of waste produced in the EU is rising;

1. does the Commission intend to examine the above methods of tracking waste;

2. does it believe it appropriate to support the Member States in implementing such a system in order to achieve 100% recycling of waste?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

The Commission supports Member States in implementing EU waste legislation, including achieving EU recycling targets ([1]).

However, the relevance, practical usefulness, costs and efficiency of different waste-related technologies depends to a large extent on the waste management options applied by national, regional or local authorities, on local circumstances and on requirements of enterprises dealing with waste. Illegal activities relating to waste trafficking remain in the competence of national police authorities.

Community financial support may be available for such technologies through the structural and cohesion funds, LIFE or the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme — Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (CIP-EIP).

In addition, the Commission has been providing financial support for research and development activities under the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) for technologies applicable to waste management, such as the RFID (Radio Frequency Identification), and the Internet of Things (IoT). Research in this field will be taken further under the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, and through the Raw Materials European Innovation Partnership.

([1]) see e.g. http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/framework/support_implementation.htm

Finally, within the context of an ongoing waste legislation review, the Commission is examining the centralised registries established by different Member States to gather waste management data from various operators in a more reliable and simplified way, building *inter alia* on E-PRTR data ([2]). The establishment of such registries in all Member States could be an effective tool to improve implementation (e.g. monitoring of compliance with targets and control of hazardous wastes).

([2]) E-PTRP is the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011100/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Pratiche sleali e abusive nella filiera alimentare europea

A livello di filiera agricola europea, si registrano tensioni nei rapporti tra produzione primaria, industria e retail, fino ad arrivare in alcuni casi a vere e proprie vessazioni a carico degli agricoltori/fornitori. Tra le pratiche sleali si segnalano, ad esempio, pagamenti tardivi, modifiche unilaterali dei contratti, clausole contrattuali inique e limitato accesso al mercato. Spesso, inoltre, la selezione degli operatori viene effettuata sulla base di aspetti esclusivamente economici, danneggiando non solo i produttori che prediligono la qualità, ma anche gli stessi consumatori. Si è assistito quest'anno infatti a due casi eclatanti: il cosiddetto Horsegate e il Porkgate. Da ciò risulta evidente come la ricerca del prezzo più basso produca gravi effetti sulla sicurezza alimentare e sulla fiducia dei consumatori.

Per cercare di migliorare i rapporti tra operatori del settore è stato elaborato un accordo volontario europeo che, tuttavia, il fronte unito degli agricoltori e delle loro cooperative nell'UE non ha firmato in quanto, a suo avviso, gli accordi volontari non sono sufficienti a risolvere le problematiche tra gli operatori della filiera.

Occorre considerare che, secondo tali accordi, le sanzioni previste per i retail che non si adeguano alle buoni prassi contrattuali sono virtuali e non proporzionate all'entità del danno, che tali accordi non garantiscono l'anonimato di quegli operatori che segnalano di subire prassi commerciali abusive e che i tempi e le modalità di valutazione degli esiti di questi accordi volontari sono incerti e soggettivi.

Alla luce di quanto precedentemente esposto, può la Commissione far sapere se:

1. intende effettuare ulteriori indagini in tale settore volte a valutare l'impatto delle pratiche scorrette sulla filiera agro-alimentare;

2. conosce eventuali progressi compiuti dagli Stati membri nel risolvere il problema delle prassi commerciali scorrette lungo la filiera alimentare;

3. il livello di regolazione della disputa si concentra sul correggere le distorsioni «intrinseche» del mercato nel suo insieme o, invece, sul regolare le prassi dei singoli soggetti contraenti (contract/competition law)? Ritiene che ciò debba essere fatto con strumenti vincolanti o volontari (hard law/soft law)?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(29 novembre 2013)

1. La Commissione è a conoscenza delle pratiche commerciali sleali tra imprese nella catena di fornitura alimentare e dei danni che possono arrecare a partner commerciali economicamente dipendenti, molti dei quali sono piccole imprese. La lotta contro le pratiche commerciali sleali è una delle priorità indicate dal Piano d'azione europeo per il commercio al dettaglio ([1]), adottato dalla Commissione il 31 gennaio 2013. Per ottenere dati sul problema, sui suoi effetti e sulle possibili risoluzioni, la Commissione ha aperto una consultazione pubblica sulla base di un Libro verde sulle pratiche commerciali sleali. Inoltre, uno studio sull'argomento ([2]) fornirà dati quantitativi sull'effetto esercitato dallo squilibrio di mercato tra commercianti al dettaglio e fornitori sulla scelta e sull'innovazione per il consumatore finale.

I servizi della Commissione stanno effettuando un'analisi d'impatto per individuare il modo migliore per affrontare le pratiche commerciali sleali. I risultati e le future prospettive dell'accordo volontario europeo, nonché le sue eventuali carenze, a cui fa riferimento l'onorevole parlamentare, saranno parte integrante di tale analisi.

2. Nell'ambito dell'analisi, i servizi della Commissione hanno raccolto informazioni complete sulle iniziative esistenti ed emergenti negli Stati membri per combattere le pratiche commerciali sleali: si tratta di iniziative normative o volontarie, o di una combinazione dei due tipi. Anche l'analisi d'impatto della Commissione si baserà su una valutazione delle iniziative nazionali.

([1]) Comunicazione della Commissione «Piano d'azione europeo per il commercio al dettaglio», COM(2013)36 def.
([2]) Studio «The economic impact of modern retail on choice and innovation in the EU food sector» (L'impatto economico della moderna vendita al dettaglio sulla scelta e sull'innovazione nel settore alimentare dell'UE), COMP/2012/015.

3. I servizi della Commissione non hanno ancora ultimato la valutazione. Nella loro analisi, essi esaminano diverse opzioni strategiche e le loro eventuali conseguenze. Le opzioni considerate variano dall'affidarsi all'iniziativa volontaria fino a una legislazione vincolante, con diversi gradi di requisiti in materia di armonizzazione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011100/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Unfair and abusive practices in the European food supply chain

In the European agricultural sector relations between primary production, industry and retail have become so strained that, in some cases, farmers and suppliers have been genuinely harassed. The unfair practices include, for example, late payments, one-sided contract changes, unfair contractual terms and restricted access to the market. Furthermore, operators are often selected on a purely economic basis, to the detriment not only of producers who strive for quality but also of consumers. We have in fact seen two striking examples this year: Horsegate and Porkgate. They clearly show that pushing prices down to their lowest level has grave repercussions for food safety and consumer confidence.

A European voluntary agreement has been drawn up in an effort to improve relations between operators in the sector. However, the united voice of farmers and their cooperatives in the European Union has not signed it because it believes that voluntary agreements are not enough to resolve the issues between the sector's operators.

It should be pointed out that, according to these agreements, the penalties prescribed for retailers that fail to adhere to good contractual practices are notional and do not reflect the amount of damage caused, that these agreements do not guarantee that operators who report abusive commercial practices will remain anonymous, and that the time frames and methods for assessing the outcomes of these voluntary agreements are vague and subjective.

1. Does the Commission plan to carry out further investigations in this sector in order to assess the impact of unfair practices on the food supply chain?

2. Is it aware of any progress made by the Member States in resolving the problem of unfair commercial practices in the food supply chain?

3. Are efforts to resolve the dispute focused on correcting 'inherent' distortions of the market as a whole, or on regulating the practices of individual contracting parties (contract/competition law)? Does the Commission believe that this should be done with binding or voluntary instruments (hard law/soft law)?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2013)

1. The Commission is aware of unfair business-to-business trading practices (UTPs) in the food supply chain and the harmful effects these may have on economically dependent trading partners, many of which are small businesses. Tackling UTPs is one of the actions identified in the European Retail Action Plan ([1]), adopted by the Commission on 31 January 2013. In order to gather evidence on the problem, its effects and possible resolutions, the Commission has launched a public consultation on the basis of a Green Paper on UTPs. In addition, a study ([2]) will provide quantitative evidence on the impact of the market imbalance between retailers and suppliers on choice and innovation for the end consumer.

The Commission services are currently undertaking an impact analysis assessing how UTPs could best be addressed. The achievements and future perspective of the European voluntary agreement as well as its possible shortfalls, mentioned in the question of the Honourable Member, are an integral part of the impact analysis.

2. In the context of its analysis, the Commission services have gathered comprehensive information on existing and emerging initiatives in Member States to address UTPs. These are regulatory or voluntary initiatives or a combination of both. An assessment of the national initiatives is also feeding into the Commission's impact analysis.

3. The assessment of the Commission services is not yet finalised. In its analysis, the Commission services examine several policy options and their possible impact. The considered options range from reliance on the voluntary initiative to binding legislation, including different degrees of harmonisation requirements.

([1]) Commission Communication Setting up a European Retail Action Plan, COM(2013) 36 final.
([2]) Study on The economic impact of modern retail on choice and innovation in the EU food sector, COMP/2012/015.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011101/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Problemi nella centrale nucleare di Tricastin

Il 16 settembre scorso, presso la centrale nucleare di Tricastin (Drôme) in Francia, è avvenuto un incidente di livello 1: la presenza anormale di trizio, un isotopo dell'idrogeno tra i principali radionuclidi emessi dai reattori nucleari, è stata segnalata martedì nelle falde sotterranee della centrale atomica.

L'incidente è stato classificato di livello 1 in una scala che va da zero a sette (il massimo).

L'attività del trizio riscontrata sotto i reattori 2 e 3 (180 becquerel/litro) è dodici volte superiore alla media, ma sessanta volte inferiore alla quantità massima ammessa dall'Organizzazione mondiale della sanità.

Quello di lunedì scorso è solo l'ultimo di una serie di incidenti della centrale, definita da associazioni ambientaliste e deputati francesi come «ancestrale e pericolosa».

Considerando che:

— il parco centrali nucleari francese fornisce l'80 % dell'energia elettrica alla rete e deve quindi seguirne la curva delle variazioni di potenza, con conseguente sensibile aumento dell'usura legato al fatto che una centrale nucleare necessita di un uso quanto più possibile lineare;

— i pericoli derivanti dall'allungamento arbitrario della vita delle centrali nucleari da parte delle aziende proprietarie sono noti, e il parco centrali francese si trova in una situazione di deterioramento particolarmente avanzato,

si chiede alla Commissione di rispondere ai quesiti di seguito elencati.

1. Di quali informazioni dispone circa l'attuale situazione a Tricastin?

2. Di quali informazioni dispone in merito alla contaminazione delle falde acquifere nell'area di Tricastin prima dell'incidente del 16 settembre 2013?

3. Prevede di ispezionare il sito di Tricastin ai sensi dell'articolo 35 del trattato Euratom? In caso negativo, per quale ragione?

4. Come giudica la decisione di far analizzare le falde acquifere presso tutti i siti francesi in cui sono ubicati reattori nucleari?

5. Non ritiene necessario rivedere la priorità e urgenza dei programmi di *Super Smart Grid* alla luce del fatto che, oltre ad abbattere i costi di produzione e al consumo, allevierebbero i carichi usuranti cui sono sottoposte le centrali attuali?

Risposta di Günther Oettinger a nome della Commissione
(2 dicembre 2013)

1. Gli incidenti di livello 1 della scala INES, come quello descritto dall'onorevole deputato, non sono notificati a livello internazionale. Di conseguenza, la Commissione non ha ricevuto alcuna informazione in merito a eventuali incidenti presso la centrale nucleare di Tricastin tramite i consueti canali di notifica. Tuttavia, la Commissione dispone di informazioni in merito alla presenza anomala di trizio nelle falde acquifere, segnalata durante un controllo di routine sul sito della centrale nucleare. Il 16 settembre 2013 l'«Autorité de sûreté nucléaire» (ASN — l'autorità nucleare francese) ha reso noti i risultati di questa verifica. I livelli di trizio riscontrati sono leggermente superiori alla media, ma nettamente inferiori a una quantità tale da suscitare preoccupazioni per la sicurezza delle persone o dell'ambiente.

2. Nel luglio 2008 una fuga presso l'impianto AREVA-SOCATRI (SOCiété Auxiliaire du TRIcastin, situato a Tricastin nei pressi della centrale nucleare) ha causato la contaminazione con uranio delle falde acquifere, anche all'esterno dello stabilimento. Questo avvenimento non aveva alcun legame con il funzionamento della centrale nucleare di Tricastin.

3. Una missione di controllo ai sensi dell'articolo 35 del trattato Euratom non è prevista a breve termine, in quanto nel maggio 2008 si è proceduto all'ispezione dell'impianto di arricchimento dell'uranio George Besse I e di SOCATRI.

4. La decisione in merito alla validità di queste verifiche rientra nelle competenze e nella discrezionalità delle autorità francesi.

5. Lo sviluppo di reti intelligenti in Europa è una priorità della Commissione europea e rientra, ad esempio, nelle aree tematiche prioritarie previste dal regolamento (UE) n. 347/2013 ([1]). L'elenco dei progetti di interesse comune (PIC) per tutta l'Unione comprende progetti di reti intelligenti, come ad esempio Green-Me (PIC 10.2.), che interessa l'area di due regioni amministrative francesi e di cinque regioni amministrative italiane ([2]).

([1]) Orientamenti per le infrastrutture energetiche transeuropee.

([2]) Questo progetto punta a rafforzare l'integrazione delle fonti di energia rinnovabile tramite la realizzazione di sistemi di automazione, controllo e monitoraggio nelle sottostazioni a media-alta tensione e a potenziare i servizi di comunicazione avanzata con i generatori di energia rinnovabile e lo stoccaggio in sottostazioni primarie.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011101/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Problems at the Tricastin nuclear power plant

On Monday 16 September 2013, there was a level 1 incident at the Tricastin nuclear power plant in Drôme, France: abnormal levels of tritium, a hydrogen isotope and one of the main radionuclides emitted by nuclear reactors, were found in the aquifers beneath the nuclear plant the next day.

The incident was classified as level 1 on a scale that goes from zero to a maximum of seven.

The tritium activity detected beneath reactors 2 and 3 (180 becquerel/litre) was 12 times the average, but 60 times lower than the maximum level permitted by the World Health Organisation.

Last Monday's incident was the latest in a series of incidents at the plant, which has been called outdated and dangerous by environmental associations and French MPs.

In France, nuclear power plants account for 80% of the electricity supplied to the grid and are therefore bound to follow its pattern of power variations, resulting in significantly higher wear and tear owing to the fact that nuclear power plants should be used as consistently as possible.

The dangers resulting from the lifespan of nuclear power plants being arbitrarily extended by the companies that own them are well known, and French nuclear plants are in a particularly advanced state of disrepair.

1. What information does the Commission have about the current situation at Tricastin?

2. What information does it have about the contamination of the aquifers in the Tricastin area before the incident on 16 September 2013?

3. Is it planning to inspect the Tricastin site pursuant to Article 35 of the Euratom Treaty? If not, why?

4. What does it think of the decision to have the aquifers analysed at all nuclear reactor sites in France?

5. Does it think it should revise the priority and urgency of Super Smart Grid programmes in the light of the fact that, as well as lowering production and consumption costs, would alleviate the arduous loads to which current plants are subjected?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

1. Level 1 incidents under the International Nuclear Event Scale, such as the one described by the Honourable Member, are not notified internationally. As a consequence, the Commission has not received any information about any incidents at the Tricastin nuclear power plant (NPP) through the usual notification channels. However, the Commission has information about abnormal findings of tritium in groundwater during routine monitoring on the site of the NPP, whose findings were made public by the 'Autorité de sûreté nucléaire' (ASN — the French Nuclear Authority) on 16 September 2013. These tritium levels were indeed slightly higher than usual, but much lower than any level that should raise concerns as regards the safety of people or the environment.

2. In July 2008, a leakage at AREVA-SOCATRI (SOCiété Auxiliaire du TRIcastin, located at the Tricastin site in the vicinity of the NPP) led to the contamination of groundwater, also off-site, with uranium. This event was not related to the operation of the Tricastin NPP.

3. A verification mission under Article 35 Euratom is not foreseen in the short term, since a verification was performed at the uranium enrichment plant George Besse I and SOCATRI in May 2008.

4. A decision as to the appropriateness of such tests is within the remit and discretion of the competent authorities in France.

5. Developing Smart Grids in Europe is a priority of the European Commission. For example, regulation (EU) No 347/2013 ([1]) establishes the deployment of smart grids as one of its priority thematic areas. The Union-wide list of Projects of Common Interest (PCI) included Smart Grid projects, such as Green-Me (PCI 10.2.), which covers the area of two French and five Italian administrative regions ([2]).

([1]) Guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure.

([2]) This project aims at enhancing the integration of renewable energy sources by implementing automation, control and monitoring systems in high and medium-high voltage substations and advanced communication with renewable generators and storage in primary substations.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011102/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Rischi sismici riguardo la diga di Rogun in Tagikistan

Il progetto della diga di Rogun, nella Repubblica del Tagikistan — che una volta ultimata, con i suoi 335 metri, sarà la più alta al mondo — è stato concepito nel 1960 dall'Unione Sovietica. I lavori iniziarono nel 1976 e si protrassero fino al 1991, anno del crollo dell'Urss. Dal 2010 il governo tagiko sta tentando di far ripartire il progetto grazie anche a cooperazioni internazionali.

Ora gli attori coinvolti sono in attesa del report della Banca Mondiale sulla fattibilità dell'opera, ma è noto che sull'area dove è stata costruita la base della futura grande diga è stata osservata una frattura sismotettonica con spostamenti e con un forte strato di sale, di uno spessore fino a 100 metri, il quale è soggetto a erosione.

Gli esperti prevedono che in caso di terremoti o cedimenti strutturali un'enorme massa d'acqua scorrerà a valle a velocità di 130 metri al secondo, ovvero 468 km all'ora, verso la centrale idroelettrica di Nurek. La diga di Nurek verrebbe completamente distrutta, e Nurek coperta dalla corrente alta 280 metri, con la velocità 86 metri al secondo. Allo stesso modo verrebbero distrutte tutte le altre centrali ed acquedotti della cascata di Vakhsh e inondate le città di Sarban, Kurgantyube e quasi tutta Rumyi. Queste città per prime percepirebbero l'impatto della corrente d'acqua, la quale, continuando il suo percorso distruttivo, finirebbe con l'inondare decine di altre città e paesi in Tagikistan, Uzbekistan e Turkmenistan.

Considerato che l'Unione europea è direttamente coinvolta, tramite l'iniziativa Europeaid, in numerosi progetti regionali di cooperazione, tra i quali il Documento di strategia regionale per l'assistenza all'Asia centrale per il periodo 2007-2013 (Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia for the period 2007-2013), che prevede tra le sue azioni l'iniziativa UE-Asia centrale per l'ambiente e l'acqua (EU-Central Asia Environment and Water Initiative), chiedo alla Commissione:

1. se intende approfondire e informare in merito al coinvolgimento economico e politico delle istituzioni europee riguardo al progetto in oggetto;

2. se intende effettuare pressioni internazionali per scoraggiare un progetto di tale rischio potenziale.

Risposta di Andris Piebalgs a nome della Commissione
(4 dicembre 2013)

1. L'UE segue con attenzione le questioni idriche e energetiche in Asia centrale. La Commissione e l'Alta Rappresentante sottolineano da sempre la necessità di un approccio basato sul dialogo e di meccanismi concordati tra i paesi a monte e a valle, quale unica via praticabile per individuare soluzioni sostenibili e reciprocamente vantaggiose ai problemi di gestione delle acque nella regione dell'Asia centrale. La Commissione e l'Alta Rappresentante sottolineano, con tutte le controparti dell'Asia centrale, l'importanza di veri e propri studi di fattibilità tecnici, ambientali e socioeconomici quale elemento imprescindibile di qualsiasi valutazione in merito alla costruzione di dighe di grandi dimensioni. Nel caso della stazione idroelettrica di Roghun bisogna tener presente non solo gli intrinsechi rischi tecnici ma anche le dirette implicazioni politico-istituzionali per i paesi confinanti.

La Commissione ha inoltre posto l'accento, anche nel quadro dei programmi di assistenza tecnica, sull'importanza, nei paesi dell'Asia centrale, di riforme idriche e energetiche in grado di migliorare la governance e l'efficienza, in particolare grazie a programmi di ristrutturazione o alla costruzione di impianti idroelettrici di piccole e medie dimensioni. Le istituzioni europee non prevedono di sostenere finanziariamente il progetto Roghun.

2. La Commissione e l'Alta Rappresentante seguono attentamente l'evoluzione degli studi di valutazione del progetto della stazione idroelettrica di Roghun, eseguiti attualmente da esperti della Banca mondiale. La Commissione, in coordinamento con l'AR, ha fatto ripetutamente presente alla Banca mondiale la necessità di agire nel rispetto dei suddetti principi e di negoziare soluzioni di lungo termine sostenibili, che tengano conto degli interessi di tutte le parti in causa.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011102/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Seismic risk affecting the Rogun dam in Tajikistan

The planned dam in Rogun, in the Republic of Tajikistan — which, once completed, will be the tallest in the world, standing at 335 metres — was designed by the Soviet Union in 1960. Work began in 1976 and continued until 1991, the year the USSR collapsed. Since 2010, the Tajik Government has been trying to restart the project with international cooperation.

Now, those involved in the project are awaiting the World Bank's report on the project's feasibility, but it is known that a seismotectonic fracture has been observed in the area on which the future massive dam will stand, along with shifting and a large layer of rock salt, up to 100 metres thick, which is subject to erosion.

Experts predict that if there is an earthquake or the structure subsides, a huge volume of water will flood out at a speed of 130 metres per second (468 km/hour) towards the Nurek hydroelectric power plant. The Nurek dam would be completely destroyed and Nurek itself would be submerged by 280 metres of water, travelling at 86 metres/second. In the same way, all the other power plants and aqueducts along the River Vakhsh would be destroyed and the towns of Sarband, Qurghonteppa and almost all of Rumi would be flooded. These towns would be the first to be affected by the water flow, which, continuing along its path of destruction, would end up flooding dozens of other towns and villages in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

Through the Europeaid initiative, the European Union is directly involved in many regional cooperation projects, including the Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia for the period 2007-2013), which includes as one of its actions the EU-Central Asia Environment and Water Initiative.

1. Does the Commission plan to look into and report on the European institutions' financial and political involvement in the project in question?

2. Does it plan to exert international pressure to discourage such a potentially risky project?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

1. The EU pays great attention to water and energy issues in Central Asia. The Commission and the HR have always underlined the need for a dialogue-driven approach and agreed mechanisms between up-stream and down-stream countries as the only viable way to identify sustainable and mutually advantageous solutions for the water management issues in the Central Asia region. With all Central Asia counterparts, the Commission and the HR have stressed the importance of fully fledged technical, environmental and socioeconomic feasibility studies as pre-conditions for any assessment concerning the construction of big dams. Moreover, in the case of the Roghun hydro power station, specific attention has to be devoted both to the intrinsic technical risks, as well as to the direct institutional and political implications for neighbouring countries.

The Commission has equally underlined, also through its technical assistance programmes, the relevance of Energy and Water Sector reforms in Central Asia, aiming at improved governance and increased efficiency, notably small to medium-sized hydro-power plant construction or rehabilitation schemes. No financial support to the Roghun project is foreseen from the European institutions.

2. The Commission as well as the HR are closely observing the developments concerning the assessment studies of the Roghun Hydro Power Scheme, currently being carried out by the the World Bank's experts. The Commission in coordination with the HR has been continuously alerting the World Bank on the need of the abovementioned principles to negotiate long-term sustainable solutions which take into account the interests of all sides.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011105/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Massacro di cristiani in Pakistan

Il 22 settembre scorso si è verificato il più grave attentato ai danni della popolazione di fede cristiana della storia del Pakistan. Sono decedute circa 80 persone e almeno 110 sono state ferite nel corso di un attentato suicida che ha colpito una chiesa cristiana a Peshawar. Il terribile bilancio di questo ennesimo attentato va a sommarsi alle numerose vittime cristiane decedute, a causa di attentati terroristici o di ripercussioni di alcuni conflitti civili, negli ultimi mesi in diverse zone del mondo, in particolare in Nigeria e in Egitto. Le persecuzioni dei cristiani nel mondo stanno diventando col passare del tempo sempre più sistematiche e violente, causando pericolose ripercussioni in aree geografiche dove la convivenza interreligiosa è il presupposto per la stabilità e la pace.

Alla luce di quanto sopra, può il Vicepresidente della Commissione europea/Alto Rappresentante per la politica estera e di sicurezza far sapere:

1. Se intende proporre agli Stati membri dell'UE un'azione coordinata al fine di tutelare la sicurezza dei cristiani nel mondo e, in caso di risposta affermativa, con quali modalità;

2. Se ha intenzione di chiedere al governo del Pakistan azioni di tutela specifiche nei confronti della minoranza cristiana e, in caso di risposta affermativa, quali;

3. Se ritiene possibile, in caso si presentassero situazioni di particolare pericolo e/o sistematica persecuzione ai danni delle popolazioni civili di fede cristiana, la realizzazione di specifici piani di accoglienza e sostegno umanitario rivolti alle suddette popolazioni;

4. In base a quali criteri potrebbe proporre agli Stati membri dell'Unione un intervento di carattere militare al fine di tutelare l'incolumità delle popolazioni cristiane vittime di persecuzioni e continui attentati?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(12 dicembre 2013)

Con l'adozione, il 24 giugno 2013, degli orientamenti in materia di libertà di religione o di opinione, l'UE ha sottolineato il proprio impegno per promuovere e difendere questo diritto umano universale, ovunque e per chiunque. L'UE punta l'attenzione sul diritto delle persone di professare o non professare una fede e, individualmente o insieme ad altri altri, di manifestare liberamente il proprio credo senza timore di intimidazioni, discriminazioni, violenze o attacchi. Gli orientamenti sottolineano che è dovere primario dei singoli Stati garantire la libertà di religione e di opinione nonché attuare misure efficaci al fine di prevenire le violazioni della libertà di religione e di opinione o, se tali violazioni si verificano, sanzionarle e punire i responsabili.

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente ha condannato nel modo più fermo l'attentato contro i cristiani a Peshawar e ha chiesto al governo pakistano di intervenire con maggior determinazione per garantire la protezione di tutti i suoi cittadini, a prescindere dalla religione o convinzione, e consegnare i responsabili alla giustizia. La situazione vulnerabile in cui versano tutte le minoranze in Pakistan è al centro delle preoccupazioni relative ai diritti umani espresse dall'UE. I governi che si sono succeduti in Pakistan hanno riconosciuto il dovere imposto dalla costituzione di salvaguardare le minoranze. Il Consiglio degli affari esteri del giugno 2013 ha ribadito il chiaro impegno dell'UE a collaborare con il Pakistan per combattere le minacce terroristiche provenienti sia dall'interno che dall'esterno del paese e consegnare i responsabili alla giustizia.

I membri delle minoranze religiose perseguitate possono e devono chiedere lo status di rifugiati e il reinsediamento. Secondo la Convenzione relativa allo status dei rifugiati del 1951, una persona costretta a fuggire dal proprio paese a causa del «timore fondato di essere perseguitata per motivi […] di religione» ha diritto allo status di rifugiato.

Un intervento militare dell'UE non è ipotizzabile per le situazioni specifiche cui fa riferimento l'interrogazione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011105/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Massacre of Christians in Pakistan

On 22 September 2013 the worst anti-Christian attack in the history of Pakistan was carried out. Some 80 people were killed and at least 110 were wounded in a suicide attack targeting a Christian church in Peshawar. The terrible death toll from this latest attack comes on top of the deaths of numerous Christians killed in recent months as a result of terrorist attacks or the repercussions of civil conflicts in various parts of the world, notably Nigeria and Egypt. Persecutions of Christians around the world are becoming more and more systematic and violent over time and are having dangerous repercussions in regions where interfaith harmony is an essential requirement for stability and peace.

1. Will the Vice-President/High Representative propose that the EU Member States take coordinated action to protect the safety of Christians around the world, and if so, by what means?

2. Will she call on the Pakistani Government to take specific measures to protect the Christian minority, and if so, what form will those measures take?

3. In the event of any particularly dangerous situations and/or systematic persecution of Christian civilian populations, does she believe that specific admission and humanitarian support plans could be created for these populations?

4. On what grounds could she propose military intervention to the EU Member States in order to protect the safety of Christian populations subject to persecution and repeated attacks?

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

With the adoption of guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) on 24 June 2013, the EU underlined its commitment to promote and defend this universal human right, everywhere and for everyone. The EU focuses on the right of individuals to believe or not to believe, and, alone or in community with others, to freely manifest their beliefs, without fear of intimidation, discrimination, violence or attack. The guidelines highlight that it is the primary duty of States to ensure FoRB and that States must put in place effective measures in order to prevent or sanction violations of FoRB when they occur and ensure accountability.

The HR/VP condemned in the strongest terms the attack on Christians in Peshawar, and called on the Pakistani Government to take stronger action to ensure the protection of all its citizens — regardless of their religion or belief — and to bring the perpetrators to justice. The vulnerable situation of all minorities in Pakistan is at the forefront of human rights concerns raised by the EU. Successive governments of Pakistan have acknowledged their duty to safeguard minority communities under the constitution. The June 2013 Foreign Affairs Council reiterated the EU's unequivocal commitment to working with Pakistan to address the shared threat from terrorism both inside and outside its borders, including bringing perpetrators to justice.

Members of persecuted religious minorities can and do apply for refugee status and resettlement. Under the 1951 Refugee Convention, a person who has been forced to flee his country because of a 'well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of […] religion' is entitled to refugee status.

EU military intervention is not an option in the specific situations referred to in the question.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011106/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Contaminazione da sostanze perfluoroalchiliche dell'acqua potabile in alcune aree della Regione del Veneto e aumento delle patologie correlate: la posizione dei medici

L'interrogante fa seguito all'interrogazione n. E-009477/2013 sulla contaminazione da sostanze perfluoroalchiliche dell'acqua potabile di una trentina di comuni della Regione del Veneto per riferire alla Commissione un importante aggiornamento in merito a quanto ivi segnalato: in data 10 settembre 2013 più di trenta medici delle province di Padova, Verona e Vicenza — per gran parte membri dell'ISDE (International Society of Doctors for Environment) — hanno inviato alla stampa locale una lettera contenente la loro presa di posizione sulla questione, ottenendone l'immediata pubblicazione ([1]).

I medici firmatari riportano nella lettera i dati contenuti nel rapporto finale del novembre 2012 di uno studio scientifico statunitense svolto da un comitato di epidemiologi indipendenti (denominato C8 Science Panel) istituito in seguito a un analogo caso di contaminazione ([2]), in base ai quali i soggetti aventi concentrazioni più elevate di sostanze perfluoroalchiliche nel sangue contraggono con maggiore frequenza le seguenti patologie: cancro dei reni, cancro dei testicoli, ipercolesterolemia, malattie della tiroide, ipertensione della gravidanza/preeclampsia e colite ulcerosa. I medici ricordano, inoltre, l'esistenza di studi italiani che suggeriscono la probabile correlazione tra esposizione a tali sostanze e infertilità maschile e femminile, nonché di altri studi condotti in numerose altre nazioni che dimostrano la probabile associazione e correlazione con malattie cardiovascolari, ictus cerebrale, diabete, linfomi e leucemie ([3]).

Riferiscono sempre i medici che trattasi di patologie per le quali, in base ai dati ufficiali — provenienti dal Registro tumori del Veneto e dalle ULSS (Unità locali socio sanitarie) — nella zona contaminata si rileva un maggiore numero di decessi e un più significativo consumo di farmaci e di risorse sanitarie rispetto ad altre aree in Italia; esiste quindi il sospetto, avvalorato dagli studi scientifici succitati, che tale maggiore incidenza sia dovuta alla comprovata esposizione della popolazione a tali sostanze. I medici chiudono la missiva formulando l'espressa richiesta alle autorità competenti di avviare con urgenza uno *screening* sanitario dei cittadini residenti nei comuni interessati, suggerendo la collaborazione di esperti indipendenti (come i membri del comitato scientifico ISDE) e possibilmente ponendo i relativi oneri a carico degli inquinatori, come accaduto nella vicenda statunitense richiamata in apertura. Sulla base di quanto esposto, qual è la posizione della Commissione in merito a quanto autorevolmente riferito e richiesto dai medici veneti?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(22 novembre 2013)

La Commissione prende atto delle informazioni supplementari fornite dall'onorevole parlamentare.

Per quanto riguarda gli *screening* sanitari che devono essere eseguiti dalle autorità competenti nelle zone colpite e il possibile ricorso ad esperti indipendenti (comitato scientifico ISDE), la decisione di effettuarli, nonché i mezzi della loro esecuzione, rientrano nelle competenze degli Stati membri.

La Commissione trasmetterà alle autorità venete le informazioni fornite e indagherà circa le misure adottate per porre rimedio a questa situazione.

([1]) Per la lettura integrale della lettera, che reca in calce l'elenco degli oltre trenta medici firmatari, si rinvia al seguente link: http://www.bassanopiu.com/leggi/contaminazione-acque-lappello-dei-medici-screening-immediato-della-popolazione

([2]) V. sito web del comitato: http://www.c8sciencepanel.org/index.html

([3]) Nella succitata lettera si ricorda altresì che, in base ad altri studi, tali sostanze sono sicuramente cancerogene per gli animali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011106/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Drinking water of some areas of the Veneto region contaminated with perfluoroalkylated substances and an increase in related illnesses: the position of doctors

This question is a follow-up to Question E-009477/2013 on 'High concentrations of PFAS (perfluoroalkylated substances) in the drinking water of some 30 municipalities in the Veneto Region', in order to inform the Commission of an important update to the situation described in that question: on 10 September 2013, more than 30 doctors from the provinces of Padua, Verona and Vicenza — most of them members of the International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE) — sent a letter stating their position on the issue to the local press, which was immediately published ([1]).

The medical signatories include in the letter data from the final report, dated November 2012, of a US scientific study carried out by a committee of independent epidemiologists (C8 Science Panel) ([2]) established following a similar case of contamination, where subjects with higher PFAS concentrations in their blood develop the following illnesses more frequently: kidney cancer, testicular cancer, hypercholesterolaemia, thyroid diseases, hypertension in pregnancy/pre-eclampsia and ulcerative colitis. Moreover, the doctors point out the existence of Italian studies which suggest a probable link between exposure to these substances and male and female infertility, as well as other studies carried out in countless other countries showing a likely association and link with cardiovascular diseases, strokes, diabetes, lymphoma and leukaemia ([3]).

The doctors also report that, according to official data from the Veneto Cancer Registry and from local health units, these illnesses lead to a higher number of deaths and a higher use of medicines and healthcare resources in the contaminated area than in other areas of Italy. There are therefore grounds for suspecting that this higher incidence is caused by the population's proven exposure to these substances, a suspicion supported by the above scientific studies. The doctors end their letter by expressly calling on the competent authorities to implement urgent health screening of the people living in the municipalities affected. They suggest that independent experts (such as members of the ISDE scientific committee) could participate, with the relevant costs possibly being charged to the polluters, as happened in the above case in the US. In light of the above, what is the Commission's position with regard to the authoritative information and requests presented by the Veneto doctors?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2013)

The Commission takes note of the additional information provided by the Honourable Member.

As regards the health screenings to be implemented by the competent authorities in the affected areas and the possible use of independent experts (ISDE scientific committee), the decision to undertake them, as well as the means by which these should be done are matters which fall under Member States' competence.

The Commission will inform the Veneto authorities of the information provided and inquire what action has been taken to address this situation.

([1]) To read the letter (in Italian), follow the link: http://www.bassanopiu.com/leggi/contaminazione-acque-lappello-dei-medici-screening-immediato-della-popolazione
([2]) http://www.c8sciencepanel.org/index.html
([3]) In said letter it is also stressed that, according to other studies, these substances are definitely carcinogenic to animals.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011107/13
aan de Commissie
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(30 september 2013)

Betreft: Telecommunicatie — harmonisering USB-kabels

Naar aanleiding van het probleem met incompatibele GSM-laders, gingen de Europese Commissie en de grootste fabrikanten van mobiele telefoons akkoord met een memorandum van overeenstemming. Dit memorandum had als bedoeling om alle in de EU verkochte laders van voor dataverkeer geschikte mobiele telefoons te harmoniseren.

Echter, enkele toestellen worden niet opgeladen met een traditionele lader, maar via een USB-kabel. Ook hier zijn verschillende soorten kabels, zelfs binnen het gamma van één fabrikant. Zo kan bijvoorbeeld een Apple iPhone 5 niet opgeladen worden via de USB-kabel van andere Appleproducten (oudere iPhones en iPads).

1. Is de Commissie van mening dat ook een harmonisatie van USB-kabels wenselijk is?

2. Heeft de Commissie in deze richting al stappen ondernomen?

3. Is hiervoor al een tijdpad vastgesteld?

4. Zijn er nog andere categorieën binnen de radio- en telecommunicatieapparatuur waarvan de Commissie denkt dat harmonisering voor specifieke onderdelen positieve gevolgen kan hebben voor consumenten?

Antwoord van de heer Tajani namens de Commissie
(22 november 2013)

De ondertekenaars van het memorandum van overeenstemming over de harmonisatie van laders voor mobiele telefoons die geschikt zijn voor dataverkeer zijn technische specificaties overeengekomen die zijn omschreven in bijlage II bij het memorandum ([1]). Het document bevat specificaties voor de technische kenmerken van een universele lader en ligt ten grondslag aan de Europese normen die de Europese normalisatie-instellingen hebben ontwikkeld om de interoperabiliteit en elektromagnetische compatibiliteit te garanderen. Die normen omvatten ook specificaties voor USB-kabels.

Het memorandum van overeenstemming staat het gebruik van een adapter toe, maar schrijft niet voor onder welke voorwaarden die moet worden verstrekt. De fabrikanten zijn niet verplicht om met de Commissie te overleggen over hun marketingstrategieën en de Commissie kan zich niet in die strategieën mengen, als adapters maar beschikbaar worden gesteld.

Volgens de Commissie kunnen de consumenten en de fabrikanten voordeel halen uit een uitbreiding van het initiatief inzake de harmonisatie van laders. Daarom heeft de Commissie een studie besteld om de resultaten van het memorandum van overeenstemming te beoordelen en om de verenigbaarheid van de universeleladertechnologie met andere draagbare apparaten op de markt, zoals digitale camera's, GPS-ontvangers, enz. te analyseren met inachtneming van de technologische innovatie.

De resultaten van de studie zullen beschikbaar zijn in de eerste helft van 2014. De studie zal de basis vormen voor de voorbereiding van eventuele verdere maatregelen op dit gebied en zal ook mogelijkheden onderzoeken voor een passende follow-up, met inbegrip van vrijwillige overeenkomsten en wetgeving.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/rtte/files/chargers/chargers_annex_ii_to_mou_january_12_2010_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011107/13
to the Commission
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Telecommunications — harmonisation of USB cables

In response to the problem of incompatible mobile phone chargers, the European Commission and the major mobile phone manufacturers agreed a memorandum of understanding, the purpose of which was to harmonise the chargers for all data-enabled mobile phones sold in the EU.

However, some devices are not charged using a traditional charger, but via a USB cable. Here, too, there are various kinds of cables, including within the range of a single manufacturer. Thus, for example, an Apple iPhone 5 cannot be charged using the USB cable from other Apple products (older iPhones and iPads).

1. Does the Commission believe that it would be desirable to also harmonise USB cables?

2. Has the Commission already taken steps in this direction?

3. Has a timeline for such a move already been established?

4. Are there other categories within the field of radio and telecoms equipment where the Commission believes that harmonisation for specific elements could have a positive impact for consumers?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2013)

Signatories of the memorandum of understanding on the harmonisation of chargers for data-enabled mobile phones (MoU) agreed technical specifications defined in MoU's Annex II ([1]). The document provided specifications for the technical characteristics of a common charger and was the basis for the European standards developed by the European Standards Organisations to guarantee interoperability and electromagnetic compatibility. These standards also include USB cables' specifications.

The MoU allowed for the use of an adaptor without prescribing the conditions for its provision. Manufactures are not obliged to consult the Commission on their marketing strategies and the Commission could not interfere on these strategies provided that adaptors are made available.

The Commission believes that consumers and manufacturers can benefit from an extension of the initiative on harmonisation of charger. The Commission has therefore launched a study to evaluate the results achieved with the MoU and to analyse compatibility of the common charger technology with other portable devices on the market such as digital cameras, GPS receivers, etc., while taking into account technological innovations.

The results of the study will be available by first semester of 2014. The study will be the basis for the preparation of possible further measures in this area and will also consider options for appropriate follow-up including voluntary agreement and legislation.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/rtte/files/chargers/chargers_annex_ii_to_mou_january_12_2010_en.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-011108/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(30 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Διαδικασία πώλησης της ΟΠΑΠ ΑΕ

Την 12.8.2013, το επενδυτικό σχήμα Emma Delta ήλθε σε συμφωνία με το Ταμείο Αξιοποίησης Ιδιωτικής Περιουσίας Δημοσίου (ΤΑΙΠΕΔ) για την εξαγορά του 33% του Οργανισμού Προγνωστικών Αγώνων Ποδοσφαίρου ΑΕ (ΟΠΑΠ), έναντι 652 εκατομμυρίων ευρώ.

Δημοσιεύματα της 25.9.2013 αναφέρουν ότι «η εταιρεία ακόμη ψάχνει τα χρήματα για να ολοκληρώσει την εν λόγω αποκρατικοποίηση. Και αυτό θα το πετύχει με δύο τρόπους: Είτε με τη σύναψη δανείου είτε με την έκδοση ομολόγων». Πιο συγκεκριμένα, σύμφωνα πάντα με τα δημοσιεύματα, η εταιρεία είτε «θα εκδώσει δύο ομολογιακά δάνεια ύψους 250 και 150 εκατομμυρίων ευρώ, με εγγυητές της έκδοσης τις εταιρείες Emma Delta Ltd και Emma Delta Hellenic Holding Ltd τα ομολογιακά δάνεια θα έχουν ως ενέχυρο τις ίδιες τις μετοχές του Οργανισμού τις οποίες όμως οι νέοι ιδιοκτήτες του ΟΠΑΠ δεν έχουν στην κατοχή τους, αφού, παρά την υπογραφή της συμφωνίας, το ΤΑΙΠΕΔ δεν έχει ολοκληρώσει ακόμη τη διαδικασία μεταβίβασης, η οποία αναμένεται να γίνει μέσα στο πρώτο δεκαπενθήμερο του Οκτωβρίου» είτε «θα λάβει δάνειο από τις εγχώριες συστημικές τράπεζες, οι οποίες έχουν μόλις ανακεφαλαιοποιηθεί με χρήματα των ελλήνων φορολογούμενων».

Με βάση τα ανωτέρω και ανεξάρτητα από την άποψη που μπορεί να έχει κάποιος για τις ιδιωτικοποιήσεις, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Γνωρίζει το περιεχόμενο της συμφωνίας μεταξύ της Emma Delta και του ΤΑΙΠΕΔ; Γνωρίζει με ποια κριτήρια έγινε η επιλογή του αγοραστή; Δεν όφειλε ο υποψήφιος αγοραστής πριν τη συμφωνία να έχει αποδείξει ότι διαθέτει τα απαραίτητα κεφάλαια για την εξαγορά των μετοχών του ΟΠΑΠ ΑΕ;

Είναι συμβατές με την κοινοτική νομοθεσία οι δύο μέθοδοι που προτίθεται να ακολουθήσει η εταιρεία προκειμένου να αντλήσει τα απαραίτητα, για την εξαγορά του ΟΠΑΠ ΑΕ, κεφάλαια;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Τα κριτήρια για την επιλογή των δυνητικών αγοραστών συνίστανται σε ένα ευρύ φάσμα απαιτήσεων όσον αφορά την προεπιλογή και την επιλεξιμότητα από νομική σκοπιά, καθώς και τους λοιπούς όρους και προϋποθέσεις. Τα κριτήρια αυτά γνωστοποιήθηκαν από το ταμείο ιδιωτικοποιήσεων (ΤΑΙΠΕΔ) στην πρόσκληση υποβολής εκδήλωσης ενδιαφέροντος και έπρεπε να πληρούνται από τους επενδυτές ή τις κοινοπραξίες επενδυτών που επιθυμούσαν να συμμετάσχουν στη διαδικασία υποβολής προσφορών.

Συνήθως, οι βέλτιστες πρακτικές υπαγορεύουν τη χρήση επιστολών τραπεζικών εγγυήσεων για τους συμμετέχοντες υποψηφίους σε ατομική βάση ή σε κοινοπραξίες. Στην περίπτωση του ΟΠΑΠ, το ταμείο ιδιωτικοποιήσεων (ΤΑΙΠΕΔ) ζήτησε επιστολή από τράπεζα ή άλλο πιστωτικό ίδρυμα που λειτουργεί νόμιμα σε ένα τουλάχιστον κράτος μέλος της ΕΕ, του ΕΟΧ ή του ΟΟΣΑ, η οποία να επιβεβαιώνει τη συνολική χρηματοοικονομική κατάσταση του υποψηφίου. Σε περίπτωση κοινοπραξιών, η παραπάνω επιστολή έπρεπε να προσκομιστεί για το κάθε μέλος της κοινοπραξίας.

Οι δύο μέθοδοι χρηματοδότησης που προτείνονται χρησιμοποιούνται ευρέως από εταιρικά σχήματα και δεν θέτουν πρόβλημα νομιμότητας στο βαθμό που οι συμβάσεις συνάπτονται και είναι σύμφωνες με τις διατάξεις της νομοθεσίας της ΕΕ.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011108/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: OPAP SA sale

On 12 August 2013, the Emma Delta equity fund clinched a deal with Taiped, the Greek privatisation agency for the purchase of a 33% stake in OPAP, a Greek football prognostics company at a cost of EUR 652 million.

On 25 September 2013, it was reported that Emma Delta was still seeking the necessary funds for the privatisation deal in the form of either a loan or bond issues. That is to say, it was considering the possibility of two bond issues to a value of EUR 250 million and EUR 150 million respectively, guaranteed by Emma Delta Ltd and Emma Delta Hellenic Holding Ltd and backed by OPAP shares, which it does not, however, actually hold, since, although the deal has been signed, Taiped has not yet completed the transfer and is unlikely to do to so before the first half of October. An alternative solution would be to take out a loan with Greek systemic banks, which have just been recapitalised with cash injections from Greek taxpayers.

In view of this and notwithstanding the acceptability of such privatisations:

Does the Commission have any information regarding the terms of the deal concluded by Emma Delta and Taiped and the criteria for selection of the prospective purchasers? Should the latter not have been required to show that they possessed the necessary capital before any agreement was reached?

Are the two proposed methods of raising the capital necessary for the purchase of the stake in OPAP SA admissible under EC law?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(5 November 2013)

The criteria for selection of the prospective purchasers were consisting of a wide range of prequalification and legal eligibility requirements and other terms and conditions. They were provided by the privatisation fund (HRADF) in the invitation to submit an expression of interest which had to be observed by the investors or consortia of investors wishing to participate in the Tender Procedure.

Usually, the best practices are implying the use of letter of bank guarantees for the participating bidders on standalone basis or in consortia. In the case of OPAP the privatisation fund (HRADF) requested a letter by a bank or other credit institution lawfully operating in at least one EU, EEA or OECD Member State, confirming the overall financial standing of the candidate. In the case of consortia, the above letter had to be provided in respect of each member of the consortium.

The two financing methods proposed are widely used by corporate entities and do not pose any legality problem as far as the contracts are concluded and obey EC law provisions.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011109/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Francisco José Millán Mon (PPE)
(30 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Unión por el Mediterráneo

Desde 2011 se están sucediendo en nuestra vecindad meridional las llamadas «primaveras árabes». El desarrollo de estas revoluciones en los distintos países del Norte de África y de Oriente Medio está siguiendo caminos diferentes, en algunos casos dramáticos, como es el de Siria.

Además, en los últimos meses se ha realizado un nuevo esfuerzo para la resolución del conflicto en Oriente Medio, promovido por el Secretario de Estado estadounidense John Kerry, que ha fructificado recientemente en el desbloqueo de las negociaciones de paz entre israelíes y palestinos.

En el contexto de estos importantes acontecimientos que se están viviendo en nuestra vecindad meridional, ¿está desempeñando algún papel la Unión por el Mediterráneo (UPM) que copreside la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta de la Comisión? ¿Cómo valora la Comisión el nivel de colaboración que en la UPM encuentra la copresidencia de la Unión Europea en la copresidencia jordana?

Respuesta de la alta representante y vicepresidenta Sra. Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(27 de noviembre de 2013)

Las revueltas árabes de 2011 pusieron de relieve los retos políticos, económicos y sociales a que se enfrenta la región mediterránea y que deben abordarse a escala regional. La Unión por el Mediterráneo (UpM), como foro único para las relaciones de la UE con sus socios del Mediterráneo meridional, estuvo a la altura de esas expectativas.

La llegada de la UE a la copresidencia norte de la UpM en febrero de 2012 insufló una nueva dinámica a la organización. Asimismo, la decisión de Jordania de asumir la copresidencia sur de la UpM en septiembre de 2012 y su excelente cooperación con la UE en la gestión de los asuntos de la UpM, así como la incorporación de Libia con estatus de observador en febrero de 2013, ponen de manifiesto que los socios meridionales han retomado sus responsabilidades. La Secretaría de la UpM, al frente de la cual se encuentra F. Sijilmassi, actúa como catalizador dinámico para desarrollar proyectos concretos (como el Plan Solar Mediterráneo, la descontaminación del Mediterráneo, el desarrollo de las autopistas del mar y terrestres y la Iniciativa de Desarrollo Empresarial del Mediterráneo).

La UpM se está convirtiendo en un foro esencial para el intercambio de las diferentes dimensiones de la cooperación euromediterránea (Asamblea Parlamentaria, Asamblea de Regiones y Localidades Euromediterráneas (ARLEM), comisiones económica y social, IFI), y las perspectivas de una mayor colaboración práctica en este amplio foro de cuarenta y cuatro países parecen muy prometedoras.

Asimismo resulta alentador que se hayan reanudado las reuniones ministeriales sectoriales de la UpM. El 12 de septiembre de 2013 tuvo lugar en París la Conferencia Ministerial de la UpM sobre el papel de la mujer en la sociedad, con un número impresionante de asistentes procedentes de los países socios tanto del sur como del norte. En noviembre y diciembre de 2013 se celebrarán las reuniones ministeriales sobre transporte y energía, respectivamente, y están previstas más reuniones en 2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011109/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Francisco José Millán Mon (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Union for the Mediterranean

Since 2011, the movements known as the 'Arab springs' have been occurring in our Southern Neighbourhood. These revolutions in the various countries of North Africa and the Middle East are developing along different trajectories, which in some cases are dramatic, as in the case of Syria.

Also, in recent months, a new effort has been made to resolve the conflict in the Middle East, led by the United States Secretary of State John Kerry. This effort has recently led to the resumption of the peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.

In the context of these important developments that are occurring in our Southern Neighbourhood, is the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), jointly led by the High Representative and Vice-President of the Commission, playing a role? How does the Commission assess the level of collaboration in the joint leadership of the UfM by the European Union and Jordan?

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

The Arab upheavals of 2011 highlighted the political, economic and social challenges in the Mediterranean region requiring to be dealt with at regional level. The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) as a unique multilateral forum for EU's relations with its Southern Mediterranean partners stood up to these expectations.

The EU take-over of the UfM Northern Co-Presidency in February 2012 provided the organisation with new dynamics. The assumption of the Southern Co-presidency by Jordan in September 2012, its excellent cooperation with the EU in the conduct of the UfM affairs, as well as the inclusion of Libya as an observer in February 2013 have demonstrated also the renewed co-appropriation of the UfM by Southern partners. The UfM Secretariat under the leadership of F. Sijilmassi functions as a dynamic catalyst for developing concrete projects (*inter alia* Mediterranean Solar Plan, de-pollution of the Mediterranean, development of Motorways of the Sea & land highways and the Mediterranean Business Development Initiative).

The UfM is becoming a key forum of exchange on the different dimensions of Euromed cooperation (Parliamentary Assembly, local authorities (ARLEM), Economic and social committees, IFIs) and perspectives for further practical collaboration in this broad forum of 44 countries seem very promising.

It is also encouraging that UfM sectoral Ministerial meetings have resumed. The UfM Ministerial conference on the role of women took place in Paris on 12 September 2013 and saw an impressive attendance from both Northern and Southern partners. UfM Ministerial meetings on transport and on energy will take place in November and December 2013, respectively. More meetings are expected in 2014.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011110/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Francisco José Millán Mon (PPE)
(30 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Estado de las conferencias ministeriales de la Unión por el Mediterráneo

Como consecuencia del Tratado de Lisboa, la Unión Europea asumió la copresidencia de la Unión por el Mediterráneo (UpM) en 2012.

Recientemente se celebró en París la III Conferencia Ministerial sobre el papel de la mujer en la sociedad. ¿Qué valoración hace la Alta Representante y Vicepresidente de la Comisión de dicha conferencia? ¿Qué expectativas alberga la Alta Representante respecto de las próximas conferencias sobre energía y transporte? ¿Están previstas otras conferencias ministeriales?

Por otro lado, ¿con qué regularidad se están reuniendo las llamadas «Senior Official Meetings» (SOM)?

Finalmente, ¿cuál es el estado actual de los proyectos concretos en los que trabaja la UpM en el marco de las áreas prioritarias identificadas en su agenda?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(19 de noviembre de 2013)

La conferencia ministerial de la Unión por el Mediterráneo (UpM) sobre el papel de la mujer en la sociedad que se celebró en París el 12 de septiembre fue la primera reunión ministerial de la UpM bajo la presidencia conjunta de la UE y Jordania y también la primera desde que se iniciaran las transformaciones históricas que se están produciendo en Oriente Medio y en el norte de África. Los 43 países miembros de la UpM, de los que 21 están representados a nivel ministerial, se han comprometido a adoptar medidas concretas que incluyen un mecanismo de seguimiento para lograr una participación equitativa de hombres y mujeres en las esferas social, política y económica y para luchar contra todas las formas de violencia y discriminación y contra los estereotipos.

A esta fructífera reunión, sucederán las reuniones ministeriales de la UpM sobre transporte (14 de noviembre) y energía (11 de diciembre), que serán las primeras reuniones sectoriales de este tipo que se celebrarán bajo la presidencia conjunta de la UE y Jordania. Ambos sectores de cooperación son cruciales y de gran importancia para el futuro de la región del Mediterráneo en términos de crecimiento, empleo e integración regional.

Hasta ahora están previstas otras dos conferencias ministeriales de la UpM para el primer semestre de 2014: industria y competitividad (18 y 19 de febrero) y medio ambiente y cambio climático (fecha pendiente de confirmación).

Se están celebrando cada dos meses reuniones de altos funcionarios de la UpM.

Los proyectos de la UpM (16 en total desde la última cumbre UpM de Vilna del 4 de octubre de 2013) se han duplicado desde 2012:

— 3 sobre empresas y desarrollo;

— 4 sobre transporte y desarrollo urbano;

— 1 sobre energía (Plan Solar Mediterráneo);

— 3 sobre agua y medio ambiente;

— 3 sobre educación superior e investigación;

— 2 sobre asuntos sociales y civiles.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011110/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Francisco José Millán Mon (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — The Union for the Mediterranean's ministerial conferences

As a consequence of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Union took over the co-presidency of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in 2012.

The third UfM ministerial conference on the role of women in society recently took place in Paris. How would the High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission assess this conference? What are the High Representative's expectations for the forthcoming conferences on energy and transport? Have any other ministerial conferences been planned?

Furthermore, how often are the Senior Official Meetings (SOM) taking place?

Finally, what is the current state of the UfM's projects in the priority areas identified in its agenda?

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

The Union for Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial conference on the role of women in society that took place in Paris on 12 September was the first UfM Ministerial meeting under the EU/Jordan co-presidency as well as the first one since the start of the ongoing historical changes across the Middle East and North Africa region. The 43 UfM partner countries, 21 of which represented at ministerial level, have committed to concrete measures including a follow-up mechanism in order to achieve equal participation of women and men in the political, economic and social spheres, to fight against all forms of violence and discrimination and to fight against stereotypes.

Following this successful meeting, the UfM Ministerial meetings on transport (14 November) and on energy (11 December) will be the first such sectorial meetings under EU/Jordan co-presidency: both are crucial sectors of cooperation and are pivotal to the future of the Mediterranean region in terms of growth, employment and regional integration.

So far two other UfM Ministerial Conferences are scheduled to take place during the first semester 2014: Industry and competitiveness (18-19 February) and environment / climate change (dates still to be confirmed).

UfM Senior Official Meetings are now taking place every two months.

The UfM labelled projects (16 in total since the last UfM SOM in Vilnius on 4 October 2013) have doubled since 2012:

— 3 on Business and Development;

— 4 on Transport and Urban Development;

— 1 on Energy (Mediterranean Solar Plan);

— 3 on Water and Environment;

— 3 on Higher Education and Research;

— 2 in Social and Civil Affairs.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011114/13
à la Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(30 septembre 2013)

Objet: Développement de l'énergie hydrolienne en Europe

Grâce à l'évolution de la technologie permettant de produire de l'électricité avec les marées, le gouvernement écossais a donné son autorisation à la construction du plus grand parc d'hydroliennes d'Europe pouvant générer d'ici à sept ans 86 mégawatts (MW), soit de quoi fournir en électricité 40 000 foyers. À long terme, l'objectif est ensuite de quadrupler cette puissance.

Les travaux commenceront prudemment au début de l'année 2014 afin de récolter des données plus précises sur l'efficacité du système, ainsi que sur l'impact environnemental sous-marin, et devraient s'achever vers 2020.

L'énergie marémotrice a ainsi l'avantage d'être beaucoup plus régulière et prévisible que l'éolien ou le solaire. En outre, les turbines sous-marines n'altèrent pas, contrairement aux éoliennes, les paysages.

Si, certes, cette technologie novatrice coûte cher, l'investissement que le développement de l'énergie hydrolienne nécessite est, néanmoins, estimé compensé par l'énorme potentiel que représentent les énergies à base de marées ou de vagues.

À l'heure où les États membres de l'Union européenne cherchent à se tourner vers de nouvelles sources d'énergie ayant un moindre impact sur l'environnement, le développement de l'énergie hydrolienne apparaît, alors, comme une alternative intéressante et qui mérite d'être encouragée.

Aussi, la Commission entend-elle soutenir le développement de ces parcs d'hydroliennes en Europe, grâce à une aide financière pour l'investissement et pour la recherche et le développement dans ce secteur?

Réponse donnée par M. Oettinger au nom de la Commission
(14 novembre 2013)

Au cours des vingt dernières années, l'Union européenne a financé des projets de recherche et de démonstration, dont des prototypes, dans le domaine de l'énergie marine. En tout, environ 78 000 000 d'euros ont été alloués à 48 projets dans le cadre du programme de recherche dans le secteur de l'énergie. Parmi eux, des dispositifs d'une puissance nominale atteignant les 2 MW devraient être opérationnels d'ici à 2016. Le soutien à ce secteur devrait se poursuivre avec le futur programme Horizon 2020, dont le processus d'adoption est en cours. De plus, l'initiative de la Commission pour la croissance bleue ([1]) a reconnu que l'énergie marine pouvait contribuer à la croissance économique et à l'innovation ([2]). La Commission élabore actuellement une initiative sur l'énergie marine qui devrait être adoptée le 26 novembre 2013.

([1]) Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions, La croissance bleue: des possibilités de croissance durable dans les secteurs marin et maritime — COM(2012) 494 final.
([2]) COM(2012) 494 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011114/13
to the Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Development of hydrokinetic energy in Europe

Thanks to the technological evolution that has enabled electricity to be produced from the tides, the Scottish Government has authorised the construction of the largest hydrokinetic site in Europe with the capacity to generate 86 megawatts over the next seven years, or enough electricity to supply 40 000 households. The long term objective is to quadruple this amount of power.

At the beginning of 2014, work will tentatively begin in order to gather more accurate data on the efficacy of the system and the underwater environmental impact, and should be completed around 2020.

Ocean energy has the advantage of being much steadier and more predictable than wind or solar energy. Furthermore, the underwater turbines, as opposed to wind turbines, do not blight the landscape.

It is certainly the case that this innovative technology is expensive, but the investment that developing hydrokinetic power requires is nevertheless thought to be compensated for by the enormous potential of wave or tidal energy.

At a time when EU Member States are looking towards new sources of energy with a lesser environmental impact, the development of hydrokinetic energy thus seems an interesting alternative and one which deserves to be encouraged.

Does the Commission therefore intend to support the development of these hydrokinetic sites in Europe by means of financial support for the investment and for research and development in this sector?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(14 November 2013)

The EU has funded ocean energy related research and demonstration projects including prototype devices in the past 20 years. In total 48 projects have been allocated a total of about EUR 78 million in funding under the energy research programme, among them devices of nameplate capacity as large as 2MW that are due to be operational by 2016. Support to the sector is expected to continue within the future Horizon 2020 programme currently subject to decision under the legislative process. Furthermore, the Commission's Blue Growth initiative ([1]) has identified ocean energy as having the potential to contribute to economic growth and innovation ([2]). The Commission is currently working on the development of a policy initiative on ocean energy expected to be adopted on 26.11.2013.

([1]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Blue Growth opportunities for marine and maritime sustainable growth — COM/2012/0494 final.
([2]) COM(2012) 494 final.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011116/13
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(30 september 2013)

Betreft: Turkse politie arresteert 70 voetbaltoeschouwers

De Turkse politie heeft 70 voetbaltoeschouwers gearresteerd — zogezegd in de strijd tegen hooliganisme. Tegenstanders van het regime beweren echter dat het een voorwendsel zou zijn om massaal politieke tegenstanders op te pakken ([1]).

In het kader van de toetredingsonderhandelingen tussen de EU en Turkije: hoe duidt de Commissie bovenomschreven gebeuren?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(27 november 2013)

De Commissie is op de hoogte van de feiten waar het geachte Parlementslid naar verwijst.

In het kader van de toetredingsonderhandelingen met Turkije ziet de Europese Unie (ook via haar delegatie in Ankara) toe op de gerechtelijke procedures die beoordelen of zij in overeenstemming zijn met de EU-normen. De Commissie brengt regelmatig verslag uit over deze onderhandelingen, zo ook in haar jaarlijkse voortgangsverslagen.

De Commissie volgt gevallen van geweld van dichtbij, zowel in de sport als in een andere context en ook hoe rechtshandhavingsinstanties in Turkije reageren op de genoemde incidenten. Turkse autoriteiten moeten de veiligheid van alle burgers waarborgen en tegelijk ervoor zorgen dat de maatregelen in overeenstemming zijn met de Europese normen inzake de grondrechten.

([1]) „Turkse politie zet voetbalrellen in scène", De Telegraaf, 28 september 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011116/13
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Turkish police arrest 70 football fans

Turkish police have arrested 70 football fans — supposedly as part of the fight against hooliganism. However, opponents of the regime claim that this is a pretext for rounding up political opponents *en masse* ([1]).

In the context of the accession negotiations between the EU and Turkey: how does the Commission interpret the above events?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(27 November 2013)

The Commission is aware of the events the Honourable Member is referring to.

In the framework of Turkey's accession negotiations, the European Union (including through its delegation in Ankara) monitors judicial proceedings in order to assess their compliance with EU standards. The Commission regularly reports on this, including in its annual Progress Reports.

The Commission closely follows incidents of violence, whether in sports or in other contexts, as well as how law enforcement authorities in Turkey respond to such incidents. Turkish authorities need to guarantee security for all citizens, while ensuring that measures are in line with European standards concerning fundamental rights.

([1]) 'Turkse politie zet voetbalrellen in scène', De Telegraaf, 28 September 2013.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés P-011117/13
a Bizottság számára
Deutsch Tamás (PPE)
(2013. szeptember 30.)

Tárgy: A Bizottság által kért politikai kutatások

A Bizottság európai uniós intézmény, amely az egész Európai Unió érdekeit képviseli, függetlenségének pedig megkérdőjelezhetetlennek kell lennie. Egyetlen tagállam vagy kormány felé sem lehet részrehajló, valamint nem támogathat semmiféle politikai tevékenységet és nem képviselheti politikai pártok érdekeit.

A fentiek fényében szeretném megkérdezni a Bizottságtól, hogy a Foglalkoztatás, a Szociális Ügyek és a Társadalmi Befogadás Főigazgatósága vagy a foglalkoztatásért, a szociális ügyekért és a társadalmi befogadásért felelős biztos hivatala az elmúlt négy évben milyen elemzést vagy kutatást rendelt meg magyar politikai kutatóintézetektől? Kérem, nevezzék meg azokat az intézeteket, amelyektől kutatást vagy elemzést rendeltek, részletezzék a költségeket és a témákat.

Andor László válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2013. október 28.)

A költségvetési rendelet szabályai, amelyeket a Bizottság a közvetlen és közvetett irányítás alá tartozó támogatásokra és beszerzésekre alkalmaz, biztosítják, hogy valamennyi tagállam minden intézménye egyenlő mértékben hozzáférjen az uniós finanszírozáshoz.

A Bizottság szerződéseket és megállapodásokat tartalmazó adatbázisának mellékelt kivonata szerint 2008 óta 10, összesen 1 895 246 EUR értékű szerződés, illetve támogatási megállapodás megkötésére került sor magyarországi szervezetekkel elemzés, kutatás és hasonló tevékenységek végzésére. Ezeket a szerződéseket, illetve támogatásokat az előírt kiválasztási folyamatot követően a foglalkoztatásért és szociális ügyekért felelős főigazgatóság ítélte oda.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011117/13
to the Commission
Tamás Deutsch (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Political research requested by the Commission

The Commission is an EU institution which represents the interests of the entire European Union, and its independence should be indisputable. It should not be biased in favour of any Member State or government, and nor should it support any kind of political activity or represent the interests of political parties.

In view of the above, I would like to ask the Commission what analysis or research has been commissioned from Hungarian political research institutes by the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, or by the Commissioner's office, in the past four years? Please specify the institutes from which the research or analysis was commissioned, the cost and the topics.

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(28 October 2013)

The rules in the Financial Regulation applied by the Commission to grants and procurement subject to direct or indirect management ensure that all institutions in all Member States have equal access to EU funding.

The appended extract from the Commission database of contracts and agreements shows that 10 contracts or grants worth EUR 1 895 246 have been concluded since 2008 with bodies in Hungary for analysis, research and similar activities. These contracts or grants were awarded, on the basis of the prescribed selection process, organised by the directorate general responsible for employment and social affairs.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-011118/13
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(30 septembre 2013)

Objet: VP/HR — Attaques islamistes au Kenya

Le samedi 21 septembre 2013, le Kenya a été victime d'une attaque terroriste islamiste particulièrement violente, revendiquée par les chabab islamistes de Somalie. L'attaque, qui à ce jour aurait fait environ 70 morts et près de 200 blessés, constitue des représailles à l'intervention de l'armée kényane contre eux, en cours depuis deux ans dans le sud de la Somalie, dans le cadre d'une force africaine soutenant le gouvernement somalien.

Cette attaque très médiatisée en raison du nombre considérable de victimes — dont des Européens — et du poids émotionnel qu'elle comporte, n'est cependant qu'un nouvel épisode d'une succession d'attaques perpétrées par les chabab. Les chabab constituent ainsi une menace contre la stabilité dans la Corne de l'Afrique.

Aussi, le Service européen pour l'action extérieure entend-il établir rapidement des programmes spécifiques pour faire face aux fragilités de cette région, tant pour s'assurer de la sécurité de la population locale que pour garantir une protection aux citoyens européens expatriés dans cette partie de l'Afrique?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(6 novembre 2013)

Immédiatement après l'attaque du 21 septembre 2013, la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante a demandé à un haut fonctionnaire de se rendre au Kenya pour examiner avec les autorités locales les possibilités de soutien. À la suite de cette visite, elle étudie conjointement avec la Commission européenne différentes options. La sécurité du Kenya est intrinsèquement liée à celle de ses voisins; c'est pourquoi, il est important de poursuivre les efforts pour stabiliser la région et en particulier la Somalie. L'UE s'y applique notamment par son soutien à l'Amisom, sa mission de formation des forces de sécurité somaliennes et ses activités politiques et de développement. La conférence «Un New Deal pour la Somalie» qui s'est tenue à Bruxelles le 16 septembre dernier a été une étape importante dans la prise en compte des principales priorités en matière politique, socio-économique et de sécurité en Somalie. En outre, l'UE continuera de promouvoir la mise en œuvre de son plan d'action en matière de lutte contre le terrorisme dans la Corne de l'Afrique et le Yémen.

Tout aussi importants sont les projets visant à lutter contre le financement du terrorisme et la violence extrémiste et à renforcer la capacité des autorités kenyanes à prévenir et à répondre à ces crises.

Pour assurer la viabilité de ces propositions spécifiques, il faudra trouver des synergies avec notre soutien global à la gouvernance, en particulier afin de promouvoir la transparence et la lutte contre l'impunité. Une telle coordination devrait aussi être replacée dans le contexte du soutien général que l'UE apporte au développement durable dans le pays et dans la région et qui permet de s'attaquer aux racines du terrorisme, moyen le plus efficace de lutter contre le terrorisme.

À un niveau plus global, le Forum mondial de lutte contre le terrorisme constitue un bon cadre de discussion pour coordonner les mesures de lutte contre le terrorisme au lendemain de l'attaque du centre commercial Westgate. L'UE est résolue à continuer d'assurer avec la Turquie la coprésidence du groupe de travail sur la région de la Corne de l'Afrique au sein du Forum mondial de lutte contre le terrorisme.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011118/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Islamist attacks in Kenya

On Saturday, 21 September 2013, Kenya was the target of a particularly violent attack for which the Somali Islamist group 'al Shabaab' has claimed responsibility. The attack, in which some 70 people died and almost 200 were injured, was carried out in retaliation for the Kenyan army's two-year-long military operations against 'al Shabaab' in southern Somalia under the auspices of an African Union mission to support the Somali Government.

This attack gained significant media attention on account of the large number of victims, which included Europeans, and its emotional impact. It is, however, just the latest in a series of attacks perpetrated by 'al Shabaab', which is now threatening the stability of the Horn of Africa.

Does the EEAS intend, therefore, to swiftly establish specific programmes to address the vulnerabilities of that region, with a view to ensuring the security of the local population and of expatriate residents from the EU?

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

Immediately after the attack the HR/VP asked a high-level official to visit Kenya to explore future support together with local authorities. As a result of this visit, the HR, jointly with the European Commission, is considering different options. As Kenya's security is intrinsically linked to that of its neighbours continued efforts to stabilise the region and in particular Somalia are important. This includes EU support to Amisom, the EU training mission for the Somalian security forces, and political and development work. The Brussels Conference on a New Deal for Somalia of 16 September was a milestone for addressing the most critical political, security, and socioeconomic priorities in Somalia. In addition, the EU will continue to promote the implementation of the EU Counter Terrorism Action Plan on Horn of Africa/Yemen.

Equally important are projects to counter the financing of terrorism and violent extremism, and to strengthen the capacity of Kenyan authorities to prevent and to respond to such crises.

For these specific proposals to be sustainable, synergies will have to be found with our overall support to the governance area, and in particular to promote transparency and counter impunity. They should also be seen in the context of general EU support to promote sustainable development in Kenya and the region, which allows for the addressing of the root causes of terrorism, the most effective way to counter terrorism.

At a wider level, the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) will provide a good forum to coordinate counterterrorism measures in the aftermath of the Westgate attack. The EU is fully committed to continue the co-chairmanship of the GCTF Horn of Africa working group together with Turkey.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-011119/13
à la Commission
Alain Cadec (PPE)
(30 septembre 2013)

Objet: Soutien au Réseau européen des Groupes d'action locale Leader

Le programme Leader contribue notablement au développement des zones rurales européennes depuis 1990, avec plus de 2 200 Groupes d'action locale (GAL) en 2013.

En organisant les GAL en réseau en complément des regroupements Leader et Feader officiels, l'association ELARD, créée en 1997, contribue de manière décisive à ce succès. Elle compte 1 070 membres bénévoles (chiffre en augmentation constante) dans 21 pays membres.

ELARD est membre du comité de coordination du Feader et assure la vice-présidence du Focus Group 4 Leader. À la demande du commissaire Ciolos, elle a intégré récemment le comité de direction du programme EIP-AGRI.

Cette association basée à Bruxelles depuis 2009 connaît une situation financière difficile, car son budget ne repose que sur les contributions financières de ses membres, limitées à 60 euros pour permettre l'adhésion des GAL des nouveaux États membres entrant dans la Communauté.

L'équilibre budgétaire n'est atteint que par des contributions financières du pays d'origine du président en exercice.

Ce pis-aller empêche le renouvellement des instances dirigeantes et l'accession à la présidence de représentants de nouveaux pays, compromet la pérennité d'ELARD et fait peser des risques graves sur son indépendance.

La Commission ne pourrait-elle pas accorder un soutien financier direct à cet organisme qui apporte une aide décisive au développement de la procédure Leader, comme cela se pratique dans certains États membres où les cotisations des GAL appellent une contribution équivalente du Feader?

Ainsi serait confortée une association essentielle à la vie du programme Leader.

Sans cela, les efforts des bénévoles, des salariés, et de ses présidents successifs Panos Patras (Grèce) et Petri Rinne (Finlande) risqueraient d'être compromis.

Réponse donnée par M. Cioloş au nom de la Commission
(22 octobre 2013)

La Commission reconnaît la contribution apportée par ELARD à la mise en réseau des groupes d'action locale (GAL) dans toute l'Europe.

La Commission n'accorde pas de soutien financier direct aux organisations pour leurs frais de fonctionnement, mais rembourse les dépenses liées à leur participation à des activités ou à la réalisation de tâches spécifiques. Les frais liés à la participation à des organismes de mise en réseau au niveau de l'UE sont remboursés.

Les frais de fonctionnement des GAL sélectionnés dans le cadre de leurs programmes de développement rural peuvent être pris en charge et pourraient comprendre les frais de participation à des associations de GAL.

En outre, il est possible de demander une subvention pour le cofinancement par la Commission d'actions d'information visant à expliquer, à mettre en œuvre et à développer la politique — ou à y contribuer —, ou à sensibiliser l'opinion publique aux enjeux et aux objectifs de cette politique.

Pour plus d'informations, consulter:
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/grants-for-information-measures/index_fr.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011119/13
to the Commission
Alain Cadec (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Support for the European network of Leader Local Action Groups

The Leader programme has been making a significant contribution to European rural development since 1990, and there are at present (2013) more than 2 200 Local Action Groups (LAGs).

By organising the LAGs into a network to complement the official Leader and EAFRD groups, ELARD, an association established in 1997, has played a decisive role in this success. It has 1070 volunteer members — a number which is constantly increasing — spread across 21 Member States.

ELARD is a member of the EAFRD coordination committee and provides the Vice Chair of Leader Focus Group 4. At the request of Commissioner Cioloş, it recently joined the steering board of the EIP-AGRI programme.

This Brussels-based association has been experiencing financial difficulties since 2009, as it is entirely reliant for its budget on the financial contributions of its members, which are limited to EUR 60 so as to enable LAGs from new EU Member States to join.

It can only balance its budget thanks to contributions from the country of origin of the acting Chair.

This far-from-ideal solution prevents the governing bodies from being renewed and the representatives of new EU Member States from becoming Chair, compromises ELARD's viability and seriously jeopardises its independence.

Would it be possible for the Commission grant direct financial support to this body, which makes a significant contribution to developing the Leader procedure, as is done in certain Member States, where LAG contributions are matched by contributions from EAFRD?

This would reinforce a body that is vital for the survival of the Leader programme.

Failure to do this would jeopardise the work put in by volunteers, employees and ELARD's successive Chairs Panos Patras (Greece) and Petri Rinne (Finland).

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(22 October 2013)

The Commission recognises ELARD's contribution to networking of Local Action Groups (LAG) throughout Europe.

The Commission does not grant direct financial support to the organisations for their operating costs, but reimburses costs related to participation in activities or carrying out specific tasks. Costs related to participation in EU-level networking bodies are reimbursed.

For LAGs selected under Rural Development Programmes their operating costs can be financed and could include costs of participation in LAG associations.

In addition to that, there is a possibility to apply for a grant for Commission co-financing for information measures that aim at explaining, contributing to, implementing and developing the policy, or raising public awareness of the issues and objectives of that policy.

More information can be obtained from:
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/grants-for-information-measures/index_en.htm

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-011120/13
до Комисията
Filiz Hakaeva Hyusmenova (ALDE)
(30 септември 2013 г.)

Относно: Средства за хората от ромските общности на ЕС

Членът на Комисията Вивиан Рединг,обяви пред „Франс инфо“, че 50 милиарда евро за ромите не са използвани от държавите членки.

По какви програми, фондове или други механизми се предоставят тези средства?

Европейската комисия извършила ли е някакви действия, с които да популяризира или да насърчи бенефициентите да кандидатстват специално за тези средства, предназначени за ромите?

Какви средства за ромите се предвиждат за новия програмен период и по кои програми и фондове?

Отговор, даден от г-жа Рединг от името на Комисията
(26 ноември 2013 г.)

Средствата на ЕС не се разпределят въз основа на етническата принадлежност. Усилията на държавите членки за подобряване на положението на маргинализираните общности, включително на ромите, получават подкрепа по линия на структурните фондове, по-специално на Европейския социален фонд (ЕСФ) и Европейския фонд за регионално развитие (ЕФРР), както и от Европейския земеделски фонд за развитие на селските райони (ЕЗФРСР).

Според една от главните констатации в оценките на Комисията за 2012 г. ([1]) и 2013 г. ([2]), предвидени в рамката на ЕС за национални стратегии за интегриране на ромите ([3]), държавите членки не използват тези средства в пълна степен за ефективното приобщаване на маргинализираните общности, включително на ромите.

В Унгария, България, Румъния и Словакия бяха организирани прояви на високо равнище, посветени на темата за използването на средства от ЕС за интеграция на ромите, като целта беше да се окаже подкрепа на държавите членки, за да насърчават кандидатстването с проекти, целящи интеграция на ромите, за финансиране от ЕС. Този въпрос бе повдигнат също така по време на двустранни разговори с националните звена за контакт по проблемите на ромите и с управляващите органи в съответните държави членки. Освен това Комисията информира държавите членки относно съществуващите възможности за подпомагане на интеграцията на тези групи по линия на политиката за развитие на селските райони.

Що се отнася до периода 2014—2020 г., европейските структурни и инвестиционни фондове ще бъдат мобилизирани, за да се подпомогнат усилията на държавите членки за интеграция на ромите. В предложението за Регламент относно ЕСФ се предвижда, че най-малко 20 % от общия размер на средствата по ЕСФ във всяка държава членка се разпределят за подпомагане на социалното приобщаване и борба с бедността и дискриминацията. Като един от инвестиционните приоритети на ЕСФ е предвидена по-конкретно интеграцията на маргинализираните общности като ромските. На последно място, в диалога с управляващите органи във връзка с новите програми за развитие на селските райони при необходимост се провеждат дискусии относно интеграцията на ромите.

([1]) COM(2012)226.
([2]) COM(2013)454.
([3]) COM(2011)173.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011120/13
to the Commission
Filiz Hakaeva Hyusmenova (ALDE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Resources for members of the EU's Roma communities

Commissioner Viviane Reding stated on 'France Info' that EUR 50 billion for the Roma are not used by Member States.

Under which programmes, funds or other mechanisms are these resources being allocated?

Has the Commission taken any measures aimed at promoting or encouraging the beneficiaries to specifically apply for these resources earmarked for the Roma?

What resources for the Roma are envisaged for the new programming period and under which programmes and funds?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2013)

EU Funds are not allocated on the basis of ethnicity. Member States' efforts to improve the situation of marginalised communities, including the Roma, are supported via the Structural Funds — in particular the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) — and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

One of the primary findings in the Commission's 2012 ([1]) and 2013 ([2]) assessments foreseen in the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies ([3]) is that Member States are not making full use of these funds for the effective inclusion of marginalised communities, including the Roma.

High level events on the use of EU Funds for Roma integration have been organised in Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia, so as to support Member States' efforts in encouraging Roma integration projects to apply for EU funding. This issue has also been raised bilaterally with Member States' National Roma Contact Points and managing authorities. In addition, the Commission has informed the Member States on the existing possibilities to support the integration of these groups under the rural development policy.

As for 2014-2020, the European Structural and Investment Funds will be mobilised to boost national efforts on Roma integration. The draft ESF Regulation provides for that at least 20% of the total ESF resources in each Member State shall be allocated to the promotion of social inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination; an ESF investment priority envisages specifically the integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma. Finally, discussions are taking place on Roma integration, where appropriate, in the dialogue with managing authorities on the new rural development programmes.

([1]) COM(2012)226.
([2]) COM(2013)454.
([3]) COM(2011)173.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011122/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(30 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ενταξιακή διαδικασία Τουρκίας

Ο μόνιμος αντιπρόσωπος της Τουρκίας στην ΕΕ, Selim Yenel, σε πρόσφατη ομιλία του στη δεξαμενή σκέψης των Βρυξελλών CEPS, αναφερόμενος στο κυπριακό ζήτημα τόνισε: «Είναι θέμα αποφασιστικής σημασίας, το οποίο θα πρέπει να λυθεί, για να μπορέσει να προχωρήσει η ενταξιακή διαδικασία».

Είπε επίσης πως η Τουρκία αναμένει σύντομα το άνοιγμα του κεφαλαίου 22 για την περιφερειακή πολιτική και ακολούθως των κεφαλαίων 23 για τη δικαιοσύνη και 24 για τα θεμελιώδη δικαιώματα.

Τέλος, ζήτησε από την ΕΕ μια ξεκάθαρη απάντηση, όσον αφορά στην ενταξιακή της πορεία της χώρας του, θέτοντας την ερώτηση: «Τι είδους ΕΕ επιθυμείτε — με ή χωρίς την Τουρκία — γιατί χάνουμε το χρόνο μας, εδώ και 50 χρόνια και έχουμε κουραστεί».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Συμφωνεί ή όχι η Επιτροπή με τη διαπίστωση του κ. Yenel πως, για να μπορέσει να προχωρήσει η ενταξιακή διαδικασία της Τουρκίας, πρέπει να λυθεί το κυπριακό;

2. Εάν συμφωνεί, δεν θα είναι αντιφατική τυχόν συγκατάνευση της ΕΕ στο άνοιγμα κεφαλαίων, για τη συνέχιση των ενταξιακών διαπραγματεύσεων της Τουρκίας;

3. Πώς σχολιάζει η Επιτροπή τη θέση πως η άμεση αποχώρηση του τουρκικού κατοχικού στρατού από την Κύπρο θα είναι και η αρχή της λύσης του κυπριακού και επομένως η συνέχιση της ενταξιακής διαδικασίας της Τουρκίας; Και αυτό σε αντίθεση με τη θέση που συνήθως εκφράζει η Επιτροπή, ότι δηλαδή η αποχώρηση των τουρκικού στρατού θα είναι μέρος της τελικής λύσης;

4. Ποιο σκοπό και ποια ευρωπαϊκά ή άλλα συμφέροντα εξυπηρετεί, για 39 χρόνια, η παρουσία του τουρκικού στρατού στην Κύπρο και η κατοχή σχεδόν 40% των ευρωπαϊκών της εδαφών;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(27 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Η ΕΕ αναμένει από την Τουρκία να στηρίξει ενεργά τις διεξαγόμενες διαπραγματεύσεις που αποβλέπουν σε συνολική διευθέτηση του Κυπριακού στο πλαίσιο του Οργανισμού Ηνωμένων Εθνών, σύμφωνα με τις σχετικές αποφάσεις του Συμβουλίου Ασφαλείας του ΟΗΕ και τις θεμελιώδεις αρχές που διέπουν την Ένωση. Η Επιτροπή έχει καλέσει επανειλημμένως την Τουρκία να δεσμευτεί με συγκεκριμένους όρους σε μια τέτοια συνολική διευθέτηση, μεταξύ άλλων και στην έκθεση προόδου του 2013 για την Τουρκία ([1]).

Η Επιτροπή έχει επισημάνει στο έγγραφό της για τη στρατηγική διεύρυνσης 2013-2014 ότι όλα τα μέρη ενθαρρύνονται να συμβάλουν στη δημιουργία θετικού κλίματος μεταξύ των κοινοτήτων, με μέτρα που ωφελούν τους Κυπρίους στην καθημερινότητά τους, και να προετοιμάσουν την κοινή γνώμη για τις αναγκαίες συμβιβαστικές λύσεις. Η Επιτροπή θεωρεί ότι τα οφέλη της επανένωσης υπερτερούν των τυχόν απαραίτητων παραχωρήσεων.

Όσον αφορά τις διαπραγματεύσεις, η Επιτροπή υπενθυμίζει τα συμπεράσματα του Συμβουλίου του Δεκεμβρίου 2012, στα οποία δηλώνεται ότι οι ενεργοί και αξιόπιστες διαπραγματεύσεις προσχώρησης που σέβονται τις δεσμεύσεις της ΕΕ και τους καθορισθέντες όρους, μαζί με όλες τις άλλες διαστάσεις της σχέσης ΕΕ-Τουρκίας που αναφέρονται στα εν λόγω συμπεράσματα, θα επιτρέψουν την πλήρη αξιοποίηση του δυναμικού της σχέσης ΕΕ-Τουρκίας. Είναι προς το συμφέρον και των δύο μερών να δοθεί νέα ώθηση στις διαπραγματεύσεις προσχώρησης, διασφαλίζοντας ότι η ΕΕ παραμένει το μέτρο αναφοράς για τις μεταρρυθμίσεις στην Τουρκία.

Το ζήτημα που θίγει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου καταδεικνύει για μία ακόμη φορά την ανάγκη ταχείας και συνολικής διευθέτησης του κυπριακού προβλήματος.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011122/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Turkey's accession process

In a recent speech at the Centre for European Policy Studies, a Brussels thinktank, Turkey's permanent representative to the EU, Selim Yenel, stated with reference to the Cyprus issue that 'This a critical issue which has to be resolved in order for the accession process to move ahead'.

He also said that Turkey is expecting Chapter 22 on regional policy to be opened soon, followed by the opening of Chapter 23 on justice and Chapter 24 on fundamental rights.

Finally, he requested a clear answer from the EU in relation to his country's accession path, by asking the question: 'What sort of EU do you want — one with or without Turkey — because we have been wasting time for 50 years and we are getting tired of it.'

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does the Commission agree with Mr Yenel's view that the Cyprus issue must be resolved in order for Turkey's accession process to move ahead?

2. If it does agree, is this not at odds with the potential EU consensus on opening the chapters that will continue Turkey's accession negotiations?

3. What does the Commission have to say about the view that an immediate withdrawal of the Turkish occupation force from Cyprus would also mark the start of a solution to the Cyprus issue and consequently the continuation of Turkey's accession process as well? Is this contrary to the position usually taken by the Commission, which is that the withdrawal of Turkish forces would form part of a final solution?

4. What objective and what European or other interests have been served by the presence of the Turkish army in Cyprus, and its occupation of almost 40% of Cyprus's European territories for 39 years?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(27 November 2013)

The Commission expects Turkey to actively support the ongoing negotiations aimed at a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement of the Cyprus issue within the UN framework, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and in line with the principles on which the Union is founded. The Commission has repeatedly called on Turkey to commit in concrete terms to such a comprehensive settlement, including in its 2013 Progress Report on Turkey ([1]).

The Commission has stressed in its 2013-2014 Enlargement Strategy that all parties are encouraged to contribute to establishing a positive climate between communities, through steps that benefit Cypriots in their daily lives, and to prepare the public for the necessary compromises. The Commission considers that the benefits of reunification will outweigh any concessions that may need to be made to this end.

As regards the negotiations, the Commission recalls the Council conclusions of December 2012, which state that active and credible accession negotiations which respect the EU's commitments and established conditionality, along with all the other dimensions of the EU Turkey relationship addressed in these conclusions, will enable the EU-Turkey relationship to achieve its full potential. It is in the interest of both parties that accession negotiations regain momentum, ensuring that the EU remains the benchmark for reforms in Turkey.

The issue raised by the Honourable Member emphasises once again the urgency of reaching a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011123/13
to the Commission
Alyn Smith (Verts/ALE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Ortolans in France

The ortolan is protected under Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds and is also included in the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list of endangered species. Regardless of this, thousands of ortolans are captured and slaughtered each year at the end of summer, particularly in France.

Despite the practice being illegal under both French and EC law, the legislation is often ignored and the illegal capture and killing of ortolans still occurs, especially in the south-west of France.

The Commission has previously stated that it will not rule out the possibility of opening infringement proceedings. As such, could the Commission outline what measures it is taking, as well as those measures, if any, which have already been implemented, to put a stop to this illegal practice?

Question for written answer E-011178/13
to the Commission
Arlene McCarthy (S&D) and David Martin (S&D)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Hunting of the ortolan bunting in France

Further to the Commission's answer of 6 November 2012 to Written Question E-008250/2012, it seems that the hunting of the ortolan bunting continues in France. It has been widely reported that in early September 2013 a group of seven members of the Committee Against Bird Slaughter, who were engaged in locating and recording the illegal trapping of ortolan buntings with cages, were expelled from the *département* of Landes by French police.

Can the Commission state what action it has taken in light of the continued illegal hunting of this protected species? Will the Commission consider the possibility of opening infringement proceedings against the French Government for failing to ensure that the provisions of the Birds Directive are complied with?

Joint answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

The Commission launched an infringement procedure against France by issuing on the 24th January of 2013 a letter of formal notice under Article 258 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union for failing to protect the Ortolan Bunting (*Emberiza Hortulana*) as required by Article 5 of the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC ([1])). This procedure is currently ongoing.

([1]) OJ L 020, 26.1.2010.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011124/13
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(30 ta' Settembru 2013)

Suġġett: Il-ġestjoni tal-foresti

Fl-20 ta' Settembru 2013, il-Kummissjoni adottat COM(2013)0659 sabiex tindirizza l-isfidi li qed iħabbtu wiċċhom magħhom il-foresti li jkopru 40 % mill-erja tal-art tal-UE. Fl-Ewropa, il-foresti jipprovdu 50 % tas-sorsi ta' enerġija rinnovabbli, u dan wassal għal żieda fil-kompetizzjoni għall-prodotti u s-servizzi għall-foresta. Għaldaqstant, il-politiki dwar il-foresti u l-iżvilupp ser ikollhom impatt fuq l-industrija lil hinn mill-fruntieri tal-foresti.

Il-Kummissjoni kif qed tippjana li tiggarantixxi li l-ġestjoni tal-foresti tiġi ttrattata b'mod olistiku? Barra minn hekk, il-Kummissjoni kif ser tittratta l-konsegwenzi li l-konsum tal-foresti fi ħdan l-UE jkollu fuq il-foresti madwar id-dinja? Sabiex jiġu sorveljati dawn l-effetti, il-Kummissjoni għandha sistema li tista' tħaddem sabiex tiġbor l-informazzjoni?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Ciolos f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(18 ta' Novembru 2013)

Il-Komunikazzjoni tal-Kummissjoni dwar Strateġija ġdida għall-foresti ([1]) hija bbażata fuq il-prinċipju ta' ġestjoni sostenibbli tal-foresti, li jiżgura approċċ olistiku għall-ġestjoni u jippermetti li l-foresti jintużaw għal diversi użi, filwaqt li jiżgura l-ħarsien tagħhom. Il-Kummissjoni u l-Istati Membri għandhom jimplimentaw l-orjentazzjonijiet ewlenin tal-istrateġija, fl-ambitu tal-kompetenzi rispettivi tagħhom, u għandhom joqogħdu attenti, b'mod partikulari, għall-involviment tal-partijiet interessati.

Waħda mill-prijoritajiet tal-Istrateġija hija d-dimensjoni globali, li għaliha jingħad li l-Kummissjoni u l-Istati Membri għandhom jivvalutaw l-impatt ambjentali tal-konsum tal-prodotti u l-materja prima fl-UE li x'aktarx jikkontribwixxu għad-deforestazzjoni u d-degradazzjoni tal-foresti barra l-UE u, jekk ikun xieraq, iqisu l-alternattivi tal-politika biex jillimitaw impatti ta' dak it-tip, fosthom l-iżvilupp ta' pjan ta' azzjoni tal-UE dwar id-deforestazzjoni u d-degradazzjoni tal-foresti skont is-seba' programm ta' azzjoni ambjentali tal-UE.

Fil-kuntest ta' azzjoni preparatorja għal tagħrif armonizzat tal-UE dwar il-foresti ([2]), il-Kummissjoni u l-Istati Membri huma impenjati jkomplu jaħdmu fuq is-"Sistema ta' Tagħrif dwar il-Foresti għall-Ewropa" billi jiġbru tagħrif armonizzat mill-Ewropa kollha u billi jappoġġaw il-pajjiżi li qegħdin jiżviluppaw fl-isforzi tagħhom biex itejbu l-monitoraġġ tal-ekosistemi tal-foresti. F'dan il-kuntest, dan l-aħħar iċ-Ċentru Konġunt tar-Riċerka tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea nieda proġett pilota dwar l-istima tal-bijomassa; dan iċ-Ċentru qiegħed jikkollabora wkoll mal-FAO fil-monitoraġġ u l-valutazzjoni perjodiċi tal-kopertura globali tal-foresti.

([1]) COM(2013) 659.

([2]) Id-Deċiżjoni tal-Kummissjoni C(2012)3716 tat-8 ta' Ġunju 2012 dwar l-adozzjoni tal-programm ta' ħidma tal-2012 fil-qafas tal-proġetti pilota msejħin "L-irkupru tal-iskart mill-baħar", "Għarfien ġdid għal ġestjoni integrata tal-attività tal-bniedem fil-baħar" u "L-effiċjenza fl-użu tar-riżorsi fil-prattika — Ċiklu minerali tal-għeluq" u tal-azzjonijiet preparatorji msejħin "Il-bażi legali tal-ġejjieni għat-tagħrif armonizzat tal-UE dwar il-foresti" u "Valutazzjoni strateġika tal-impatt ambjentali tal-iżvilupp tal-Artiku", li sservi bħala d-deċiżjoni ta' finanzjament.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011124/13
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Forest management

The Commission adopted COM(2013) 0659 on 20 September 2013 to address the challenges facing the forests covering 40% of the EU's land area. Forests provide 50% of renewable energy sources in Europe, which has led to increased competition for forest products and services; therefore, policies on forests and development will have an impact on industry beyond the borders of the forests.

How does the Commission plan to ensure that forest management is approached in a holistic manner? Furthermore, how will the Commission approach the consequences of forest consumption within the EU on forests worldwide? Does the Commission have a system in place to collect information in order to monitor such effects?

Answer given by Mr Ciolos on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

The Commission Communication on a new Forest Strategy ([1]) is based on the principle of sustainable forest management that ensures a holistic approach to management and allows multifunctional use of forests while ensuring forest protection. The main orientations of the strategy should be implemented by the Commission and Member States, within their respective competences, paying particular attention to stakeholder involvement.

One of the priorities of the strategy is the global dimension where it is stated that the Commission and Member States should assess the environmental impact of EU consumption of products and raw materials likely to contribute to deforestation and forest degradation outside the EU and, if appropriate, consider policy options for limiting such impacts, including the development of an EU action plan on deforestation and forest degradations in line with the 7th EU Environment Action Programme.

In the context of a preparatory action on harmonised EU forest information ([2]), the Commission and Member States are committed to continue the work on the 'Forest Information System for Europe' by collecting harmonised Europe-wide information and to support developing countries in their efforts to improve the monitoring of forest ecosystems,. In this framework, a pilot project on biomass estimation has recently been launched by the Commission's Joint Research Centre, which is also collaborating with the FAO in the periodic global forest cover monitoring and assessment.

([1]) COM(2013) 659.
([2]) COMMISSION DECISION C(2012)3716 of 8 June 2012 on the adoption of the 2012 work programme in the framework of the Pilot Projects 'Marine litter recovery', 'New knowledge for an integrated management of human activity in the sea', 'Resource efficiency in practice — Closing mineral cycle' and of the Preparatory Actions 'Future legal base on harmonised EU forest information' and 'Strategic environmental impact assessment of the development of the Arctic', serving as financing decision.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011125/13
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(30 ta' Settembru 2013)

Suġġett: Il-promozzjoni tal-attività fiżika fl-Ewropa

Il-proposta tal-Kummissjoni "Inqajmu lin-nies minn fuq is-siġġijiet: inizjattiva ġdida li tippromwovi l-attività fiżika fl-Ewropa" ([1]) għandha l-għan li tindirizza l-isfidi li l-piż żejjed u l-obeżità jqajmu kemm għas-saħħa tal-Ewropej kif ukoll għal ħafna sistemi tal-kura tas-saħħa fl-UE. Fl-2008, l-Organizzazzjoni Dinjija tas-Saħħa sabet li madwar 50 % tal-irġiel u n-nisa kollha fl-Ewropa għandhom piż żejjed, u li l-livell ta' inattività baqa' għoli b'mod perikoluż.

Tista' l-Kummissjoni tindika l-politiki u l-inizjattivi preċedenti dwar il-promozzjoni tal-attività fiżika fl-Ewropa? Barra minn hekk, il-Kummissjoni kif ser tadatta din l-aktar inizjattiva riċenti għall-ambjent tas-saħħa uniku f'kull Stat Membru?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Vassiliou f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(4 ta' Diċembru 2013)

Fl-2007, il-Kummissjoni adottat l-Istrateġija għall-Ewropa dwar kwistjonijiet ta' saħħa marbuta man-Nutriment, il-Piż Żejjed u l-Obeżità ([2]) sabiex tippromwovi dieti aktar tajbin għas-saħħa u l-attività fiżika fl-UE, fil-livell nazzjonali u fil-livell lokali.

L-Istrateġija tiġi implimentata permezz tal-Grupp ta' Livell Għoli għan-Nutrizzjoni u l-Attività Fiżika ([3]) sabiex jiġu kkoordinati l-inizjattivi tal-Istati Membri, u permezz tal-Pjattaforma tal-UE dwar id-dieta, l-attività fiżika u s-saħħa ([4]), fejn il-partijiet interessati jimpenjaw ruħhom li jieħdu azzjoni, fosthom b'rabta mal-attività fiżika.

Il-Grupp ta' Livell Għoli beda jiżviluppa wkoll Pjan ta' Azzjoni komuni għall-2014 sal-2020 li jiffoka fuq in-nutrizzjoni u l-attività fiżika sabiex tiġi indirizzata l-kwistjoni tal-obeżità fit-tfal.

Barra minn hekk, il-linji gwida tal-UE tal-2008 għall-attività fiżika jipprovdu l-bażi għall-kooperazzjoni politika bejn l-Istati Membri u għal djalogu strutturat mal-organizzazzjonijiet sportivi.

Il-proposta tal-2013 tal-Kummissjoni għal Rakkomandazzjoni tal-Kunsill dwar il-promozzjoni transsettorjali ta' attività fiżika favur is-saħħa ([5]) għandha l-għan li ssaħħaħ il-kooperazzjoni u l-koordinazzjoni tal-politika bejn l-Istati Membri u li jkomplu jinqasmu l-aħjar prattiki fi ħdan l-istrutturi rilevanti tal-UE għall-isport u s-saħħa. L-inizjattiva tfasslet bħala għodda flessibbli sabiex tappoġġa u tikkumplimenta l-politiki nazzjonali dwar l-attività fiżika favur is-saħħa u mistennija tissejjes fuq strutturi eżistenti sabiex tippromwovi l-attività fiżika favur is-saħħa u tiġi implimentata b'kooperazzjoni mal-Organizzazzjoni Dinjija tas-Saħħa.

Ġew allokati fondi tal-UE għal għadd ta' proġetti li jindirizzaw ix-xejra dejjem tikber ta' piż żejjed u obeżità. Bħala eżempju ta' dan nistgħu nsemmu l-proġetti għall-promozzjoni tal-attività fiżika favur is-saħħa ffinanzjati fil-kuntest tal-azzjonijiet preparatorji fil-qasam tal-isport, il-proġetti ffinanzjati fil-kuntest tal-programm dwar is-saħħa u dak imsejjaħ "Żgħażagħ fl-Azzjoni", kif ukoll il-proġetti tar-riċerka kkofinanzjati mill-Programm Qafas għar-Riċerka.

([1]) IP/13/793.
([2]) COM(2007) 279.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/high_level_group/index_mt.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/platform/index_mt.htm
([5]) COM(2013) 603 finali, 28.8.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011125/13
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Promoting physical activity in Europe

The Commission proposal 'Getting people out of their chairs: new initiative to promote physical activity in Europe' ([1]) is intended to address the challenges that excess weight and obesity pose to the health of Europeans as well as to the many healthcare systems in the EU. In 2008, the World Health Organisation found that approximately 50% of all men and women in Europe were overweight, and the level of inactivity still remains distressingly high.

Can the Commission list previous policies and initiatives that have promoted physical activity in Europe? Moreover, how will the Commission adapt this latest initiative to the unique health environment in each Member State?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

To promote healthier diets and physical activity at EU, national, and local level, the Commission adopted in 2007 the strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity-related Health Issues ([2]).

The strategy is implemented through the High Level Group (HLG) for Nutrition and Physical Activity ([3]) to coordinate MS initiatives and through the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, ([4]) where stakeholders commit to actions, including on physical activity.

The HLG also started the development of a common Action Plan for 2014-2020 to tackle childhood obesity, focusing on nutrition and physical activity.

In addition, the 2008 EU Physical Activity Guidelines provide the basis for political cooperation between MS and structured dialogue with sport organisations.

The 2013 Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation promoting health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) ([5]) aims at strengthening cooperation and policy coordination between MS and at further exchanging best practices within the relevant EU structures for sport and health. The initiative has been designed as a flexible tool to support and complement national policies on HEPA, and is expected to build on existing structures to promote HEPA and to be implemented in synergy with the World Health Organisation (WHO).

EU funding has been made available to a range of projects tackling the rising trend in overweight and obesity. Examples include HEPA promotion projects funded under the preparatory actions in the field of sport, projects financed under the Health and the Youth in Action programmes, and also research projects co-funded by the Research Framework Programme.

([1]) IP/13/793.
([2]) COM(2007) 279.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/high_level_group/index_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/platform/index_en.htm
([5]) 28.8.2013, COM(2013) 603 final.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011126/13
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(30 ta' Settembru 2013)

Suġġett: Esportazzjonijiet tas-sajd mill-Gżejjer Faeroe
Il-Gżejjer Faeroe pprotestaw b'mod qalil kontra deċiżjoni tal-UE li tipprojbixxi l-esportazzjonijiet tal-ħut tagħhom lejn l-UE. Filwaqt li l-UE takkuża l-Gżejjer Faeroe b'sajd eċċessiv, l-arċipelago ċkejken, li għandu sovranità Daniża, qed jhedded li jipperikola n-negozjati multilaterali dwar l-allokazzjonijiet tal-kwoti tal-aringi. L-UE temmen li, fil-Grigal tal-Atlantiku, il-Gżejjer Faeroe attribwixxew lilhom infushom żieda ta' 229 % fil-kwota tagħhom tal-aringi, u b'hekk kisru ftehim dwar il-kwoti li ntlaħaq waqt forum tal-Istati Kostali tal-Grigal Atlantiku ([1]).

Il-Kummissjoni kif qed tippjana li ssaħħaħ il-ftehim dwar il-kwoti mingħajr ma taqta' r-rabtiet multilaterali? Barra minn hekk, se jkun hemm lok għal negozjati dwar il-kwoti mal-Gżejjer Faeroe?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Damanaki f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(22 ta' Novembru 2013)

Il-Kummissjoni tirrikonoxxi d-dritt tal-Gżejjer Faeroe li jaspiraw li jkollhom sehem akbar ta' aringi Atlantiċi-Skandinavi jekk ikun hemm raġunijiet oġġettivi li jsostnu din it-talba. F'dak ir-rigward, il-Kummissjoni ilha involuta f'taħditiet mal-Istati kostali kkonċernati bil-ħsieb li tiddiskuti l-argumenti għal sehem akbar mal-Gżejjer Faeroe. Il-Kummissjoni u Stati kostali oħra, ħlief il-Gżejjer Faeroe, huma tal-fehma li sakemm jingħalqu dawn id-diskussjonijiet, il-Gżejjer Faeroe m'għandhomx iżidu sehemhom unilateralment, iżda għandhom iżommu mal-allokazzjoni miftiehma fl-2009.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-785_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011126/13
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Fishing exports from the Faroe Islands

The Faroe Islands have reacted furiously to an EU decision to ban their fish exports to the EU. While the EU accuses the Faroe Islands of overfishing, the small archipelago, which has Danish sovereignty, is threatening to jeopardise multilateral negotiations on herring quota allocations. The EU believes that the Faroe Islands granted themselves a 229% increase in their herring quota in the North-East Atlantic, breaching a quota agreement reached in a North-East Atlantic Coastal States forum ([1]).

How does the Commission plan to enforce the quota agreement without severing multilateral ties? Furthermore, will there be room for quota negotiations with the Faroe Islands?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2013)

The Commission recognises the right of the Faroe Islands to aspire to have a higher share of Atlanto-Scandian herring if there are objective reasons in support of such claim. In that respect, the Commission has been engaged in talks with the coastal States concerned with a view to discuss with the Faroe Islands arguments for a higher share. It is the Commission's view, supported by coastal States other than Faroe Islands, that until these discussions are concluded, Faroe Islands should not increase their share unilaterally, but stick to the allocation agreed in 2009.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-785_en.htm

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011127/13
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(30 ta' Settembru 2013)

Suġġett: Id-differenza bejn il-pagi tal-irġiel u n-nisa

Id-Deċiżjoni tal-Kunsill 2003/578/KE tindirizza l-politiki tal-impjieg tal-Istati Membri. Minkejja l-korp tal-liġi sinifikanti li hemm fis-seħħ sabiex titnaqqas id-differenza bejn il-pagi tal-irġiel u n-nisa hekk kif indirizzata f'din id-deċiżjoni u l-azzjonijiet meħuda u r-riżorsi li ntefqu, id-differenza bejn il-pagi tal-irġiel u n-nisa għadha problema, b'differenza attwali fil-pagi ta' 16.2 % madwar l-UE. Differenza simili ntweriet ukoll fil-livell tal-UE fis-snin ta' qabel: 17.7 % fl-2006, 17.6 % fl-2007, 17.4 % fl-2008, 16.9 % fl-2009, u 16.4 % fl-2010.

Il-Kummissjoni tista' tindika kull leġiżlazzjoni u inizjattiva tal-UE li titratta b'mod dirett jew indirett id-differenza bejn il-pagi tal-irġiel u n-nisa? Twettqet xi tip ta' valutazzjoni dwar l-effettività ta' dawn l-inizjattivi?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Reding f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(26 ta' Novembru 2013)

Li tittratta d-differenza bejn il-pagi tal-irġiel u n-nisa hija waħda mill-prijoritajiet tal-Kummissjoni fl-Istrateġija tagħha għall-ugwaljanza bejn in-nisa u l-irġiel 2010-2015 ([1]).

Il-prinċipju ta' paga ndaqs għall-irġiel u n-nisa ilha prinċipju fundamentali tal-liġi sa mit-Trattat ta' Ruma u issa tinsab minquxa fl-Artikolu 157 tat-TFUE. L-istrument legali ewlieni fil-ġlieda kontra d-diskriminazzjoni fil-pagi bbażata fuq is-sessi hija d-Direttiva 2006/54/KE ([2]), u b'mod partikolari l-Artikolu 4.

Il-fokus tal-Kummissjoni għas-snin li ġejjin se jkun li timmonitorja l-applikazzjoni korretta u l-infurzar tad-dispożizzjonijiet dwar paga ndaqs tad-Direttiva 2006/54/KE fil-livell nazzjonali u li tagħti appoġġ lill-Istati Membri u partijiet interessati oħra fl-infurzar u l-applikazzjoni xierqa tar-regoli attwali. Ir-Rapport dwar l-applikazzjoni tad-Direttiva 2006/54/KE, li jivvaluta l-implimentazzjoni tad-dispożizzjonijiet dwar paga ndaqs, huwa previst għall-adozzjoni iktar tard din is-sena.

Il-Kummissjoni nediet għadd ta' attivitajiet biex tqajjem kuxjenza u tipprovdi għodod prattiċi għall-Istati Membri u l-imsieħba soċjali sabiex tiġi indirizzata d-differenza bejn il-pagi tal-irġiel u n-nisa. Matul is-Semestru Ewropew, il-Kummissjoni għamlet rakkomandazzjonijiet lill-Istati Membri sabiex jindirizzaw id-differenza bejn il-pagi tal-irġiel u n-nisa u l-kawżi ewlenin tagħha. Barra minn hekk, il-Kummissjoni organizzat it-tielet Jum Ewropew għall-Paga Ugwali ([3]) fit-28 ta' Frar 2013 u implimentat l-inizjattiva "Equality Pays Off" ([4]) biex tqajjem kuxjenza dwar id-differenza fil-pagi bejn l-irġiel u n-nisa fil-kumpaniji. Fl-aħħar nett, fl-2013, il-Kummissjoni ppubblikat sejħa miftuħa għal proposti ta' appoġġ għall-azzjonijiet li jindirizzaw id-differenza fil-pagi bejn l-irġiel u n-nisa.

Il-Kummissjoni qed tippjana wkoll inizjattiva mhux leġiżlattiva fl-2014 li għandha l-għan li tippromwovi u tiffaċilita l-applikazzjoni effettiva tal-prinċipju ta' pagi ndaqs fil-prattika u li tgħin lill-Istati Membri biex isibu l-aħjar approċċi sabiex inaqqsu d-differenza persistenti fil-pagi bejn l-irġiel u n-nisa ([5]).

([1]) COM(2010) 491 finali.
([2]) Id-Direttiva 2006/54/KE tal-Parlament Ewropew u tal-Kunsill tal-5 ta' Lulju 2006 dwar l-implimentazzjoni tal-prinċipju ta' opportunitajiet indaqs u ta' trattament ugwali tal-irġiel u n-nisa fi kwistjonijiet ta' impjiegi u xogħol (riformulazzjoni); ĠU L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23-36.
([3]) Ara http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-165_mt.htm u l-fuljett il-ġdid jinstab hawnhekk: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender_pay_gap/gpg_brochure_2013_final_en.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/equality-pays-off/index_en.htm
([5]) Programm ta' Ħidma tal-Kummissjoni 2014, disponibbli fuq . http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/pdf/cwp_2014_annex_mt.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011127/13
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Gender pay gap

Council Decision 2003/578/EC addresses the employment policies of Member States. In spite of the significant body of legislation in force to narrow the gender pay gap addressed in this decision and the actions taken and resources spent, the gender pay gap remains a problem, with the difference in pay between women and men currently standing at 16.2% across the EU. A similar disparity has also been evidenced at EU level in previous years: 17.7% in 2006, 17.6% in 2007, 17.4% in 2008, 16.9% in 2009, and 16.4% in 2010.

Can the Commission list all current EU legislation and initiatives which deal either directly or indirectly with the gender pay gap? Has any assessment been carried out as to the effectiveness of these initiatives?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2013)

Tackling the gender pay gap is one of the Commission priorities in its Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015 ([1]).

The principle of equal pay for men and women has been a fundamental principle of law since the Treaty of Rome and is now enshrined in Article 157 TFEU. The key legal instrument to fight gender-based pay discrimination is Directive 2006/54/EC ([2]), and in particular Article 4.

The Commission's focus for the coming years will be to monitor the correct application and enforcement of the equal pay provisions of Directive 2006/54/EC at national level and to support Member States and other stakeholders with the proper enforcement and application of the existing rules. The report on the application of Directive 2006/54/EC, assessing the implementation of the equal pay provisions, is envisaged for adoption later this year.

The Commission has launched a number of activities to raise awareness and to provide practical tools for Member States and social partners to tackle the gender pay gap. During the European Semester, the Commission addressed recommendations to Member States to tackle the gender pay gap and its root causes. Moreover, the Commission held the third European Equal Pay Day ([3]) on 28 February 2013 and implemented the 'Equality Pays Off' ([4]) initiative raising awareness of the gender pay gap in companies. Finally, the Commission published in 2013 an open call for proposals to support actions addressing the gender pay gap.

The Commission is also planning a non-legislative initiative in 2014 aiming to promote and facilitate effective application of the principle of equal pay in practice and assist Member States in finding the right approaches to reduce the persisting gender pay gap ([5]).

([1]) COM(2010) 491 final.
([2]) 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, pp. 23-36.
([3]) See http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-165_en.htm and the and the new brochure can be found here: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender_pay_gap/gpg_brochure_2013_final_en.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/equality-pays-off/index_en.htm
([5]) Commission Work Programme 2014, available at http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/pdf/cwp_2014_annex_en.pdf

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011128/13
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(30 ta' Settembru 2013)

Suġġett: It-turiżmu transnazzjonali fl-istaġun baxx

F'MEMO/10/289 ([1]) il-Kummissjoni pproponiet 21 azzjoni li ser jittieħdu sabiex tiggarantixxi li l-Ewropa tibqa' l-iktar destinazzjoni turistika popolari fid-dinja.Il-Kummissjoni se tkun involuta direttament fil-monitoraġġ tal-programm li ġie propost għat-turiżmu? Bħalissa, x'qed tagħmel il-Kummissjoni sabiex tiggarantixxi s-suċċess ta' dawn l-azzjonijiet proposti? Ladarba bħalissa mhu qed jittieħed l-ebda pass, x'qed tippjana li tagħmel il-Kummissjoni sabiex tiggarantixxi s-suċċess ta' din il-proposta? X'inhu l-perjodu ta' żmien għall-implimentazzjoni tal-azzjonijiet imsemmija f'MEMO/10/289 ([2])?

Ladarba l-proposta se tirċievi l-iffinanzjar jekk tiġi approvata, il-Kummissjoni se tiggarantixxi li kull Stat Membru jkollu l-istess opportunità ta' parteċipazzjoni? Kif se jiġi allokat l-iffinanzjar? Liema huma s-sistemi li qed jitħaddmu biex jiddeterminaw l-iffinanzjar?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Tajani f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(29 ta' Novembru 2013)

Bil-Komunikazzjoni tagħha tal-2010 dwar it-turiżmu ([3]), il-Kummissjoni pproponiet qafas ta' azzjoni mġedded għal politika kkonsolidata tal-UE dwar it-turiżmu u indikat azzjonijiet li jisfruttaw kemm jista' jkun il-potenzjal tas-settur tat-turiżmu biex jistimulaw it-tkabbir ekonomiku u l-impjiegi fl-UE u jiġi żgurat li l-Ewropa tibqa' l-aktar destinazzjoni turistika mfittxija fid-dinja. Sa llum, il-Kummissjoni qed timplimenta b'suċċess dawn l-azzjonijiet ([4]).

F'termini ta' finanzjament, il-biċċa l-kbira tal-inizjattivi tal-Kummissjoni marbuta mat-turiżmu ġew kofinanzjati mill-Programm għall-Intraprenditorjat u l-Innovazzjoni ([5]) (EIP), kif ukoll taħt azzjonijiet preparatorji differenti ([6]). Ġew previsti wkoll riżorsi finanzjari xierqa għall-perjodu 2014-2020 fil-qafas tal-Programm għall-Kompetittività tal-Intrapriżi u l-SMEs ([7])(COSME), taħt dawn il-prijoritajiet: it-tkabbir fid-domanda għal servizzi tat-turiżmu tal-UE sew fi ħdan l-UE sew minn pajjiżi terzi, id-diversifikazzjoni tal-offerta u l-prodotti tat-turiżmu tal-UE, it-titjib tal-kwalità, is-sostenibbiltà, l-aċċessibbiltà, l-informazzjoni u l-innovazzjoni tat-turiżmu, it-titjib tal-għarfien soċjoekonomiku tas-settur, u t-tkabbir tal-viżibbiltà tal-Ewropa bħala destinazzjoni turistika kif ukoll tad-destinazzjonijiet diversi tagħha. Dawn l-azzjonijiet se jiġu żviluppati fuq bażi volontarja u b'kooperazzjoni mill-qrib mal-awtoritajiet pubbliċi nazzjonali u reġjonali tat-turiżmu, il-partijiet interessati privati u netwerks Ewropej involuti f'attivitajiet turistiċi. Il-finanzjament se jiġi allokat fuq il-bażi ta' sejħa speċifika għal proposti għal proġetti u l-awtoritajiet pubbliċi tat-turiżmu tal-Istati Membri se jkollhom opportunitajiet ugwali ta' parteċipazzjoni għal sħubijiet fi proġetti li jkunu konformi mal-ispeċifikazzjonijiet tekniċi, l-eliġibbiltà u l-kriterji tal-għażla tas-sejħiet rispettivi għall-proposti.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-10-289_en.htm
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-10-858_en.htm
([3]) COM (2010) 352 finali, 30.06.2010.
([4]) Ħarsa ġenerali lejn il-kisbiet ewlenin u l-progress tingħata fuq is-sit tal-Kummissjoni dwar it-turiżmu: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/index_en.htm
L-Onorevoli Membru mistieden ukoll jirreferi għat-tweġiba tal-Kummissjoni għall-mistoqisja bil-miktub ta' E-6397/2013 tas-Sa Rosa Estaràs Ferragut.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/cip/eip/
([6]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/budget/data/DB2014/EN/SEC03.pdf
([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/initiatives/cosme/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011128/13
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Transnational low-season tourism

In MEMO/10/289 ([1]) the Commission proposed 21 actions that will be taken to ensure that Europe remains the world's top tourism destination.

Will the Commission be directly involved in monitoring the proposed tourism programme? What is the Commission currently doing to ensure the success of these proposed actions? If no steps are currently being taken, what does the Commission plan to do to ensure the success of this proposal? What timescale is there to implement the actions outlined in MEMO/10/289 ([2])?

Since the proposal will receive funding if approved, will the Commission ensure that each Member State has an equal opportunity to participate? How will funding be allocated? What systems are in place to determine funding?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2013)

With its 2010 Communication on tourism ([3]), the Commission proposed a renewed action framework for a consolidated EU tourism policy and outlined actions aiming at making the utmost of the tourism sector's potential to stimulate economic growth and jobs in the EU and ensuring that Europe remains the world's top tourist destination. By today, the Commission is successfully implementing these actions ([4]).

In terms of funding, most of the Commission tourism-related initiatives have been co-financed under the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme ([5]) (EIP), as well as under different preparatory actions ([6]). Appropriate financial resources for tourism have also been foreseen for the period 2014-2020 in the framework of the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs ([7]) (COSME), under the following priorities: increasing demand for EU tourism services both within the EU and from third countries, diversifying the EU tourism offer and products, enhancing tourism quality, sustainability, accessibility, skills, information and innovation, improving socioeconomic knowledge of the sector, and increasing Europe's visibility as a tourist destination as well as of its diverse destinations. These actions will be developed on a voluntary basis and in close cooperation with the national and regional tourism public authorities, private stakeholders and European networks involved in tourism activities. Funding will be allocated on the basis of specific call for project proposals and Member States' tourism public authorities will have equal participation opportunities to project partnerships in line with the technical specifications, eligibility and selection criteria of the respective calls for proposals.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-10-289_en.htm
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-10-858_en.htm
([3]) COM(2010) 352 final of 30.06.2010.
([4]) A detailed overview on the main achievements and progress is provided on the Commission's tourism website at: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/index_en.htm
The Honourable Member is also invited to refer to the Commission's response to Written Question E-6397/2013 by Ms Rosa Estaràs Ferragut.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/cip/eip/
([6]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/budget/data/DB2014/EN/SEC 03.pdf
([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/initiatives/cosme/index_en.htm

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011129/13
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(30 ta' Settembru 2013)

Suġġett: It-taxxa Google

Fil-EUCO 75/1/13 ([1]) il-Kummissjoni ddikjarat li għandhom jittieħdu aktar miżuri kontra l-frodi fiskali fl-industrija diġitali għaliex kumpaniji bħal Google, Apple u Facebook qed iħallsu ammont minimu ta' taxxi u, riżultat ta' dan, il-gvernijiet fl-UE qed jitilfu madwar EUR 1 triljun kull sena. IP/13/530 ([2]) mexa pass lejn il-ġlieda kontra l-evażjoni fiskali billi ta mandat għall-iskambju awtomatiku ta' informazzjoni bejn l-amministrazzjonijiet differenti tat-taxxa fl-UE.

Kien hemm evalwazzjoni dwar l-effetti ta' IP/13/530 fit-tnaqqis tal-evażjoni fiskali fl-UE? Il-Kummissjoni, x'azzjonijiet ulterjuri tara neċessarji sabiex twaqqaf l-evażjoni u l-evitar illegali tat-taxxa min-naħa ta' dawn il-kumpaniji diġitali kbar? Il-Kummissjoni taħseb li ser ikun diffiċli li l-miżuri deċiżi jiġu implimentati b'mod uniformi fl-Istati Membri?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Šemeta f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(18 ta' Novembru 2013)

IP/13/530 tirreferi għall-proposta tal-Kummissjoni tat-12 ta' Ġunju 2013 biex testendi skambju awtomatiku ta' informazzjoni bejn l-amministrazzjonijiet tat-taxxa tal-Istati Membri skont id-Direttiva tal-Kunsill 2011/16/UE. Skont il-proposta, dividendi, qligħ kapitali, il-forom l-oħra kollha ta' dħul finanzjarju u bilanċi tal-kontijiet, jiżdiedu mal-lista ta' kategoriji li huma soġġetti għal skambju awtomatiku ta' informazzjoni fi ħdan l-UE. Il-proposta twieġeb għas-sejħa mill-Kunsill Ewropew ta' Mejju biex jiġi estiż l-iskambju awtomatiku ta' informazzjoni fuq livelli globali u tal-UE bil-għan li jiġu miġġielda l-frodi u l-evażjoni tat-taxxa u l-ippjanar aggressiv tat-taxxa. Minħabba l-urġenza, il-proposta ma kinitx akkumpanjata minn valutazzjoni tal-impatt.

Il-problemi prinċipali relatati mat-tassazzjoni tal-ekonomija diġitali ġeneralment mhumiex direttament relatati mal-evażjoni tat-taxxa jew il-frodi fiskali. L-isfidi fiskali ewlenin jikkonċernaw il-problema speċifika tal-industrija li r-regoli tat-taxxa internazzjonali ma' żammewx mal-pass tal-mudelli kummerċjali fl-industrija diġitali. Fit-22 ta' Ottubru 2013, il-Kummissjoni stabbilixxiet Grupp ta' Esperti ta' Livell Għoli dwar it-Tassazzjoni tal-Ekonomija Diġitali. Il-Grupp se jidentifika l-problemi ewlenin tat-tassazzjoni diġitali minn perspettiva tal-UE u jippreżenta firxa ta' soluzzjonijiet possibbli.

Fit-22 ta' Mejju 2013 il-Kunsill Ewropew enfasizza biċ-ċar l-importanza ta' miżuri kontra l-frodi u l-evażjoni tat-taxxa fil-livell nazzjonali, kif ukoll Ewropew u globali, inkluż l-erożjoni tal-bażi u kwistjonijiet ta' trasferiment tal-profitt. L-iżvilupp ta' standards ġodda u l-implimentazzjoni tagħhom b'mod uniformi madwar l-UE mhuwiex kompitu faċli, madankollu l-Istati Membri kollha jidhru li huma impenjati biċ-ċar li jieħdu l-passi meħtieġa biex jiġi protett id-dħul u tiġi żgurata l-fiduċja tal-pubbliku fil-ġustizzja u l-effikaċja tas-sistemi fiskali tagħna.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/genaff/137197.pdf
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-530_mt.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011129/13
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Google tax

In EUCO 75/1/13 ([1]) the Commission declared that further measures must be taken to combat tax fraud in the digital industry since companies such as Google, Apple and Facebook are paying minimal taxes and, as a result, governments in the EU are losing an estimated EUR 1 trillion per year. IP/13/530 ([2]) took a step towards fighting tax evasion by mandating the automatic exchange of information between different tax administrations within the EU.

Has there been an assessment of the effects of IP/13/530 on reducing tax evasion in the EU? What further action does the Commission deem necessary in order to put an end to illegal tax evasion and avoidance by these large digital companies? Does the Commission feel it will be difficult to implement the measures decided upon uniformly across the Member States?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

IP/13/530 refers to the Commission's proposal of 12 June 2013 to extend automatic exchange of information between Member States' tax administrations under Council Directive 2011/16/EU. Under the proposal, dividends, capital gains, all other forms of financial income and account balances, would be added to the list of categories which are subject to automatic information exchange within the EU. The proposal responds to the call by the May European Council to extend automatic exchange of information at global and EU levels with a view to combating tax fraud and evasion and aggressive tax planning. In view of the urgency, the proposal was not accompanied by an impact assessment.

The main problems related to taxation of the digital economy are generally not directly related to tax evasion or tax fraud. The main tax challenges concern the industry specific problem that international tax rules have not kept pace with the business models in the digital industry. On 22 October 2013, the Commission has established a High Level Expert Group on Taxation of the Digital Economy. The group will identify the key problems with digital taxation from an EU perspective and present a range of possible solutions.

The European Council on 22 May 2013 has clearly underlined the importance of measures against tax fraud and evasion at national, European and global level, including base erosion and profit shifting issues. Developing new standards and implementing these uniformly across the EU is no easy task, but all Member States seem to be clearly committed to taking the steps needed to protect revenues and ensure public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of our tax systems.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/137197.pdf
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-530_en.htm

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011130/13
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(30 ta' Settembru 2013)

Suġġett: Kumpens għal passigieri bl-ajru mdewma

Ir-regolamenti (KE) Nri 261/2004 u 2027/2004 jagħtu drittijiet b'saħħithom lill-passiġieri bl-ajru tal-UE rigward il-kumpens għal titjiriet mdewma u ħsara jew telf ta' bagalji; madankollu, ħafna jsibu diffikultà jitolbu dawn id-drittijiet minħabba biża ta' spejjeż legali għoljin. Il-Kummissjoni qed tipproponi MEMO/13/203 sabiex tipprovdi l-passiġieri b'aktar drittijiet u tikkjarifika l-kwistjonijiet mhux ċari minn regolamenti preċedenti.

Il-Kummisjoni kif beħsieba tissorvelja u tinforza l-kumpens tal-passiġieri fi ħdan l-industrija tat-trasport? Il-Kummissjoni liema taħseb li ser ikunu l-aktar aspetti diffiċli li timplimenta?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Kallas f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(5 ta' Novembru 2013)

Skont l-Artikolu 16 (1) tar-Regolament (KE) Nru 261/2004 ([1]), kull Stat Membru għandu jinnomina organu nazzjonali tal-infurzar (l-ONI) responsabbli għall-infurzar tar-Regolament.

Fil-proposta tagħha għal reviżjoni tad-drittijiet tal-passiġġieri tal-ajru ([2]), il-Kummissjoni pproponiet li tiddefinixxi aktar ir-rwol tal-ONI u ssaħħaħ l-azzjoni ta' infurzar (jiġifieri proċeduri tas-sanzjonar) min naħa, u l-proċeduri tal-ġestjoni tat-talbiet u tal-ilmenti li jagħmluha eħfef għall-passiġġieri biex jinfurzaw id-drittijiet tagħhom min-naħa l-oħra. Barra minn hekk, l-iskambju ta' informazzjoni u l-koordinazzjoni bejn l-ONI stess, u bejn l-ONI u l-Kummissjoni, għandhom jittejbu.

Skont il-proposta, l-ONI għandhom jiżguraw ukoll l-applikazzjoni korretta tar-regoli dwar bagalji mitlufa/bil-ħsara/li jaslu tard skont ir-Regolament (KE) 2027/97 ([3]) u l-Konvenzjoni ta' Montreal (b'mod partikolari f'dak li għandu x'jaqsam mat-tagħmir għall-mobbiltà). L-ONI jkunu meħtieġa jirrappurtaw dwar l-attività tagħhom u dwar sanzjonijiet applikati.

Fuq talba tal-Kummissjoni, l-ONI jistgħu jinvestigaw prassi speċifiċi minn wieħed jew għadd ta' trasportaturi tal-ajru u jirrappurtaw is-sejbiet tagħhom lill-Kummissjoni. Dan huwa partikolarment utli f'każ ta' ksur f'aktar minn Stat Membru wieħed.

Il-Kummissjoni hija kunfidenti li l-ġabra proposta ta' koordinazzjoni msaħħa tal-ONI u d-drittijiet tal-passiġġieri ċċarati (eż. id-definizzjoni ta' ċirkustanzi straordinarji) se jindirizzaw effettivament id-diffikultajiet ta' implimentazzjoni li qed jiġu esperjenzati bħalissa.

([1]) Ir-Regolament (KE) Nru 261/2004 tal-Parlament Ewropew u tal-Kunsill tal-11 ta' Frar 2004 li jistabbilixxi regoli komuni dwar il-kumpens u l-assistenza għal passiġġieri fil-każ li ma jithallewx jitilgħu u ta' kanċellazzjoni jew dewmien twil ta' titjiriet, u li jħassar ir-Regolament (KEE) Nru 295/91 (ĠU L 46/1, 17.2.2004).

([2]) COM(2013) 130 final, 13.3.2013.

([3]) Ir-Regolament tal-Kunsill (KE) Nru 2027/97 tad-9 ta' Ottubru 1997 dwar ir-responsabbilità ta' trasportaturi bl-ajru fl-eventwalità ta' inċidenti (ĠU L 285, 17/10/1997).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011130/13
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Compensation for delayed air passengers

Regulations (EC) Nos 261/2004 and 2027/2004 give EU air passengers strong rights with regards to compensation for delayed flights and damaged or lost baggage; however, many have difficulty claiming these rights for fear of high legal costs. The Commission is proposing MEMO/13/203 to provide passengers with greater rights and clarify the 'grey areas' of previous regulations.

How does the Commission plan to monitor and enforce passenger compensation within the transportation industry? What does the Commission feel are going to be the most difficult aspects to implement?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(5 November 2013)

Pursuant to Article 16(1) of Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 ([1]), each Member State must designate a National Enforcement Body (NEB) responsible for the enforcement of the regulation.

In its proposal for a revision of air passenger rights ([2]), the Commission proposed to further define the role of NEBs and to enhance both enforcement action (i.e. sanctioning procedures) on the one hand, and claim and complaint handling procedures that will make it easier for passengers to enforce their rights on the other hand. Furthermore, the exchange of information and the coordination between the NEBs themselves, and between the NEBs and the Commission, would be enhanced.

Under the proposal, NEBs would also ensure the correct application of rules on lost/damaged/delayed baggage under Regulation (EC) 2027/97 ([3]) and the Montreal Convention (in particular with regard to mobility equipment). NEBs would be required to report on their activity and on sanctions applied.

At the request of the Commission, the NEBs could investigate specific practices by one or several air carriers and report its findings to the Commission which is particularly useful in case of infringements in more than one Member State.

The Commission is confident that the proposed combination of enhanced coordination of NEBs and clarified passenger rights (e.g. the definition of extraordinary circumstances) will effectively address the implementation difficulties currently experienced.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 February 2004 establishing common rules on compensation and assistance to passengers in the event of denied boarding and of cancellation of flights, and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 295/91 (OJ L 46, 17.2.2004).

([2]) COM(2013) 130 final, 13.3.2013.

([3]) Council Regulation (EC) No 2027/97 of 9 October 1997 on air carrier liability in the event of accidents (OJ L 285, 17.10.1997).

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011131/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(30 september 2013)

Betreft: Gevolgen van onafhankelijkheid (follow-up)

Joaquín Almunia, vicevoorzitter van de Europese Commissie, heeft verklaard dat wanneer een deel van een grondgebied van een lidstaat besluit zich af te scheiden, het afgescheiden deel geen lid is van de Europese Unie. Deze verklaring werd gesteund door een senior woordvoerder van de Commissie, die stelde dat de beoordeling van de situatie door Almunia in overeenstemming is met het standpunt van de Commissie en dat een afgescheiden regio wettelijk gezien niet onder de bestaande verdragen valt ([1]).

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van bovengenoemde verklaringen?

2. Sprak de heer Almunia namens de Commissie, in de hoedanigheid van Europees Commissaris of als particulier?

3. Had de heer Almunia officiële toestemming van de Commissie om zijn mening hierover te geven? Zo ja, is aan deze toestemming een formele evaluatie van het huidige scenario voorafgegaan?

4. Was de Juridische Dienst van de Commissie al verzocht om een beoordeling van de rechtsgevolgen van de afscheiding van een grondgebied van een lidstaat? Zo ja, kan de Commissie de uitkomsten van deze beoordeling meedelen?

5. Ziet de Commissie een verschil tussen de verklaringen van de heer Almunia en het antwoord op mijn schriftelijke vraag (nr. E-009009/2012) inzake deze kwestie van de heer Barroso? Zo ja, wat is het officiële en juridische standpunt van de Commissie?

Antwoord van de heer Barroso namens de Commissie
(12 november 2013)

Zoals de Commissie heeft opgemerkt in haar antwoord op schriftelijke vraag E-008133/2012, moet zij geen standpunt formuleren over vragen van interne organisatie met betrekking tot de constitutionele regelingen voor een bepaalde lidstaat.

Scenario's zoals de scheiding van een deel van een lidstaat of de vorming van een nieuwe lidstaat zullen niet neutraal zijn ten aanzien van de EU-verdragen. De Europese Commissie zal haar standpunt kenbaar maken over de juridische gevolgen overeenkomstig de EU-wetgeving als een lidstaat daar om verzoekt en nauwkeurig een scenario beschrijft.

Zoals de Commissie heeft bevestigd in haar antwoord op de schriftelijke vragen P-009756/2012 en P-009862/2012, is de EU gegrondvest op de verdragen die uitsluitend van toepassing zijn op de lidstaten die deze hebben goedgekeurd en bekrachtigd. Indien een deel van het grondgebied van een lidstaat ophoudt deel uit te maken van deze staat, omdat het een nieuwe onafhankelijke staat wordt, dan zullen de verdragen niet langer op dat gebied van toepassing zijn. Met andere woorden zal een nieuwe onafhankelijke staat vanwege haar onafhankelijkheid ten opzichte van de EU een derde land worden en zullen de verdragen niet langer op haar grondgebied van toepassing zijn.

Op grond van artikel 49 van het Verdrag betreffende de Europese Unie kan elke Europese staat die de beginselen eerbiedigt die zijn neergelegd in artikel 2 van het Verdrag betreffende de Europese Unie, verzoeken lid te worden van de EU. Indien de Raad de aanvraag met eenparigheid van stemmen goedkeurt, zullen de verzoekende staat en de lidstaten vervolgens een overeenkomst onderhandelen betreffende de voorwaarden voor de toelating en de uit de Verdragen voortvloeiende aanpassingen. Deze overeenkomst moet worden bekrachtigd door alle lidstaten en de staat die de aanvraag doet.

([1]) http://www.neurope.eu/article/new-europe-print-edition-issue-1050.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011131/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Consequences of independence (follow-up)

According to Commission Vice-President Joaquin Almunia, if one part of the territory of a Member State decides to separate, the separated part is not a member of the European Union. This statement has been backed up by a senior Commission spokesperson, who stated that Commissioner Almunia's assessment of the situation was in line with the Commission's position and that, legally, a breakaway region would not be covered by the existing Treaties ([1]).

1. Is the Commission familiar with the above statements?

2. Was Commissioner Almunia speaking on behalf of the Commission, as a Commissioner or as a private individual?

3. Was Commissioner Almunia officially authorised by the Commission to express his opinion on the situation? If so, was this authorisation preceded by a formal evaluation of the current situation?

4. Had the Commission's Legal Service already been requested to provide an assessment of the legal consequences of the separation of part of a Member State's territory? If so, could the Commission share the results of this assessment?

5. Can the Commission see a difference between Commissioner Almunia's statements and President Barroso's reply to my Written Question E-009009/2012 on this matter? If so, which response represents the official and legal standpoint of the Commission?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(12 November 2013)

As the Commission has noted in its reply to Written Question E-008133/2012, it is not its role to express a position on questions of internal organisation related to the constitutional arrangements of a particular Member State.

Scenarios such as the separation of one part of a Member State or the creation of a new state would not be neutral as regards the EU Treaties. The European Commission would express its opinion on the legal consequences under EC law upon request from a Member State detailing a precise scenario.

As the Commission has confirmed in the reply to written questions P-009756/2012 and P-009862/2012, the EU is founded on the Treaties which apply only to the Member States who have agreed and ratified them. If part of the territory of a Member State would cease to be part of that state because it were to become a new independent state, the Treaties would no longer apply to that territory. In other words, a new independent state would, by the fact of its independence, become a third country with respect to the EU and the Treaties would no longer apply on its territory.

Under Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union, any European state which respects the principles set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union may apply to become a member of the EU. If the application is accepted by the Council acting unanimously, an agreement is then negotiated between the applicant state and the Member States on the conditions of admission and the adjustments to the Treaties which such admission entails. This agreement is subject to ratification by all Member States and the applicant state.

([1]) http://www.neurope.eu/article/new-europe-print-edition-issue-1050

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011132/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Regione Marche: l'emittente televisiva TVRS avvia la procedura di mobilità del personale

Nella regione Marche, la società BETA S.p.A., in qualità di editrice dell'emittente televisiva TVRS, ha ottenuto dal ministero italiano competente lo statuto di «operatore di rete», oltre ai canali 11 e 111 sul digitale terrestre, in base a precisi requisiti stabiliti dalla legge, tra cui quello del numero dei dipendenti.

L'11 maggio 2013 la BETA S.p.A. ha avviato la procedura di messa in mobilità per tutto il personale, dichiarando di voler cessare l'attività di produzione, ma mantenendo il beneficio di «operatore di rete».

Tuttavia, i bilanci della società non giustificano in alcun modo tale scelta, dal momento che la BETA S.p.A. ha anche beneficiato, dal 2008 al 2011, di contributi pubblici per un importo complessivo superiore a 2 milioni di euro, oltre ad ulteriori finanziamenti derivanti dalla stipula di convenzioni con numerosi enti.

La cessazione delle attività e il conseguente licenziamento dei ventuno dipendenti sembrerebbe riconducibile a un «distacco tra la proprietà e il personale», a seguito di una revoca di un piano industriale che avrebbe incrementato i fatturati.

Tutto ciò premesso, può la Commissione precisare:

1. Se la società BETA S.p.A. possiede ancora i requisiti per trasmettere, pur non soddisfacendo più alcuni criteri previsti dalla legge europea?

2. Se sono state rispettate le disposizioni della direttiva 94/45/CE, quale modificata dalla direttiva 2009/38/CE, della direttiva 2002/14/CE relativa alla procedura d'informazione e di consultazione dei lavoratori, della direttiva 2001/23/CE sul mantenimento dei diritti dei lavoratori e della direttiva 2008/94/CE?

3. In quali termini possono essere delineati un quadro e una valutazione generali della situazione?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(9 dicembre 2013)

1. Secondo il quadro normativo UE per le comunicazioni elettroniche, la fornitura di una rete (vale a dire, la creazione, la messa in funzione, il controllo o il rendere disponibile una rete di comunicazione elettronica, come una rete di trasmissioni radiotelevisive) può essere soggetta unicamente alle condizioni specifiche del settore elencate nell'allegato alla direttiva Autorizzazione 2002/20/CE, compresi, tra l'altro, gli impegni presi nel contesto delle procedure di selezione per l'assegnazione dei diritti d'uso. La Commissione non è tuttavia in grado di valutare la conformità di singole imprese a tali condizioni, così come recepite in Italia dal Codice delle comunicazioni elettroniche (Decreto legislativo 259/03) attuato dalle autorità regolamentari nazionali competenti, né dispone della competenza necessaria per valutare le conseguenze collegate a tale qualificazione nell'ambito di altri settori del diritto nazionale.

2. La Commissione non è in una posizione tale da poter valutare i fatti o stabilire se una società privata si sia o no conformata alle disposizioni nazionali che attuano le direttive UE citate dall'onorevole parlamentare. Spetta alle autorità nazionali competenti, compresi i tribunali, garantire che la legislazione nazionale che recepisce queste direttive sia applicata in modo corretto ed efficace dal datore di lavoro in questione, considerate le specifiche circostanze del caso.

3. Alla luce di quanto sopra, non è possibile fornire un'analisi e una valutazione della situazione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011132/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Marche region: redundancy procedure at the TVRS television station

As the owner of the TVRS television station in the Marche region, the BETA SpA company has been granted 'network operator' status by the Italian ministry concerned, as well as being assigned channels 11 and 111 on the digital terrestrial network on the basis of specific legal requirements, not least as regards the number of employees.

On 11 May 2013 BETA SpA started a redundancy procedure for the staff as a whole, stating that it wished to end its production activities, while continuing to be treated as a network operator.

However, the company's financial statements in no way justify this decision, since, between 2008 and 2011, BETA SpA received public subsidies totalling over EUR 2 million, in addition to funding under agreements with many other bodies.

The cessation of activities and the consequent dismissal of 21 employees appear to be due to a 'divorce' between owners and staff following the cancellation of an industrial plan which would have increased revenue.

1. Does BETA SpA still meet broadcasting requirements, even though it no longer satisfies certain criteria laid down by European law?

2. Has the company complied with Directive 94/45/EC, as amended by Directive 2009/38/EC, Directive 2002/14/EC on informing and consulting employees, Directive 2001/23/EC on the safeguarding of employees' rights, and Directive 2008/94/EC?

3. Is it possible to provide an overview and a general assessment of the situation?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(9 December 2013)

1. According to the EU Regulatory Framework for electronic communications, the provision of network, (i.e. the establishment, operation, control or making available an electronic communications network, such as broadcasting transmission) can only be subject to the sector specific conditions listed in the annex to the Authorisation Directive 2002/20/EC, including *inter alia* the commitments made in the context of selection procedures for the assignment of rights of use. The Commission however is not in a position to assess the compliance of individual undertakings with these conditions as transposed in Italy by the Electronic Communications Code (D. Lgs. 259/03) and implemented by the competent national regulatory authorities, nor is competent to assess the consequences linked to this qualification under other fields of national law.

2. The Commission is not in a position to assess the facts or state whether a private company has or has not complied with national provisions implementing the EU Directives cited by the Honourable Member. It is for the competent national authorities, including the courts, to ensure that the national legislation transposing these Directives is correctly and effectively applied by the employer concerned, having regard to the specific circumstances of the case.

3. In view of the above, it is not possible to provide an overview and an assessment of the situation.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011133/13
to the Commission
Claude Moraes (S&D)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Clean air — ambient air quality directive

1. When exactly does the Commission intend to revise Directive 2008/50/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2008 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (the 'ambient air quality directive')?

2. Will the thematic strategy contain a commitment to revise air quality limits and targets in the light of the recent World Health Organisation report and previous other scientific findings, which have shown the current limits in the directive to be seriously inadequate from a public health perspective?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(29 October 2013)

The Commission is in the process of finalising the review of the current EU policy on air including the revisions of air quality targets and will come forward with its proposals before the end of the year.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor P-011134/13
upućeno Komisiji
Sandra Petrović Jakovina (S&D)
(30. rujna 2013.)

Predmet: Kriteriji prihvatljivosti za Inicijativu za zapošljavanje mladih (Youth Employment Initiative)

Dogovor oko uredbe Europskog Socijalnog Fonda (ESF) je blizu, ali i dalje su otvorena neka od ključnih pitanja poput kriterija prihvatljivosti za Inicijativu za zapošljavanje mladih (YEI). Uz to je EP, odnosno Odbor za zapošljavanje i socijalna pitanja, ponovno otvorio pitanje minimalnih udjela za ESF, unatoč načelno postignutom dogovoru Vijeća i EP-a prije ljetne stanke. Za YEI je situacija ponešto drukčija jer bi se lako mogao ostvariti pristanak na pomicanje dobne granice za prihvatljivost intervencija ovog instrumenta, dok će to biti nemoguće oko pitanja prihvatljivosti regija. Za sada je plan za Republiku Hrvatsku bio da se kategorija mladih od 25 do 30 godina financira nacionalnim i raspoloživim sredstvima ESF-a, a odgovor na ovo pitanje bi u svakom slučaju olakšao izradu Implementacijskog plana Republike Hrvatske za Garanciju za mlade.

Prilikom razmatranja ovog pitanja potrebno je uzeti u obzir trajanje financijske krize od 2008. godine, te da to petogodišnje razdoblje obuhvaća i onaj dio generacije mladih koji je u vrijeme njezina početka imao 25 godina, te je kao rezultat krize pogođen nedostatkom novih radnih mjesta u navedenom razdoblju. Na prethodno navedenoj osnovi RH temelji svoju trenutačnu politiku po ovom pitanju na način da ciljana skupina obuhvaća mlade ljude do 30 godina starosti koji bi upravo sada trebali biti uključeni u ovaj program jer će se u suprotnom doista raditi o „izgubljenoj generaciji".

Pitanja za Komisiju glase:

1. Kada će nam biti dostupna informacija o predviđenoj financijskoj alokaciji za YEI koja će biti namijenjena RH s obzirom na prihvatljivost obje naše regije za financiranje Garancije za mlade unutar YEI-a?

2. Budući da je RH u interesu da financiranje YEI-a obuhvaća mlade do 30 godina, jer RH u sklopu Garancije za mlade koju provodi od 1. srpnja 2013. iz te financijske alokacije želi uključiti mlade do 30 godina, je li razumno očekivati da će YEI ostvariti pomicanje dobne granice za prihvatljivost intervencija ovog instrumenta?

Odgovor g. Andora u ime Komisije
(5. studenog 2013.)

Dodatna sredstva dodijeljena svakoj prihvatljivoj državi članice na temelju Inicijative za zapošljavanje mladih ovise o parametrima propisanima u Odredbi o Europskom socijalnom fondu za razdoblje od 2014. do 2020. godine. Komisija će biti u mogućnosti potvrditi dodatna sredstva dodijeljena svakoj prihvatljivoj državi članici čim se završi tekući zakonodavni postupak za odobrenje ove Odredbe. Prema procjenama Komisije na temelju trenutačnog stanja postojećih pregovora između Vijeća i Parlamenta, Hrvatska ima pravo na otprilike 60 milijuna eura.

Komisija smatra da potpora na temelju Europskog socijalnog fonda treba biti usmjerena prema onima koji najteže pronalaze posao nakon školovanja, tj. mladim ljudima ispod 25 godina. No, tijekom trenutačnih pregovora između Vijeća i Parlamenta, Komisija je naznačila da bi mogla prihvatiti mogućnost da države članice uključe i mlade ljude između 25 i 29 godina, ukazujući na činjenicu da su potrebna dodatna sredstva iz Europskog socijalnog fonda (ESF) veća od minimalnog udjela za Europski socijalni fond (ESF) unutar strukturnih fondova radi pružanja odgovarajuće potpore svim mladim ljudima između 15 i 29 godina koji nisu zaposleni, koji se ne obrazuju niti stručno osposobljavaju.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011134/13
to the Commission
Sandra Petrović Jakovina (S&D)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Eligibility criteria for the Youth Employment Initiative

The European Social Fund (ESF) Regulation is on the point of being agreed, but there are some key issues still to be resolved, for example the eligibility criteria for the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). The EP, or more exactly the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, has again raised the question of minimum shares under the ESF, in spite of the agreement in principle between the Council and the EP before the summer break. As regards the YEI, the situation is rather different: permission could easily be obtained to alter the cut-off age for YEI assistance, but no such latitude will be possible regarding eligibility in terms of regions. The plan for Croatia thus far has been that financing for the 25-30 age group is to come from national resources and available ESF funding; clarification on that point would, in any event, make it easier for Croatia to draw up its Youth Guarantee implementation plan.

When considering this matter it is necessary to take into account the protracted financial crisis, since 2008, and the fact that young people aged 25 at the start of the current five-year period — and therefore eligible — are, as a result of the crisis, being hard hit by the shortage of new jobs at this particular time. These considerations form the basis of Croatia's present policy whereby the target group includes young people up to 30, who, especially now, need to be encompassed within the programme, as otherwise they really will turn out to be a 'lost generation'.

Can the Commission say:

1. When will information be available about the YEI funding allocation to be earmarked forCroatia, both of its regions being eligible for Youth Guarantee Financing under the YEI?

2. Given that Croatia is anxious that YEI financing should cover young people up to 30, as ithas been implementing the Youth Guarantee since 1 July 2013 and wishes to use thisfunding allocation for that age group, is it reasonable to expect that the YEI will alter theage limit for persons eligible for assistance?

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

Allocations due to each eligible Member State under the Youth Employment Initiative depend on parameters which will be set out in the regulation on the European Social Fund for 2014-2020. The Commission will be in a position to confirm the allocations due to each eligible Member State as soon as the ongoing legislative process to approve this regulation is finalised. According to Commission estimates based on the current state of play of the negotiations between Council and Parliament, Croatia would be entitled to around EUR 60 million.

The Commission maintains that assistance under the Youth Employment Initiative should be targeted at those who suffer most from difficult school-to-work transitions, i.e. young people below 25 years. However, in the ongoing negotiations between Council and Parliament, the Commission signalled that it could accept a possibility for Member States to also include young people between 25 and 29 years old, while signalling that providing adequate support to all young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) between 15 and 29 years, an additional ESF allocation higher than the minimum share for the ESF within the structural funds will be required.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-011136/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Roma, zona di Falcognana: ulteriori informazioni circa l'apertura di una nuova discarica

Con la risposta all'interrogazione E-009479/2013 la Commissione ha sottolineato che ad oggi non è arrivata alcuna richiesta di autorizzazione per l'ampliamento e la trasformazione del sito in località Falcognana, ribadendo, inoltre, che gli Stati membri hanno l'obbligo, prima del rilascio delle autorizzazioni per i progetti di impianti di smaltimento di rifiuti, di prevedere una valutazione di impatto ambientale (VIA) con relativa consultazione dei cittadini.

Anche il Ministro della cultura italiana ha ribadito che l'area interessata è di notevole interesse pubblico e presenta numerosi vincoli rispetto ai quali sono necessarie specifiche autorizzazioni.

Eppure, nei giorni scorsi, il Ministro dell'ambiente italiano di concerto con il Presidente della Regione Lazio ed il Sindaco di Roma, ha ribadito la volontà di firmare il decreto per smaltire 300 tonnellate di rifiuti nella discarica di Falcognana, senza specificare se siano state esperite tutte le procedure preliminari, come previsto dall'Allegato I della direttiva 2011/92/UE.

Tale posizione è stata poi nuovamente riaffermata dal Presidente della Regione Lazio, lo scorso 23 settembre, durante il dibattito in Consiglio regionale dedicato alla questione dei rifiuti.

Premesso che la Commissione in più occasioni si è espressa contro soluzioni provvisorie che inseguono la logica emergenziale, può la stessa far sapere:

1. se è stata avviata la nuova procedura VIA dalle autorità italiane preposte e qual è stato l'esito della stessa;

2. come intende procedere nel caso in cui riceva prove certe di un'eventuale violazione della normativa Ue in materia ambientale;

3. se è in grado di fornire un quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(30 ottobre 2013)

Spetta agli Stati membri garantire la corretta applicazione delle direttive UE sul loro territorio, compresa la direttiva 2011/92/UE concernente la valutazione dell'impatto ambientale di determinati progetti pubblici e privati ([1]). Di conseguenza, a meno che si possa provare che un determinato impianto è stato autorizzato in violazione delle pertinenti disposizioni dell'Unione europea in materia di gestione dei rifiuti, valutazioni ambientali e permessi, la Commissione non può interferire con la decisione delle autorità italiane.

Per quanto riguarda in particolare l'intenzione delle autorità italiane di autorizzare una discarica a Falcognana per sostituire la discarica di Malagrotta, attualmente chiusa, la Commissione non dispone di prove che il progetto sia stato autorizzato in violazione della direttiva 2011/92/UE. Qualora vi fossero delle prove sul punto, la Commissione contatterà le autorità italiane per verificare se la direttiva è stata applicata correttamente.

Per quanto riguarda la gestione dei rifiuti nel Lazio, nel giugno 2013 la Commissione ha adito la Corte di giustizia dell'UE nell'ambito del procedimento d'infrazione 2011/4021, in quanto la Regione Lazio non dispone di sufficiente capacità per di trattamento meccanico-biologico dei rifiuti. Pertanto, in alcune discariche del Lazio, compresa quella di Malagrotta, i rifiuti non sono sottoposti a un trattamento adeguato prima di essere collocati in discarica e ciò costituisce una violazione della direttiva 1999/31/CE ([2]) relativa alle discariche di rifiuti e della direttiva 2008/98/CE ([3]) relativa ai rifiuti. Il procedimento d'infrazione 2011/4021 mira esattamente a garantire che il Lazio sia equipaggiato delle necessarie capacità di trattamento meccanico-biologico, in modo che i rifiuti collocati in tutte le discariche del Lazio vengano trattati adeguatamente.

([1]) GU L 26 del 28.1.2012.
([2]) Direttiva 1999/31/CE relativa alle discariche di rifiuti (GU L 182 del 16.7.1999).
([3]) Direttiva 2008/98/CE relativa ai rifiuti (GU L 312 del 22.11.2008).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011136/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Latest information on the opening of a new landfill site in the Falcognana district of Rome

In its answer to Written Question E-009479/2013, the Commission said that no authorisation request had yet been lodged for the expansion and conversion of the Falcognana site, and reiterated that Member States are required to carry out an environmental impact assessment (EIA), involving appropriate public consultation, before the go-ahead can be given for projects concerning waste disposal plants.

The Italian Ministry of Culture has also stressed that the area in question is of significant public interest. The nature of many of its features means that specific authorisation needs to be sought before development projects can proceed.

In the past few days, however, Italy's Environment Ministry, in concert with the President of the Lazio Region and the Mayor of Rome, has reiterated its intention to sign a decree authorising the disposal of 300 tonnes of waste at the Falcognana site, without specifying whether all the preliminary procedures specified in Annex I to Directive 2011/92/EU have been carried out.

The President of the Lazio Region confirmed this stance at the regional council meeting on waste issues held on 23 September 2013.

The Commission has said repeatedly that it does not support temporary solutions which do nothing to address underlying problems. With that in view:

1. Can the Commission indicate whether a new EIA procedure has been launched by the relevant Italian authorities and, if so, what the result was?

2. What will it do if concrete evidence emerges that Italy has breached EU environmental law?

3. Can it give an overview of the situation?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(30 October 2013)

It is for the Member States to ensure the correct application in their territories of EU Directives, including Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment ([1]). Therefore, unless there is evidence that a given installation has been authorised in breach of relevant EU provisions on waste management, environmental assessment and permits, the Commission cannot interfere with the national authorities' decisions.

As concerns in particular the Italian authorities' intention to issue a permit for a landfill in Falcognana to replace the now closed Malagrotta landfill, the Commission has no evidence that the project has been finally authorised in breach of Directive 2011/92/EU. Should such evidence become available, the Commission will contact the Italian authorities to check if the directive has been correctly applied.

As concerns the situation of waste management in Lazio, in June 2013 the Commission applied to the EU Court in the framework of infringement procedure 2011/4021, because the Lazio Region does not have sufficient capacity for mechanic-biological treatment. Therefore, waste landfilled in some Lazio landfills, including Malagrotta, has not been subjected to an adequate treatment before being landfilled, which constitutes a breach of Directive 1999/31/EC ([2]) and Directive 2008/98/EC ([3]). Infringement procedure 2011/4021 is precisely aimed at ensuring that Lazio is equipped with the necessary MBT capacity, so that the waste landfilled in all the Lazio landfills is adequately treated.

([1]) Official Journal L 026, 28.1.2012.
([2]) Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste (Official Journal L 182, 16.7.1999).
([3]) Directive 2008/98/EC on waste (Official Journal L 312, 22.11.2008).

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse P-011137/13
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(1. oktober 2013)

Om: Spredning af fremmede ukrudtsarter via fuglefoder

Et dansk medie skriver, at ukrudtplanten bynke-ambrosie spreder sig i Danmark. Planten kommer til landet via fuglefoder importeret fra Østeuropa. Den vokser blandt andet som ukrudt på solsikkemarker, og ved høstning ender plantedele og -frø i foderblandingerne.

Plantens udbredelse har store konsekvenser for såvel økologiske landmænd som for borgernes generelle sundhed. Det er set i andre dele af verden, hvor planten er vokset frem i vid udstrækning.

Konventionelle landmænd kan bekæmpe ukrudtsplanten, men økologer skal bruge mange kræfter på at komme den til livs, og høstudbyttet vil falde.

Biologer skønner, at plantens udbredelse vil få antallet af allergikere til at stige med 100 000 alene i Danmark — den tendens er blandt andet set i USA og Ungarn. Pollensæsonen i Danmark vil blive forlænget med fire til seks uger, hvis planten breder sig. Stigningen i danske allergikere skønnes årligt at koste 750 mio. DKK.

Den 1. januar 2012 vedtog EU en forordning, der sætter en øvre grænse på 50 milligram bynke-ambrosiefrø pr. kilo fuglefoder. Danske stikprøvekontroller fra 2012 og 2013 viser imidlertid, at forordningen ikke altid overholdes.

Mit spørgsmål til Kommissionen er derfor:

Hvad har Kommissionen tænkt sig at gøre ved problemet? Vil den stramme milligram-grænserne for bynke-ambrosiefrø og indføre en strengere kontrol med producenterne?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Tonio Borg
(25. oktober 2013)

Direktiv 2002/32/EF ([1]) har fastsat strenge foranstaltninger vedrørende forekomsten af frø af bynkeambrosie (Ambrosia artemisiifolia) i fodermidler og foderblandinger, der indeholder umalede kerner og frø. Disse foranstaltninger trådte i kraft 1. januar 2012.

Siden ikrafttrædelsen har det hurtige varslingssystem for fødevarer og foder (RASFF) anmeldt fire tilfælde af frø af bynkeambriose i sorghum og fuglefoder. Yderligere spredning af bynkeambiose i EU skal undgås som følge af en effektiv håndhævelse af foranstaltningerne foretaget af medlemsstaterne. For at beskytte folkesundheden har Kommissionen understreget vigtigheden af en effektiv håndhævelse af disse bestemmelser over for de kompetente myndigheder fra medlemsstaterne. Sidstnævnte fik desuden påpeget deres retlige forpligtelse til at sikre en sådan effektiv håndhævelse.

([1]) Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets direktiv 2002/32/EF af 7. maj 2002 om uønskede stoffer i foderstoffer (EUT L 140 af 30.5.2002, s. 10).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011137/13
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Spread of invasive weed species through bird food

There is a report in the Danish media that common ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*), is spreading in Denmark. This plant reaches the country via bird food imported from Eastern Europe. It grows as a weed in sunflower beds, and when the sunflowers are harvested parts and seeds of the plant end up in bird feed mixtures.

The spread of this plant has serious consequences both for organic farmers and for the health of the general public. This has been seen in other parts of the world where the plant has become widespread.

Conventional farmers can combat this weed, but organic farmers have to make considerable efforts to tackle it, and their yields will fall.

It is estimated by biologists that the spread of this plant will lead to a rise of 100 000 in the number of allergy sufferers in Denmark alone — this trend has been seen in other countries including the USA and Hungary. The pollen season in Denmark will be extended by four to six weeks if the plant is allowed to spread. The increase in allergy sufferers in Denmark is expected to cost DKK 750 million per year.

In January 2012 the EU adopted a regulation setting an upper limit of 50 mg of common ragweed seeds per 1 kg of bird food. However, spot checks carried out in Denmark in 2012 and 2013 show that the regulation is not always complied with.

I should therefore like to ask the Commission:

What measures does the Commission propose to take to address this problem? Will it tighten the milligram limits for common ragweed seeds and introduce stricter checks on producers?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(25 October 2013)

Strict measures have been established by Directive 2002/32/EC ([1]) as regards the presence of seeds of common ragweed (Ambrosia artemisiifolia) in feed materials and compound feed containing unground cereals grains and seeds. These measures are in application since 1 January 2012.

Since the entry into application, there have been four Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) notifications on the presence of seeds of common ragweed in sorghum and bird feed. An effective enforcement of the measures by the Member States shall avoid a further spread of common ragweed in the EU. The Commission has highlighted to the competent authorities from the Member States the importance of an effective enforcement of these provisions for the protection of public health and pointed out to them their legal duty to ensure such an effective enforcement.

([1]) Directive 2002/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 May 2002 on undesirable substances in animal feed (OJ L 140, 30.5.2002, p; 10).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011138/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(1º ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Situazione nel settore dei servizi correlati al comparto ferroviario italiano

Dagli ultimi bandi redatti dalla RFI S.p.A. (Rete Ferroviaria Italiana) si evince che le garanzie richieste a corredo delle offerte per concorrere presentano requisiti di qualificazione particolarmente rigidi e che ciò porta a una riduzione dei partecipanti alle gare bandite dalla predetta società.

La politica della RFI sembra essere dunque quella di redigere bandi di gara solo per importi elevati, escludendo così le imprese più piccole.

Tali disposizioni sarebbero insostenibili per le micro-imprese diffuse in Italia e nel settore e andrebbero a ledere la libera concorrenza, essendo contrarie alle norme previste nel D.Lgs 163/2006 che seppur non applicabili, per quanto attiene agli articoli 75 e 113, alla stessa RFI S.p.A. stante l'esclusione disciplinata all'art.206, costituiscono comunque norme guida conformi alla normativa comunitaria.

Considerando quanto segue:

— la maggior parte delle piccole e medie imprese lavora in subappalto (con elevati ribassi sui prezzi già scontati) e gli incassi avvengono con maggiori ritardi,

— l'adeguamento per i requisiti previsti dal sistema di qualifica interno della RFI S.p.A. impone alle imprese un investimento notevole in macchinari, con costi elevati per il bilancio aziendale, impedendo di fatto l'ingresso di nuove aziende nel mercato,

— la direttiva 2004/18/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 31 marzo 2004, relativa al coordinamento delle procedure di aggiudicazione degli appalti pubblici di lavori, di forniture e di servizi,

— gli articoli 101 e 102 del TFUE,

può la Commissione verificare che non sia in atto una violazione del principio della libera concorrenza del mercato?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(2 dicembre 2013)

Le attività relative alla messa a disposizione o alla gestione di reti destinate a fornire un servizio al pubblico nel campo del trasporto ferroviario sono disciplinate dalla direttiva 2004/17/CE. A quanto sembra, le procedure di aggiudicazione degli appalti cui fa riferimento l'onorevole deputato sono soggette alle disposizioni di detta direttiva e non della direttiva 2004/18/CE.

La direttiva 2004/17/CE non impone agli enti aggiudicatori alcun obbligo di limitare il valore degli appalti di forniture, servizi e lavori. Fatto salvo l'uso di norme e criteri obiettivi che siano disponibili agli operatori economici interessati, gli enti aggiudicatori sono inoltre liberi di effettuare una selezione qualitativa sia mediante sistemi di qualificazione, sia nel contesto di procedure di aggiudicazione singole.

Dato che le procedure di aggiudicazione di appalti citate dall'onorevole deputato riguardano un settore altamente specializzato dal punto di vista tecnico (gestione delle reti ferroviarie), gli operatori economici che desiderano partecipare potrebbero avere necessità di realizzare investimenti cospicui.

Alla luce di quanto sopra e sulla base delle informazioni disponibili, la Commissione non ravvisa alcuna violazione della normativa dell'UE in materia di appalti pubblici.

Per quanto concerne le norme sulla concorrenza, le circostanze cui si fa riferimento nell'interrogazione riguardano un ipotetico comportamento unilaterale da parte di una società, escludendo pertanto le violazioni dell'articolo 101 del TFUE che vieta, in determinate condizioni, accordi tra due o più società. Anche assumendo che la RFI detenga una posizione dominante, se un ente aggiudicatore fa uso di norme e criteri quali descritti in precedenza, le circostanze riportate dall'onorevole deputato non sembrano indicare che, nel caso di specie, sia stato commesso un abuso ai sensi dell'articolo 102 del TFUE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011138/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Services sector — situation in Italy's railways

Judging from recent invitations to tender published by the Italian rail network company RFI SpA (Rete Ferroviaria Italiana), the qualification criteria in the guarantees to support the tenders are very rigid. As a result, the number of firms taking part in the tendering procedure is less.

It seems to be RFI's policy for all its invitations to tender to be for high value contracts, thereby excluding smaller firms.

Clauses such as these cannot be met by the many micro-enterprises in Italy and in the sector, and will be detrimental to free competition, being contrary to the rules laid down in Legislative Decree No 163/2006. Although Articles 75 and 113 do not apply to RFI SpA by reason of the exclusion in Article 206, these rules are nonetheless guidelines that comply with Community legislation.

The majority of small and medium-sized enterprises work as subcontractors (with heavy discounts on already marked-down prices) and suffer from very late payment. The requirements for RFI SpA's internal qualification system force firms to invest heavily in machinery, at a high cost to the company budget. This prevents new firms from entering the market.

In light of the above and of Directive 2004/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts, and Articles 101 and 102 TFEU, could the Commission check that the principle of free market competition is not being breached here?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

Activities relating to the provision or operation of networks providing a service to the public in the field of transport by railway are covered by Directive 2004/17/EC. It seems that the contract award procedures mentioned by the Honourable Member are subject to the provisions of that directive, and not Directive 2004/18/EC.

Directive 2004/17/EC does not impose on contracting entities any obligation to limit the value of supply, service and works contracts. Provided that they use objective rules and criteria which are available to interested economic operators, contracting entities are also free to carry out qualitative selection either through qualification systems or in the context of individual tendering procedures.

Given that the contract award procedures mentioned by the Honourable Member concern a highly specialised and technical sector (operation of railway networks), economic operators willing to participate may need to make significant investments.

In the light of the above, and on the basis of available information, the Commission cannot identify any breach of EU public procurement law.

As regards competition rules, the circumstances referred to in the question relate to an alleged unilateral behavior of a company, thereby excluding any finding of an infringement of Article 101 TFEU, which prohibits under certain conditions agreements between two or more companies. Even assuming that RFI would hold a dominant position, to the extent that a contracting entity uses objectives rules and criteria as indicated above, the circumstances mentioned by the Honourable Member do not seem to indicate that an abuse within the meaning of Article 102 TFEU has been committed in the present case.

(Slovenska različica)

Vprašanje za pisni odgovor P-011139/13
za Komisijo
Romana Jordan (PPE)
(1. oktober 2013)

Zadeva: Subvencije na enotnem notranjem trgu za energijo

Začetek delovanja enotnega notranjega trga Evropske unije za energijo je predviden leta 2014. Prinesel naj bi veliko koristi za potrošnike, industrijo in gospodarstvo na splošno. Da pa bi te koristi postale realnost, je potrebno zagotoviti nemoteno delovanje enotnega notranjega trga.

Trenutno obstaja na področju energetike veliko število subvencij, namenjenih obnovljivim virom energije. Čeprav že sedaj poznamo negativne vplive tovrstnih subvencij na nemoteno delovanje trga, pa se za prihodnost napovedujejo še dodatne, nove subvencije, ki so si marsikdaj celo nasprotujoče. Velika Britanija je na primer napovedala vzpostavitev finančnih podpor za jedrsko energijo, medtem ko Francija pripravlja davek za svoje jedrske elektrarne.

Od Komisije v kratkem pričakujemo nove smernice na področju državnih pomoči za okolje in energijo za obdobje naslednjih sedmih let. Zato sprašujem:

1. Kako namerava Komisija zagotoviti, da subvencije v energetiki ne bodo ovirale vzpostavitve enotnega notranjega trgu za energijo?

2. Kako bo Komisija zagotovila, da subvencije v prihodnosti ne bodo izkrivljale razmer na notranjem trgu za energijo?

3. Ali Komisija meni, da bi moral biti sistem za trgovanje z emisijami (ETS) na trgu glavni mehanizem za dekarbonizacijo?

4. Kako namerava Komisija okrepiti sistem ETS?

Odgovor g. Oettingerja v imenu Komisije
(11. november 2013)

Prihodnje in sedanje subvencije morajo biti skladne z zakonodajnimi določbami, ki veljajo za notranji trg z energijo, vključno s pravili za državno pomoč. Komisija trenutno pripravlja sporočilo z naslovom „Vzpostavitev notranjega trga z električno energijo in čim boljši izkoristek javnega posredovanja“ in revizijo smernic za državno pomoč v energetskem sektorju. Ti dokumenti obravnavajo težave, ki se lahko pojavijo zaradi neusklajenega posredovanja na trgih z električno energijo, kot so nacionalni programi podpore za energijo iz obnovljivih virov ali plačila za rezervne zmogljivosti. Začasno javno posredovanje je lahko cenejše in lahko manj izkrivlja notranji trg, če je bolje usklajeno med državami članicami in upošteva cilje več politik, hkrati pa je lahko bolj tržno in dovolj prilagodljivo, da odraža tehnološke in tržne spremembe.

Sistem trgovanja z emisijami ostaja pomembno tržno usmerjeno orodje za dekarbonizacijo. Skladen je z delovanjem notranjega trga EU z električno energijo in dosega svoje cilje v zvezi z zmanjševanjem emisij CO_2. Vendar je tudi orodje, ki je bolj občutljivo za nepredvidene dogodke, kot je npr. gospodarska kriza, in zato manj predvidljivo z vidika spodbud za nove naložbe v nizkoogljične tehnologije. Pričakuje se, da bo Komisija predstavila predloge okvira podnebne in energetske politike do leta 2030 na podlagi s tem povezane zelene knjige ([1]) iz marca 2013 ter odgovore, zbrane z javnim posvetovanjem o njej. Po pričakovanjih bodo ti predlogi vključevali elemente strukturne reforme sistema trgovanja z emisijami, predvidene do leta 2030.

([1]) COM(2013)0169.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011139/13
to the Commission
Romana Jordan (PPE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Subsidies in the single internal energy market

The EU's single internal energy market is scheduled to come into operation in 2014. It should bring great benefits to consumers, industry and the economy in general, but in order for those benefits to be realised it is essential to ensure that the single internal market functions smoothly.

In the energy sector there are currently a large number of subsidies for renewable energy. We already know about the negative impact such subsidies have on the smooth functioning of the market, yet additional new subsidies are being announced for the future, which are often even contradictory. The UK, for example, has announced the introduction of financial support for nuclear energy, while France is preparing to introduce a tax on its nuclear power stations.

We are expecting the Commission shortly to publish new state aid guidelines for the environment and energy for the next seven years.

1. How does the Commission intend to ensure that subsidies in the energy sector will not impede the establishment of the single internal energy market?

2. How does the Commission intend to ensure that future subsidies do not distort the internal energy market?

3. Does the Commission believe that the Emissions Trading System (ETS) in the market should be the principal mechanism for decarbonisation?

4. How does the Commission intend to strengthen the ETS?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(11 November 2013)

Future and current subsidies need to comply with the legal provisions of the internal energy market including rules on state aid. The Commission is currently preparing a communication 'Delivering the internal electricity market and making the most of public intervention' and a revision of state aid Guidelines applicable in the energy sector. These documents address problems that can result from uncoordinated interventions in the electricity markets, such as national support schemes for renewable energy or payments for reserve capacities. Temporary government interventions can be cheaper and less distortive to the internal market if they are coordinated among Member States and take account of multiple policy objectives, more market-based and flexible enough to reflect technological or market changes.

The Emission Trading Scheme remains an important, market-oriented tool for decarbonisation. It is compatible with the functioning of the EU internal electricity market and delivers its goals in reducing CO_2 emissions. However, it is a tool which is more susceptible to unforseen events, such as the economic crisis, and therefore less predictable in terms of the incentives it gives to new investments in low-carbon technologies. The Commision is expected to come forward with proposals for a 2030 framework for climate and energy policies on the basis of its Green Paper ([1]) on the matter from March 2013 and the responses to the public consultation on it. These proposals are expected to include elements of a structural reform of the Emission Trading Scheme in a 2030 perspective.

([1]) COM(2013) 0169.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011141/13
an die Kommission
Herbert Reul (PPE)
(1. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Seveso-II-Richtlinie

Im Wahlkreis des Fragestellers konnte jüngst das Bauvorhaben eines Möbeldiscounters nicht verwirklicht werden, da das zu bebauende Grundstück nach der Seveso-II-Richtlinie zu nah an den Anlagen zweier Chemiefirmen liegt. Das bereits gekaufte Grundstück mit einer Fläche von 20 000 qm musste an die Chemiefirma zurückgegeben werden.

Es ist richtig und wichtig, dass der Abstand zwischen Störfallbetrieben und öffentlich genutzten Gebäuden reguliert werden muss. Allerdings kann eine Blockade anderer wirtschaftlicher Entwicklungen doch nicht gewollt sein.

Sieht die Kommission einen Weg, diesen Widerspruch aufzulösen? Ist die Richtlinie nach Ansicht der Kommission ausreichend ausgestaltet und konkretisiert, so dass mit ihr angemessen gearbeitet werden kann? Wie bewertet die Kommission diesbezüglich das Urteil des EuGH vom 15. September 2011 in der Rechtssache C-53/10?

Wird die Richtlinie in allen EU-Mitgliedstaaten entsprechend umgesetzt? Verfügt die Kommission in diesem Zusammenhang über einen Überblick über den aktuellen Stand der Umsetzung in den einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(22. November 2013)

Die Seveso-II-Richtlinie 96/82/EG ([1]) verpflichtet die Mitgliedstaaten, dafür zu sorgen, dass in ihren Politiken der Flächenausweisung oder Flächennutzung und/oder anderen einschlägigen Politiken langfristig dem Erfordernis Rechnung getragen wird, dass zwischen den unter diese Richtlinie fallenden Betrieben einerseits und Wohngebieten, öffentlich genutzten Gebäuden und Gebieten sowie Freizeitgebieten und Verkehrswegen (so weit wie möglich) andererseits ein angemessener Abstand gewahrt bleibt.

Die Richtlinie schreibt keine genauen Sicherheitsabstände vor und überlässt es den nationalen Behörden, diese in jedem Einzelfall unter Berücksichtigung der jeweiligen Gegebenheiten festzusetzen. Diese Vorgehensweise wurde vom Gerichtshof in seinem Urteil zur Rechtssache C-53/10 bestätigt, wonach die nationalen Behörden nicht verpflichtet sind, eine Baugenehmigung allein aufgrund des Abstandskriteriums zu verweigern, dieses Kriterium bei der Risikoabschätzung vor der Genehmigungserteilung jedoch beachten müssen.

Ein zusammenfassender Bericht über die Durchführung der Richtlinie durch die Mitgliedstaaten findet sich, zusammen mit detaillierten nationalen Durchführungsberichten, auf der Seveso-Website ([2]).

([1]) ABl. L 10 vom 14.1.1997.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/seveso/implementation.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011141/13
to the Commission
Herbert Reul (PPE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Seveso II Directive

The building project of a furniture discount store in the author's constituency could not be completed recently as, according to the Seveso II Directive, the land that was to be built on is too close to the facilities of two chemical companies. The 20 000 m^2 of land, which had already been purchased, had to be given back to the chemical company.

It is right and important for the distance between hazardous incident plants and buildings in public use to be regulated. However, the blocking of other economic developments surely cannot be the intention.

Can the Commission see a way to resolve this contradiction? In its opinion, is the directive sufficiently specific and adequately formulated to enable it to be used appropriately? In this regard, what is the Commission's view of the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union of 15 September 2011 in Case C-53/10?

Is the directive implemented accordingly in all EU Member States? In this connection, does the Commission have an overview of the current status of its implementation in the individual Member States?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2013)

The Seveso II Directive 96/82/EC ([1]) obliges Member States to ensure that their land-use or other relevant policies take account of the need, in the long term, to maintain appropriate safety distances between establishments covered by the directive and residential areas, buildings and areas of public use, recreational areas, and, as far as possible, major transport routes.

The directive does not prescribe detailed safety distances, leaving it for the relevant national authorities to set these, taking into account the specific circumstances of each case. This has been confirmed by the European Court of Justice in its judgment in Case C-53/10, which states that authorities are not obliged to refuse a planning permission solely on the basis of the distance criterion, but they have to take it into account in their risk assessment prior to granting any permission.

A summary report on the implementation of the directive by the Member States is available on the Seveso website ([2]), together with the more detailed national implementation reports.

([1]) OJ L 10, 14.1.1997.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/seveso/implementation.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011142/13
à la Commission
Dominique Riquet (PPE)
(1er octobre 2013)

Objet: Exigences de formation prévues par les directives 2003/59/CE et 2008/68/CE dans le secteur du transport routier

Dans le but d'assurer un niveau élevé de sécurité routière, la directive 2003/59/CE introduit dans son annexe I, entre autres, la formation continue obligatoire pour les conducteurs de certains véhicules routiers. De plus, la directive 2008/68/CE relative au transport intérieur des marchandises dangereuses comprend des exigences sur la formation continue des conducteurs transportant des marchandises dangereuses en particulier. En pratique, la majorité des États membres mettent en œuvre les deux directives séparément, ce qui crée des obligations de formation ne répondant pas aux besoins spécifiques des secteurs du transport routier des marchandises dangereuses.

C'est par exemple le cas des distributeurs locaux d'huiles de chauffage, lesquels doivent suivre des formations sur la sécurité du fret qui ne sont pas applicables aux camions-citernes. Cela crée une charge financière et administrative, notamment pour les micro- — et petites entreprises, sans que cela ne contribue à l'amélioration du niveau de sécurité routière, à travers des formations qui ne sont pas adaptées aux activités liées à ces emplois. Seul un nombre limité d'États membres mettent en œuvre ces directives avec souplesse, adaptant les formations aux besoins spécifiques de chaque secteur et répondant par une formation aux exigences imposées par les deux directives.

En ce qui concerne la mise en œuvre de la directive 2003/59/CE et de la directive 2008/68/CE, la Commission peut-elle préciser si les États membres disposent d'un degré de flexibilité pour adapter les formations requises par les deux directives aux besoins des secteurs spécifiques, à condition que ces formations répondent aux critères énoncés dans les directives? Est-il permis aux États membres de compter les cours de perfectionnement ADR dans les 35 heures de formation obligatoire requise par la directive 2003/59/CE?

Compte tenu de la révision en cours de la directive 2003/59/CE, la Commission a-t-elle l'intention de proposer la possibilité de voir les heures de formation exigées par la directive 2008/68/CE prises en compte dans les 35 heures de formation obligatoire prévues à l'annexe I de la directive 2003/59/CE, à condition que celles-ci se rapportent à la sécurité et soient pertinentes pour le secteur d'activité spécifique?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(18 novembre 2013)

Concernant le rapport entre les directives 2003/59/CE ([1]) et 2008/68/CE ([2]), la Commission renvoie l'Honorable Parlementaire à sa réponse à la question écrite E-006163/2013 ([3]).

Concernant la modification de la directive 2003/59/CE, la Commission n'est pas encore en mesure de se prononcer sur les résultats de la révision, celle-ci étant encore à un stade précoce d'élaboration.

([1]) Directive 2003/59/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 15 juillet 2003 relative à la qualification initiale et à la formation continue des conducteurs de certains véhicules routiers affectés aux transports de marchandises ou de voyageurs, modifiant le règlement (CEE) n° 3820/85 du Conseil ainsi que la directive 91/439/CEE du Conseil et abrogeant la directive 76/914/CEE du Conseil (JO L 226 du 10.9.2003, p. 4).

([2]) Directive 2008/68/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 24 septembre 2008 relative au transport intérieur des marchandises dangereuses (JO L 260 du 30.9.2008, p. 13).

([3]) Peut être consultée à l'adresse suivante:
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bWQ%2bE-2013-006163 %2b0 %2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0 %2f%2fEN&language=EN

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011142/13
to the Commission
Dominique Riquet (PPE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Training requirements set out by Directives 2003/59/EC and 2008/68/EC in the road transport sector

With the aim of ensuring a high level of road safety, Directive 2003/59/EC introduces in Annex I, among others, compulsory periodic training for the drivers of certain road vehicles. Furthermore, Directive 2008/68/EC on the inland transport of dangerous goods includes requirements regarding periodic training for drivers transporting dangerous goods in particular. In practice, the majority of Member States implement the two Directives separately, which creates training obligations that do not meet the specific requirements of the dangerous goods road transport sectors.

This is the case for local distributors of heating oil for example, who have to undertake training on freight safety which is not applicable to tankers. This creates a financial and administrative burden, particularly for micro and small businesses, through training that is not adapted to the activities associated with these jobs, without contributing to improved road safety. Only a limited number of Member States are implementing these Directives in a flexible manner, adapting the training to the specific requirements of each sector and meeting via the training the requirements imposed by the two Directives.

As regards the implementation of Directive 2003/59/EC and Directive 2008/68/EC, can the Commission specify whether Member States have a degree of flexibility to adapt the training required by the two Directives to the needs of specific sectors, provided the training meets the criteria laid down in the directives? Are Member States permitted to count the ADR training course towards the 35 hours of compulsory training that directive 2003/59/EC requires?

Given that there is a review underway of Directive 2003/59/EC, does the Commission intend to offer the possibility of the training hours that directive 2008/68/EC requires counting towards the 35 hours of compulsory training set out in Annex I of Directive 2003/59/EC, provided they relate to safety and are relevant for the specific business activity sector?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

Regarding the relationship between Directives 2003/59/EC ([1]) and 2008/68/EC ([2]) the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-006163/2013 ([3]).

Regarding the modification of Directive 2003/59/EC the Commission is not yet in the position to comment on the outcome of the review as this is still at an early stage of elaboration.

([1]) Directive 2003/59/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 July 2003 on initial qualification and periodic training of drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods or passengers, amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 3820/85 and Council Directive 91/439/EEC and repealing Council Directive 76/914/EEC, OJ L 226, 10.9.2003.

([2]) Directive 2008/68/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 September 2008 on the inland transport of dangerous goods, OJ L 260, 30.9.2008.

([3]) Available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bWQ%2bE-2013-006163%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011143/13
alla Commissione
Sergio Gaetano Cofferati (S&D)
(1º ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Ridimensionamento della linea ferroviaria Cuneo-Nizza-Ventimiglia

La linea ferroviaria Cuneo-Nizza-Ventimiglia, di cui nei mesi scorsi è stata ipotizzata da parte della Regione Piemonte la parziale dismissione, subirà un notevole ridimensionamento del servizio a partire dal prossimo dicembre.

Considerando che:

— questa linea ferroviaria rappresenta un fondamentale asse verticale per il collegamento transfrontaliero tra Italia e Francia, e in particolare costituisce la parte centrale di una connessione importante tra due grandi centri come Torino e Nizza e di un raccordo con la Svizzera,

— il collegamento è ad oggi molto utilizzato per il traffico passeggeri, in particolare per ragioni turistiche,

— questa ferrovia tutela le valli dal prevedibile aumento di traffico di automobili e camion qualora si raddoppiasse il tunnel stradale del Tenda,

— l'opera si distingue per un notevole valore ingegneristico ed architettonico,

— si renderebbero necessari ulteriori stanziamenti finalizzati alla messa in sicurezza della tratta,

— occorrerebbe procedere con la revisione della convenzione del 1970 stipulata tra Italia e Francia riguardante la ricostruzione e le modalità di manutenzione e di gestione della linea,

può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se ritiene importante il mantenimento e la valorizzazione di questa tratta che, sebbene non sia inclusa nei progetti delle reti transeuropee di trasporto, si colloca perfettamente nello stesso approccio definito dalle linee guida;

2. quali misure possono essere prese per sollecitare il rinnovo e il conseguente aggiornamento della Convenzione del 1970?

Risposta di Siim Kallas a nome della Commissione
(2 dicembre 2013)

La Commissione condivide l'opinione dell'onorevole parlamentare in merito alla considerevole importanza che riveste la linea ferroviaria Cuneo-Nizza-Ventimiglia e l'affermazione che essa promuove in generale l'utilizzo del trasporto ferroviario anche per i collegamenti transfrontalieri.

Questo indipendentemente dalla circostanza che tale linea non sia stata inclusa nella rete TEN-T la quale segue una solida metodologia economica e prospettica.

Il 24 giugno 2013 la Francia e l'Italia hanno notificato alla Commissione la convenzione del 1970 concernente la linea ferroviaria Cuneo-Nizza-Ventimiglia, a norma dell'articolo 14 della direttiva 2012/34/UE ([1]) che stabilisce una procedura per verificare la conformità degli accordi transfrontalieri al diritto dell'UE. La convenzione è attualmente all'esame della Commissione, che dovrebbe adottare una decisione in merito entro 9 mesi dalla notifica.

Dal dicembre 2012 sono in corso negoziati tra la Francia e l'Italia in merito all'eventuale revisione della suddetta convenzione.

([1]) Direttiva 2012/34/UE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 21 novembre 2012, che istituisce uno spazio ferroviario europeo unico (GU L 343 del 14.12.2012, pag. 32).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011143/13
to the Commission
Sergio Gaetano Cofferati (S&D)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Scaling-down of the Cuneo-Nice-Ventimiglia railway line

In recent months, the Piedmont regional government proposed a partial decommissioning of the Cuneo-Nice-Ventimiglia railway line, and service will be significantly reduced as of this December.

Given that:

— this railway line is a fundamental cross-border vertical corridor connecting Italy and France, and in particular it forms the central part of an important link between the two major cities of Turin and Nice, and of a link with Switzerland;

— today the line is used heavily by passengers, particularly tourists;

— this railway will protect the valleys from the expected increase in car and lorry traffic should the Col de Tende road tunnel be expanded;

— the railway is notable for its considerable engineering and architectural value;

— further appropriations are needed to make this stretch of railway safe;

— the 1970 agreement between Italy and France on the reconstruction of the line and arrangements for its maintenance and management must be revised;

1. does the Commission believe it important to maintain and develop this stretch which, although not included in trans-European transport network projects, perfectly reflects the approach laid down in the guidelines;

2. what measures can be taken to press for a renewal and subsequent update of the 1970 agreement?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

The Commission agrees with the Honourable Member that the Cuneo-Nice-Ventimiglia railway line has considerable value and encourages in general the use of rail transport including for cross-border connections.

This is irrespective of the fact that the line was not included in the TEN-T network which follows a solid economic and prospective methodology.

On 24 June 2013 France and Italy notified to the Commission the 1970 agreement on the Cuneo-Nice-Ventimiglia railway line in accordance with the requirements of Article 14 of Directive 2012/34/EU ([1]) which establishes a procedure to verify the compliance of cross-border agreements with EC law. The agreement is currently being examined by the Commission which is expected to adopt a decision on the matter within 9 months of the notification.

Negotiations between France and Italy on a possible revision of this agreement have been going on since December 2012.

([1]) Directive 2012/34/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 establishing a single European railway area, OJ L 343, 14.12.2012.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011144/13
alla Commissione
Giommaria Uggias (ALDE)
(1º ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Destinazione dei beni confiscati alla mafia per ridurre gli squilibri macroeconomici

Nel contesto del cosiddetto semestre europeo è prevista un'apposita azione volta a prevenire gli squilibri macroeconomici eccessivi negli Stati membri. Tale azione viene condotta dalla Commissione che, sulla base di esami approfonditi degli squilibri macroeconomici, effettuati negli Stati membri in cui il rischio di siffatti squilibri è stato considerato elevato, può formulare raccomandazioni destinate ai paesi interessati e finalizzate alla correzione degli squilibri.

Il 10 aprile 2013 la Commissione ha pubblicato i risultati dell'esame approfondito per l'Italia, a norma dell'articolo 5 del regolamento (UE) n. 1176/2011. Tale analisi ha portato la Commissione a concludere che l'Italia presenta squilibri macroeconomici che richiedono un'azione politica incisiva. Al fine di contrastare tali squilibri la Commissione ha formulato, in data 29.5.2013, delle raccomandazioni volte a contenere il disavanzo, ridurre il debito pubblico e dare attuazione effettiva alle riforme in taluni settori specificamente indicati. Tali raccomandazioni sono state fatte proprie dal Consiglio che le ha a sua volta formalizzate in data 9.7.2013.

Attualmente lo Stato italiano, dando seguito alle citate raccomandazioni, sta adottando misure che vanno prevalentemente nella direzione di un aumento della pressione fiscale. Negli ultimi giorni, per scongiurare l'ennesimo aumento dell'aliquota IVA, il governo italiano ha pubblicamente dichiarato che occorre ancora recuperare entrate per un miliardo di euro.

Per altro verso, appare paradossale che mentre il governo italiano procede sulla strada dell'aumento della pressione fiscale, lo Stato italiano abbia consistenti disponibilità economiche che non vengono utilizzate. In particolare, in Italia risulta che lo Stato disponga di beni confiscati alla mafia e alla criminalità organizzata per un valore superiore a 80 miliardi di euro. Di questi, 700 milioni circa sono costituiti da titoli giacenti presso il Fondo Unico Giustizia (FUG).

Tutto ciò premesso, si chiede alla Commissione se non ritenga opportuno formulare un'apposita raccomandazione allo Stato Italiano affinché:

per contenere il disavanzo pubblico, secondo quanto prescritto dai parametri europei, l'Italia utilizzi preventivamente i proventi della vendita dei beni confiscati alle mafie e alla criminalità organizzata ovvero spieghi le ragioni del loro mancato utilizzo.

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(9 dicembre 2013)

Nelle raccomandazioni specifiche per paese (CSR) sulle finanze pubbliche si valuta in generale il rispetto delle disposizioni del patto di stabilità e crescita e si invita lo Stato membro ad affrontare i possibili rischi di deviazione.

Data l'importanza attribuita alle riforme strutturali ed anche tenuto conto dei risultati dell'esame approfondito del paese, le CSR rivolte all'Italia per il 2013 raccomandano tra l'altro una riforma dell'imposizione fiscale al fine di migliorare la competitività e ridurre la forte disoccupazione. Nel caso dell'Italia l'analisi ha infatti dimostrato che esistono margini per rendere la struttura impositiva più favorevole alla crescita, trasferendo il carico fiscale dall'imposizione del lavoro e del capitale all'imposizione dei consumi, alla tassazione ricorrente degli immobili o alle imposte ambientali. Le CSR raccomandano inoltre di intensificare le azioni per migliorare il rispetto dell'obbligo tributario e combattere l'evasione fiscale e di prendere misure contro l'economia sommersa e il lavoro non dichiarato, in modo tale da accrescere l'efficienza e l'equità.

Tuttavia, la responsabilità per l'attuazione delle politiche economiche e l'elaborazione delle azioni specifiche intese ad applicare le CSR ricade interamente sui governi nazionali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011144/13
to the Commission
Giommaria Uggias (ALDE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Using assets confiscated from the mafia to reduce macroeconomic imbalances

As part of the 'European Semester', a special action is envisaged to prevent excessive macroeconomic imbalances in the Member States. This action is being carried out by the Commission: based on in-depth reviews of macroeconomic imbalances undertaken in Member States in which the risk of these imbalances has been deemed high, it can draw up recommendations for the countries concerned with the aim of correcting the imbalances.

On 10 April 2013, the Commission published the results of the in-depth review of Italy, in accordance with Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011. This analysis led the Commission to conclude that Italy has macroeconomic imbalances requiring incisive political action. To counter these imbalances, on 29 May 2013 the Commission drew up recommendations intended to contain the deficit, reduce public debt and ensure the effective implementation of reforms in certain specified sectors. These recommendations were taken on board by the Council which in turn formally issued them on 9 July 2013.

The Italian State, acting on the above recommendations, is currently adopting measures which mainly seek to increase taxes. In recent days, to avert yet another VAT increase, the Italian Government publicly stated that it still needs to recover EUR 1 billion in revenue.

It seems strange, however, that while the Italian Government is pressing ahead with tax increases, Italy has substantial economic reserves which are not being used. In particular, the Italian State holds assets confiscated from the mafia and organised crime groups totalling over EUR 80 billion. Of this sum, approximately EUR 700 million is held in the form of securities in the Single Justice Fund (Fondo Unico Giustizia).

Does the Commission consider it appropriate to draw up a special recommendation for Italy so that, in order to contain the public deficit, in accordance with EU parameters, Italy either uses the revenue from the sale of assets confiscated from the mafia and organised crime groups, or explains why it is not being used?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(9 December 2013)

Country specific recommendations (CSRs) on public finances are generally assessing compliance with the provisions of the Stability and Growth Pact, recommending Member States to address possible risks of deviation.

Given the focus on structural reforms, also taking into account the findings of the in-depth review, the 2013 CSRs to Italy included also recommendations on reforms of taxation as a way to improve competitiveness and address high unemployment. In the case of Italy, the analysis has shown that there is room to shift the tax base from labour and capital to consumption, recurrent property or environmental taxation, which is more growth-friendly. The CSRs also recommend stepping up actions to improve tax compliance and fight tax evasion and take steps against the shadow economy and undeclared work, which can improve efficiency and fairness.

However, national governments retain full responsibility for the implementation of economic policies and for designing the specific actions in line with the CSRs.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-011145/13
komissiolle
Sari Essayah (PPE)
(1. lokakuuta 2013)

Aihe: Laserosoittimien kieltäminen

Vetoomuksessaan 1169/2011 Günther Dilikrath vetosi laserosoittimien kieltämiseksi. Komissio myönsi vastauksessaan, että jotkin kuluttajille myydyt laserosoittimet voivat aiheuttaa riskin näkökyvylle ja myös lentoturvallisuudelle. Kansalliset markkinavalvontaviranomaiset ovat lähes yksimielisiä siitä, ettei luokkaa 2M tehokkaampia laserosoittimia tulisi markkinoida kuluttajille. Vastauksen mukaan 10 jäsenmaan markkinavalvontaviranomaiset ovat vuosina 2011–2013 osallisina yhteistyöprojektissa estääkseen vaarallisten laserosoittimien markkinoinnin ja komissio neuvottelee jäsenmaiden kanssa uuden tai tarkistetun eurooppalaisen standardin luomiseksi, jossa määriteltäisiin mitä laserosoittimia voi markkinoida kuluttajille. Tällainen standardi olisi välttämätön apu kansallisille markkinavalvontaviranomaisille. Komissio viittaa edelleen vastauksessaan yleiseen tuoteturvallisuusdirektiiviin 2001/95/EY ja sen mahdolliseen uudistamiseen.

Mikä tilanne tällä hetkellä on ja missä aikataulussa komission mahdollinen esitys direktiivin 2001/95/EY muuttamiseksi tai uudistetun eurooppalaisen standardin luomiseksi on odotettavissa?

Neven Mimican komission puolesta antama vastaus
(14. marraskuuta 2013)

Nykyisessä laserlaitteita koskevassa eurooppalaisessa standardissa (EN 60825–1:2007 Laserlaitteiden turvallisuus – Osa 1: Laiteluokitus ja vaatimukset) edellytetään, että laserlaitteiden aiheuttama vaara on arvioitava ja että laserlaitteissa on oltava asianmukaiset varoitusmerkinnät ja niiden mukana on oltava käyttöohjeet, jotka sisältävät kaikki asiaankuuluvat turvallisuustiedot. Kyseisen standardin noudattaminen ei kuitenkaan riitä takaamaan, että laserlaitteet ovat turvallisia.

Luonnos komission päätökseksi turvallisuusvaatimuksista, jotka kuluttajien käyttöön tarkoitettuja laserlaitteita koskevien eurooppalaisten standardien on täytettävä yleisestä tuoteturvallisuudesta annetun Euroopan parlamentin ja neuvoston direktiivin 2001/95/EY mukaisesti, ([1]) on äskettäin toimitettu parlamentille ja neuvostolle, joilla on oikeus tarkastella sitä 27 päivään joulukuuta 2013 saakka.

Jos parlamentti tai neuvosto eivät vastusta ehdotusta, komissio aikoo hyväksyä päätöksen vuoden 2014 alussa. Kyseisten turvallisuusvaatimusten perusteella komissio esittää eurooppalaisille standardointielimille pyynnön laatia uusi eurooppalainen standardi tai muuttaa nykyistä eurooppalaista standardia sen varmistamiseksi, että kuluttajille tarkoitetut laserlaitteet ovat turvallisia eivätkä aiheuta silmävammojen tai ihovammojen riskiä.

Komissio on esittänyt 13. helmikuuta 2013 ehdotuksen asetukseksi kulutustavaroiden turvallisuudesta. Tällä ehdotuksella tarkistetaan yleisestä tuoteturvallisuudesta annettua direktiiviä. Ehdotus on käsiteltävänä tavallisessa lainsäätämisjärjestyksessä. Samoin kuin nykyiseen lainsäädäntöön, myös tähän ehdotukseen sisältyy yleinen vaatimus, jonka mukaan talouden toimijat voivat saattaa unionin markkinoille tai asettaa saataville unionin markkinoilla ainoastaan turvallisia tuotteita.

([1]) EYVL L 11, 15.1.2002, s. 4–17.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011145/13
to the Commission
Sari Essayah (PPE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Banning laser pointers

In petition 1169/2011, Günther Dilikrath petitioned for a ban on the sale of laser pointers. In its reply, the Commission admitted that some laser pointers sold to consumers may pose a risk to eyesight and also to flight safety. National market surveillance authorities are virtually unanimous in the opinion that laser pointers that are more powerful than class 2M should not be marketed to consumers. In accordance with the reply, market surveillance authorities from ten Member States participated in a project between 2011 and 2013 to prevent dangerous laser pointers from being marketed. The Commission is negotiating with the Member States on creating a reformed or amended European Standard to define which laser pointers can be marketed to consumers. Such a Standard would be an essential aid to national market surveillance authorities. In its reply, the Commission referred to the potential reform of Directive 2001/95/EC on general product safety.

What is the current situation and what is the timetable that could be expected for the Commission to present amendments to Directive 2001/95/EC or the creation of a reformed European Standard?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(14 November 2013)

The current European standard for laser products (EN 60825-1:2007 'Safety of laser products — Part 1: Equipment classification and requirements') provides that the hazard of laser products has to be assessed and that appropriate warning and user instructions containing all relevant safety information shall be provided. However, compliance with that standard is not sufficient to ensure that a laser product is safe.

A draft Commission Decision on the safety requirements to be met by European standards for consumer laser products pursuant to Directive 2001/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on general product safety (GPSD) ([1]) has recently been transmitted to the Parliament and Council who have the right of scrutiny until 27 December 2013.

If there are no objections raised by either the Parliament or the Council, the Commission aims at adopting the decision in early 2014. Based on these safety requirements the Commission will submit a request to the European standardisation bodies to develop a new European standard or amend the current European standard in order to ensure that consumer laser products are safe with respect to the risk of damage to the eyes or the skin.

On 13 February 2013, the Commission has presented a Proposal for a regulation on Consumer Product Safety, which revises the GPSD. The proposal is currently subject to the ordinary legislative procedure. Similarly to the current legislation, the proposal contains the general requirement that economic operators shall place or make available on the Union market only safe products.

([1]) OJ L 11, 15.1.2002, p. 4-17.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011146/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(1 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Coste de la electricidad y competitividad

Según ha informado el Ente Vasco de la Energía, empresa pública del Gobierno vasco, la última reforma energética del Gobierno español le ha supuesto a la industria vasca un incremento importante de la factura eléctrica. El 60 % de las empresas vascas ha pagado un 20 % más en el mes de agosto, momento de entrada en vigor de la reforma, en los peajes de acceso (http://www.noticiasdegipuzkoa.com/2013/09/28/economia/el-60-de-las-empresas-vascas-tiene-subidas-del-20-en-los-peajes-electricos).

Siendo la industria vasca una industria muy exportadora, este incremento de los costes energéticos tiene una influencia negativa en la competitividad de las empresas.

Esta es otra de las consecuencias negativas que las reformas del sector eléctrico que está impulsando el Gobierno español, que parece beneficiar solo a los grandes oligopolios eléctricos.

¿Conoce la Comisión esa situación?

¿Conoce la Comisión el alcance de las reformas del sector eléctrico impulsadas por el Gobierno español?

¿Tiene la Comisión alguna opinión al respecto?

¿Considera la Comisión que esas medidas encajan y están en consonancia con la política energética impulsada en la Unión?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de noviembre de 2013)

El Gobierno español ha presentado a la Comisión el texto jurídico aprobado, y la Comisión está actualmente analizando su compatibilidad con la legislación de la UE. La Comisión también está supervisando la finalización de los actos de ejecución pertinentes.

Su Señoría puede tener la certeza de que la Comisión está prestando la máxima atención al sector eléctrico español con el fin de garantizar un funcionamiento completo y eficaz del mercado interior de la energía, así como el respeto de la Directiva sobre las energías renovables y la Directiva sobre eficiencia energética ([1]).

([1]) Directiva 2009/28/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de abril de 2009, relativa al fomento del uso de energía procedente de fuentes renovables y Directiva 2012/27/UE, de 25 de octubre de 2012, relativa a la eficiencia energética.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011146/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Cost of electricity and competitiveness

According to Ente Vasco de la Energía, a Basque Government-owned company, the Spanish Government's most recent energy reform has resulted in a significant increase in energy bills for Basque industry. In August, when the reform took effect, 60% of Basque companies paid 20% more in access charges (http://www.noticias degipuzkoa.com/2013/09/28/economia/el-60-de-las-empresas-vascas-tiene-subidas-del-20-en-los-peajes-electricos).

Given that Basque industry is very export-oriented, this increase in energy costs negatively affects the competitiveness of companies.

This is one more negative consequence of the electricity sector reforms launched by the Spanish Government, one that appears to benefit only the large electricity oligopolies.

Is the Commission aware of this situation?

Is the Commission aware of the scope of the electricity sector reforms launched by the Spanish Government?

Does the Commission have any opinion on this issue?

Does the Commission take the view that these measures are in accordance and harmony with the energy policy pursued in the EU?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

The Spanish Government has presented to the Commission the adopted legal text and the Commission is currently analysing its compatibility with EU legislation. The Commission is also monitoring the finalisation of the relevant implementing acts.

The Honourable Member can be reassured that the Commission is paying the highest attention to the Spanish electricity sector in order to ensure a full and effective functioning of the Internal Energy Market and the respect of the directive on renewable energy and energy efficiency ([1]).

([1]) 2009/28 of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources and Directive 2012/27/EU of 25 October 2012 on energy efficiency.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011149/13
to the Commission
David Martin (S&D)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Ongoing issue of Cyprus property deeds

The Commission will be well aware of the ongoing problem as regards purchasers of property in Cyprus being able to obtain property deeds.

In its reply to Written Question E-006305/2013 earlier this year, the Commission advised that it had attached priority to resolving the title deeds issue and stated:

In Article 5.4 of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) concluded between the Commission, acting on behalf of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), and the Republic of Cyprus, it is therefore stated that the Cypriot authorities will, by end 2014, 'Eliminate the title deed issuance backlog to less than 2 000 cases of immovable property sales contracts with title deed issuance pending for more than one year. The Cypriot authorities will enhance cooperation with the financial sector to ensure the swift clearing of encumbrances on title deeds to be transferred to purchasers of immovable property, and implement guaranteed timeframes for the issuance of building certificates and title deeds'

(The text of the memorandum of understanding is also available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp149_en.pdf)

'The MoU therefore envisages a specific deadline for the elimination of the observed backlog. The swift clearing of encumbrances on title deed transfers constitutes an important element of this agreement.'

As there remain many property-owners who have still to see any sign of their property deeds or to receive any further advice or information on the problem, can the Commission advise as to what monitoring has been done and what information it has received regarding cooperation by the Cypriot authorities on this matter?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2013)

Resolving the issue of property title deeds requires deep structural reforms in the housing market and the immovable property regulation. In the context of the economic adjustment programme, Cyprus has agreed to a very ambitious timeframe in implementing them.

The Commission and the other troika partners, as part of the quarterly reviews, have technical meetings with the Cypriot authorities, including the Department of Lands and Surveys, where progress is assessed. Moreover, as the memorandum of understanding stipulates, data on the issuance of title deeds were made available to the public since mid-2013 (http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/DLS/dls.nsf/dmldata_en/dmldata_en?OpenDocument).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011150/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(1º ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Sequestro di tursiopi presso il delfinario di Rimini e situazione dei delfinari in Europa

Il 12 settembre 2013 quattro delfini dal naso a bottiglia (Tursiops truncatus) detenuti in cattività presso il delfinario di Rimini sono stati sequestrati a seguito di indagini eseguite dal Corpo forestale dello Stato — Servizio centrale CITES — che a fine luglio 2013 era intervenuto ([1]) presso la struttura per verificarne la conformità alla normativa in materia di zoo. In tale occasione erano state accertate diverse irregolarità e comminate sanzioni amministrative per circa 18 000 euro. Erano emerse: assenza di riparo dal sole e dalla vista del pubblico, carenza di un adeguato sistema di raffreddamento e di pulizia dell'acqua, nonché vecchie vasche di contenimento irregolari non adatte a consentire un adeguato movimento dei tursiopi e a garantirne la salute fisica e psichica. I delfini, inoltre, non erano sottoposti a un idoneo programma di trattamenti medici veterinari, come testimonia l'assenza di vasche predisposte a tal fine, o adibite alla quarantena o a ospitare le femmine durante il periodo di gravidanza e allattamento. Oltre a questi illeciti è stato ipotizzato il reato di maltrattamento animale.

Il 30 settembre 2013 il Tribunale del Riesame di Rimini ha confermato il sequestro preventivo degli animali ([2]).

La cattività dei cetacei è una pratica deprecabile: costringe animali come i tursiopi a vivere in vasche anguste e a condividere i piccoli spazi con conspecifici imposti dall'uomo, quando sono note la loro capacità di percorrere lunghe distanze in mare ogni giorno e l'importanza delle relazioni sociali che si instaurano nel branco di appartenenza. Le loro minime esigenze socio-etologiche sono insoddisfatte e per questo i cetacei detenuti in cattività manifestano gravi segnali di stress e spesso si ricorre alla massiccia somministrazione quotidiana di tranquillanti.

1. La Commissione è a conoscenza di tale provvedimento di sequestro?

2. Saprebbe confermare quanto affermato nel comunicato stampa ([3]) del Corpo forestale dello Stato italiano, ovvero che si tratti del primo sequestro di delfini in Europa per l'ipotesi di reato di maltrattamento animale?

3. Potrebbe precisare quanti delfinari sono attivi nell'Unione europea e quanti sono in totale i cetacei ivi detenuti in cattività?

4. È stato portato a termine lo studio intrapreso dalla Commissione, citato nella risposta all'interrogazione E-004837/2012, per l'elaborazione di un documento orientativo e di migliori pratiche inteso a incoraggiare l'attuazione della Direttiva 1999/22/CE relativa alla custodia degli animali selvatici nei giardini zoologici, e quale situazione ne è emersa?

5. La Commissione sta monitorando se gli Stati Membri effettuano i dovuti controlli, al fine di prevenire il ripetersi di situazioni come quella del delfinario di Rimini?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(20 novembre 2013)

Come affermato nelle precedenti risposte alle interrogazioni scritte sullo stesso argomento E-000705/2011 e E-5760/2011 ([4]), la direttiva sui giardini zoologici ([5]) è stata adottata con l'intento di promuovere la protezione delle specie di fauna selvatica potenziando il ruolo dei giardini zoologici nella loro conservazione. Questo obiettivo deve essere conseguito attraverso l'adozione da parte degli Stati membri di misure per il rilascio delle licenze e per le ispezioni dei giardini zoologici, onde garantire che queste strutture rispettino le disposizioni in materia di conservazione e protezione, compresa l'appropriata sistemazione degli animali.

Per quanto riguarda il caso citato nell'interrogazione parlamentare:

1. La Commissione non era a conoscenza del provvedimento cui fa riferimento l'onorevole deputato.

([1]) Intervento condotto da funzionari del Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare, da medici veterinari del Ministero della Salute e da esperti di mammiferi marini.
([2]) http://www.ilrestodelcarlino.it/rimini/cronaca/2013/09/30/958164-riesame-conferma-sequestro-delfini.shtml.
([3]) http://www3.corpoforestale.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/7920.
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/it/parliamentary-questions.html
([5]) Direttiva 1999/22/CE del Consiglio, del 29 marzo 1999, relativa alla custodia degli animali selvatici nei giardini zoologici, GU L 94 del 9.4.1999.

2. La Commissione non è in grado di formulare osservazioni su questo specifico intervento delle autorità italiane inteso ad applicare le disposizioni della direttiva sui giardini zoologici sul territorio nazionale, né può confermare che si tratti del primo sequestro di questo tipo effettuato in Europa.

3. La Commissione non tiene un registro dei delfinari, né dei giardini zoologici, presenti nell'Unione europea. Tale attività è di competenza dei singoli Stati membri.

4. La Commissione sta attualmente elaborando un documento orientativo e di migliori pratiche volto a incoraggiare l'attuazione della direttiva sui giardini zoologici.

5. La direttiva sui giardini zoologici non impone agli Stati membri di condurre un'azione sistematica di monitoraggio, controllo o verifica per accertarne l'applicazione. La Commissione sta tuttavia esaminando ogni elemento ben documentato e circostanziato portato alla sua attenzione in ordine al mancato recepimento o alla mancata attuazione della direttiva e, se necessario, adotterà i provvedimenti del caso.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011150/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Seizure of bottlenose dolphins from the Rimini dolphinarium and the situation of dolphinariums in Europe

On 12 September 2013, four bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) kept in captivity at the Rimini dolphinarium were seized following investigations by the CITES Section of the State Forestry Corps, which inspected the facility in late July 2013 ([1]) to check that it complied with zoo legislation. On that occasion, a number of irregularities were found and the dolphinarium was fined some EUR 18 000. It was found that there was no shelter from the sun or from public view, no suitable water cooling and cleaning system in place, as well as old and unsuitable containment tanks that did not allow the bottlenose dolphins enough room to move and to ensure their physical and mental health. There was no suitable veterinary treatment programme in place for the dolphins, as proved by there being no tanks for that purpose or any tanks set aside for quarantine purposes or to accommodate pregnant or breastfeeding females. In addition to those offences, there were allegations of animal cruelty.

On 30 September 2013, the Rimini Court of Appeal upheld the preventive seizure of the animals ([2]).

Keeping cetaceans in captivity is disgraceful: it forces animals, such as bottlenose dolphins, to live in cramped tanks and to share small spaces with conspecifics determined by humans, when their ability to cross huge distances by sea every day and the importance of social relations in their pods are well known. Their basic social and ethological needs are not met and cetaceans kept in captivity therefore show major signs of stress and they are often administered large doses of tranquillisers on a daily basis.

1. Is the Commission aware of this seizure?

2. Could it confirm the claims in the press release ([3]) from the Italian State Forestry Corps, namely that this is the first seizure of dolphins in Europe on the grounds of animal cruelty?

3. Could it specify how many dolphinariums are in operation in the EU and how many cetaceans in total are kept in captivity in them?

4. Has the study undertaken by the Commission, referred to in the answer to Question E-004837/2012, to produce a guidance and best practice document to support the implementation of Directive 1999/22/EC relating to the keeping of wild animals in zoos, been completed and what were its findings?

5. Is the Commission monitoring whether the Member States are carrying out the necessary checks in order to prevent a repeat of situations like that of the Rimini dolphinarium?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

As stated in earlier responses to the similar written questions E-000705/2011 and E-5760/2011 ([4]), the Zoos Directive ([5]) was adopted with the objective to promote the protection of wild animal species by strengthening the role of zoos in their conservation. This is to be achieved by Member States adopting measures for the licensing and inspection of zoos in order to ensure that zoos respect the necessary conservation and protection measures, including appropriate accommodation of the animals.

Under these circumstances,

1. The Commission was not previously aware of this event of enforcement of EU Legislation communicated by the Honourable Member.

([1]) Inspection carried out by officials from the Ministry of the Environment and Protection of Land and Sea, veterinarians from the Ministry of Health and marine mammal experts.
([2]) http://www.ilrestodelcarlino.it/rimini/cronaca/2013/09/30/958164-riesame-conferma-sequestro-delfini.shtml
([3]) http://www3.corpoforestale.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/7920
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([5]) Council Directive 1999/22/EC of 29 March 1999 relating to the keeping of wild animals in zoos, OJ L 94, 9.4.1999.

2. The Commission is not in a position to comment on this particular intervention of the Italian authorities when applying the provisions of the Zoos Directive in their territory and cannot confirm whether this is the first case of such a seizure in Europe.

3. The Commission does not keep a registry of Dolphinariums, or Zoos, in the EU. This is responsibility of individual Member States.

4. The Commission is currently preparing the production of an 'EU Zoos Directive Guidance and Best Practice Document'.

5. The Zoos Directive does not provide for systematic monitoring, control, or audit of its implementation by the Member States. However, the Commission is examining any well founded and substantiated evidence that is brought to its attention as regards failures of transposition or implementation of the directive and, if necessary, will take the appropriate steps.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011151/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(1 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: El resurgir de la acción de oro y la política europea de telecomunicaciones

Una relevante empresa de telecomunicaciones española ha llegado a un acuerdo con sus socios en el *holding* que controla la mayor participación con derecho a voto en otra empresa de telecomunicaciones italiana. El convenio ha sido comunicado a los órganos supervisores competentes, y en él, además de incluirse otras estipulaciones como las operaciones para garantizar la estabilidad de la empresa y la reducción de deuda, se explica el derecho a adquirir el cien por cien de la compañía. Sin embargo, el Gobierno italiano ha anunciado una reforma normativa sobre el régimen de las ofertas públicas de adquisición, así como la recuperación de la denominada «acción de oro» con el fin de impedir tal objetivo.

Resulta innecesario recordar a la Comisión la jurisprudencia del Tribunal de la Unión Europea, que ha declarado contrarios al Derecho comunitario europeo los instrumentos que confieren a los Estados derechos especiales a autorizar operaciones de las sociedades mercantiles ([1]). Pero, además, la reciente presentación de un gran paquete de política europea de telecomunicaciones y, de manera especial, la propuesta de Reglamento que establecerá las medidas en relación con el mercado único europeo de las comunicaciones electrónicas y para crear un continente conectado (documento presentado el pasado día 11 de septiembre, con la referencia COM(2013)0627), hace que traslade a la Comisión las siguientes preguntas:

1. ¿Considera la Comisión acorde con el Tratado de Funcionamiento de la Unión Europea, con la jurisprudencia reiterada del Tribunal de Justicia y con las nuevas propuestas de política de telecomunicaciones para facilitar el mercado único europeo el anuncio del Gobierno italiano dirigido a restringir o impedir los movimientos de capital en una empresa hasta ahora de predominante accionariado italiano?

2. ¿Qué actuaciones adoptará la Comisión Europea? ¿Requerirá al Gobierno italiano para evitar el incumplimiento del Derecho europeo?

Respuesta del Sr. Barnier en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de noviembre de 2013)

La Comisión ha seguido muy de cerca la legislación italiana que concede al Estado poderes especiales en empresas que operan en sectores estratégicos, como las telecomunicaciones y la energía.

En 2011, la Comisión decidió llevar a Italia ante el Tribunal de Justicia por considerar que la legislación italiana que concede al Estado poderes especiales en las empresas privatizadas infringía las normas del Tratado sobre libre circulación de capitales y derecho de establecimiento.

No obstante, con el fin de garantizar el cumplimiento de la legislación de la UE, en 2012 Italia adoptó una nueva ley que introduce un nuevo régimen de poderes especiales sustancialmente diferente al anterior.

La plena aplicación de la nueva ley exige la adopción de algunos decretos de ejecución, entre ellos uno que determine los activos estratégicos que deben protegerse en los sectores de la energía, el transporte y las telecomunicaciones. Estos decretos están actualmente en fase de preparación. Cuando se introduzcan, la Comisión podrá evaluar la compatibilidad de los nuevos poderes y su aplicación en casos concretos con la legislación de la UE y decidirá las acciones más adecuadas que deban adoptarse.

([1]) Entre otras, sirva la mera referencia a las sentencias del Tribunal de Justicia de 4 de junio de 2002 o de 28 de septiembre de 2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011151/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: The re-emergence of the golden share and European telecommunications policy

A major Spanish telecommunications company has reached an agreement with its associates in the holding company that controls the largest voting interest in another, Italian, telecommunications company. The agreement, which has been sent to the competent supervisory bodies, asserts the right to acquire 100% of the company and also mentions other conditions, such as operations intended to guarantee the company's stability and to reduce debt. However, in order to prevent the achievement of this aim, the Italian Government has announced a regulatory reform of the system governing takeover bids and the re-establishment of the 'golden share'.

The Commission needs no reminding of Court of Justice case-law declaring that instruments which grant states special rights to authorise trading-company operations are in breach of EC law ([1]). Moreover, a large European policy package on telecommunications was recently presented and a proposal has been made for a regulation to establish a European single market for electronic communications and to create a connected continent (see the document COM/2013/0627, submitted on 11 September).

1. Does the Commission believe that the Italian Government's announcement of its intention to restrict or prevent the free movement of capital in a company whose shareholders to date have predominantly been Italian is in accordance with the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Court of Justice's settled case-law and the new proposed telecommunications policy to facilitate the single European market?

2. What steps will the Commission take to deal with this situation? Will it request that the Italian Government does not to breach European law?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The Commission has been monitoring closely the Italian legislation which grants the State special powers in companies operating in strategic sectors, such as telecommunications and energy.

In 2011, the Commission decided to refer Italy to the Court of Justice because it considered that the Italian law providing for State's special powers in privatised companies breached the Treaty rules on the free movement of capital and the right of establishment.

However, in order to ensure compliance with EC law, in 2012 Italy adopted a new law which introduces a new regime of special powers substantially different from the previous one.

Full application of the new law requires the adoption of some implementing decrees, including a decree identifying the strategic assets to be protected in the energy, transport and telecommunication sectors. Those decrees are currently under preparation. When they are in place, the Commission will be able to assess the compatibility of the new powers and of their application in specific cases with EC law and will decide accordingly on the most appropriate actions to be taken.

([1]) Among other examples, see the sentences passed by the Court of Justice on 4 June 2002 and 28 September 2006.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011152/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(1 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Ciudad de la Luz de Alicante

La Comisión Europea ha ordenado recientemente desinvertir todo el dinero público empleado en el proyecto de la Ciudad de la Luz de la Generalitat Valenciana, que supuso una inversión pública estimada en 265 millones de euros. A raíz de la denuncia de los estudios Pinewood de Londres, se consideró que los fondos invertidos vulneraban las normas de libre competencia.

El Gobierno de España ha explicado que en las reuniones mantenidas con la Comisión Europea se persigue el objetivo de «conseguir el cumplimiento de la obligación de recuperación, valorando posibles escenarios ante la imposibilidad de recuperar la ayuda de la sociedad pública». Desde el pasado mayo la licitación del complejo está pendiente de autorización por la Comisión.

La Ciudad de la Luz se enmarca dentro de la estrategia del Gobierno del Partido Popular valenciano de fomento de macroestructuras y complejos de ocio para atraer turismo. Esta estrategia ha llegado a hundir las arcas públicas con 29 000 millones de euros de deuda, más del doble del presupuesto anual.

¿Hará público la Comisión el informe sobre la violación de las normas de libre competencia de la UE en el proyecto de la Ciudad de la Luz? ¿Qué medidas tiene previsto adoptar a la luz de los acontecimientos relacionados con proyectos financiados por la UE y los casos de corrupción?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(6 de diciembre de 2013)

La Comisión informa a Su Señoría de que, a fin de ajustarse a la Decisión de la Comisión, las autoridades españolas han propuesto la privatización del complejo «Ciudad de la Luz». La Comisión está tratando con las autoridades españolas los aspectos técnicos del proceso de licitación. La Decisión de la Comisión y el informe de LECG se publicaron el 23 de marzo de 2013 ([1]). La Comisión no tiene previsto publicar ningún nuevo informe sobre este asunto.

([1]) DO L 85, página 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011152/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Ciudad de la Luz in Alicante

The European Commission recently ordered the divestment of all of the public money spent on the Valencian Regional Government's Ciudad de la Luz project, which has received EUR 265 million of public funds. Following a complaint made by Pinewood Studios of London, the funds invested were considered to have contravened the rules regarding free competition.

The Spanish Government has explained that the meetings held with the European Commission aim to 'achieve fulfilment of the duty to recover the funds in question, assessing potential scenarios that may arise if it is impossible to recover these funds from the public company'. The process of bidding for the complex has been awaiting authorisation by the Commission since May.

Ciudad de la Luz forms part of a strategy pursued by members of the Valencian branch of the Partido Popular to attract tourism by promoting macrostructures and leisure complexes. This strategy has stripped public coffers of their funds, generating EUR 29 billion of debt, more than twice the annual budget.

Will the Commission publish the report on the contravention of the EU's rules on free competition in the Ciudad de la Luz project? What steps does it intend to take in relation to EU-funded projects and cases of corruption?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2013)

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that in order to comply with the Commission's decision, the Spanish authorities have proposed the privatisation of the Ciudad de la Luz complex. The Commission is currently discussing technicalities of the tender process with the Spanish authorities. The Commission decision and the report of LECG were both published on 23 March 2013 ([1]). The Commission does not envisage publishing any further report in this case.

([1]) OJ L85, page 1.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011153/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(1. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Konsequenzen des amerikanischen „Shutdown“

Amerika konnte sich erneut nicht auf einen Übergangshaushalt einigen. Für Staatsbedienstete im Land hat das schlimme Konsequenzen, und ein gangbarer Weg aus dieser Krise scheint derzeit nicht in Sicht zu sein.

1. Es wird prognostiziert, dass das BIP im vierten Quartal dieses Jahres um 0,3 % sinken könnte. Welche Konsequenzen erwartet die Kommission für die Handelsbeziehungen zwischen den USA und der EU, wenn es der Regierung nicht gelingt, den Staatshaushalt zu sanieren?

2. Wird die Kommission aus der gegenwärtigen Situation Konsequenzen für etwaige Verhandlungen über Wirtschaftsabkommen in Betracht ziehen? Wenn ja, welche?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(18. November 2013)

1. Durch die am 16. Oktober im Kongress erzielte Einigung ging der 16-tägige „Shutdown“ zu Ende. Die Prognose, dass das BIP-Wachstum der USA im 4. Quartal 2013 um etwa 0,3 Prozentpunkte niedriger ausfallen könnte als ursprünglich geschätzt, scheint die allgemeine Ansicht widerzuspiegeln, nach der diese Situation keine großen direkten makroökonomischen Auswirkungen haben dürfte. Daher lässt sich behaupten, dass die Nachfrage nach EU-Erzeugnissen nicht in großem Umfang beeinträchtigt sein dürfte und in die USA ausführende Unternehmen, einschließlich EU-Unternehmen, deshalb vermutlich nicht wesentlich betroffen sind. Darüber hinaus ist festzuhalten, dass der „Shutdown“ keine Auswirkungen auf die US-Außenhandelskanäle (Häfen, Flughafeninfrastruktur) hatte.

2. Der „Shutdown“ der US-Regierung im Oktober hatte nur sehr geringe Auswirkungen auf die Verhandlungen über eine Transatlantische Handels- und Investitionspartnerschaft (TTIP). Er führte zur Verschiebung der zweiten Verhandlungsrunde, die ursprünglich für die Woche vom 7. Oktober vorgesehen war und nun im der Woche vom 11. November in Brüssel stattfinden wird.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011153/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Consequences of the US shutdown

The US has once again been unable to agree on a transitional budget. For State employees in the country, this has serious consequences, and no viable way out of this crisis appears to be in sight at present.

1. Forecasts indicate that the GDP could fall by 0.3% in the fourth quarter of this year. What impact does the Commission expect it to have on trade relations between the US and the EU if the government does not succeed in restoring the State budget?

2. Will the Commission take account of any implications the present situation may have for any negotiations on economic agreements? If so, what are they?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

1. The agreement reached in Congress on 16 October put an end to the 16 days long shut-down. The estimate that the US GDP growth in the 4th quarter of 2013 could be around 0.3 percentage points lower than initially estimated seems to reflect the general view that no big direct macroeconomic impact is to be expected from this situation. Therefore it can be safely said that demand for EU products should not have been affected to a big extent and therefore, companies exporting to the US, including EU companies, are not likely to be significantly concerned. Moreover, it is also important to note that the shutdown did not affect the US foreign trade channels (ports, airport infrastructure).

2. The shutdown of the US Government in the course of October only had a very limited impact on the negotiations of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). It led to the postponement of the second negotiating round which was initially planned for the week of 7 October. This will now take place in the week of 11 November in Brussels.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011154/13
to the Commission
Gay Mitchell (PPE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Repercussions of 'Basel III' standards on credit unions

In January 2013, the governing body of the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision reached an agreement on the implementation of liquidity standards under Basel III.

Under Basel III, a number of different classes, or funding sources, are identified. Thus far, banks have broadly treated credit unions as stable deposits which have attracted competitive rates of return. Irish credit unions are not-for-profit cooperatives which are managed by voluntary boards of directors and regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. As part of the Irish Deposit Guarantee Scheme, credit unions have the appropriate funds on deposit with the Irish Central Bank. Moreover, they are also subject to the European Central Bank's Minimum Reserve Requirements (MRR) and consequently have the appropriate funds on deposit with the Irish Central Bank for this.

Under Basel III, it appears that deposits from credit unions will be classified as unsecured wholesale funding rather than retail or small business deposits, as is the situation currently. It is assumed that deposits from unsecured wholesale sources would be withdrawn from banks in a period of market stress, and consequently will be viewed as a relatively unstable source of funding. Therefore, deposits from credit unions may no longer be as attractive to banks, especially deposits with maturities of less than one year, and hence the interest rates offered to credit unions may decrease.

1. Will the Commission clarify whether, based on the Basel III criteria, credit unions will fall into the wholesale category of non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs), or will their classification as retail or small business customers remain, given the fact that surplus funds in Irish credit unions are wholly owned by their members?

2. In view of the above, and bearing in mind the individual circumstances (e.g. in Ireland there are only four operating retail banks, and the only other organisations offering personal savings and loans are credit unions), will the Commission comment on whether discretion should not be given to Member States to classify credit unions individually, in particular in the light of the social and economic significance of their role in a specific Member State?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2013)

The Commission is aware of the social and economic importance of credit unions, particularly in peripheral areas where no or limited banking services may be physically available. The Commission also recognises that credit unions are typically subject to specific national legislation. While based on the Basel III criteria, credit unions could fall into the category of wholesale non-bank financial institutions, for the purposes of the calculation of the liquidity coverage ratio (LCR), the definitive treatment of deposits made by credit institutions will have to be determined in the Commission delegated act implementing the detailed LCR in accordance with Article 460 CRR (Capital Requirements Regulation ([1])). When adopting this delegated act, the Commission will take into account the reports prepared by the European Banking Authority under Article 509 CRR, international standards and Union specificities. The Commission has still to receive the EBA Reports and complete its deliberations prior to preparation of the LCR delegated act.

([1]) Regulation No 575/2013, OJ 27.6.2013, L176.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011155/13
alla Commissione
Giommaria Uggias (ALDE)
(1º ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Accertamento IVA sulle quote rimpatriate tramite lo scudo fiscale

A seguito dell'interrogazione presentata in data 4 aprile 2012 e relativa alla compatibilità dello scudo fiscale con la normativa europea in materia di IVA, il Commissario alla fiscalità e all'Unione doganale Algirdas Semeta, riferiva, con risposta datata 28 maggio 2012, di aver inviato una lettera alle autorità italiane «chiedendo la prova….degli importi IVA recuperati nel corso dell'amnistia».

Il Commissario sottolineava inoltre che l'Italia si era nel frattempo conformata al quadro normativo europeo tramite l'introduzione, nel proprio ordinamento giuridico, di una previsione normativa, l'articolo 8, comma 16, lettera i), del decreto legge n.16 del 2 marzo 2012, il quale sancisce chiaramente che lo scudo fiscale non preclude l'accertamento dell'IVA, come più volte sostenuto dallo scrivente in precedenti interrogazioni rivolte alla Commissione.

Questo utile chiarimento, se da un lato eliminava ogni ambiguità sulla sopraggiunta conformità della normativa italiana con quella europea in materia fiscale, lasciava inevasa la richiesta di conoscere la quantità degli importi IVA recuperati dallo Stato italiano in relazione alle operazioni coperte dallo scudo a partire dal 2009.

Più in generale, sono stati recentemente riportati dai media italiani diversi casi di cronaca aventi ad oggetto presunte evasioni fiscali attuate tramite un complesso sistema societario che prevedeva il trasferimento di ingenti somme di danaro «estero su estero». Somme successivamente rimpatriate in Italia proprio attraverso il provvedimento di condono dello scudo fiscale.

Alla luce di quanto illustrato, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se abbia ricevuto comunicazione dalle autorità italiane circa gli accertamenti effettuati in relazione alle operazioni coperte dallo scudo fiscale e i dati relativi agli importi IVA recuperati nel corso dell'amnistia;

2. in caso di risposta negativa al primo quesito, quali misure intende adottare per assicurare che l'Italia fornisca, nel più breve tempo possibile, un reale ed esaustivo riscontro circa le somme IVA recuperate?

Risposta di Algirdas Šemeta a nome della Commissione
(21 novembre 2013)

La Commissione non ha ricevuto, da parte dell'Italia, informazioni particolari riguardanti transazioni che rientrano nel campo di applicazione dell'IVA e che sarebbero state messe in evidenza nel corso dell'applicazione dello scudo fiscale a partire dal 2009. In ogni caso, la Commissione rammenta che ha preso in esame lo scudo fiscale ed ha concluso che, in linea di massima, la sua applicazione non ha incidenza sulla riscossione dell'IVA conformemente alle norme del diritto dell'Unione né tantomeno sulle risorse proprie. Nella risposta del 28 maggio 2012, a cui si riferisce l'onorevole parlamentare, la Commissione ha precisato non erano necessarie altre azioni nei confronti dell'Italia. Pertanto non intende rivolgersi alle autorità nazionali in merito, restando impregiudicate le normali attività di controllo in materia di risorse proprie.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011155/13
to the Commission
Giommaria Uggias (ALDE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: VAT assessment on the amounts repatriated under the tax shield

In response to the Question submitted on 4 April 2012 on the compatibility of the tax shield with EU VAT legislation, the Commissioner for Taxation and Customs Union, Algirdas Šemeta, stated, in his answer of 28 May 2012, that a letter had been sent to the Italian authorities 'asking to provide proof … of the amounts of VAT recovered during the course of the amnesty.'

Moreover, the Commissioner pointed out that Italy had in the meantime brought itself into line with EC law by introducing a legislative provision (Article 8(16)(i) of Decree-Law No 16 of 2 March 2012) into its national law, which clearly lays down that the tax shield does not preclude VAT assessment, as I have stated many times in previous questions to the Commission.

While this useful clarification removes any ambiguities regarding the conformity of Italian tax law with EU tax law, it does not answer the Commission's question as to how much VAT has been recovered by the Italian State in relation to transactions covered by the tax shield since 2009.

More generally, there have recently been reports in the Italian media of several cases involving alleged tax evasion conducted through a complex company system involving the transfer of huge sums of foreign money. These sums were subsequently returned to Italy under the tax shield amnesty measure.

1. Has the Commission received any information from the Italian authorities regarding assessments carried out in relation to transactions covered by the tax shield and figures on the amounts of VAT recovered during the amnesty?

2. If not, what action will it take to ensure that Italy conducts, as soon as possible, a genuine and comprehensive audit of the amounts of VAT recovered?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par M. Šemeta au nom de la Commission
(21 novembre 2013)

La Commission n'a reçu aucune information spécifique de l'Italie concernant les éventuelles transactions relevant du champ d'application de la TVÀ qui auraient été découvertes lors de la mise en œuvre du bouclier fiscal (scudo fiscale) depuis 2009. En tout état de cause, la Commission rappelle qu'elle a procédé à une analyse du bouclier fiscal (scudo fiscale), et qu'elle a conclu qu'il n'a normalement pas d'effets sur la perception de la TVA conformément aux règles du droit de l'Union et encore moins sur les ressources propres. Dans sa réponse du 28 mai 2012 à laquelle se réfère l'Honorable Parlementaire, la Commission a indiqué qu'aucune autre action à l'égard de l'Italie n'était nécessaire. Elle n'entend donc pas contacter les autorités nationales sur ce sujet, sans préjudice de ses activités habituelles de contrôle liées aux ressources propres.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011156/13
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE)
(1º ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Termine ragionevole di durata del processo

Ogni persona ha diritto a che la sua causa sia esaminata entro un «termine ragionevole» ai sensi dell'articolo 47, paragrafo 2, della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'UE e dell'articolo 6, paragrafo 1, della Convenzione europea per la salvaguardia dei diritti dell'uomo e delle libertà fondamentali.

L'Italia è stata condannata innumerevoli volte dalla Corte europea dei diritti dell'uomo per la lunghezza eccessiva dei processi.

Nel 2001, per porre un limite alle continue richieste di condanna dello Stato italiano da parte dei cittadini che si rivolgevano alla Corte europea, è stata approvata la legge 89/2001, in base alla quale si riconosce il diritto di adire la Corte di Appello competente per richiedere un'equa riparazione quando si è subito un danno, patrimoniale o no, per mancato rispetto del termine ragionevole del processo, come previsto dalla CEDU.

L'articolo 2 bis della menzionata legge prevede che si considera rispettato il termine ragionevole se il processo non eccede la durata di tre anni in primo grado e di due anni in secondo grado, di un anno nel giudizio di legittimità.

Per quel che attiene al processo penale, il termine iniziale di durata ragionevole del processo decorre dall'assunzione della qualità di imputato, di parte civile o di responsabile civile ovvero dal momento in cui l'indagato abbia avuto legale conoscenza della chiusura delle indagini.

Nella sentenza pilota della Corte europea nel caso «Torreggiani e altri contro Italia» dell'8/1/2013, si afferma che il 40 % circa dei detenuti nelle carceri italiane sono persone sottoposte a custodia cautelare in attesa di giudizio.

Già nel corso delle indagini preliminari, il cittadino può essere sottoposto a misura cautelare e da questo momento possono trascorrere lunghi anni di attesa fino alla conclusione delle indagini o all'assunzione della qualità di imputato.

Tutto ciò premesso, ritiene la Commissione, per garantire l'effettivo diritto di cui all'articolo 47, paragrafo 2 della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'UE, anche il momento in cui viene disposta una misura cautelare durante le indagini preliminari vada considerato «*dies a quo*» ai fini del computo della durata ragionevole del processo per l'ottenimento dell'equa riparazione?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(3 dicembre 2013)

In virtù dell'articolo 47, secondo comma, della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea, ogni persona ha diritto a che la sua causa sia esaminata entro un termine ragionevole. La Carta, tuttavia, si applica agli Stati membri esclusivamente nell'attuazione del diritto dell'Unione. Nel settore dei procedimenti penali, gli Stati membri applicano il diritto dell'Unione soltanto laddove quest'ultimo li obbliga a imporre sanzioni penali. La Commissione non è quindi in grado di formulare ulteriori osservazioni sulla questione sollevata dall'onorevole parlamentare, dato che la normativa dello Stato membro interessato si riferisce indistintamente a tutti i procedimenti penali. Spetta comunque agli Stati membri fare in modo che i loro obblighi in materia di diritti fondamentali — derivanti dagli accordi internazionali, in particolare dalla Convenzione europea per la salvaguardia dei diritti dell'uomo, nonché dal loro diritto interno — siano rispettati.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011156/13
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Reasonable time of legal proceedings

Everyone is entitled to a hearing within a 'reasonable time' pursuant to Article 47(2) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and Article 6(1) of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Italy has come in for a great deal of criticism by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) for its excessively long proceedings.

Law No 89/2001 was adopted in 2001 in order to curb the constant requests made by citizens before the European Court for the Italian State to be prosecuted. The law recognises the right to appeal to the competent court of appeal to request fair compensation in the event of financial or non-financial losses sustained as a result of legal proceedings failing to comply with a reasonable time period, as laid down by the ECHR.

Article 2a of the aforementioned law lays down that the reasonable time requirement is considered to have been met if the proceedings do not exceed a period of three years in proceedings of first instance, two years in proceedings of second instance, and one year for a ruling on validity.

As regards criminal proceedings, the initial reasonable time of the proceedings is calculated from the moment when the defendant is indicted, or declared a civil party or civilly liable party, or from the time when the suspect is made legally aware of the completion of investigations.

The European Court's pilot judgment in the case 'Torreggiani and Others v. Italy' of 8 January 2013, found that around 40% of inmates in Italian prisons are on remand awaiting trial.

In the course of preliminary investigations, a member of the public may be remanded in custody and have to wait several years from that time before the investigations are concluded or they are indicted.

Does the Commission think that, in order to guarantee the effective right referred to Article 47(2) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the moment when a suspect is remanded in custody during preliminary investigations should be considered *dies a quo* for the purposes of calculating whether the time of the proceedings is reasonable, in order to obtain fair compensation?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2013)

Article 47(2) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union provides for the right to have a hearing within a reasonable time. The Charter however only applies where a Member State is implementing Union law. In the area of criminal proceedings a Member State is implementing Union law only where Union law obliges Member States to impose criminal sanctions. The Commission is therefore not in a position to comment further on the matter referred to by the Honourable Member since the legislation of the Member State concerned refers indistinctly to all criminal proceedings. It is in any case for Member States to ensure that their obligations regarding fundamental rights — as resulting from international agreements including notably the European Convention on Human Rights and from their internal legislation — are respected.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011159/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(1 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Incoherencias en la regulación del régimen de autoconsumo de energía eléctrica

El Gobierno del Reino de España ha elaborado una ambiciosa reforma del sector eléctrico. El pasado día 20 de septiembre aprobó el proyecto de Ley que ha presentado ya a las Cortes Generales y ha anunciado que tiene muy ultimadas seis disposiciones reglamentarias. Muchos son los cambios que se pretenden introducir. En este momento llamo la atención sobre la regulación del «autoconsumo de energía eléctrica» porque se prevé que esos consumidores contribuyan a los costes y servicios del sistema por la energía autoconsumida, además de calificar como infracciones muy graves los incumplimientos del régimen que se establezca. Esta regulación implica, entre otras consideraciones de posible inconstitucionalidad interna, una incomprensible incoherencia con la dirección marcada en la política energética por la Unión Europea ([1]), al desincentivar las soluciones más descentralizadas de las redes de energía, las instalaciones de «pequeña escala», las minirredes, en fin, alternativas que persiguen la eficiencia del sistema.

1. ¿Podría indicar la Comisión qué comunicación le ha trasladado el Gobierno de España sobre el nuevo régimen de autoconsumo?

2. ¿Advertirá la Comisión al Gobierno de España de la contradicción de esas propuestas con la dirección marcada por la política energética europea?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(14 de noviembre de 2013)

El Gobierno español ha presentado a la Comisión el texto jurídico aprobado.

La legislación de la UE en materia de energía no recoge disposiciones específicas sobre el tratamiento del autoconsumo, cuando se contribuye a los costes, más allá de la prohibición general de discriminación con respecto a la electricidad producida a partir de fuentes de energía renovables a la hora de fijar las tarifas de transporte y distribución ([2]). No obstante, la Comisión fomenta la promoción del autoconsumo y del sistema de contadores inteligentes como un modo de adaptar mejor los sistemas de energía a una producción de energía más flexible y distribuida. En este sentido, se seguirá trabajando con las autoridades españolas para facilitar la integración de las fuentes de energía distribuida y garantizar que las tarifas de red que se aplican al autoconsumo reflejen adecuadamente tanto los costes como los beneficios.

([1]) Junto a documentos de la propia Comisión, recuerdo que son muchas las Resoluciones del Parlamento Europeo que han insistido en esa misma dirección. Muy larga sería la cita pero permítaseme que, además de la Resolución de 5 de julio de 2011 sobre las prioridades de la infraestructura energética a partir de 2020, cuya tramitación tuve el honor de promover, recuerde las últimas, como la Resolución de 2 de febrero de 2012 sobre la cooperación al desarrollo de la UE en apoyo al objetivo de acceso universal a la energía para 2030, la Resolución de 16 de enero de 2013 sobre el papel de la política de cohesión de la UE y sus actores en la aplicación de la nueva política energética europea, la Resolución de 14 de marzo de 2013 sobre la Hoja de Ruta de la Energía para 2050, la Resolución de 21 de mayo de 2013 sobre los desafíos y oportunidades actuales para las energías renovables en el mercado interior europeo, la Resolución de 12 de septiembre de 2013 sobre la microgeneración — generación de calor y electricidad a pequeña escala, etc.…

([2]) Artículo 16, apartado 7, de la Directiva 2009/28/CE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011159/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Inconsistencies in the regulation governing the self-supply of electricity

The Spanish Government has developed an ambitious reform of the electricity sector. On 20 September, it approved the bill previously presented to the Spanish Parliament, announcing that it has almost completed six regulations. Many changes are proposed. I would draw your attention today to the regulation governing the 'self-supply of electricity', which requires these consumers to contribute to the costs and services involved in the self-supply of electricity and qualifies breaches of the new regime as very serious violations. Among other possible grounds for internal unconstitutionality, this regulation is incomprehensibly at odds with the direction taken by EU energy policy ([1]), in that it discourages more decentralised energy network solutions, 'small-scale' facilities, mini-grids-in short, alternatives that aim to make the system efficient.

1. Can the Commission indicate what information the Spanish Government has supplied to it regarding the new self-supply regime?

2. Will the Commission advise the Spanish Government of the inconsistency of these proposals with the direction taken by EU energy policy?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(14 November 2013)

The Spanish Government has presented to the Commission the adopted legal text.

The EU energy legislation does not contain any specific provisions on the treatment of self-consumption when levying charges beyond the general prohibition to discriminate against electricity from renewable energy sources when setting transmission and distribution tariffs ([2]). However, the Commission encourages the promotion of self-consumption and smart metering as a way of making energy systems better adapted to distributed and more flexible energy production. In this sense, it will continue working with Spanish authorities to facilitate the integration of distributed energy sources and ensure that network tariffs applicable to self-consumption adequately reflect both costs and benefits.

([1]) In addition to the documents of the Commission itself, I should point out that many European Parliament Resolutions have insisted on that same direction. A complete citation would be very long, but allow me to mention-in addition to the resolution of 5 July 2011 on energy infrastructure priorities for 2020 and beyond, the preliminary examination of which I am proud to have encouraged-the most recent ones, such as the resolution of 2 February 2012 on EU development cooperation in support of the objective of universal energy access by 2030, the resolution of 16 January 2013 on the role of EU cohesion policy and its actors in implementing the new European energy policy, the resolution of 14 March 2013 on the Energy roadmap 2050, the resolution of 21 May 2013 current challenges and opportunities for renewable energy in the European internal energy market, the resolution of 12 September 2013 on microgeneration — small-scale electricity and heat generation, etc.

([2]) Art. 16(7) of Directive 2009/28/EC.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011160/13
aan de Commissie
Jan Mulder (ALDE)
(1 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Risicogericht controleren op luchthavens

Een aantal landen en internationale organisaties ontwikkelen nieuwe controles voor luchthavens waarmee enerzijds het reizen voor de passagiers aantrekkelijker wordt gemaakt doordat bijvoorbeeld laptops en vloeistoffen in de tassen mogen blijven. Anderzijds geven deze nieuwe controles een beter antwoord op de daadwerkelijke risico's doordat zij zich richten op een brede range van relevante dreigingen, waaronder explosieve vloeistoffen, maar ook vele andere. De VS werkt hier bijvoorbeeld al aan met hun Pre check programma en IATA heeft op dit gebied haar „checkpoint of the future" gepresenteerd.

Is de Commissie van mening dat dergelijke manieren van controleren de veiligheid doen toenemen en zo ja kan zij aangeven wat er op dit gebied op Europese luchthavens al is geïmplementeerd?

Antwoord van de heer Kallas namens de Commissie
(7 november 2013)

De Commissie bestudeert verscheidene manieren om veiligheidscontroles te vergemakkelijken en tegelijk een hoog veiligheidsniveau te handhaven. Dit gebeurt samen met de luchtvaartsector en de lidstaten, bijvoorbeeld in de werkgroep „controlepunten voor passagiers" die in 2012 is opgericht in het kader van het regelgevend comité voor de beveiliging van de luchtvaart. Verder test een aantal Europese luchthavens nieuwe apparatuur die geschikt is voor het screenen van vloeistoffen in tassen, zodat bijvoorbeeld laptops niet meer moeten worden uitgepakt.

Voor alle kwesties in verband met de beveiliging van de luchtvaart werkt de Commissie nauw samen met luchthavens, fabrikanten van apparatuur en luchtvaartmaatschappijen die vluchten binnen en vanuit de EU uitvoeren. Bovendien blijft de EU landen met een gelijkwaardig hoog luchtvaartbeveiligingsniveau en internationale organisaties de hand reiken om de beveiliging van de luchtvaart verder te harmoniseren in een poging om de effectiviteit ervan te verhogen en de kosten en lasten voor passagiers en ondernemingen laag te houden.

Zodra is aangetoond dat innovatieve beveiligingsmaatregelen effectief en efficiënt zijn voor wat de beveiliging en de exploitatie van de luchthavens betreft, en het gemak van de passagiers doen toenemen, zal de Commissie regelmatig voorstellen die maatregelen toe te voegen aan het bestaande beveiligingskader.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011160/13
to the Commission
Jan Mulder (ALDE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Risk-based checks at airports

A number of countries and international organisations are developing new checks for airports that make travelling more attractive for passengers by enabling the likes of laptops and liquids to remain in bags while providing a better response to the actual risks because they focus on a wide range of relevant threats, including, but not restricted to, liquid explosives. The US, for example, is already working on this with its Pre-check programme, while IATA has presented its 'checkpoint of the future' in this connection.

Does the Commission believe that these types of checks will increase security and, if so, can it explain what has already been implemented in this connection at European airports?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(7 November 2013)

The Commission looks into various aspects of facilitating security checks while maintaining a high level of security. This is done together with industry and Member States for example in the passenger checkpoint working group that was established in 2012 under the regulatory committee for aviation security. Furthermore, some European airports are testing new equipment that is capable of screening liquids in bags and allow for leaving laptops in carry-on baggage.

The Commission maintains close cooperation on all aviation security related issues with airports, manufacturers of equipment and airlines operating within and from the EU. In addition the EU keeps reaching out to countries with equivalently high levels of aviation security and international organisations to further harmonise aviation security in the attempt to increase its effect and keep costs and burden on passengers and industry low.

As soon as innovative security measures have proven to be effective and efficient as concerns security and operations as well as capable of offering facilitation for passengers the Commission regularly proposes to add such measures to the existing security framework.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-011161/13
Komisi
Hynek Fajmon (ECR)
(1. října 2013)

Předmět: Postup při předávání vědeckých studií nezbytných pro registraci ochranných látek

V evropské legislativě REACH existuje povinnost předávat vědecké studie sloužící jako podklad pro registraci chemických látek všem zájemcům o jejich případné využití. V jiných analogických legislativních aktech však tato povinnost dosud zakotvena nebyla. Řada vědeckých studií je přitom pro registraci určitých látek nezbytná. V rozporu s tím je ale skutečnost, že některé typy studií na obratlovcích jsou nyní zcela zakázány. Držitelé těchto studií však nemají povinnost je poskytnout jiným subjektům, čímž vzniká problém z hlediska ochrany hospodářské soutěže. Pokládám proto Evropské komisi následující otázky:

1. Je si Evropská komise vědoma problému týkajícího se předávání vědeckých studií sloužících jako podklad pro registraci látek mimo legislativu REACH?

2. Považuje Evropská komise skutečnost, že držitelům vědeckých studií není stanovena povinnost poskytnout je dalším subjektům, za ohrožení principu hospodářské soutěže?

3. Jak by měly postupovat subjekty, které usilují o vědecké studie a nemohou se k nim nyní v důsledku legislativní situace dostat?

Odpověď pana Potočnika jménem Komise
(4. prosince 2013)

Komise si je vědoma rozdílů v právních předpisech o sdílení údajů.

Podle nařízení REACH ([1]) společnosti odpovídají za sběr informací o vlastnostech a použitích látek, které vyrábí nebo dováží v množství jedné tuny ročně nebo vyšším.

Uvedené informace musí být sdíleny mezi žadateli o registraci téže látky. Jsou-li informace k dispozici, musí být studie zahrnující testy na obratlovcích sdíleny mezi žadateli o registraci.

Subjekty, které mají potíže se získáním vědeckých údajů v souvislosti s dodržováním nařízení REACH, mohou informovat Evropskou agenturu pro chemické látky ([2]).

([1]) Nařízení (ES) č. 1907/2006, Úř. věst. L 396, 30.12.2006.
([2]) http://echa.europa.eu/web/guest/contact

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011161/13
to the Commission
Hynek Fajmon (ECR)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Procedure for submission of scientific studies for the registration of protective substances

European REACH legislation requires all applicants seeking to register chemical substances to submit a scientific study as a precondition to their use. However, this requirement has not yet been laid down in other similar legislation. Numerous scientific studies are necessary for the registration of some substances, but these are now jeopardised by the fact that some types of studies on vertebrates are now entirely banned. Those who have already conducted studies that would now be illegal are not, however, required to make the results available to others, which gives rise to problems relating to competition. I would therefore like to put the following questions to the Commission:

1. Is the Commission aware of the problem concerning the submission of scientific studies required for the registration of substances outside of REACH legislation?

2. Does the Commission consider the fact that holders of scientific studies are not required to pass them on to other entities to be a threat to the principle of economic competition?

3. How should entities that are seeking scientific studies but are unable to obtain them as a result of legislative changes proceed?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

The Commission is aware of the differences in legislative provisions regarding data sharing.

Under the REACH Regulation ([1]), companies are responsible for collecting information on the properties and the uses of substances that they manufacture, or import at or above one tonne per year.

This information must be shared among the registrants of the same substance. When information is available, studies involving vertebrate animal testing must be shared between registrants.

Those with difficulties obtaining scientific data in the context of compliance with REACH are invited to inform the European Chemicals Agency ([2]).

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006, OJ L 396, 30.12.2006.
([2]) http://echa.europa.eu/web/guest/contact

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-011162/13
til Kommissionen
Anna Rosbach (ECR)
(1. oktober 2013)

Om: Lovligheden af den danske hundelov

I Danmark er det ved lov forbudt at holde 13 specifikke hunderacer, og i tvivlstilfælde benyttes der omvendt bevisførelse, således at det påhviler borgeren at bevise, at en hund ikke er af en af de 13 forbudte racer.

Derudover er det, hvis en hund »skambider« et andet dyr eller et menneske, politimesteren der skal kræve hunden aflivet, uden at det er sikret, at en fagperson har vurderet bidet og omstændighederne omkring det.

I den forbindelse bedes Kommissionen svare på nedenstående:

— Er Kommissionen bekendt med den danske hundelov?

— Hvordan forholder Kommissionen sig til, at loven medfører, at hunde, det er lovlige at eje, købe og sælge i andre EU-lande, er forbudte i Danmark? Er dette en overtrædelse af varernes fri bevægelighed?

— Hvordan forholder Kommissionen sig til, at loven kan medføre, at EU-borgere fra ét land, hvor disse hunde er lovlige, ikke kan krydse Danmark på vej til et andet EU-land, hvor disse hunde ligeledes er lovlige?

— Er det i overensstemmelse med EU's krav til medlemsstaternes retssystemer, når Danmark kræver omvendt bevisførelse, således at det er ejeren, der skal bevise at en hund ikke er af en forbudt race?

— Hvordan mener Kommissionen, at den omstridte danske hundelov, herunder ikke mindst bestemmelserne om at hunde kan sendes til aflivning på grund af deres adfærd, men uden at denne adfærd er blevet vurderet af en fagkyndig, stemmer overens med Unionens dyrevelfærdslovgivning?

— Hvordan forholder Kommissionen sig til den forudgående udvælgelsesproces i medlemsstaterne, så man undgår vilkårlighed i udvælgelsen af såkaldt farlige hunderacer?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Tonio Borg
(9. december 2013)

Kommissionen er bekendt med den danske lov om farlige hunde. Dette spørgsmål er ikke omfattet af EU's beføjelser og hører derfor under medlemsstaternes enekompetence, for så vidt de nationale bestemmelser ligger inden for traktaternes rammer.

Danmark havde meddelt lovforslaget til Kommissionen i overensstemmelse med Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets direktiv 98/34/EF om en informationsprocedure med hensyn til tekniske standarder og forskrifter ([1]) og tilpassede teksten, således at der blev taget højde for Kommissionens kommentarer til de aspekter i lovforslaget, der muligvis ville kunne have en negativ virkning på EU-borgernes frie bevægelighed med deres hunde.

Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets forordning (EF) nr. 998/2003 om dyresundhedsmæssige betingelser for ikke-kommerciel transport af selskabsdyr ([2]) berører ikke bestemmelser om andre aspekter end dem, der vedrører dyresundhedsmæssige betingelser, herunder national lovgivning om farlige hunde.

I henhold til Rådets direktiv 91/174/EØF ([3]) skal medlemsstater påse, at handelen med racerene dyr ikke forbydes, begrænses eller hindres af zootekniske eller genealogiske årsager. Gennemførelsen i dansk ret ([4]) forudsætter, at avlsorganisationer fastsætter ikke-diskriminerende regler for så vidt angår dyr med oprindelse i andre medlemsstater. Danmark har ikke meddelt godkendelse af nogen avlsorganisation for hunde.

([1]) EFT L 204 af 21.7.1998, s. 37.
([2]) EUT L 146 af 13.6.2003, s. 1.
([3]) EFT L 85 af 5.4.1991, s. 37.
([4]) Bekendtgørelse nr. 716 af 8.9.1993; Lovtidende A af 8.9.1993, s. 3988. Se følgende websted: https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=78048

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011162/13
to the Commission
Anna Rosbach (ECR)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Legality of the Danish Dog Act

In Denmark it is prohibited by law to keep 13 specific breeds of dog, and in the event of doubt the principle of the reverse burden of proof is applied, meaning that the onus is on the person to prove that a dog does not belong to one of the 13 prohibited breeds.

In addition, if a dog 'savages' another animal or a person, it is the police chief constable who is to demand that the dog be destroyed, without ensuring that an expert has assessed the bite and the circumstances surrounding it.

— Is the Commission familiar with the Danish Dog Act?

— What is its position with regard to the fact that, under this Act, dogs that it is legal to own, buy and sell in other EU Member States are prohibited in Denmark? Is this a violation of the free movement of goods?

— What is the Commission's view of the fact that this Act may mean that EU citizens from one country in which these dogs are permitted cannot cross Denmark en route to another EU Member State in which these dogs are also permitted?

— Is it in line with the EU requirements relating to Member States' legal systems for Denmark to require the application of the reverse burden of proof, such that it is the owner who must prove that a dog does not belong to a prohibited breed?

— Does the Commission consider the contested Danish Dog Act to be in line with the Union's animal welfare legislation, in particular the provisions stipulating that dogs can be destroyed on account of their behaviour, but without this behaviour having been assessed by an expert?

— What is its position with regard to the *ex-ante* selection process in the Member States so as to avoid arbitrariness in the selection of so-called dangerous breeds of dog?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(9 December 2013)

The Commission is aware of the Danish legislation on dangerous dogs. This question is not under EU competences and therefore remains under the sole competence of the Member States as far as national provisions are in compliance with the Treaties.

Denmark had notified the draft law to the Commission in accordance with Directive 98/34/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 June 1998 laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the field of technical standards and regulations ([1]), and adapted the text in order to take into account Commission comments on those aspects of the draft law that had the potential to compromise free movement of EU citizens with their pet dogs.

Regulation (EC) No 998/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the animal health requirements applicable to the non-commercial movement of pet animals ([2]) does not affect provisions on considerations other than those relating to animal health requirements, including national legislation on dangerous dogs.

Council Directive 91/174/EEC ([3]) requires Member States to ensure that the marketing of pure-bred animals is not prohibited, restricted or impeded on zootechnical or pedigree grounds. The transposition into Danish law ([4]) requires breeding organisations to lay down non-discriminatory rules in relation to animals originating in other Member States. Denmark has not notified the approval of any breeding organisation for dogs.

([1]) OJ L 204, 21.7.1998, p. 37.
([2]) OJ L 146, 13.6.2003, p. 1.
([3]) OJ L 85, 5.4.1991, p. 37.
([4]) Bekendtgørelse nr. 716 of 8.9.1993; Lovtidende A of 8.9.1993, p. 3988. Available at: https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=78048

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011163/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(1 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Túnel de Benasque-Bañeras de Luchón

Uno de los proyectos históricos de comunicaciones transfronterizas demandados en la comunidad autónoma de Aragón (Reino de España) es la posible apertura de un túnel carretero, de unos cuatro kilómetros de longitud, que una Aragón con Mediodía-Pirineos (España con Francia) por Benasque y Bagnères-de-Luchon (Bañeras de Luchón).

Han sido diversas las iniciativas aprobadas en distintas administraciones aragonesas solicitando esta infraestructura, cuestión esta que, según ha sido recogido por varios medios de comunicación, fue trasladada a Comisarios de Transportes de la Unión Europea en diferentes ocasiones. Pero la población potencialmente implicada carece de cualquier información sobre el proyecto, desconociéndose si dicho túnel será construido siguiendo el proyecto original o si el Gobierno español, el de Aragón o la Comisión Europea han cambiado su parecer y optan por otros proyectos.

El citado túnel podría tener un importante impacto económico que estimule la actividad productiva de la región, suponiendo un importante estímulo para la fijación de la población en el medio rural del norte de Aragón. La importancia económica de esta conexión explica el interés que tienen en el proyecto los diferentes núcleos urbanos por los que podría pasar dicho corredor y la necesidad de ser informados sobre el estatus del mismo.

— ¿Existe una decisión en firme sobre la construcción del túnel Benasque-Bañeras de Luchón?

— ¿Qué cuestiones o criterios deberían darse para que la Unión Europea apoyara decididamente este paso transfronterizo?

— En caso de existir dicha decisión, ¿cuándo comenzarían los trabajos y cuándo se estima que dicho paso transfronterizo podría estar en funcionamiento?

Respuesta del Sr. Kallas en nombre de la Comisión
(26 de noviembre de 2013)

Los Estados miembros señalados no han solicitado ayuda de la UE para el proyecto de túnel a que se refiere Su Señoría.

La Comisión carece, pues, de información detallada sobre el estado en que se encuentra tal proyecto.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011163/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Benasque-Bagnères-de-Luchon tunnel

One of the historic cross-border connection projects being called for in the Spanish autonomous region of Aragon involves the potential construction of a road tunnel, some four kilometres long, linking Aragon in Spain with the Midi-Pyrénées region of France by way of Benasque and Bagnères-de-Luchon.

Various initiatives seeking this infrastructure have been approved under different administrations in Aragon and, according to various media outlets, the subject has been raised with the European Union Commissioners for Transport on several occasions. However, the community that would potentially be affected lacks any information about the project. It does not know whether the tunnel will be built according to the original project, or whether the Spanish Government, the Government of Aragon, or the European Commission have changed their minds and are opting for other projects.

This tunnel could have a significant economic impact that would stimulate manufacturing activity in the region, providing a significant motivation for the inhabitants of the rural north of Aragon to continue living there. The economic importance of this connection explains why the project is of interest to the various city centres through which the corridor may pass, and why they need to be informed about the status of the project.

— Has a definitive decision been made about building the Benasque-Bagnères-de-Luchon tunnel?

— What issues or criteria must be addressed in order for the European Union to give its resolute support to this cross-border pass?

— If such a decision has been made, when will the work begin, and when is it expected that the cross-border pass could be in operation?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2013)

The Member States concerned have not asked for the EU support for the abovementioned project.

Therefore, the Commission does not dispose of detailed information on the state of implementation of the abovementioned tunnel.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011164/13
to the Commission
Alyn Smith (Verts/ALE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: EU assistance for clearing contaminated land

It has come to my attention that a piece of land in my constituency has been found to contain high levels of lead, arsenic and benzo(a)pyrene in the soil.

The village of Blanefield contains properties built on land on which a print works used to stand, but which has been used for housing since the 1930s. There are currently 13 plots, which have recently undergone an investigation, in which the soil was found to be contaminated.

European funding for the remediation of contaminated land has been forthcoming in the past. Can the Commission clarify what, if any, funds are now available to cover the cost of cleaning such land?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

In the 2007-2013 period, assistance from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) can be used for the rehabilitation of the physical environment, including contaminated, desertified and brownfield sites and land as part of the environmental and risk prevention objective.

The Lowlands and Uplands of Scotland ERDF programme envisages such activity under priority 3 'Urban regeneration'. The programme may support projects that invest in the rehabilitation of the physical environment, specifically work around the decontamination and servicing of brownfield land and gap sites. However, this activity is eligible only as a component part of an integrated urban development plan and excludes development of public realm unless a reasonable and direct physical link is made with ERDF eligible activity.

For the 2014-2020 period, the Commission has proposed that the ERDF supports regeneration and decontamination of brownfield sites (including conversion areas) under the thematic objective 'Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency'.

EU funds for remediation of soil contamination must be used in accordance with the 'polluter pays principle'. ([1])

In line with the shared management principle used for the implementation of cohesion policy, the selection and funding of individual projects is the responsibility of the managing authority in the Member State. Therefore the Commission invites the Honourable Member to contact directly the managing authority:

Scottish Government
European Structural Funds Division
5 Atlantic Quay
150 Broomielaw
Glasgow G2 8LU

([1]) Community Guidelines on State Aid for Environmental Protection (2008/C 82/01), paragraph 3.1.10. Aid for the remediation of contaminated sites.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011165/13
do Komisji
Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa (PPE)
(1 października 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Zwiększanie efektywności doradztwa zawodowego w szkołach

W dobie kryzysu ekonomicznego i wzrostu bezrobocia, zwłaszcza wśród osób młodych konieczne jest podjęcie wszelkich kroków, które pomogą młodym ludziom podjąć pracę w możliwie jak najkrótszym czasie po zakończeniu edukacji. Jednym ze sposobów na to jest skuteczne doradztwo zawodowe, które może zapobiec nieprzemyślanym decyzjom i pomóc dostosować wykształcenie młodych ludzi do potrzeb rynku, co stanowi dziś niemały problem, przykładowo w Wielkiej Brytanii roczne straty dla gospodarki spowodowane nieprzemyślanymi decyzjami odnoście kierunku edukacji i zawodu szacuje się na ok. 200 milionów funtów.

Ponieważ sprawy związane z edukacją nie wchodzą w zakres regulacji Unii Europejskiej, zawarte w Białej Księdze Kształcenia i Doskonalenia podstawowe cele, jakie powinny osiągnąć krajowe systemy edukacji w dziedzinie doradztwa zawodowego są celami jedynie na papierze. Doradztwo zawodowe istnieje w każdym europejskim systemie edukacji, jednak kraje członkowskie bagatelizują ten problem. Nieefektywność lub całkowity brak doradztwa w szkołach powoduje, że młodzi ludzie nie mają okazji odpowiednio wcześnie określić swoich zainteresowań i umiejętności, oraz zapoznać się z zapotrzebowaniem na rynku pracy na poszczególne zawody, co prowadzi do wzrostu bezrobocia i strat dla gospodarki.

Doradztwo zawodowe powinno być formą profilaktyki społecznej, inwestycją w jednostkę, a poprzez to w dobro całej wspólnoty, dlatego pomijanie tej kwestii w szkołach jest ogromnym błędem. Wyrównanie szans na dobry start zawodowy uczniów w całej wspólnocie i przy okazji znaczące obniżenie stopy bezrobocia w tej grupie wiekowej to dziś dla nas jeden z priorytetów, problem ten dotyczy każdego z krajów w innym stopniu, ale dla Unii Europejskiej, jako całość jest bardzo poważnym problemem, dlatego mam do Komisji następujące pytania:

1. Czy Komisja planuje poprzez wspólnotowe mechanizmy walki z bezrobociem realizować program, który pozwoliłby na zwiększenie efektywności prowadzenia doradztwa zawodowego?

2. Czy Komisja zamierza umożliwić szkołom ubieganie się o dofinansowanie własnych projektów związanych z doradztwem zawodowym, lub/oraz premiować placówki wyróżniające się na tym polu szczególną aktywnością?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Androullę Vassiliou w imieniu Komisji
(28 listopada 2013 r.)

Komisja uważa, że wysokiej jakości poradnictwo, oparte na bieżących potrzebach rynku pracy i zapewnione na wczesnym etapie, jest niezbędne, by pomóc młodzieży w podejmowaniu świadomych decyzji związanych z kształceniem i karierą oraz by zwalczać bezrobocie osób młodych i ograniczać zjawisko przedwczesnego kończenia nauki.

W rezolucji Rady z 2008 r. w sprawie poradnictwa przez całe życie ([1]) państwa członkowskie postanowiły zwiększyć rolę poradnictwa w dziedzinie edukacji i uczenia się przez całe życie, także przez ułatwianie wszystkim obywatelom dostępu do usług poradnictwa i włączenie poradnictwa do zadań stawianych przed szkołami, organizatorami kształcenia i szkolenia zawodowego oraz placówkami szkolnictwa wyższego. Europejska Sieć Całożyciowego Poradnictwa Zawodowego (ELGPN), obecnie wspierana przez Komisję w ramach programu „Uczenie się przez całe życie", promuje współpracę na szczeblu państw członkowskich w zakresie wdrażania wspomnianej rezolucji. Ponadto UE współfinansuje krajowe ośrodki sieci Euroguidance, która przekazuje informacje doradcom zawodowym, studentom, uczniom i ich rodzicom oraz pracownikom z sektora kształcenia i szkolenia.

W zaleceniu Rady w sprawie ustanowienia gwarancji dla młodzieży z 2013 r. ([2]) wezwano państwa członkowskie do zapewniania i koordynowania poradnictwa na poziomie szkół, organizatorów kształcenia i szkolenia zawodowego oraz służb zatrudnienia. Poradnictwo to ma być wsparciem dla młodzieży w podejmowaniu właściwych wyborów edukacyjnych i zawodowych. W odniesieniu do gwarancji dla młodzieży UE uzupełni finansowanie krajowe poprzez Europejski Fundusz Społeczny i przekaże 6 mld EUR w ramach Inicjatywy na rzecz zatrudnienia ludzi młodych, co obejmuje środki na poradnictwo.

([1]) Rezolucja Rady (2008/C 319/02).
([2]) Zalecenie Rady (2013/C 120/01).

Dzięki przyszłemu programowi Erasmus+ szkoły mogłyby tworzyć „partnerstwa strategiczne" z innymi europejskimi partnerami w celu opracowywania i ulepszania usług poradnictwa. W tym kontekście pokrycie kosztów bieżących takich usług nie będzie jednak finansowane, ponieważ należy to do obowiązków każdego z państw członkowskich.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011165/13
to the Commission
Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa (PPE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: More effective careers advice in schools

At a time of economic crisis and rising unemployment, particularly among young people, every possible effort must be made to help young people find jobs as soon as possible after leaving education. One way of achieving this is to provide effective careers advice, which can prevent uninformed decisions and help young people tailor their education to market demands. This represents a considerable problem nowadays; for example, the annual economic losses suffered by the UK due to uninformed education and career decisions are estimated at approximately GBP 200 million.

The fact that education-related matters fall outside the EU's regulatory remit means that the fundamental objectives set out in the White Paper on Education and Training for careers advice provided by national education systems exist only on paper. Careers advice is a feature of each of the education systems within the EU, but the Member States underestimate its importance. The ineffectiveness or total absence of such advice in schools deprives young people of the opportunity to identify their interests and skills at a sufficiently early stage or to familiarise themselves with the labour market demand for the various professions. This results in higher unemployment levels and economic losses.

Careers advice should be seen as a preventive social measure, or in other words a way of investing in individuals in order to invest in society as a whole. Failing to provide this advice in schools is therefore a huge mistake. One of our current priorities is to ensure that all school pupils are offered the same opportunities when it comes to starting their career, regardless of their social status, which would also mean a significant reduction in unemployment for this age group. This is an issue which affects each of the Member States to a different degree, but it is a very serious problem facing the European Union as a whole. I would therefore like to ask the European Commission the following questions:

1. Is the Commission planning to use the Community mechanisms put in place to fight unemployment to implement a programme which would help make careers advice more effective?

2. Does the Commission intend to make it possible for schools to apply for funding for careers advice projects, and/or to reward establishments which go to particular lengths in this area?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

The Commission considers high quality, up-to-date guidance from an early stage essential to help young people to make informed education and career choices and combat youth unemployment and early school leaving.

In the 2008 Council Resolution on lifelong guidance ([1]), Member States agreed to strengthen the role of guidance in education and lifelong learning, including by facilitating access by all citizens to guidance services and making guidance one of the objectives of schools, vocational education and training providers and higher education establishments. The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN), currently supported by the Commission under the Lifelong Learning Programme, promotes cooperation at Member State level in implementing the Resolution. The EU also co-finances the national centres of the Euroguidance network, which provide information for counsellors, students, pupils and their parents, and personnel in education and training.

The 2013 Council Recommendation on the Youth Guarantee ([2]) calls upon Member States to ensure and coordinate guidance at the level of schools, vocational education and training providers and employment services in supporting young people making the right educational and vocational choices. For the Youth Guarantee the EU will top-up national spending through the European Social Fund and a dedicated EUR 6 billion under the Youth Employment Initiative, including measures on guidance.

With the future Erasmus+ programme, schools could form 'strategic partnerships' with other European partners for developing and improving guidance services. Running costs of such services will nonetheless not be financed in this context since they are a responsibility of each Member State.

([1]) Council Resolution (2008/C 319/02).
([2]) Council Recommendation (2013/C 120/01).

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011166/13
do Komisji
Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa (PPE)
(1 października 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Płatności końcowe dla projektów realizowanych przy udziale środków z Funduszu Spójności

Przedsiębiorstwo Wodociągów i Kanalizacji Spółka z o.o. w Gdyni jest beneficjentem środków z Funduszu Spójności. Przedsiębiorstwo realizowało projekt inwestycyjny na podstawie decyzji KE nr DL/2003/3570 z dnia 18 grudnia 2003 r., zmienionej decyzją KE nr K(2006)6646 z dnia 8 grudnia 2006 r., skorygowanej decyzją KE nr K(2009)1658 z dnia 5 marca 2009 r.

W ramach projektu zrealizowany został pełny zakres rzeczowy określony w decyzjach KE, w ustalonym terminie 31 grudnia 2010 r., przy łącznych wydatkach w 60,4 mln euro, czyli o 911 214 euro mniej w stosunku do budżetu ustalonego w decyzji KE – 61,2 mln euro. Firma otrzymała około 80 % przyrzeczonej dotacji i złożyła wniosek o płatność końcową na kwotę 6 166 970,72 euro.

Dnia 29 czerwca 2011 r. Generalny Inspektor Kontroli Skarbowej przekazał wniosek o płatność ostateczną do Komisji Europejskiej i od tamtego czasu środki wciąż nie zostały wypłacone, mimo licznych zabiegów mających na celu przyspieszenie wypłaty. Instytucja zarządzająca-Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego pismem z dnia 12 czerwca 2013 r., znak DPI-II-7621-(03138)-2-KR/11 Nk: 69892/13 poinformowała o trwającej nadal analizie raportu końcowego projektu.

Nadmienić należy, że do tej pory żadna z kompetentnych do tego instytucji nie zgłosiła zastrzeżeń dotyczących deklaracji zamknięcia, raportu zakończenia, ani poprawności wykonania i rozliczenia projektu. Ze względu na duże zaangażowanie PEWIK Gdynia sp. z o.o. w realizację kolejnych przedsięwzięć finansowych z udziałem środków Funduszu Spójności otrzymanie przedmiotowej płatności ostatecznej w możliwie jak najkrótszym czasie ma istotne znaczenie dla utrzymania płynności finansowej realizowanych przedsięwzięć. W podobnej sytuacji znalazło się wiele innych firm– beneficjentów środków z Funduszu Spójności realizujących zadania w zakresie ochrony środowiska, którym brak wypłaty pełnej dotacji może utrudniać aplikowania i finansowanie kolejnych projektów inwestycyjnych.

W związku z powyższym pragnę zadać Komisji następujące pytania:

1. Dlaczego sprawy płatności ostatecznych są prowadzone w tak długotrwały sposób, skoro instytucje weryfikujące wykonanie i rozliczenie projektu nie ujawniły jakichkolwiek uchybień, które mogłyby skutkować korektami finansowymi?

2. Czy i w jaki sposób zamierza Komisja usprawnić proces wypłacania płatności końcowej dla zakończonych projektów?

3. Czy Komisja Europejska może przedstawić harmonogram, zgodnie z którym zostanie wypłacona ostatnia kwota dofinansowania dla projektu nr 2003/PL/16/P/PE/038?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Johannesa Hahna w imieniu Komisji
(28 listopada 2013 r.)

1. Projekt „Dolina Redy i Chylonki – zaopatrzenie w wodę i oczyszczanie ścieków" jest finansowany w ramach Funduszu Spójności na lata 2000-2006, wcześniej Instrumentu Przedakcesyjnej Polityki Strukturalnej. Był to jeden ze 130 projektów zatwierdzonych dla Polski w tym okresie programowania. Każdy z tych projektów wymaga indywidualnej procedury zamknięcia, a ta z kolei wymaga od Komisji szczegółowej analizy dokumentów przedstawionych przez państwo członkowskie po zakończeniu projektu.

Tak jak w przypadku wielu innych projektów, Komisja przeprowadza obecnie analizę dokumentacji dotyczącej zamknięcia. Po zakończeniu tej analizy Komisja wyśle wniosek dotyczący zamknięcia do zainteresowanego państwa członkowskiego i wkrótce po jego przyjęciu dokona płatności.

2. Komisja uprościła już proces dokonywania płatności końcowych. Powołana została specjalna grupa zadaniowa do analizowania dokumentów i przyspieszenia procesu zamknięcia. Grupa zadaniowa ściśle współpracuje z polskimi władzami w celu jak najszybszego dokonania płatności końcowych dla pozostałych polskich projektów. Płatności końcowe mogą ulec znacznemu przyspieszeniu, jeśli wszelkie korekty finansowe zaproponowane przez Komisję zostaną niezwłocznie zaakceptowane przez polskie władze.

3. W odpowiedzi na wniosek władz polskich Komisja zaproponowała wybranym polskim projektom wypłaty częściowe. Wspomniany projekt zrealizowany w Gdyni do nich należy i powinien otrzymać wypłatę częściową przed końcem 2013 r. Wniosek dotyczący zamknięcia zostanie przedstawiony w przyszłym roku.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011166/13
to the Commission
Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa (PPE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Final payments for projects supported by the Cohesion Fund

The Gdynia-based company Przedsiębiorstwo Wodociągów i Kanalizacji Spółka z o.o., a Cohesion Fund beneficiary, implemented an investment project pursuant to Commission Decision No DL/2003/3570 of 18 December 2003, amended by Commission Decision No C(2006)6646 of 8 December 2006, corrected by Commission Decision No C(2009)1658 of 5 March 2009.

The full scope of the project as specified in the Commission Decisions was implemented before the deadline of 31 December 2010, and total expenditure was EUR 60.4 million, or EUR 911,214 less than the allocated budget of EUR 61.2 million. The company has received around 80% of this funding, and submitted an application for a final payment of EUR 6 166 970.72.

On 29 June 2011 the General Inspector for Treasury Control submitted a final payment application to the European Commission, but the money has still not been paid out despite several attempts to speed up the process. In a letter dated 12 June 2013, ref. DPI-II-7621-(03138)-2-KR/11 Nk: 69892/13, the Ministry of Regional Development, acting in its capacity as Managing Authority, stated that the final project report was still being analysed.

It should be noted that none of the competent institutions have to date voiced any criticisms in respect of the statement of closure, final report or incorrect implementation and accounting. PEWIK Gdynia sp. z o.o.'s involvement in many other projects funded by the Cohesion Fund means that it is crucially important for the company to receive the final payment in question as soon as possible in order to safeguard the financial liquidity of these projects. Similar problems are faced by many other companies which are Cohesion Fund beneficiaries in the field of environmental protection, since a failure to receive the full funding can make it difficult to apply for or fund other investment projects.

In connection with the above, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Why has the final payment procedure been so protracted, given that the institutions verifying project implementation and accounting have failed to identify any shortcomings entailing financial corrections?

2. Does the Commission intend to streamline the process for making final payments upon project completion, and if so how?

3. Can the Commission provide a schedule for payment of the final subsidy for project No 2003/PL/16/P/PE/038?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

1. The Dolina Redy I Chylonki (Gdynia) project on water supply and waste water treatment is a project financed under the 2000-2006 Cohesion Fund, formerly the Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession. This was one of 130 projects approved for Poland for that programming period. Each of these projects requires an individual closure procedure which requires detailed analysis by the Commission of the documents provided by the Member State following the completion of the project.

Along with many other projects, the Commission is currently analysing the closure documentation. After it has completed its analysis, the Commission will sent a closure proposal to the Member State and if accepted, will make a payment shortly after.

2. The Commission has already streamlined the process for making final payments. A dedicated task force has been set up to analyse the documents provided at closure and to accelerate the closure process. The task force is working in close cooperation with the Polish authorities to make the final payments as soon as possible for the remaining Polish projects. Final payments can be greatly accelerated if any financial corrections proposed by the Commission are accepted by the Polish authorities as soon as possible.

3. In response to a request by the Polish authorities, the Commission proposed to make partial payments to a limited number of Polish projects. The Gdynia project is one of these and should receive a partial payment by the end of 2013. The closure proposal will follow next year.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-011167/13
alla Commissione
Susy De Martini (ECR)
(1º ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Direttiva per il pagamento dei debiti della pubblica amministrazione

La direttiva 2011/7/UE mira a garantire alle imprese la possibilità di svolgere le proprie attività commerciali in tutto il mercato interno con la certezza di essere pagate nei tempi previsti. Gli Stati membri devono assicurare che nelle transazioni commerciali in cui la parte debitrice sia la pubblica amministrazione il periodo di pagamento non superi il termine di 30 giorni dal ricevimento della fattura o di una richiesta di pagamento. La situazione più grave si delinea in Italia dove le imprese possono aspettare fino a 170 giorni prima di essere pagate.

Può la Commissione dire se a sei mesi dalla scadenza del termine per il recepimento della direttiva:

— ha tracciato un bilancio sui ritardi degli Stati membri nella trasposizione della norma;

— ha avviato un'analisi dettagliata della grave situazione italiana;

— pensa di sanzionare il governo italiano aprendo una procedura di infrazione ai sensi dell'articolo 258 del Trattato, al fine di proteggere le imprese italiane dal lassismo del loro governo?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(25 ottobre 2013)

La Commissione segue da vicino il recepimento e l'attuazione corretti della direttiva 2011/7/UE in tutti e 28 gli Stati membri e intrattiene i contatti necessari con quegli Stati membri le cui misure di recepimento sollevano interrogativi quanto alla loro piena ottemperanza alla direttiva.

Nel caso dell'Italia la Commissione ritiene che la legge nazionale a recepimento della direttiva impone che si chiarifichino diverse questioni. La Commissione è pertanto in contatto con le autorità italiane per far luce su tali punti controversi e per assicurare che la legge nazionale sia in linea con la direttiva.

Conformemente all'articolo 258 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea (TFUE) la Commissione ha il diritto di avviare procedure d'infrazione se uno Stato membro viene meno a un obbligo che gli incombe in forza del trattato. Se la valutazione giuridica delle misure nazionali che recepiscono la direttiva nel diritto nazionale rivelasse una mancata conformità al disposto della direttiva, la Commissione può avviare le azioni necessarie tra cui, se del caso, procedure d'infrazione.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011167/13
to the Commission
Susy De Martini (ECR)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Government compliance with the Late Payments Directive

Directive 2011/7/EU aims to ensure that companies are able to conduct business throughout the internal market without having to worry about late payments. Where a government purchases goods or services, the payment period may not exceed 30 days from the date of receipt of the invoice or payment request. The situation is particularly serious in Italy, where companies have to wait up to 170 days to receive payment from the government.

The deadline for transposing the directive passed some six months ago.

— Has the Commission compiled information concerning late transposition of the directive by Member States?

— Is it conducting a detailed analysis of the dire situation in Italy?

— Does it intend to invoke Article 258 of the Treaty to institute infringement proceedings against the Italian Government in an effort to protect Italian businesses against their government's casual approach to paying bills?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(25 October 2013)

The Commission is strictly monitoring the correct transposition and implementation of Directive 2011/7/EU in all 28 Member States and is undertaking necessary contacts with the Member States whose transposition measures pose questions as to their full compliance with the directive.

In the case of Italy, the Commission considers that the transposition law of the directive requires the clarification of a number of issues. The Commission is therefore in contact with the Italian authorities in order to clarify these issues and in order to ensure that the law is compliant with the directive.

According to Article 258 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the Commission has the right to initiate infringement proceedings if a Member State has failed to fulfil an obligation under the Treaties. Should the legal assessment of the national measures transposing the directive into the national law reveal non-compliance with the requirements of the directive, the Commission may take the necessary action including, where appropriate, infringement procedures.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011168/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D)
(1 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Επίπεδο πληρωμών από τις 30 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013

Μετά από την έγκριση του σχεδίου διορθωτικού προϋπολογισμού αριθ. 6/2012, η Επιτροπή, κατόπιν αιτήματος της αρμόδιας για τον προϋπολογισμό αρχής, υπέβαλε το σχέδιο διορθωτικού προϋπολογισμού αριθ. 2/2013, ύψους 11,2 δισεκατομμυρίων ευρώ, ώστε να γίνει δυνατή η κάλυψη όλων των νόμιμων υποχρεώσεων πληρωμών οι οποίες εκκρεμούσαν στα τέλη του 2012, καθώς και εκείνων που προκύπτουν πριν από το τέλος του 2013, εντός του προϋπολογισμού του τρέχοντος έτους.

Στη συνεδρίαση του Συμβουλίου Ecofin της 14ης Μαΐου 2913, επιτεύχθηκε πολιτική συμφωνία για τη διάθεση της επιπλέον χρηματοδότησης για τον προϋπολογισμό του 2013 σε δύο δόσεις, η πρώτη από τις οποίες ανερχόταν σε 7,3 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ. Παρότι οι υπουργοί συμφώνησαν να επανέλθουν στο θέμα αργότερα μέσα στο 2013, δεν υπήρξε επίσημη δέσμευση σε σχέση με τα υπόλοιπα 3,9 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ του σχεδίου διορθωτικού προϋπολογισμού αριθ. 2/2013.

Μετά από την πολιτική συμφωνία της 27ης Ιουνίου 2013 που επιτεύχθηκε από τα θεσμικά όργανα σχετικά με το Πολυετές Δημοσιονομικό Πλαίσιο (ΠΔΠ) 2014-2020, το Συμβούλιο Ecofin ενέκρινε στις 9 Ιουλίου 2013 τη συμπληρωματική χρηματοδότηση ύψους 7,3 δισεκατομμυρίων ευρώ για τον προϋπολογισμό του 2013 και δεσμεύτηκε να λάβει κάθε απαραίτητο πρόσθετο μέτρο για να διασφαλιστεί η πλήρης τήρηση των υποχρεώσεων της Ένωσης για το 2013. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, βάσει πρότασης που πρόκειται να υποβάλει η Επιτροπή στις αρχές του φθινοπώρου στηριζόμενη στις πιο πρόσφατες επικαιροποιημένες εκτιμήσεις όσον αφορά τις πιστώσεις πληρωμών, το Συμβούλιο δεσμεύεται να αποφασίσει χωρίς καθυστέρηση σχετικά με πρόσθετο σχέδιο διορθωτικού προϋπολογισμού, προκειμένου να αποφευχθούν οποιεσδήποτε ελλείψεις όσον αφορά αιτιολογημένες πιστώσεις πληρωμών. Στις 26 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013 η Επιτροπή κατέθεσε το σχέδιο διορθωτικού προϋπολογισμού αριθ. 8/2013 για τα υπόλοιπα 3,9 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ.

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη όλα όσα εκτέθηκαν ανωτέρω και δεδομένου ότι το επίπεδο πληρωμών για τον προϋπολογισμό του 2013 είναι κατά 5 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ χαμηλότερο από τις εκτιμήσεις της Επιτροπής για τις ανάγκες πληρωμών στο σχέδιο προϋπολογισμού της για το 2013, θα μπορούσε η Επιτροπή να παράσχει λεπτομερείς πληροφορίες σχετικά με το επίπεδο των πληρωμών που καταβλήθηκαν μέχρι τις 31 Ιουλίου 2013; Ειδικότερα, θα μπορούσε η Επιτροπή να γνωστοποιήσει τις πληρωμές που έχουν καταβληθεί τον Ιανουάριο, τον Φεβρουάριο, τον Μάρτιο, τον Απρίλιο, τον Μάιο, τον Ιούνιο και τον Ιούλιο του 2013, αναλυτικά ανά κράτος μέλος και ανά τομέα/πρόγραμμα πολιτικής;

Θα μπορούσε επίσης η Επιτροπή να παράσχει μία σύγκριση μεταξύ των εκτιμήσεων πληρωμών των κρατών μελών και των πραγματικών πληρωμών που έχουν καταβληθεί μέχρι τώρα στο πλαίσιο του προϋπολογισμού του 2013, αναλυτικά ανά κράτος μέλος και ανά τομέα/πρόγραμμα πολιτικής;

Απάντηση του κ. Lewandowski εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(14 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Η λεπτομερής κατανομή των έγκυρων αιτήσεων ([1]) πληρωμών που ελήφθησαν τον Αύγουστο και Σεπτέμβριο για τα χρηματοδοτούμενα από το ΕΚΤ, το ΕΤΠΑ και το ΤΣ επιχειρησιακά προγράμματα για την περίοδο 2007-2013 αναφέρεται στο παράρτημα ΙΑ και το παράρτημα ΙΒ της παρούσας απάντησης, ενώ για το ΕΤΑ τα δεδομένα περιλαμβάνονται στο παράρτημα ΙΙΑ και παράρτημα ΙΙΒ, αντίστοιχα. Για το ΕΓΤΑΑ δεν υποβλήθηκαν αιτήσεις πληρωμών κατά τους μήνες Αύγουστο και Σεπτέμβριο. Τα αριθμητικά στοιχεία του παραρτήματος ΙΑ και ΙΒ προκύπτουν από τη σύγκριση των έγκυρων αιτήσεων πληρωμής που υποβλήθηκαν έως το τέλος Αυγούστου 2013 με τα στοιχεία που υποβλήθηκαν μέχρι το τέλος Ιουλίου 2013. Η ίδια μεθοδολογία εφαρμόστηκε για να προσδιοριστεί το επίπεδο των αιτήσεων πληρωμών που υποβλήθηκαν τον Σεπτέμβριο. Η Επιτροπή μπορεί να αποφασίσει την αλλαγή χαρακτηρισμού μιας αίτησης πληρωμής από «Αποδεκτή» σε «Πλήρως απορριφθείσα» ή «Επιστραφείσα προς διόρθωση» και, συνεπώς, τα αριθμητικά στοιχεία των παραρτημάτων της παρούσας απάντησης ενδέχεται να αποτελέσουν αντικείμενο περαιτέρω προσαρμογών. Τα αρνητικά υπόλοιπα του ΕΚΤ για το Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο, για παράδειγμα, είναι αποτέλεσμα τέτοιας αλλαγής κατάστασης.

Ανάλογα στοιχεία για τους μήνες Ιανουάριο, Φεβρουάριο, Μάρτιο, Απρίλιο, Μάιο, Ιούνιο και Ιούλιο δόθηκαν από την Επιτροπή στις ερωτήσεις E-1090/2013, E-3237/2013, E-3928/2013, E-4903/2013, E-6405/2013, E-8097/2013 και E-9846/2013, αντίστοιχα ([2]).

([1]) Με εξαίρεση τα ποσά που έχουν απορριφθεί πλήρως.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/el/parliamentary-questions.html

Οι προβλέψεις πληρωμών των κρατών μελών δεν μπορούν να συγκριθούν άμεσα με τις πραγματικές πληρωμές που πραγματοποιήθηκαν μέχρι τώρα κατά το τρέχον έτος, λόγω του ότι οι εν λόγω πληρωμές περιλαμβάνουν το σημαντικό ποσό που αφορά τις αιτήσεις πληρωμών που ελήφθησαν πριν από το τέλος του προηγούμενου έτους και έπρεπε να καταλογιστούν στις διαθέσιμες πιστώσεις στον προϋπολογισμό του 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011168/13
to the Commission
Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Level of payments as of 30 September 2013

After the approval of Draft Amending Budget No 6/2012, the European Commission, at the request of the budgetary authority, came forward with Draft Amending Budget No 2/2013 amounting to EUR 11.2 billion, to allow all the legal payment obligations left pending at the end of 2012, as well as those arising before the end of 2013, to be covered in this year's budget.

At the Ecofin meeting of 14 May 2013, a political agreement was reached to provide the extra funding for the 2013 budget in two tranches, with the first amounting to EUR 7.3 billion. While the Ministers promised to return to the issue later in the year, there has been no formal commitment on the remaining EUR 3.9 billion in Draft Amending Budget 2/2013.

After the political agreement of 27 June 2013 reached by the institutions on the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework (MFF), the Ecofin Council of 9 July 2013 approved the EUR 7.3 billion top-up for the 2013 EU budget and committed itself to taking all necessary additional steps to ensure that the Union's obligations for 2013 were fully honoured. In this respect, on the basis of a proposal to be made by the Commission in early autumn based on the latest updated estimates regarding payment appropriations, the Council is committed to deciding, without delay, on a further draft amending budget to avoid any shortfall in justified payment appropriations. On 26 September 2013, the Commission issued Draft Amending Budget 8/2013 for the remaining EUR 3.9 billion.

Taking all the above into consideration and given the fact that the level of payments for the 2013 EU budget is EUR 5 billion lower than the Commission's estimates for payment needs in its 2013 draft budget, could the Commission provide detailed information on the level of payments received by 31 July 2013? More specifically, could the Commission provide information on payments received in the months of January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August and September 2013, broken down by Member State and policy area/programme?

Moreover, could the Commission also provide a comparison between the Member States' payment forecasts and the actual payments that have taken place thus far in the year within the framework of the 2013 EU budget, broken down by Member State and by policy area/programme?

Answer given by Mr Lewandowski on behalf of the Commission
(14 November 2013)

A detailed breakdown of the valid payment claims ([1]) received in August and September for the 2007-2013 ESF, ERDF and CF-funded operational programmes is provided in Annex IA and Annex IB to this reply while for EFF the data is included in Annex IIA and Annex IIB, respectively. For EAFRD no payment claims were submitted during the months of August and September. The figures in the Annex IA and IIA result from comparing valid payment claims submitted until the end of August 2013 with those submitted until the end of July 2013. The same methodology was applied to determine the level of payment claims submitted in September. The Commission may decide to change the status of a payment claim from 'Accepted' to 'Fully rejected' or 'Returned for corrections' and therefore the figures presented in the annexes to this reply could still undergo further adjustments. A negative ESF balance for the United Kingdom in September, for instance, is the result of such changes in status.

Similar data for the months of January, February, March, April, May, June and July were provided by the Commission in response to questions E-1090/2013, E-3237/2013, E-3928/2013, E-4903/2013, E-6405/2013, E-8097/2013 and E-9846/2013, respectively ([2]).

Member States' payment forecasts cannot directly be compared to the actual payments that have taken place thus far in the year because the latter includes the significant amount of payment claims received before the end of last year and had to be charged on the appropriations available in the 2013 budget.

([1]) Excluding fully rejected amounts.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011169/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE), Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE), Maria Badia i Cutchet (S&D), Raimon Obiols (S&D), Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE) y Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(1 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Carta Europea de las Lenguas y su ratificación

El Parlamento Europeo ha aprobado recientemente por una amplísima mayoría el informe sobre las lenguas europeas amenazadas de desaparición y la diversidad lingüística en la Unión Europea.

En el apartado 3 de dicho informe el Parlamento Europeo «pide a los Estados miembros que aún no lo hayan hecho que ratifiquen y apliquen la Carta Europea de las Lenguas Regionales o Minoritarias».

Algunos países de la Unión no han ratificado todavía dicha Carta.

¿Considera la Comisión necesario impulsar alguna iniciativa en el sentido de recomendar a los Estados miembros no firmantes de la Carta que tomen en consideración la recomendación del Parlamento Europeo e invitarles a firmarla?

Respuesta de la Sra. Vassiliou en nombre de la Comisión
(15 de noviembre de 2013)

La Comisión ha tomado nota del informe sobre las lenguas europeas amenazadas de desaparición y la diversidad lingüística en Europa adoptado recientemente por el Parlamento Europeo y reconoce plenamente su importancia.

Aunque la protección de las lenguas amenazadas no es competencia de la Comisión (artículo 165 del Tratado de Funcionamiento de la UE), ya que sigue estando claramente en manos de los Estados miembros, la Comisión trabaja en estrecha colaboración con los Estados miembros y las partes interesadas, apoyando y coordinando sus esfuerzos cuando resulta adecuado. Por ejemplo, ha apoyado proyectos sobre la adquisición de lenguas regionales y minoritarias en su programa de aprendizaje permanente y ha integrado el aprendizaje de idiomas y la diversidad lingüística en todo el nuevo programa Erasmus+.

La Comisión coopera también con organizaciones internacionales, como el Consejo de Europa, a cuya Carta Europea de las Lenguas Regionales o Minoritarias remite frecuentemente como instrumento jurídico internacional dedicado específicamente a la protección y la promoción de las lenguas regionales o minoritarias. No puede emitir recomendaciones a los Estados miembros acerca de la ratificación de dicha Carta, pero mantiene su compromiso con la diversidad lingüística de Europa y seguirá haciendo todo lo que sus competencias le permitan para que permanezca en la agenda política.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011169/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE), Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE), Maria Badia i Cutchet (S&D), Raimon Obiols (S&D), Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE) and Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and ratification thereof

Parliament recently adopted the report on endangered European languages and linguistic diversity in the European Union by a huge majority.

Paragraph 3 of this report by Parliament 'calls on all Member States who have not yet done so to ratify and implement the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages'.

Some EU countries still have not ratified the charter.

Does the Commission think there is a need to run some sort of initiative recommending that Member States that have not signed the charter pay attention to Parliament's recommendation and calling on them to sign it?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

The Commission has taken note of the report on endangered European languages and linguistic diversity in Europe that was recently adopted by the European Parliament and fully recognises the importance of it.

Although the protection of endangered languages does not belong to the competence of the Commission (Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU) but instead remains firmly in the hands of Member States, the Commission nevertheless works closely with Member States and stakeholders, supporting and coordinating their efforts where appropriate. It has for example supported projects aimed at the acquisition of regional and minority languages in its Life Long Learning programme and has now mainstreamed language learning and linguistic diversity throughout the new Erasmus+ programme.

The Commission also cooperates with international organisations such as the Council of Europe and regularly refers to its European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages as the international legal instrument specifically devoted to the protection and promotion of regional or minority languages. It cannot issue recommendations to Member States on the ratification of this Charter, but stays committed to the linguistic diversity in Europe and will continue to do what is within its competences to keep it on the political agenda.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011170/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(1 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Αναθεώρηση του καθεστώτος ομαδικών απολύσεων

Το ζήτημα της αναθεώρησης του νομικού πλαισίου που διέπει τις ομαδικές απολύσεις βρίσκεται, σύμφωνα με τον ελληνικό Τύπο, στο επίκεντρο των συζητήσεων της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης με την τρόικα. Η ελληνική αγορά εργασίας διέρχεται έντονη κρίση, με τα ποσοστά ανεργίας να αγγίζουν το 27% και την ύφεση να πλήττει όχι μόνο το δείκτη αύξησης της απασχόλησης, αλλά ακόμα και την προσπάθεια διατήρησης των υφιστάμενων θέσεων εργασίας. Τα τελευταία χρόνια δρομολογήθηκε σωρεία αλλαγών στις εργασιακές σχέσεις, προκειμένου να ενισχυθεί η ανταγωνιστικότητα της χώρας, οι οποίες λειτούργησαν πολλές φορές σε βάρος της ασφάλειας των εργαζομένων και με αμφισβητούμενα αποτελέσματα. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Πώς θεωρεί ότι η αναθεώρηση του πλαισίου των ομαδικών απολύσεων — τόσο των ορίων απόλυσης, όσο και της αναγκαιότητας της υπογραφής του εκάστοτε Υπουργού Εργασίας — συμβάλλει στην ενίσχυση της απασχόλησης;

2. Πώς αξιολογεί το γεγονός ότι τέτοιου είδους μέτρα υπονομεύουν το σκέλος της ασφάλειας στην αγορά εργασίας, δημιουργώντας συνθήκες για την περαιτέρω αποδιάρθρωσή της;

3. Δεδομένου ότι, λόγω της γενικότερης οικονομικής και δημοσιονομικής κατάστασης, βρίσκονται υπό εξέλιξη και πρόκειται να δρομολογηθούν μια σειρά αναδιαρθρώσεων σε κλάδους και επιχειρήσεις του ιδιωτικού αλλά και του ευρύτερου δημόσιου τομέα, πώς κρίνει ότι θα επηρεάσει την τύχη των εργαζομένων, σε τέτοιου είδους περιπτώσεις, η απελευθέρωση του καθεστώτος των ομαδικών απολύσεων; Στόχος σε περιπτώσεις αναδιαρθρώσεων δεν είναι άλλωστε η συσσώρευση ανέργων στο ταμείο ανεργίας, αλλά η διασφάλιση όσο το δυνατόν περισσότερων θέσεων εργασίας.

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(27 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή είναι της άποψης ότι στόχος των κανονισμών ομαδικών απολύσεων θα πρέπει να είναι η προστασία των εργαζομένων και ο περιορισμός των κοινωνικών προβλημάτων που συνδέονται με τις απολύσεις, επιτρέποντας παράλληλα τη συντεταγμένη αναδιάρθρωση των εταιρειών σε περίπτωση αλλαγής των οικονομικών συνθηκών. Το δίκαιο της ΕΕ ([1]) προβλέπει ήδη ελάχιστες απαιτήσεις, ιδίως μάλιστα τις υποχρεώσεις των εργοδοτών για ενημέρωση και διαβουλεύσεις με τους εκπροσώπους των εργαζομένων, προτού αποφασίσουν να προβούν σε ομαδικές απολύσεις. Οι διαβουλεύσεις αυτές καλύπτουν τρόπους για την αποφυγή των απολύσεων ή τη μείωση του αριθμού τους, καθώς και για την άμβλυνση των συνεπειών τους, χάρη σε συνοδευτικά κοινωνικά μέτρα.

Στο πλαίσιο των όρων πολιτικής που προσαρτώνται στο πρόγραμμα οικονομικής προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα, η ελληνική κυβέρνηση συμφώνησε να επανεξετάσει τις υφιστάμενες εργασιακές ρυθμιστικές διατάξεις. Στόχος είναι ο προσδιορισμός μέτρων τα οποία, με βάση τις πρόσφατες μεταρρυθμίσεις, μπορούν να συμβάλουν στην προσέλκυση επενδύσεων και στη στήριξη της δημιουργίας θέσεων απασχόλησης, ευθυγραμμίζοντας ταυτόχρονα την Ελλάδα με τις βέλτιστες πρακτικές των άλλων χωρών. Η διαδικασία αυτή αναμένεται να συμπεριλάβει συγκριτική επανεξέταση των κανονιστικών θεμάτων που αφορούν την αναδιάρθρωση των εταιριών και τις ομαδικές απολύσεις, ώστε να διασφαλιστεί η εξισορρόπηση μεταξύ της διευκόλυνσης της αναγκαίας προσαρμογής με την ισότιμη κατανομή του βάρους της προσαρμογής μεταξύ των εργαζομένων, των εταιρειών και της κυβέρνησης ([2]).

([1]) Ιδίως, η οδηγία 98/59/ΕΚ του Συμβουλίου της 20ής Ιουλίου 1998, για προσέγγιση των νομοθεσιών των κρατών μελών που αφορούν τις ομαδικές απολύσεις, ΕΕ L 225 της 12.8.1998.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp159_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011170/13
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(1 October 2013)

Subject: Review of the collective redundancy regime

A review of the legislative framework governing collective redundancies is, according to the Greek press, a key point in talks between the Greek Government and the Troika. The Greek job market is in a period of extreme crisis, with unemployment rates reaching 27%, and the recession hitting not only employment growth, but also the effort to hold on to existing jobs. Many changes have been initiated in labour relations in recent years with a view to boosting the country's competitiveness. These changes were often made at the expense of job security and with doubtful results. With regard to this, will the Commission answer the following:

1. How does it think that a review of the framework for collective redundancies — covering not only redundancy limits, but also the requirement for the signature of the incumbent Minster of Labour — contributes to strengthening employment?

2. How does it view the fact that measures of this kind undermine the element of security in the job market by creating conditions for further market dislocation?

3. Given that a series of restructurings are underway or are due to be launched in industries and enterprises in both the private and the public sectors on account of the general economic and budgetary situation, how does it think that the outlook for employees will be affected in such cases by a liberalisation of the collective redundancy regime? The aim of restructuring is not, after all, to lengthen the queues at unemployment benefit offices, but to safeguard as many as jobs as possible.

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(27 November 2013)

The Commission is of the view that the aim of collective dismissal regulations should be to protect workers and contain the social hardship linked to dismissals while allowing an orderly restructuring of firms in the event of changing economic circumstances. EC law ([1]) already provides for minimum requirements, in particular the obligation of employers to inform and consult employees' representatives before they decide to carry out collective redundancies. Such consultation covers ways of avoiding redundancies, or reducing their number, and of mitigating their consequences through accompanying social measures.

As part of the policy conditionality attached to the economic adjustment programme for Greece, the Greek Government agreed in carrying out a review of existing labour regulations. The objective is to identify measures that, building on recent reforms, can contribute to attract investment and support job creation while aligning Greece with best practices in other countries. This exercise is expected to include a comparative review of regulatory issues concerning the re-structuring of companies and collective dismissals to ensure a balance between facilitating necessary adjustment and a fair sharing of the burden of adjustment between workers, firms and the Government. ([2])

([1]) In particular, Council Directive 98/59/EC of 20 July 1998 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to collective redundancies, OJ L 225, 12.8.1998.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp159_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011171/13
to the Commission
Derek Roland Clark (EFD)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Dutch state pension

A correspondent of mine, resident in the UK, has recently become entitled to a Dutch state pension. He has been refused payment in euros to his euro bank account. The UK is the only non-euro area EU Member State which is excluded from euro payments. This has reduced my constituent's pension payment and represents discrimination, which is illegal under the Lisbon Treaty.

Why has this practice been permitted?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

The EC law which regulates the coordination of social security systems ([1]) (including pensions) lays down the rules on pension calculation and establishes rules for currency conversion in order to avoid discrimination in payments. However, the conversion rules apply only to the establishment of an entitlement to benefit (pension) and the first calculation of the benefit (pension). According to these rules, the applicable exchange rate is a daily exchange rate.

Unfortunately the Honourable Member did not outline in detail in his written question whether the Dutch state pension fund, the Dutch state pension fund's bank or the UK bank actually refused the payment in Euros to his correspondent's Euro bank account. According to the SEPA end-date Regulation 260/2012, the payment can also not be refused by the bank of the Dutch pensioner in the UK. By allowing the opening of a Euro bank account, the payment service provider automatically accepts to receive and process credit transfers in euro. The regulation provides that in such cases the payment service provider shall also be reachable for credit transfers initiated by a payer through a payment service provider in any other Member State (in this case the Dutch pension fund).

The Honourable Member is therefore kindly suggested to inform the Commission of further details, in particular clarifying which organisation disallowed the transfer. This will allow identifying the responsible national organisation that could help in enforcing the correspondent's rights.

([1]) Regulation (EC) n. 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems and Regulation (EC) 987/2009 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011172/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(2 ta' Ottubru 2013)

Suġġett: L-obeżità fit-tfal

Studju riċenti ppublikat f'Malta wera li t-tfal Maltin huma fost l-aktar tfal obeżi fid-dinja. Fid-dawl tal-fatt li l-Organizzazzjoni Dinjija tas-Saħħa ddeskriviet l-obeżità bħala marda li kważi laħqet status pandemiku:

1. Il-Kummissjoni temmen li l-Istati Membri għandhom jingħataw miri sabiex inaqqsu l-obeżità fost it-tfal fuq perjodu ta' żmien speċifiku?

2. Il-Kummissjoni tkun lesta li tappoġġja sforzi bħal dawn fl-Istati Membri?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Borg f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(15 ta' Novembru 2013)

Il-Kummissjoni taf bir-rata ta' obeżità fit-tfal f'Malta.

L-Istrateġija għall-Ewropa dwar kwistjonijiet ta' saħħa marbuta man-Nutriment, il-Piż Żejjed u l-Obeżità ([1]) tinkludi azzjoni li tindirizza, bħala prijorità, lit-tfal. F'dan il-kuntest, il-Grupp ta' livell għoli dwar in-nutriment u l-attività fiżika bħalissa qed iqis Pjan ta' azzjoni ġdid biex jittratta l-obeżità fit-tfal. Fejn jidħol l-iffissar ta' miri potenzjali biex titnaqqas l-obeżità fit-tfal, il-Kummissjoni temmen li l-Istati Membri għandhom jiddefinixxu huma stess kwalunkwe mira ta' dan it-tip u jsegwuha.

Barra minn hekk, il-Kummissjoni pproponiet Rakkomandazzjoni tal-Kunsill dwar il-promozzjoni transsettorjali ta' attività fiżika favur is-saħħa ([2]), immirata għal nies ta' kull età, fosthom it-tfal, li għandha l-għan li tiġġieled kontra l-piż żejjed u l-obeżità, u li tevita l-kundizzjonijiet marbutin magħhom.

Il-proposta tal-Kummissjoni għal programm fil-qasam tas-saħħa għall-perjodu mill-2014 sal-2020 ([3]) ukoll tipprevedi attivitajiet fl-oqsma tal-obeżità u tan-nutriment. X'aktarx li l-proposta tal-Kummissjoni għall-Programm Qafas għar-Riċerka u l-Innovazzjoni — Orizzont 2020 (2014-2020) ([4]) se toffri opportunitajiet għar-riċerka dwar l-obeżità, in-nutriment u l-attività fiżika.

([1]) COM(2007) 279 finali, 30.5.2007.
([2]) COM(2013) 603 finali, 28.8.2013.
([3]) COM(2011) 709 finali, 9.11.2011.
([4]) COM(2011) 809 finali, 30.11.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011172/13
to the Commission
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Child obesity

A recent study published in Malta has shown that Maltese children are among the most obese children in the world. Given that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has described obesity as a disease verging on pandemic status:

1. Does the Commission believe that Member States should be given targets for reducing obesity among children over a specific period of time?

2. Would the Commission be willing to support any such endeavours within Member States?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

The Commission is aware of the rate of childhood obesity in Malta.

The strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity-related Health Issues ([1]) features action addressing children as a priority. In this context, the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity is currently considering a new Action Plan to tackle childhood obesity. As regards setting up potential targets for reducing obesity among children, the Commission believes that it is up to Member States to define and pursue any such targets.

In addition, the Commission has proposed a Council Recommendation on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors ([2]) targeting all age groups, including children, which aims at combating overweight and obesity, and preventing related conditions.

The Commission's proposal for the 2014-2020 Health Programme ([3]) further foresees activities in the areas of obesity and nutrition. The Commission's proposal for Horizon 2020 — The framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) ([4]) will likely offer opportunities for research on obesity, nutrition and physical activity.

([1]) COM(2007) 279 final, 30.5.2007.
([2]) COM(2013) 603 final, 28.8.2013.
([3]) COM(2011) 709 final, 9.11.2011.
([4]) COM(2011) 809 final, 30.11.2011.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011173/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(2 ta' Ottubru 2013)

Suġġett: Sigħat ta' edukazzjoni fiżika

L-edukazzjoni fiżika hi parti integrali mill-iżvilupp tat-tfal. Skont studju ppublikat mill-Kummissjoni f'Marzu tal-2013, in-numru minimu ta' sigħat allokat għall-edukazzjoni fiżika fl-Istati Membri jvarja bejn 31 siegħa fis-sena f'Malta u 108 siegħa fis-sena fi Franza. Fid-dawl ta' dan, u fiż-żieda inkwetanti fir-rati ta' obeżità fit-tfal fl-Ewropa:

1. Il-Kummissjoni taħseb li n-numru minimu ta' sigħat ta' edukazzjoni fiżika fl-Ewropa għandu jiżdied?

2. Tikkunsidra li tintroduċi numru komuni ta' sigħat ta' edukazzjoni fiżika fl-Istati Membri?

3. Jekk iva, x'inhu l-aħjar numru ta' sigħat li tirrakomanda?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Vassiliou f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(13 ta' Novembru 2013)

Fil-Komunikazzjoni "L-Iżvilupp tad-Dimensjoni Ewropea fl-Isport" ([1]), il-Kummissjoni esprimiet il-fehma tagħha li jista' jitqatta' iktar ħin fl-isport u l-attivitajiet fiżiċi fl-edukazzjoni mingħajr bżonn ta' ħafna spejjeż, barra l-kurrikulu tal-iskola u kif ukoll fil-kurrikulu stess.

Madankollu, skont l-Artikolu 165 tat-Trattat dwar il-Funzjonament tal-Unjoni Ewropea, ir-responsabbiltà għall-kontenut tat-tagħlim u l-organizzazzjoni tas-sistemi edukattivi, inkluż l-għadd ta' sigħat dedikati għal suġġett speċifiku bħall-edukazzjoni fiżika, hija kompletament tal-Istati Membri. Għalhekk, huwa f'idejn kull Stat Membru biex jiddetermina kif jista' jinkoraġġixxi l-attivitajiet tal-edukazzjoni fiżika fl-iskejjel.

([1]) COM(2011) 12 finali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011173/13
to the Commission
Marlene Mizzi (S&D)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Hours of physical education

Physical education is an integral part of a child's development. According to a study published by the Commission in March 2013, the minimum number of hours allocated to physical education in the Member States varies from 31 hours per year in Malta to 108 hours per year in France. In the light of this, and of the worrying increase in child obesity rates in Europe:

1. Does the Commission believe that the minimum number of hours of physical education in Europe should be increased?

2. Would it consider introducing a common number of hours of physical education in the Member States?

3. If so, what would be the optimum number of hours that it would recommend?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(13 November 2013)

In the communication 'Developing the European Dimension in Sport' ([1]), the Commission expressed its view that time spent on sport and physical activity in education could be improved at low cost both outside and within the school curriculum.

However, in accordance with Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the responsibility for the content of the teaching and the organisation of education systems, including the number of hours dedicated to a specific subject such as physical education, rests entirely with Member States. It is therefore up to each Member State to determine how to encourage physical education activities at school.

([1]) COM(2011) 12 final.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011174/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Personal in EU-Vertretungen (2013)

Der Europäische Auswärtige Dienst (EAD) beschäftigt in seinen Delegationen AD- und AST-Beamte, Bedienstete auf Zeit, junge Sachverständige sowie lokale Ortskräfte. Ebenso sind den Delegationsleitern des EAD Beamte, Bedienstete, junge Sachverständige sowie Ortskräfte der Kommission unterstellt.

1. Kann die Hohe Vertreterin, vergleichbar zu den Angaben in der Antwort der Hohen Vertreterin auf Anfrage 9151/2012, welche die Zahlen für Ende 2012 wiedergibt, tabellarisch aufstellen, wie viel Personal des EAD in den Delegationen des EAD beschäftigt ist?

2. Kann die Hohe Vertreterin ebenso tabellarisch aufstellen, wie viel Personal der Kommission den Delegationsleitern des EAD unterstellt ist?

3. Kann die Hohe Vertreterin die Gründe erläutern, falls sich eine der Zahlen von 2012 bis 2013 um mehr als 10 % erhöht hat.

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

Derzeit gibt es weltweit 139 EU Delegationen. Die Zusammensetzung des in diesen Delegationen tätigen EAD-Personals ist in der nachstehenden Tabelle aufgeführt.

Die Daten vom 15.9.2013 haben sich gegenüber den früheren Daten, die für Ende 2012 vorgelegt wurden, in keinem Fall um mehr als 10 % erhöht.

EU-Delegationen 2013	EAD	KOM	Insgesamt
AD- und AST-Beamte sowie Bedienstete auf Zeit	554	597	1 151
Vertragsbedienstete	191	856	1 047
Örtliche Bedienstete	1 077	1 969	3 046
Junger Sachverständiger in Delegationen	29	31	60
Abgeordnete nationale Sachverständige	41	21	62
Insgesamt	1 892	3 474	5 366

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011174/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Staff in EU representations (2013)

In its delegations, the European External Action Services (EEAS) employs AD and AST grade officials, temporary agents, young experts and local agents. In addition, officials, members of staff, young experts and local agents of the Commission are also under the authority of the EEAS Heads of Delegation.

1. Can the High Representative provide a table, similar to that in her answer to question 9151/2012, which reflected the figures for the end of 2012, showing how many members of EEAS staff are employed in the EEAS delegations?

2. Can she also provide a table showing how many members of Commission staff are under the authority of the EEAS Heads of Delegation?

3. If any of the figures increased by more than 10% between 2012 and 2013, can she explain the reasons for this?

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

There are currently 139 EU Delegations around the world. The distribution of the EEAS staff employed in Sep. 2013 in these Delegations is set out in the table below.

Taking the data on the 15/09/2013, and comparing them with the previous data provided for the end of 2012, none of the figures have increased by more than 10%.

EU Delegations 2013	EEAS	COM	Total
AD and AST Officials and Temporary Agents	554	597	1151
Contractual Agents	191	856	1047
Local Agents	1077	1969	3046
Junior Professional in Delegation	29	31	60
Seconded national Experts	41	21	62
Total	1892	3474	5366

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011175/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Ergebnisse der Konsultation zur Strukturreform des Bankensektors

Vom 16. Mai 2013 bis zum 11. Juli 2013 führte die Kommission eine öffentliche Konsultation zur Strukturreform des Bankensektors durch.

Auf der entsprechenden Website ist angegeben, dass sowohl die einzelnen Beiträge als auch eine Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse „nach Abschluss der Konsultation verfügbar gemacht werden". Bis dato (Stand 1. Oktober 2013) wurden diese Informationen allerdings nicht veröffentlicht.

1. Warum wurden die Informationen nicht bzw. so lange nicht veröffentlicht?

2. Kann die Kommission abschätzen wann die Konsultationsbeiträge zugänglich sein werden?

3. Wird durch diese Verzögerung auch die Veröffentlichung des erwarteten Gesetzesvorschlags weiter verzögert?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(29. November 2013)

1.-2. Die einzelnen Beiträge sowie eine Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse der Konsultation zur Strukturreform im Bankensektor können Sie einsehen unter:
http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2013/banking-structural-reform/index_de.htm

3. Bei der Ausarbeitung des Legislativvorschlags wendet die Kommission ebenso wie bei der Konsultation aller einschlägigen Interessenträger ihre internen Verfahren an. Der Vorschlag wird zusammen mit einer ausführlichen Folgenabschätzung vorgelegt werden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011175/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Results of the consultation on the structural reform of the banking sector

From 16 May 2013 to 11 July 2013, the Commission conducted a public consultation on the structural reform of the banking sector.

On the corresponding website, it states that both the individual contributions and a summary of the results 'will be available after the closing of the consultation period'. However, this information has not as yet (as of 1 October 2013) been published.

1. Why has the information not, or not yet, been published?

2. Can the Commission provide an estimate of when the consultation contributions will be available?

3. Will this delay also further delay the publication of the expected legislative proposal?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2013)

1-2. The contributions to the consultation on the structural reform of the banking sector, as well as a summary of responses, can be found at:
http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2013/banking-structural-reform/

3. The Commission is following its internal procedures for the elaboration of its legislative proposal, including consultations with all relevant stakeholders. The proposal will be accompanied by a thorough impact assessment.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011176/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Detaillierte Aufschlüsselung der Übersetzungskosten in den Jahren 2009 und 2012

In ihrer Antwort auf die Anfrage 9665/2013 von Hans-Peter Martin schreibt Kommissionsmitglied Vassiliou: „Die Gesamtkosten der Übersetzung der Kommission in den Jahren 2009, 2010, 2011 und 2012 betrugen jeweils etwa 330 Mio. EUR. Darin enthalten sind die Kosten für Übersetzer, Support/Verwaltungsaufgaben (wie Koordinierung, Fortbildung, Ressourcenmanagement, Informationstechnologie und Kommunikation) sowie Infrastruktur (Gebäude, Strom, Wasser usw.). Sie umfassen außerdem die Kosten für externe Übersetzung und externe Mitarbeiter."

1. Wie genau gliederten sich die circa 330 Mio. EUR Übersetzungskosten im Jahr 2009 und im Jahr 2012 auf die von Kommissionsmitglied Vassiliou genannten Kostenpunkte auf?

2. Wie viele externe Mitarbeiter wurden im Jahr 2009 und im Jahr 2012 von der Kommission angestellt? Arbeiten diese Vollzeit und ganzjährig für die Kommission oder nur zeitlich befristet oder stundenweise? Nutzten diese Mitarbeiter Büros und Materialien der Kommission, oder arbeiteten sie von außerhalb? Handelt es sich dabei um Vertragsbedienstete, intra muros tätige Leistungserbringer oder andere Personalkategorien?

Antwort von Frau Vassiliou im Namen der Kommission
(20. November 2013)

1. Im Jahr 2009 betrugen die Gesamtkosten für die Übersetzung in der Kommission 323 962 821 EUR, die sich wie folgt zusammensetzten:

— Übersetzerinnen und Übersetzer: 178 333 624 EUR;

— Support/Verwaltungsaufgaben: 67 369 997 EUR;

— Infrastruktur: 58 181 760 EUR;

— externe Übersetzungsdienstleistungen: 12 865 401 EUR;

— externes Personal: 7 212 039 EUR.

Für 2012 setzt sich die Gesamtsumme von 336 699 026 EUR wie folgt zusammen:

— Übersetzerinnen und Übersetzer: 188 134 620 EUR;

— Support/Verwaltungsaufgaben: 66 772 340 EUR;

— Infrastruktur: 60 300 600 EUR;

— externe Übersetzungsdienstleistungen: 12 704 177 EUR;

— externes Personal: 8 787 289 EUR.

2. Zum externen Personal gehören Vertragsbedienstete (Übersetzer und Assistenten), abgeordnete nationale Sachverständige und Zeitarbeitskräfte. Sie arbeiten auf Vollzeitbasis für die Dauer der Laufzeit ihres Vertrags in den Büros der Kommission. Zeitarbeitskräfte werden für höchstens sechs Monate eingestellt.

In Zahlen zum 31. Dezember 2009:

— Vertragsbedienstete: 101;

— abgeordnete nationale Sachverständige: 10;

— Zeitarbeitskräfte: 26.

In Zahlen zum 31. Dezember 2012:

— Vertragsbedienstete: 173;

— abgeordnete nationale Sachverständige: 7;

— Zeitarbeitskräfte: 23.

Unter den externe Übersetzungsdienstleistungen sind Übersetzungen zu verstehen, die auf der Grundlage von Verträgen im Wege einer Ausschreibung nach außen vergeben werden. Ausschreibungen und Aufforderungen zur Interessenbekundung werden im Amtsblatt, in „Tenders Electronic Daily“ (TED) und auf der Europa-Website veröffentlicht. Auftragnehmer arbeiten mit ihrem eigenen Personal, in ihren eigenen Räumlichkeiten und mit ihrem eigenen Material ([1]).

([1]) Listen der Vertragspartner sind abrufbar unter http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/workwithus/calls/list/index_de.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011176/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Detailed breakdown of translation costs for 2009 and 2012

In her reply to question 9665/2013 from Hans-Peter Martin, Commissioner Vassiliou states: 'The overall cost of translation in the Commission in each of the years 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 was approximately EUR 330 million. This figure includes the cost of translators, support/administrative services (such as coordination, training, resource management, information technology and communication), and infrastructure (buildings, electricity, water etc.). It also includes the cost of external translation services and external staff.'

1. How exactly is the EUR 330 million in translation costs for 2009 and 2012 divided between the items referred to by Commissioner Vassiliou?

2. How many external staff were employed by the Commission in 2009 and 2012? Do these people work full time throughout the year for the Commission or just for a limited time or hourly? Do these members of staff use offices and materials belonging to the Commission, or do they work externally? Are these people contract staff, suppliers working on site or other categories of staff?

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

1. In 2009, the overall cost of translation in the Commission was EUR 323 962 821, comprising:

— translators: EUR 178 333 624;

— support and administrative services: EUR 67 369 997;

— infrastructure: EUR 58 181 760;

— external translation services: EUR 12 865 401;

— external staff: EUR 7 212 039.

The figure for 2012 was EUR 336 699 026, comprising:

— translators: EUR 188 134 620;

— support and administrative services: EUR 66 772 340;

— infrastructure: EUR 60 300 600;

— external translation services: EUR 12 704 177;

— external staff: EUR 8 787 289.

2. The external staff includes contract agents (translators and assistants), seconded national experts and interim staff. They work full time for the duration of their contract and use Commission's offices. Interim staff is hired for maximum 6 months.

The figures on 31 December 2009 were as follows:

— contract agents: 101;

— seconded national experts: 10;

— interim staff: 26.

The figures on 31 December 2012 were as follows:

— contract agents: 173;

— seconded national experts: 7;

— interim staff: 23.

External translation services refer to translation work that is outsourced on the basis of contracts awarded through a tendering procedure. Calls for tender and for expressions of interest are published in the Official Journal, on Tenders Electronic Daily (TED) and on the Europa website. Contractors use their own staff, offices and equipment ([1]).

([1]) Lists of contractors are available at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/workwithus/calls/list/index_en.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-011177/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Kontakte der Kommission mit Interessensvertretern bezüglich der Strukturreform des Bankensektors

Bei der Anhörung im ECON-Ausschuss des Europäischen Parlaments am 16. September 2013 signalisierte EU-Kommissar Michel Barnier, dass er bereit ist, auf Anfrage seine Gespräche und Konsultationen mit Interessensvertretern im Detail zu veröffentlichen.

1. Mit welchen Interessensvertretern haben sich der Kommissar und seine Mitarbeiter im Zusammenhang mit dem Liikanen-Bericht und im Hinblick auf den Regulierungsvorschlag zur Strukturreform des Bankensektors getroffen und/oder schriftlichen Kontakt gehabt? Welche konkreten Themen wurden bei diesen Treffen und Kontakten jeweils behandelt?

2. Welche Auswirkungen haben diese Treffen und Kontakte auf den Regulierungsvorschlag zur Strukturreform des Bankensektors, den die Kommission laut Aussage des EU-Kommissars Michel Barnier im November veröffentlichen wird?

3. Wann und in welcher Weise plant der Kommissar diesen „Fußabdruck für Lobbyisten" (lobby footprint) künftig der Öffentlichkeit zugänglich zu machen?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(19. November 2013)

1. Mit Blick auf den geplanten Legislativvorschlag zur Strukturreform großer Banken in der EU haben die Kommissionsdienststellen eine öffentliche Konsultation durchgeführt, die am 11. Juli 2013 abgeschlossen wurde ([1]). Eingegangen sind 540 schriftliche Beiträge von Banken und anderen Finanzinstituten, nichtfinanziellen Unternehmen, Anlegern, öffentlichen Stellen, Verbraucherverbänden sowie einzelnen Bürgerinnen und Bürgern.

Im Rahmen dieser öffentlichen Konsultation fand am 17. Mai 2013 ein Treffen mit den Interessenvertretern statt. Ferner kamen die zuständigen Kommissionsdienststellen und Kommissar Barnier mit verschiedenen Interessenträgern auf deren Wunsch hin zusammen, darunter Vertreter der nationalen Behörden, des privaten Sektors und der Zivilgesellschaft. Welche Organisationen in den vergangenen sechs Monaten an den von Herrn Barnier und den ihm unterstellten Diensten (Generaldirektion Binnenmarkt und Dienstleistungen) abgehaltenen Treffen teilgenommen haben, ist dem Anhang zu entnehmen.

2. Die Kommissionsdienststellen und Herr Barnier werden alle — mündlichen und schriftlichen — Stellungnahmen und Rückmeldungen von Interessenträgern bei den laufenden Überlegungen zur Reform des Bankensektors sorgfältig prüfen. Dies wird auch bei etwaigen künftigen Initiativen in diesem Bereich der Fall sein.

3. Die Kommission will einen offenen, transparenten und regelmäßigen Dialog mit den repräsentativen Verbänden und der Zivilgesellschaft pflegen. Auf der Grundlage einer mit dem Europäischen Parlament geschlossenen interinstitutionellen Vereinbarung führt sie ein gemeinsames Transparenzregister und fördert darüber hinaus die Transparenz der Tätigkeiten und Verfahren der Kommission und ihrer Mitglieder durch eine regelmäßige Aktualisierung der Informationen auf der Website Europa.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/bank/structural-reform/index_de.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011177/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Commission's dealings with lobby groups in connection with the reform of the structure of the banking sector

At the European Parliament's ECON Committee hearing on 16 September 2013, EU Commissioner Michel Barnier indicated that he is prepared to publish details of his talks and consultations with lobby groups upon request.

1. What lobby groups have the Commissioner and his colleagues met and/or been in written contact with regarding the Liikanen report and the proposal for a regulation on the reform of the structure of the banking sector? What specific issues were covered at each of these meetings or in this correspondence?

2. What impact did these meetings and dealings have on the proposal for a regulation on the reform of the structure of the banking sector which, according to Michel Barnier, the Commission will publish in November?

3. When and how does the Commissioner plan to make this lobby footprint available to the public in the future?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

1. In the context of the future legislative proposal on reforming the structure of large EU banks, the Commission services conducted a public consultation which closed on 11 July 2013 ([1]), to which 540 written replies have been received, from banks and other financial institutions, non-financial corporations, investors, public authorities, consumer associations and individual citizens.

During this public consultation, a public stakeholder meeting was organised on 16 May 2013. Additionally, the Commission services and Commissioner Barnier met a range of stakeholders at their request, including representatives of national public authorities, private sector and civil society. The organisations that have participated in meetings held by Mr Barnier/his services (Directorate General Internal Market and Services) during the last 6 months are listed in the annex.

2. All stakeholders' opinions and feedbacks are considered with great attention by the Commission services and Commissioner Barnier in the ongoing reflexion on the reform of the banking sector, whether they were in oral or in written form. Such opinions would also be taken into account in any forthcoming initiative on the topic.

3. The Commission aims to maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society. It keeps a common Transparency Register in accordance with the relevant Interinstitutional Agreement between the Commission and the European Parliament and fosters transparency on the work and proceedings of the Commission and of its Members through a continuous update of information on the Europa website.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/bank/structural-reform/index_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011179/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(2 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Aumento del gasto en el presupuesto

Según los presupuestos presentados hoy por el Gobierno del Estado español, en el año 2014 se gastará un 3,7 % más que en 2013 y se llegará hasta los 423 227,5 millones de euros.

Por otro lado, según la previsión de crecimiento de la deuda del mismo, para finales de 2014 el Estado español tendrá una deuda del 99,8 % del PIB.

Además, desde el mes de julio el Gobierno ha rebasado su objetivo de déficit para 2013.

Finalmente, cabe recordar que, con la aprobación del Reglamento (UE) n° 473/2013, la Comisión está facultada para emitir recomendaciones sobre los presupuestos nacionales en caso de que crea que es necesario para cumplir los objetivos del Pacto de Estabilidad y Crecimiento, así como la legislación europea sobre gobernanza económica.

¿Está preocupada la Comisión por el aumento constante de la deuda pública del Estado español?

De acuerdo con el Semestre Europeo y las recomendaciones específicas, ¿cree la Comisión que el Gobierno debería hacer reformas en profundidad que disminuyan el déficit público mediante la reducción del gasto corriente pero sin perjudicar a la inversión y al gasto en I+D?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(19 de noviembre de 2013)

El 15 de noviembre de 2013, la Comisión aprobará y hará público su dictamen sobre los proyectos de planes presupuestarios de los Estados miembros de la zona del euro que no están sujetos a un programa de ajuste macroeconómico, incluida España.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011179/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Increased budget spending

According to the budget published by the Spanish Government today, it will spend EUR 423.2275 billion in 2014, 3.7% more than in 2013.

Moreover, according to the Spanish Government's debt growth forecasts, it will owe 99.8% of GDP by the end of 2014.

Furthermore, the government reduced its deficit target for 2013 in July.

Finally, it should be remembered that, with the adoption of Regulation (EU) No 473/2013, the Commission is empowered to issue recommendations regarding national budgets if it considers them necessary for meeting the targets of the Stability and Growth Pact and of European economic governance legislation.

Is the Commission concerned by the steady increase in Spanish Government debt?

In accordance with the European semester and specific recommendations, does the Commission believe that the government should implement far-reaching reforms to reduce the public deficit by reducing current expenditure but without reducing R&D investment and spending?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

The Commission will adopt and make public its opinion on draft budgetary plans of euro area Member States that are not subject to a macroeconomic adjustment programme on 15 November 2013, including for Spain.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011180/13
an den Rat
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Deckelung des Ruhegehalts bei Kombination von Arbeitsverhältnissen

Viele Beamte im Rat haben das Recht auf Rentenansprüche von mehreren Arbeitgebern aus verschiedenen Ländern. Unter anderem waren Bedienstete der höchsten Führungsebene des Rates schon in mehreren Berufsfeldern und Ländern angestellt.

1. Werden die Pensionsansprüche aus (1) dem vorherigen Arbeitsverhältnis und/oder (2) dem aktuellen Arbeitsverhältnis bei der EU reduziert? Wenn ja, in welcher prozentualen Höhe?

2. Wie viele Bedienstete des Rates, vor allem Bedienstete der höchsten Führungsebene, beziehen Ruhegehälter aus mehr als einem Land oder mehr als einem Arbeitsverhältnis? Wie stellt sich dieser Wert in den Jahren 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 und 2014 dar?

Antwort
(9. Dezember 2013)

Beamte und sonstige Bedienstete der Europäischen Union, für die das Personalstatut gilt, haben nach Artikel 11 Absatz 2 dieses Statuts das Recht, Rentenansprüche, die sie im Zusammenhang mit ihren vorherigen Berufstätigkeiten in nationalen oder internationalen Rentensystemen erworben haben, auf das Versorgungssystem der EU zu übertragen.

Rentenansprüche, die nicht auf das Versorgungssystem der EU übertragen wurden, verbleiben in den ursprünglichen Systemen und unterliegen den nationalen Rechtsvorschriften und den Regeln der jeweiligen Systeme.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011180/13
to the Council
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Capping of pensions when combining employment relationships

Many officials in the Council are entitled to claim pensions from several employers from different countries. Among other things, members of staff in top leadership roles in the Council have already been employed in several professional fields and countries.

1. Are their pension entitlements from (1) previous employment relationships and/or (2) their current employment with the EU being reduced? If so, by what percentage?

2. How many Council employees, particularly those in top leadership roles, receive pensions from more than one country or more than one employment relationship? What is this figure for the years 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014?

Reply
(9 December 2013)

Officials and other servants of the European Union to whom the Staff Regulations are applicable have the right according to Article 11(2) of Annex VIII to the Staff Regulations to transfer their pension rights, acquired in national or international pension schemes linked to their previous professional activities, to the EU pension scheme.

Pension rights which have not been transferred to the EU pension scheme remain in the schemes of origin and national legislation and individual scheme rules are applied to them.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011181/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Deckelung des Ruhegehalts bei Kombination von Arbeitsverhältnissen

Viele Beamte in den Institutionen der Europäischen Union haben das Recht auf Rentenansprüche von mehreren Arbeitgebern aus verschiedenen Ländern. Unter anderem waren Bedienstete der höchsten Führungsebene in der Kommission schon in mehreren Berufsfeldern und Ländern angestellt.

1. Werden die Pensionsansprüche aus (1) dem vorherigen Arbeitsverhältnis und/oder (2) dem aktuellen Arbeitsverhältnis bei der EU reduziert? Wenn ja, in welcher prozentualen Höhe?

2. Wie viele Kommissionsbedienstete, vor allem Bedienstete der höchsten Führungsebene, beziehen Ruhegehälter aus mehr als einem Land oder mehr als einem Arbeitsverhältnis? Wie stellt sich dieser Wert in den Jahren 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 und 2014 dar?

Antwort von Herrn Šefčovič im Namen der Kommission
(20. November 2013)

Nach den geltenden Rechtsvorschriften über die Freizügigkeit der Arbeitnehmer können Unionsbürger von einem Mitgliedstaat in einen anderen umziehen und haben deshalb möglicherweise Teilrentenansprüche aus verschiedenen Systemen der sozialen Sicherheit. Bedienstete der EU-Organe befinden sich in einer vergleichbaren Situation; hat ein Beamter zuvor in einem Mitgliedstaat gearbeitet und Beiträge zu dessen Versorgungsordnung entrichtet, hat er auch Teilrentenansprüche aus dem betreffenden System.

Es ist darauf hinzuweisen, dass gemäß dem geänderten Statut, das am 1. Januar 2014 in Kraft tritt, ein neu eingestellter Beamter erst nach 39 Dienstjahren in den Organen der EU Anspruch auf ein EU-Ruhegehalt in voller Höhe hat. Die Beamten erwerben auf der Grundlage ihrer Beiträge zur Versorgungsordnung der EU für jedes Dienstjahr 1,8 % ihres Grundgehalts bis zu einem Höchstsatz von 70 %. Somit werden die Rentenansprüche aus der Versorgungsordnung der EU oder dem betreffenden nationalen System nicht gedeckelt, sondern bemessen sich nach geleisteten Beitragszahlungen und Dienstjahren. Dies macht es unmöglich, in zwei oder mehr Systemen ein Ruhegehalt in voller Höhe zu erhalten.

Die Kommission sammelt weder Informationen über in nationalen Versorgungsordnungen erworbene Rentenansprüche und erhaltene Leistungen pensionierter Beamter, noch ist sie hierzu befugt. Anders verhält es sich, wenn ein Beamter die Übertragung dieser Ansprüche auf die Versorgungsordnung der EU im Einklang mit dem Statut beantragt, um zu vermeiden, dass er mehrere Teilrenten erhält.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011181/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Capping of pensions when combining employment relationships

Many officials in the institutions of the European Union are entitled to claim pensions from several employers from different countries. Among other things, members of staff in top leadership roles in the Commission have already been employed in several professional fields and countries.

1. Are their pension entitlements from (1) previous employment relationships and/or (2) their current employment with the EU being reduced? If so, by what percentage?

2. How many Commission employees, particularly those in top leadership roles, receive pensions from more than one country or more than one employment relationship? What is this figure for the years 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

According to the legislation in force regarding free movement of workers, an EU citizen may move from one Member State to another and as a consequence, receive partial pension entitlements from several social security schemes. Staff of the EU institutions appears in a comparable situation and if an official has worked previously in any of the Member States and has contributed to the pension scheme, he is also entitled to partial pension benefits from that scheme.

It should be noted that, under the amended Staff Regulations that will enter into force on 1 January 2014, a newly recruited official is entitled to a full EU pension only after 39 years of service in the EU institutions. They acquire 1.8% of their basic salary for every year of service, with the maximum of 70%, based on their payment of contributions to the EU pension scheme. Hence, the pension entitlements in the EU pension scheme or in the national scheme are not reduced, but are based on contributions and on years of service. This makes it impossible to obtain a full pension in two or more schemes.

The Commission does not and would not be entitled to collect information about pension rights that retired staff members have acquired in national pension schemes and what benefits they receive, except when a staff member submits a request for transferring these rights to the EU pension scheme, in accordance with the Staff Regulations in order to avoid receiving several partial pensions.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011182/13
an den Rat
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Detaillierte Aufschlüsselung der Kosten für den Tag der Offenen Tür im Rat

In seiner Antwort auf die parlamentarische Anfrage E-005388/2013 von Hans-Peter Martin schreibt der Rat: „Die Ausgaben des Rates für den Tag der offenen Tür" belaufen sich auf:

2009: 76 348 EUR

2010: 77 686 EUR

2011: 65 915 EUR

2012: 73 528 EUR

2013: 67 992 EUR

1. Für welche einzelnen Posten wurden die Summen von 2009 bis 2013 konkret eingesetzt?

2. Sind bei den Angaben der Kosten (2009-2013) bereits die Personalkosten enthalten? Falls nein, auf welche Summe belaufen sich die Kosten für die Bediensteten während des Tages der Offenen Tür und die aufgewendeten Personalkosten für Auf- und Abbau bzw. Vorbereitung der verschiedenen Veranstaltungen?

3. Wie viele Besucher wurden in den Jahren 2009-2013 am Tag der Offenen Tür des Rates gezählt?

Antwort
(9. Dezember 2013)

Die speziellen Einzelposten, für die die Gesamtbeträge zwischen 2009 und 2013 ausgegeben wurden, sind in der Anlage aufgeführt.

Die Personalkosten wurden nicht in die beigefügte Tabelle aufgenommen, da der jährliche Tag der Offenen Tür im Ratsgebäude von den Dienststellen des Generalsekretariat des Rates ohne zusätzliche Personalkosten veranstaltet und vorbereitet wird. Am Tag der Offenen Tür selbst gilt der Grundsatz, dass Mitglieder des Personals freiwillig alle Aufgaben insbesondere im Zusammenhang mit der Begrüßung und Information der Besucher übernehmen.

Die Besucherzahlen am Tag der Offenen Tür des Rates beliefen sich 2009 auf 7 300, 2010 auf 4 770, 2011 auf 6 230, 2012 auf 5 385 und 2013 auf 6 400.

ANLAGE

Tag der Offenen Tür — Ausgaben (EUR)

Posten	Ausgaben 2009	Ausgaben 2010	Ausgaben 2011	Ausgaben 2012	Ausgaben 2013
Werbeartikel	23 000	25 000	15 500	22 632	16 751
Interinstitutionelle Zeitungsanzeigen (teilweise vom Generalsekretariat des Rates übernommen)	11 000	12 600	13 366	13 000	13 000
Vinylaufkleber mit dem Flaggenlogo	1 700	1 600	880	940	940
Repliken des Friedensnobelpreises					6 952
Europa-Karten	300	280	292	310	350
Verpflegung	30 586	28 236	25 797	16 891	10 000
Rotes Kreuz	548	556	676	701	701
Schließung von Durchgängen	4 414	4 414	4 414	4 414	4 414
An den Ständen bereitgestellte Bildschirme	4 800	5 000	4 990	14 640	14 884
Insgesamt	76 348	77 686	65 915	73 528	67 992

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011182/13
to the Council
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Detailed breakdown of the costs for the Council's Open Day

In its answer to parliamentary Question E-005388/2013 from Hans-Peter Martin, the Council states the following: 'Council expenditure for the Open Day is indicated in the following table:

"2009: EUR 76 348

2010: EUR 77 686

2011: EUR 65 915

2012: EUR 73 528

2013: EUR 67 992"'

1. On what specific individual items were the totals from 2009 to 2013 spent?

2. Do the specified costs (2009-2013) already include staff costs? If not, what are the total costs for the staff during the Open Day and the staff costs for setting up and dismantling or preparation of the various events?

3. What were the visitor numbers for the Council Open Day in the years 2009-2013?

Reply
(9 December 2013)

Specific individual items on which the totals from 2009 to 2013 were spent are set out in the annex.

Staff costs are not included in the table in the annex, since the annual Open Day at the Council premises is organised and prepared by the SGC Services with no extra staff costs. On the day of the event, the key principle is that staff members volunteer to perform all activities, notably those relating to welcoming and informing the public.

The visitor numbers for the Council Open Day were 7 300 in 2009, 4 770 in 2010, 6 230 in 2011, 5 385 in 2012 and 6 400 in 2013.

ANNEX

Open day — Expenditure *(EUR)*

Item	Expenditure 2009	Expenditure 2010	Expenditure 2011	Expenditure 2012	Expenditure 2013
Promotional products	23 000	25 000	15 500	22 632	16 751
Interinstitutional publicity in newspapers (partly dealt with by the GSC)	11 000	12 600	13 366	13 000	13 000
Adhesive vinyl banner	1 700	1 600	880	940	940
Replica of Nobel Peace Prize					6 952
Maps of Europe	300	280	292	310	350
Catering	30 586	28 236	25 797	16 891	10 000
Red Cross	548	556	676	701	701
Panels to close passageways	4 414	4 414	4 414	4 414	4 414
Screens available at stands	4 800	5 000	4 990	14 640	14 884
Total	76 348	77 686	65 915	73 528	67 992

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011183/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Kosten des Europatags beziehungsweise der Europatagswoche

Zum Europatag der Europäischen Union beziehungsweise in der „Europatagswoche" organisierten die EU-Informationsbüros der Kommission in den Mitgliedstaaten eine Reihe von Veranstaltungen. So organisierte das EU-Informationsbüro in Wien unter anderem einen Stand auf dem Wiener Straßenfest, mehrere Informationsveranstaltungen, eine Filmvorführung und ein Theaterstück.

1. Welche Kosten fielen für das EU-Informationsbüro in Wien für den Europatag beziehungsweise die Europatagswoche jeweils in den Jahren 2009 bis 2013 an?

2. Welche Kosten fielen für die einzelnen EU-Informationsbüros in den Mitgliedstaaten sowie die einzelnen EU-Informationsbüros in Drittstaaten jeweils im Jahr 2013 für die Veranstaltungen zum Europatag beziehungsweise der Europatagswoche an?

3. Welches waren, insgesamt gesehen, im Jahr 2013 die drei kostenaufwändigsten Veranstaltungen, die EU-Informationsbüros zum Europatag organisierten?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(13. November 2013)

Die Kommission verweist den Herrn Abgeordneten auf ihre Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-006075/2013 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bWQ%2bE-2013-006075 %2b0 %2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0 %2f%2fEN&language=EN

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011183/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Cost of Europe Day and Europe Week

For the European Union's Europe Day and Europe Week, the information offices of the Commission in the Member States organised a series of events. The EU information office in Vienna, for example, organised a stand at the Vienna street festival and arranged several information events, a film showing and a play, among other things.

1. What costs were incurred by the EU information office in Vienna for Europe Day and Europe Week in each of the years from 2009 to 2013?

2. What costs were incurred by each of the individual EU information offices in the Member States and in third countries in 2013 for the events relating to Europe Day or Europe Week?

3. What, overall, were the three most costly events organised by the EU information offices for Europe Day in 2013?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(13 November 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-006075/2013 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bWQ%2bE-2013-006075%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011184/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Negative Folgen einer Finanztransaktionssteuer für die Verbraucher

Im September 2011 veröffentlichte die Kommission einen Legislativvorschlag für eine harmonisierte Finanztransaktionssteuer in der EU, mit der die Finanzbranche an den Kosten der Finanzkrise beteiligt werden soll. Aufgrund von Einsprüchen einiger Mitgliedstaaten wurde von einer Gruppe Mitgliedstaaten entschieden, die Steuer im Verfahren der „verstärkten Zusammenarbeit" zu implementieren, woraufhin die Kommission im Februar 2013 einen weiteren Vorschlag unterbreitete.

Verschiedenen Medienberichten zufolge besteht das Risiko, dass die Kosten der Finanztransaktionssteuer nicht im Finanzsystem verbleiben, sondern an die Endverbraucher weitergegeben werden. Damit würde die Steuer ihr ursprüngliches Ziel verfehlen.

1. Wie beurteilt die Kommission dieses Risiko?

2. Kann die Kommission einschätzen, wie hoch die Kosten für die Endverbraucher in jedem einzelnen teilnehmenden Mitgliedstaat ausfallen würden?

3. Was kann in Bezug auf die Ausgestaltung einer künftigen Finanztransaktionssteuer getan werden, um einen solchen Effekt zu verhindern oder möglichst weitgehend einzudämmen?

Antwort von Herrn Šemeta im Namen der Kommission
(21. November 2013)

Im Hinblick auf den Fall, dass mit „Endverbraucher" Kapitalnehmer wie etwa Regierungen oder Investoren im nichtfinanziellen Sektor gemeint sind, erläuterte die Kommission in ihrer Folgenabschätzung die Ergebnisse von Modellen, denen zufolge durch die Besteuerung von Transaktionen auf dem Sekundärmarkt die Kapitalkosten auf den betreffenden Primärmärkten um sieben Basispunkte steigen könnten. Andererseits würde auch die relative Marktmacht von Käufern und Verkäufern eine Rolle spielen, da der Kommissionsvorschlag vorsieht, dass beide Transaktionsparteien die Steuer zu entrichten hätten. Daher könnte der Nettoeffekt in der Praxis bei Null liegen. Davon abgesehen wird damit gerechnet, dass die Kapitalkosten infolge zusätzlicher Einnahmen der Regierungen oder der geringeren Inanspruchnahme kostspieliger Leistungen von Finanzintermediären gedämpft werden, was sich für die „Endverbraucher" positiv auswirkt.

Im Hinblick auf den Fall, dass mit „Endverbraucher" die „Halter von Vermögenswerten" wie etwa „Sparer" oder „Rentenempfänger" gemeint sind, erläuterte die Kommission Beispiele dafür, welche Wirkung zu erwarten ist, wenn das Finanzinstitut Wertpapiere entweder unmittelbar im Namen privater Haushalte oder mittelbar über Fonds oder Dachfonds erwirbt oder veräußert. Im ersten Fall könnte der Finanzsektor die Steuer direkt auf die Privathaushalte abwälzen, so dass etwa ein Aktienkauf über den Betrag von 10 000 EUR mit zusätzlichen Transaktionskosten von 10 EUR verbunden wäre. Im zweiten Fall wird damit gerechnet, dass nur „passive" Fonds mit niedrigen Transaktionskosten, die somit nur sehr begrenzt von der Steuer betroffen sind, die Zusatzkosten weitergeben könnten, wogegen die anderen, „aktiven" Fonds die Steuer durch die Änderung der Geschäftsmodelle (Verringerung der Handelsfrequenz) und niedrigere Verwaltungsgebühren und Leistungsvergütungen auffangen müssten, da sie andernfalls durch die von der Steuer kaum betroffenen Geschäftsmodelle aus dem Markt gedrängt würden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011184/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Negative consequences of a financial transaction tax for consumers

In September 2011, the Commission published a legislative proposal for a harmonised financial transaction tax in the EU, with the aim of making the financial sector contribute to the costs of the financial crisis. On account of objections raised by some Member States, a group of Member States decided to implement the tax under the enhanced cooperation procedure, and so the Commission submitted a further proposal in February 2013.

According to various media reports, there is a risk that the costs associated with the financial transaction tax will not remain within the financial system, but be passed on to final consumers. The tax would therefore have failed to achieve its original purpose.

1. What is the Commission's assessment of this risk?

2. Can it estimate how high the costs would be for final consumers in each of the participating Member States?

3. How can a future financial transaction tax be constructed in order to prevent this sort of effect or to reduce it as much as possible?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

Assuming that 'final consumers' means 'borrowers', such as governments or investors in the non-financial sector, the Commission in its impact assessment presented the findings of models that concluded that taxing transactions on the secondary market might increase the cost of capital on the respective primary markets by 7 basis points. On the other hand, it would also depend on the relative market power of buyers and sellers, as the Commission proposal foresees that both parties to the transaction would have to pay the tax. So, the net effect might actually be zero. Moreover, other mitigating effects on the cost of capital, such as additional revenue for Governments or less exposure to costly financial intermediation are expected to play in favour of such 'final consumers'.

Assuming that 'final consumers' means 'asset holders', such as 'savers' or 'pensioners' the Commission presented examples of the impact in case the financial institution bought/sold securities either directly in the name of private households or indirectly via funds or funds of funds. In the first case the financial sector might directly pass the tax on to the private household, e.g. a purchase of shares for EUR 10 000 might come at additional transaction cost of EUR 10. In the second case it is expected that only those 'passive' funds that have low transaction cost and thus are only to a very limited extend exposed to the tax would be able to pass through the additional cost, while the other 'active' funds would have to absorb the tax through changing business models (trading less frequently) and lower management and performance fees as they would otherwise be crowded out of the market by those business models that were hardly affected by the tax.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011185/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 octobre 2013)

Objet: Boom des soucis de garantie

Les appareils électroniques incassables n'existent pas. Trop souvent nos Smartphones, ordinateurs ou tablettes connaissent des problèmes avant la fin de la garantie.

Problème: les revendeurs refusent encore souvent de la faire fonctionner. 388 litiges en Belgique depuis janvier 2013.

1. Combien ailleurs?

2. La Commission possède-t-elle des statistiques européennes par pays?

3. Est-ce un méfait en augmentation pour l'Europe comme cela l'est en Belgique?

4. Est-ce plus spécifique à des produits ou des types de produits?

5. Comment la Commission compte-t-elle lutter contre cela?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Reding au nom de la Commission
(25 novembre 2013)

La Commission ne dispose pas de statistiques détaillées sur le nombre de litiges relatifs aux garanties légales prévues par la directive 1999/44/CE. De telles statistiques devraient englober des litiges résolus à différents niveaux: directement entre le consommateur et le professionnel, ou avec l'aide d'associations de consommateurs, ou encore dans le cadre des modes alternatifs de règlement des litiges, ou enfin devant les tribunaux.

La Commission sait que les réclamations relatives aux garanties peuvent représenter une part non négligeable des réclamations introduites par les citoyens. Ainsi, dans le cas des achats transfrontières, environ 10 % des 32 000 réclamations reçues par les Centres européens des consommateurs en 2012 concernaient l'application de la directive 1999/44/CE ([1]). La base de données constituée à partir des réclamations de consommateurs collectées par les organismes nationaux de traitement des réclamations intervenant en tant que tierce partie, conformément à la méthode harmonisée décrite dans la recommandation ([2]), et signalées pour la première fois dans le 8^e^ tableau de bord des marchés de consommation ([3]), intègre également les réclamations portant sur les garanties ([4]).

Lorsqu'il s'agit de produits électroniques portables (appareils photos, smartphones, tablettes), il peut en effet être difficile au consommateur de démontrer que le bien ne fonctionne plus parce qu'il n'était pas conforme au contrat au moment de la livraison et non parce qu'il a été endommagé à la suite d'un choc, d'un contact avec l'eau ou d'un autre incident qui aurait été causé par le consommateur.

La Commission vérifie systématiquement l'application de la législation protégeant les consommateurs et elle a prévu de lancer une étude du marché de la consommation en 2014, dans le domaine des garanties légales relatives aux biens de consommation. L'un des objectifs de cette étude sera d'évaluer les difficultés que rencontrent les consommateurs pour faire valoir leurs droits dans certains cas, tels que celui que vous avez évoqué. Au vu des résultats de cette étude, la Commission examinera la nécessité de prendre de nouvelles mesures.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/ecc/docs/report_ecc-net_2012_en.pdf, page 12.
([2]) Recommandation de la Commission relative à l'utilisation d'une méthode harmonisée pour classer les réclamations et demandes des consommateurs et communiquer les données y afférentes (C(2010)3021): http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/complaints/policy_framework_en.htm
([3]) 8^e^ tableau de bord des marchés de consommation, 2012, Commission européenne, DG SANCO: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_research/editions/cms8_en.htm
([4]) Environ 3,5 % des 133 000 cas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011185/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Boom in warranty concerns

Unbreakable electronic devices do not exist. All too often, our smartphones, computers or notebooks run into problems before the warranty has expired.

The problem is that retailers often refuse to invoke the warranty. There have been 388 disputes in Belgium since January 2013.

1. How many have there been elsewhere?

2. Does the Commission have European statistics broken down by country?

3. Is this a growing problem in Europe as well as in Belgium?

4. Does it apply specifically to certain products or types of products?

5. How does the Commission intend to combat this?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

The Commission does not have detailed statistics on the number of disputes involving legal guarantees under Directive 1999/44/EC. Such statistics would have to include disputes resolved at different levels: individually with traders, with the help of consumer associations or alternative dispute resolution schemes and finally through courts.

The Commission is informed that complaints concerning guarantees may represent a large share of complaints from individual citizens. In the case of cross border purchases about 10% of the 32 000 complaints received by European Consumer Centres in 2012 were related to the application of Directive 1999/44/EC ([1]). The database of consumer complaints collected by national third-party complaint bodies according to the harmonised methodology set out in the recommendation ([2]) and reported on for the first time in the 8th Consumer Markets Scoreboard ([3]) also includes complaints related to guarantees and warranties ([4]).

In cases of portable electronic goods (cameras, smartphones tablets), it may indeed be difficult for consumers to prove that the good is not functioning anymore because it was not in conformity with the contract at the time of delivery and not because it was damaged following a shock or a contact with water or another incident which would have been caused by the consumer.

The Commission systematically monitors the application of the consumer legislation and is planning to launch a consumer market study in 2014 in the area of consumer legal guarantees. One of the objectives of this study will be to evaluate the difficulty for consumers to claim their rights in certain instances such as the one you raised. On the basis of the possible outcomes of this study the Commission will assess the need for further action.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/ecc/docs/report_ecc-net_2012_en.pdf, page 12.
([2]) Commission Recommendation on the use of a harmonised methodology for classifying and reporting consumer. Complaints and enquiries (C(2010)3021), http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/complaints/policy_framework_en.htm
([3]) 8th Consumer Markets Scoreboard, 2012, European Commission, DG SANCO, http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_research/editions/cms8_en.htm
([4]) About 3.5% of the 133 000 cases.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011186/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 octobre 2013)

Objet: Danger des hypothèques de plus de 30 ans

Les banques souhaitent allonger la durée des hypothèques de 30 à 40 ans.

Pour reprendre l'exemple cité dans la presse par un député régional: imaginez que vous empruntiez 100 000 euros à un taux fixe de 4 % sur 30 ans. Celui-ci vous coûterait alors 171 869 euros. Si vous faites le même prêt sur 35 ans, vous devrez alors payer 185 965 euros pour une mensualité qui ne sera réduite que de 34,65 euros. Cela n'est donc pas du tout avantageux pour l'acheteur.

1. La Commission partage-t-elle l'avis que cela représente un danger pour l'acheteur?

2. Comment la Commission accueille-t-elle cet allongement potentiel du crédit hypothécaire?

Réponse donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(25 novembre 2013)

La Commission est informée de la récente tendance à allonger la durée des prêts malgré les taux d'intérêt historiquement bas qui prévalent après la crise financière.

En mars 2011, elle a proposé une directive sur le crédit hypothécaire ([1]) qui, je l'espère, sera adoptée par les colégislateurs d'ici la fin de cette année. Cette directive introduit pour la première fois des critères européens d'évaluation de la solvabilité. Les États membres doivent veiller à ce que les prestataires de crédit ne proposent un crédit au consommateur que si l'évaluation de sa solvabilité indique que les obligations résultant du contrat de crédit sont susceptibles d'être remplies conformément aux conditions stipulées dans ce contrat.

L'allongement de la durée d'un prêt peut être dans l'intérêt du consommateur, mais elle peut également être le signe, dans certains cas, d'une incapacité de rembourser dans le délai initialement prévu. En conséquence, lors de l'évaluation de la solvabilité des clients potentiels, les prestataires de crédit devront aussi être attentifs à la durée générale du crédit.

La directive rendra, en outre, les coûts du crédit plus transparents pour les consommateurs, en obligeant les prestataires de crédit à leur fournir, au stade précontractuel, des informations précises sur le crédit proposé, au moyen de la fiche européenne d'information standardisée (FEIS). Le consommateur pourra, entre autres, obtenir des informations concrètes sur la durée du prêt et sur le montant total à rembourser. La fiche d'information lui permettra ainsi de comparer plus facilement différents scénarios de prêt et offres de crédit proposés sur le marché.

([1]) COM(2011) 142.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011186/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Danger of mortgages with a term of over 30 years

Banks want to extend the term of mortgages from 30 to 40 years.

To use the example quoted in the press by a regional politician: imagine that you borrow EUR 100 000 at a fixed rate of 4% for 30 years. The loan will cost you EUR 171 869. The same loan over 35 years will cost EUR 185 965, but monthly payments will only be EUR 34.65 less. There is therefore no benefit to the borrower.

1. Does the Commission endorse the view that this represents a danger to borrowers?

2. What are the Commission's views on the potential extension of mortgage terms?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

The Commission is aware of recent trends to extend the duration of loans despite the record-low interest rate environment after the financial crisis.

In March 2011, the Commission proposed a Mortgage Credit Directive (MCD) ([1]), which will hopefully be adopted by the co-legislators by the end of this year. The directive introduces for the first time EU-wide creditworthiness assessment criteria. Member States are required to ensure that credit providers only make credit available to consumer where the result of the creditworthiness assessment indicates that the obligations resulting from the credit agreement are likely to be met in the manner required under that agreement.

Extending the duration of a loan can be in the consumer's interest, but might also signal in certain instances an inability to repay the loan within the time span initially foreseen. Thus, when assessing the creditworthiness of potential clients, credit providers will also need to pay due attention to the general duration of the credit.

The directive will also make credit costs more transparent for the consumer by obliging credit providers to provide consumers at pre-contractual level with precise information on the proposed credit by means of the European Standardised Information Sheet (ESIS). The consumer will, *inter alia*, receive precise information on the duration of the loan and on the total amount to be reimbursed. The ESIS will therefore facilitate for the consumer the comparison of different credit offers and loan scenarios available on the market.

([1]) COM(2011) 142.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011187/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 octobre 2013)

Objet: Interdire les cigarettes en chocolat

Ne serait-il pas logique que la Commission pousse à l'interdiction de la vente de confiseries et de jouets destinés aux enfants, avec l'intention de donner au produit ou à son emballage l'apparence d'un produit à base de tabac?

Quel est l'avis de la Commission sur la vente de cigarettes en chocolat?

Partage-t-elle l'avis des récentes études menées dans de nombreux pays démontrant que les cigarettes en chocolat peuvent induire un comportement mimétique chez l'enfant et peuvent donc doubler la probabilité de voir l'enfant devenir fumeur à l'adolescence et à l'âge adulte, indépendamment du fait que ses parents soient ou non fumeurs?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(15 novembre 2013)

La recommandation 2003/54/CE du Conseil relative à la prévention du tabagisme et à des initiatives visant à renforcer la lutte antitabac ([1]) demande déjà aux États membres d'interdire «la vente de confiseries et de jouets destinés aux enfants et fabriqués avec la nette intention de donner au produit et/ou à son emballage l'apparence d'un type de produit du tabac».

De même, la Convention-cadre de l'OMS pour la lutte antitabac, qui est un traité international obligatoire auquel sont parties tous les États membres et l'Union européenne, encourage les gouvernements à interdire «la fabrication et la vente de confiseries, en-cas, jouets ou autres objets ayant la forme de produits du tabac attrayants pour les mineurs».

Ces dernières années, la Commission n'a réalisé aucune étude permettant de déterminer si les cigarettes en chocolat augmentaient la probabilité qu'un enfant commence à fumer à l'adolescence ou à l'âge adulte.

Enfin, cette question n'a pas été incluse dans la proposition de la Commission visant à réviser la directive relative aux produits du tabac ([2]), étant donné que la directive en question ne semble pas être l'instrument adéquat pour traiter de ces produits.

([1]) JO L 22 du 25.1.2003, p 31.
([2]) COM(2012) 788 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011187/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Ban on chocolate cigarettes

Would it not make sense for the Commission to push for a ban on confectionary and toys designed for children with the intention of making products or packaging look like tobacco-based products?

What is the Commission's opinion on the sale of chocolate cigarettes?

Does it endorse the findings of recent studies carried out in numerous countries which illustrate that chocolate cigarettes may encourage children to mimic adult behaviour and may therefore double the probability of the child becoming a smoker in adolescence or as an adult, regardless of whether or not the parents smoke?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

Council Recommendation 2003/54/EC on the prevention of smoking and on initiatives to improve tobacco control ([1]) already calls on Member States to prohibit 'the sale of sweets and toys intended for children and manufactured with the clear intention that the product and/or packaging would resemble in appearance a type of tobacco product'.

Similarly, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which is a mandatory international treaty to which all Member States and the EU are Parties, encourages governments to 'prohibit the manufacture and sale of sweets, snacks, toys or any other objects in the form of tobacco products which appeal to minors'.

The Commission has not carried out studies in recent years analysing whether chocolate cigarettes increase the likelihood of a child taking up smoking in adolescence or as an adult.

Finally, this issue was not included in the Commission's proposal to revise the Tobacco Products Directive ([2]) as the directive in question does not seem to be the adequate instrument to deal with these products.

([1]) OJ L 22/31, 25.1.2003.
([2]) COM(2012) 788 final.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011188/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 octobre 2013)

Objet: Téléphoner en vol

Trente pour cent des voyageurs confient avoir déjà «accidentellement» laissé un appareil allumé au décollage ou à l'atterrissage.

La demande devenait telle que la Federal Aviation Administration, autorité absolue en matière de règles d'aviation pour les États-Unis, n'était plus en mesure d'enclencher la commande de dépressurisation. Sous la pression de voyageurs plus connectés que jamais et lassés de devoir limiter leurs interactions électroniques dans la cabine, peut-être sous la pression de lobbys divers également, l'institution a mandaté un groupe de réflexion au sein duquel vingt-huit experts devaient statuer sur un assouplissement des règles concernant l'utilisation de gadgets électroniques en vol.

Et les experts sont arrivés à la conclusion suivante, que les accros du jeu *Angry Birds*, très *angry* de devoir interrompre leur partie durant la descente de l'aéronef, verront d'un bon œil: les précautions actuelles sont obsolètes et aucun danger concret d'interférer sur la stabilité électronique de l'appareil ne peut être posé par une console, un smartphone, un PC ou une tablette.

Concrètement, alors qu'aujourd'hui tout dispositif électronique doit être éteint à une altitude inférieure à 3 000 m, les recommandations du groupe d'experts (que la FAA suivra) appellent à une utilisation pendant toute la durée du vol (plus besoin d'éteindre l'appareil), mais avec quelques restrictions, comme l'interdiction d'utiliser le Wi-Fi, la 3G ou d'émettre ou de recevoir des appels pendant les phases, cruciales, de décollage et d'atterrissage.

Une fois la bénédiction de la FAA reçu, les compagnies aériennes seront libres d'assouplir leur règlement interne. Vu la demande des voyageurs qu'elles transbahutent, c'est une certitude: elles le feront. Et l'Europe, par l'entremise de l'EASA (la FAA du Vieux Continent) a de grandes chances de suivre le sillage.

1. Comment la Commission se positionne-t-elle?

2. À supposer qu'il n'y ait pas de danger, qu'en est-il des désagréments causés par la proximité imposée aux passagers dans un espace restreint lorsqu'il sera permis d'utiliser les téléphones à bord?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(10 décembre 2013)

La Commission est au courant du débat qui agite l'opinion publique mondiale sur l'utilisation des appareils électroniques portatifs, notamment des téléphones portables, à bord des aéronefs. Il est actuellement déjà permis d'utiliser les téléphones portables en cours de vol sous certaines conditions.

L'Agence européenne de la sécurité aérienne (AESA) a été associée aux travaux du groupe d'experts mentionné par l'Honorable Parlementaire. Dès que le rapport final de la FAA sera disponible, l'AESA devrait formuler des recommandations contenant de plus amples précisions et des directives en vue d'autoriser l'utilisation des appareils électroniques portatifs sans compromettre la sécurité d'exploitation continue des aéronefs.

Il n'existe aucune restriction en ce qui concerne les désagréments causés par la proximité imposée aux passagers dans un espace confiné tel qu'un avion, un train, une voiture ou une pièce, et il n'est pas prévu de réglementer le niveau sonore des conversations sur téléphones portables dans ce type d'environnement. C'est toujours aux transporteurs aériens qu'il revient de déterminer quels types d'appareils peuvent être utilisés à bord de leurs aéronefs et pendant quelles phases de vol.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011188/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: In-flight calls

Thirty per cent of passengers admit that they have 'accidentally' left a device on during take-off or landing.

Demand has become so high that the Federal Aviation Administration, the absolute authority on aviation matters in the United States, has been unable to press the depressurisation button. Under pressure from passengers used to being online and loath to limit their in-flight electronic communications and possibly under pressure from various lobbies, the Administration has instructed an advisory panel of twenty-eight experts to decide if the rules on in-flight use of electronic gadgets can be relaxed.

The experts arrived at the following conclusion, which aficionados of the computer game 'Angry Birds', who were very angry at having to interrupt their game during the descent of the aircraft, will welcome: the current precautions are obsolete and no console, smartphone, PC or notebook poses an actual risk of interference with the aircraft's electronic systems.

At present, all electronic devices must be switched off at altitudes of less than 3 000 metres; however, the group of experts (which the FAA will follow) is calling for use throughout the flight (no need to switch devices off), but with certain restrictions, such as a ban on the use of Wi-Fi, 3G or incoming or outgoing calls during the crucial phases of take-off and landing.

Once the FAA has given its blessing, airlines will be free to relax their internal regulations. Given the demand from the passengers carried, one thing is certain: they will do so and Europe, via the EASA (the Old World's FAA) is very likely to follow suit.

1. What is the Commission's opinion on this?

2. Assuming that there is no danger, what about the disturbance caused by the proximity imposed on passengers in a confined space if in-flight telephone calls are allowed?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2013)

The Commission is aware of the worldwide debate around the use on board aircraft of portable electronic devices (PEDs) including mobile phones. Already today the use of mobile phones during cruise flights is possible under certain conditions.

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has been involved in the activity of the advisory panel mentioned by the Honourable Member. The Agency is expected to make recommendations to further clarify and provide guidance on allowing PEDs without compromising the continued safe operation of the aircraft once the final report from the FAA is available.

There are no restrictions on disturbance caused by the proximity imposed on passengers in any confined space located in an airplane, train, car, building and there are no plans to regulate the noise levels from mobile phone chatter in such environment. The aircraft operator is still responsible for determining what types of devices may be used on board their aircraft and during which phase of flight.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011189/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 octobre 2013)

Objet: Red Bull te donne des problèmes cardiaques

L'absorption de boissons énergisantes provoque des troubles cardiaques, neurologiques et psychologiques.

Le débat n'est pas neuf, les boissons dites énergisantes (BDE) ne sont pas bonnes pour la santé. Leurs fortes concentrations en caféine, taurine et sucres ont des effets nocifs sur notre organisme.

L'Anses (Agence française de sécurité sanitaire) présente mardi son rapport sur les risques liés à leur consommation. Des problèmes cardiaques suspects seraient mis en lien avec l'ingurgitation de ces boissons, de type Red Bull, Monster ou Nalu, pour ne citer que les plus célèbres. Plusieurs cas de troubles ont été rapportés en France. Des problèmes cardio-vasculaires, psychologiques et neurologiques ont été constatés par des médecins de l'hexagone suite à l'ingestion de ces poisons, euh… boissons.

Les grands problèmes ciblés par les agences de protection alimentaire sont la consommation de ces produits chez les jeunes (enfants et adolescents) et leur prise sous forme de cocktails, mélangés à un alcool. En effet, les BDE masquent les effets de l'alcool à cause de leurs actifs excitants. La sensation d'ivresse est moindre et les risques pris sont donc accrus, que ce soit au volant ou même dans les interactions avec les autres. En outre, la caféine, tout comme l'alcool, a des effets notablement diurétiques et la combinaison de ces deux produits peut donc provoquer des déshydratations sévères en cas d'efforts intenses (comme une série de danses enflammées sur les pistes de nos plus célèbres boîtes de nuit).

En ce qui concerne la consommation des boissons énergétiques chez les jeunes, le constat européen est tout aussi effrayant. Ces boissons contiennent une quantité de caféine et de sucre bien trop élevée pour nos benjamins, mais ça ne freine pourtant pas près d'un enfant sur cinq.

1. Un rapport de l'Autorité européenne de sécurité des aliments (EFSA) révèle que les jeunes Européens boivent ces sodas quasi dès le berceau et que les millions de litres absorbés par les habitants du vieux continent atteignent des taux alarmants. Ce nouveau rapport ne rend-il pas le tableau encore un peu plus sombre?

2. La Commission compte-t-elle prendre des mesures contre ces boissons qui représentent un danger tant pour les adultes que pour les enfants, en imposant par exemple des limites pour certains composants de ces produits?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(15 novembre 2013)

La Commission invite l'Honorable Parlementaire à prendre connaissance de sa réponse à la question écrite E-003646/2013 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011189/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Red Bull gives you heart problems

The consumption of energy drinks causes cardiac, neurological and psychological problems.

This debate is not new; energy drinks are not good for your health. Their high concentrations of caffeine, taurine and sugar cause physical damage.

The French food safety agency (Anses) is due to present its report on the risks associated with these drinks on Tuesday. Suspected heart problems will be linked to the consumption of drinks such as Red Bull, Monster or Nalu, to name but a few of the most common. Several cases of problems have been reported in France. Cardiovascular, psychological and neurological problems have been diagnosed by doctors in France following the consumption of these drinks.

The main problems targeted by food safety agencies are consumption of these drinks by young people (children and teenagers) and their consumption in the form of a cocktail, mixed with alcohol. The active stimulants in energy drinks actually mask the effects of the alcohol. The sense of intoxication is reduced and the risks taken, either at the wheel or in interactions with other people, are therefore higher. Furthermore, both caffeine and alcohol have a diuretic effect and the combination of these two products may cause severe dehydration in the case of intense activity (such as prolonged energetic dancing on the floors of our most famous nightclubs).

As regards the consumption of energy drinks by young people, the findings for Europe are equally alarming. These drinks contain far too much caffeine and sugar for young people, but that does not deter nearly one child in five.

1. A report by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) states that young Europeans drink these sodas almost from the cradle and that the millions of litres absorbed by people in the Old World are reaching alarming rates. Does this new report not paint an even darker picture?

2. Does the Commission intend to take measures against these drinks, which pose a risk to adults and children alike, by imposing, for example, limits on certain ingredients in such products?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to the answer given to Written Question E-003646/2013 ([1]).

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

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011190/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 octobre 2013)

Objet: Patch anti-ondes pour téléphone portable

Le patch anti-ondes GSM débarque en Belgique. Pas tout à fait neuf: le principe, simplissime, de ces autocollants à apposer au dos de votre mobile, a plus de 10 ans. Il s'agit d'un circuit imprimé ultrafin, de forme ronde et aux dimensions précises (qui correspondent à celles de l'antenne du mobile).

L'autocollant, vendu une bonne vingtaine d'euros, forme en réalité une antenne passive, utilisant le principe du déphasage à 180° pour annuler l'onde polluante émise par le méchant téléphone. Le tout pour une qualité de réception et d'émission du mobile intacte, c'est du moins ce que promettent les commerciaux.

La nouveauté, ici, repose dans l'homologation du patch, le premier en Belgique, qui lui donne un crédit certain et la permission d'être vendu en pharmacie.

Le principe du déphasage à 180° est scientifiquement avéré dans la réduction du DAS (débit d'absorption spécifique), limité à 2 W/kg, que notre ministre impose justement aux vendeurs de mobiles d'afficher clairement sur leurs emballages et étiquettes.

1. Quelle est la position de la Commission?

2. Y voit-elle un opportunisme malsain en laissant des entreprises tirer profit d'une inquiétude ambiante, non établie?

3. La Commission penche-t-elle vers la thèse de la dangerosité des ondes provenant des téléphones portables pour notre santé et notre cerveau?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(20 novembre 2013)

La recommandation du Conseil du 12 juillet 1999 ([1]) a établi des restrictions de base et des niveaux de référence pour l'exposition du public aux champs électromagnétiques, y compris les rayonnements électromagnétiques non ionisants émis par les téléphones mobiles.

Le comité scientifique européen indépendant des risques sanitaires émergents et nouveaux (CSRSEN) dispose d'un mandat permanent pour évaluer les risques des champs électromagnétiques. La Commission demande périodiquement l'actualisation des preuves scientifiques disponibles pour évaluer les risques des champs électromagnétiques et vérifie si les dernières observations attestées justifient toujours les limites d'exposition proposées dans la recommandation du Conseil susmentionnée. Selon les dernières études dudit comité (2009) ([2]), il n'est pas probable que l'exposition à la radiofréquence des champs électromagnétiques entraîne une multiplication des cas de cancer chez l'homme ou ait des effets non-carcinogénétiques négatifs sur la santé. Un nouvel examen est en cours et il devrait être achevé avant la fin de 2013.

Cependant, conformément au traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne, la protection de la santé en tant que telle relève essentiellement de la responsabilité des États membres.

([1]) (JO L 199 du 30.7.1999, p. 59) Recommandation du Conseil du 12 juillet 1999 relative à la limitation de l'exposition du public aux champs électromagnétiques (de 0 Hz à 300 GHz).
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihr/docs/scenihr_o_022.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011190/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Anti-radiation patch for mobile telephones

The GSM anti-radiation patch has landed in Belgium. It is not exactly new: the idea of these very simple stickers for the back of your mobile telephone is over 10 years old. They contain a round ultrafine printed circuit of the same size as the telephone aerial.

The sticker, which sells for around EUR 20, is actually a passive aerial which uses the principle of a 180° phase shift to cancel out the harmful radiation emitted by the nasty telephone. The quality of reception and transmission are not affected, at least not according to the suppliers.

The novelty here is that homologation has been obtained for this first patch in Belgium, which gives it a certain credibility and means that it can be sold in pharmacies.

The principle of a 180° phase shift is scientifically proven to reduce the SAR (specific absorption rate). This is limited to 2 W/kg and our minister rightly insists that it must be clearly marked on packaging and labels.

1. What is the Commission's position?

2. Does it consider that it is unhealthy opportunism to allow companies to profit from a general, but unsubstantiated concern?

3. Does the Commission subscribe to the view that the radiation emitted by mobile telephones is dangerous to our health and our brain?

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

The Council Recommendation of 12 July 1999 ([1]) has set basic restrictions and reference levels for the exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields (EMFs) including non-ionising radiation emitted by mobile phones.

The independent European Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) has a standing mandate to evaluate the risks from electromagnetic fields. The Commission requests periodically an update of the scientific evidence available to evaluate the risks from EMF and checks whether latest evidence still supports the exposure limits as proposed in the abovementioned Council Recommendation. According to its latest review (2009) ([2]), exposure to radiofrequency EMF is unlikely to lead to an increase in cancer incidence in humans or to non-carcinogenetic negative health outcomes. A new review is ongoing and it is expected to be finalised by the end of 2013.

However, in accordance with the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the protection of health as such is primarily a responsibility of Member States.

([1]) (OJ. L 199/59, 30.7.1999) Council Recommendation of 12 July 1999 on the limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields (0 Hz to 300 GHz).

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihr/docs/scenihr_o_022.pdf

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-011192/13
upućeno Komisiji
Andrej Plenković (PPE)
(2. listopada 2013.)

Predmet: Problem onečišćenja zraka na području Slavonskog Broda zbog emisija iz „Rafinerije nafte Brod" a.d. u susjednoj Bosni i Hercegovini

Tijekom proteklih nekoliko godina na području Brodsko-posavske županije, a osobito grada Slavonskog Broda i njegove okolice u Republici Hrvatskoj, uočeno je kontinuirano onečišćenje zraka koje je prouzročeno štetnim emisijama iz „Rafinerije nafte Brod" a.d., koja se nalazi u susjednoj Bosni i Hercegovini u neposrednoj blizini rijeke Save.

Na temelju informacija koje sam kao član Europskog parlamenta zaprimio od župana Brodsko-posavske županije razvidno je kako su stanovnici Slavonskog Broda, sukladno podacima o mjerenju kvalitete zraka, izloženi sumpornom dioksidu, sumporovodiku, dušičnim oksidima, benzenu, ozonu i lebdećim česticama. Mjerenja su pokazala da dolazi do visokih prekoračenja onečišćujućih tvari, osobito u zimskim mjesecima, a za pojedine kao što je npr. ozon koncentracije su bile povišene i u ljetnim mjesecima. Stoga je Županijska skupština Brodsko-posavske županije donijela Zaključak kojim traži pomoć od nadležnih institucija Europske unije u rješavanju ovog pitanja.

Riječ je o ozbiljnom ekološkom problemu prekograničnog karaktera koji u velikoj mjeri narušava kvalitetu života i zdravlje stanovnika Slavonskog Broda i okolice.

Zanima me koje mjere može poduzeti Europska komisija kako bi u dijalogu s vlastima Bosne i Hercegovine obvezala „Rafineriju nafte Brod" a.d. na ubrzanu modernizaciju i usvajanje europskih standarda zaštite okoliša i time spriječila daljnje onečišćenje zraka koje ugrožava zdravlje stanovništva Slavonskog Broda?

Odgovor g. Potočnika u ime Komisije
(21. studenog 2013.)

Ugovor o stabilizaciji i pridruživanju između Europskih zajednica i njihovih država članica i Bosne i Hercegovine ratificiran je, no još nije stupio na snagu. Unatoč naporima koje je Komisija poduzela kako bi aktivno pomogla u usklađivanju sa zakonodavstvom EU-a u području zaštite okoliša, u tom je području postignut samo ograničeni napredak, a izazova je još mnogo, kako je potvrđeno u nedavno donesenom izvješću Komisije o napretku za 2013. ([1]).

Bosna i Hercegovina ugovorna je stranka i Ugovora o Energetskoj zajednici ([2]), na temelju kojeg se obvezala da će poduzeti sve što je moguće kako bi provela Direktivu 2008/1/EZ ([3]) o integriranom sprečavanju i kontroli onečišćenja (Direktiva o IPPC-u) u sektoru energetskih mreža (uključujući rafinerije). Ta je obveza, međutim, neobvezujuća. Tom se Direktivom zahtijeva da se dotičnim postrojenjima upravlja uz primjenu „najboljih raspoloživih tehnologija" (NRT) kako bi se spriječilo, u što većoj mjeri smanjilo te uklonilo onečišćenje uzrokovano industrijskim djelatnostima.

U pogledu velikih uređaja za loženje, uključujući one u rafinerijama, Ugovor o Energetskoj zajednici nedavno je izmijenjen Odlukom Vijeća ministara ([4]). Ugovorne stranke morat će provoditi odredbe poglavlja III. i Priloga V. Direktive 2010/75/EU o industrijskim emisijama (IED) ([5]) za nove velike uređaje za loženje počevši od 1. siječnja 2018. Nije dogovoren rok za provedbu IED-a za postojeće velike uređaje za loženje, na koje će se i dalje primjenjivati odredbe Direktive o velikim uređajima za loženje 2001/80/EZ ([6]) u skladu s uvjetima utvrđenima u Odluci Vijeća ministara o prilagodbi te Direktive okviru Energetske zajednice ([7]).

([1]) Izvješće o napretku uz Komunikaciju Komisije Europskom parlamentu i Vijeću — Strategija proširenja i glavni izazovi 2013. — 2014. (COM(2013) 700 final), 16.10.2013.
([2]) http://www.energy-community.org.
([3]) SL L 24, 29.1.2008.
([4]) Odluka D/2013/06/MC-EnC od 24. listopada 2013.
([5]) SL L 334, 17.12.2010., str. 334.
([6]) SL L 309, 27.11.2001., str. 1.
([7]) Odluka D/2013/05/MC-EnC od 24. listopada 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011192/13
to the Commission
Andrej Plenković (PPE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Air pollution problem in the Slavonski Brod area caused by emissions from an oil refinery in neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina

Over the past few years Brod-Posavina County, and especially the city of Slavonski Brod and surrounding Croatian areas, have been subjected to unremitting air pollution caused by noxious emissions from a nearby oil refinery, Rafinerija nafte Brod a.d., situated in neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina on the other side of the Sava river.

The information which I, as a Member of the European Parliament, have obtained from the Prefect of Brod-Posavina County clearly shows that the inhabitants of Slavonski Brod are being exposed, according to the air quality measurement data, to sulphur dioxide, hydrogen sulphide, nitrogen oxides, benzene, ozone, and suspended particulate matter. Measured pollutant concentrations far exceed the limit values, especially in winter months, and some individual pollutants, for example ozone, have been detected in higher concentrations than normal in summer months as well. That is why the Brod-Posavina County Assembly has adopted a resolution calling on the appropriate EU institutions to help find a solution.

What is involved in this case is a serious environmental problem of a cross-border nature that is severely impairing the quality of life and the health of the people living in and around Slavonski Brod.

What steps can the Commission take to ensure that, through dialogue with the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities, an obligation is imposed to modernise the oil refinery without delay and bring it into line with European environmental protection standards, thereby averting further air pollution and the related public health hazards in Slavonski Brod?

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

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States and Bosnia and Herzegovina has been ratified, but has not yet entered into force. Despite the efforts made by the Commission to actively assist in the approximation towards the EU environmental law that, there is only limited progress in this field, and major challenges remain, as was confirmed in the Commission's recently adopted 2013 progress report ([1]).

Bosnia and Herzegovina is also a Contracting Party to the Energy Community ([2]), under which it has committed to endeavour to implement Directive 2008/1/EC ([3]) concerning Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC Directive) in the field of the network energy sector (including refineries). However, this is not a binding obligation. This directive requires the operation of concerned installations by applying the 'best available techniques (BAT)' in order to prevent, reduce and as far as possible eliminate pollution arising from industrial activities.

For large combustion plants, including those within refineries, the Energy Community Treaty has been recently amended through a Ministerial Council Decision ([4]). Contracting Parties will have to implement the provisions of Chapter III and Annex V of Directive 2010/75/EU on industrial emissions (IED) ([5]) for new large combustion plants from 1 January 2018 on. No IED implementation deadline was agreed for existing large combustion plants, which will remain subject to the provisions of the Large Combustion Plant Directive 2001/80/EC ([6]) under the conditions set out in the Ministerial Council Decision adapting that directive to the Energy Community framework ([7]).

([1]) Progress Report accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council — Enlargement Strategy And Main Challenges 2013-2014 (COM(2013) 700 final), 16.10.2013.
([2]) http://www.energy-community.org
([3]) OJ L 24, 29.1.2008.
([4]) Decision D/2013/06/MC-EnC of 24 October 2013.
([5]) OJ L 334, 17.12.2010, p. 334.
([6]) OJ L 309, 27.11.2001, p. 1).
([7]) Decision D/2013/05/MC-EnC of 24 October 2013.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011193/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(2 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Έρευνες της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής για Gazprom

Σύμφωνα με ανακοίνωση της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής, η εταιρεία Gazprom τίθεται υπό διεξοδική έρευνα σχετικά με δραστηριότητές της στην αγορά φυσικού αερίου στην Κεντρική και Ανατολική Ευρώπη και συγκεκριμένα, αναφορικά με την παραβίαση των ευρωπαϊκών κανόνων ανταγωνισμού.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1) Σε τι συνίσταται η έρευνα που διεξάγει για την εταιρεία Gazprom; Ποιες είναι οι πρακτικές της εταιρείας που ενδέχεται να παραβιάζουν το κοινοτικό δίκαιο περί ανταγωνισμού;

2) Μπορεί να με ενημερώσει για τη μέση χονδρική και λιανική τιμή του φυσικού αερίου σε όλες της χώρες της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης και την Ελλάδα; Υπάρχουν σημαντικές διαφοροποιήσεις στις τιμές φυσικού αερίου και, αν ναι, πώς τις εξηγεί η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή;

Απάντηση του κ. Almunia εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Τον Σεπτέμβριο του 2012, η Επιτροπή ανακοίνωσε ότι είχε κινήσει επίσημη διαδικασία για να διερευνηθεί μήπως η Gazprom παρεμποδίζει τον ανταγωνισμό στις αγορές φυσικού αερίου της Κεντρικής και Ανατολικής Ευρώπης, κατά παράβαση των αντιμονοπωλιακών κανόνων της ΕΕ.

Η Επιτροπή διερευνά κατά πόσον η Gazprom επέβαλε εδαφικούς περιορισμούς στις συμφωνίες προμήθειας φυσικού αερίου για να υπονομεύσει την ολοκλήρωση των ευρωπαϊκών αγορών φυσικού αερίου. Η Επιτροπή διερευνά, επίσης, κατά πόσον η Gazprom επιβάλλει αθέμιτες τιμές στους πελάτες της. Επιπλέον, η Gazprom ενδεχομένως να παρεμπόδισε τη δημιουργία ανταγωνισμού, παρακωλύοντας τη διαφοροποίηση του εφοδιασμού με φυσικό αέριο.

Η ΓΔ Ενέργειας δημοσιεύει τριμηνιαίες εκθέσεις για τις ευρωπαϊκές αγορές αερίου και ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας ([1]), με αναλύσεις εμπειρογνωμόνων για τις ευρωπαϊκές ενεργειακές αγορές, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της χονδρικής και λιανικής για τις τιμές του φυσικού αερίου. Εξακολουθούν να υπάρχουν σημαντικές διαφορές τιμών μεταξύ της ΕΕ-28 σε επίπεδα χονδρικής και λιανικής. Σε επίπεδο χονδρικής, μεταξύ των σημαντικών παραγόντων διαφοροποίησης περιλαμβάνονται, για παράδειγμα, οι δυνατότητες επιλογής διαφορετικών οδών εφοδιασμού και προμηθευτών. Σε επίπεδο λιανικής, η φορολογία αποτελεί σημαντικό στοιχείο. Οι μέσες τιμές λιανικής πώλησης το δεύτερο εξάμηνο του 2012 για την ΕΕ-27 ανέρχονταν σε 4,04 cEUR/kWh (εύρος διακύμανσης: 2,64-7,00 cEUR/kWh) για τους βιομηχανικούς καταναλωτές (εκτός ΦΠΑ) και 7,10 cEUR/kWh (εύρος διακύμανσης: 2,74-12,68 cEUR/kWh) για τα νοικοκυριά ([2]). Αντίθετα, το δεύτερο εξάμηνο του 2012, οι τιμές για τη βιομηχανία και τα νοικοκυριά στην Ελλάδα ήταν κατά 5,79 cEUR/kWh και κατά 10,17 cEUR/kWh, αντίστοιχα, υψηλότερες από το μέσο όρο της ΕΕ.

([1]) Παρατηρητήριο Ενεργειακών Αγορών της ΓΔ Ενέργειας — http://ec.europa.eu/energy/observatory/index_en.htm

([2]) Οι τιμές της ΕΕ σημείωσαν μέση αύξηση +6,9% για τη βιομηχανία και +9,6% για τα νοικοκυριά από το δεύτερο εξάμηνο του 2011 έως το δεύτερο εξάμηνο του 2012. Ωστόσο, κατά μέσο όρο, οι τιμές μειώθηκαν στα νοικοκυριά της ΕΕ κατά -7,2% στο δεύτερο εξάμηνο του 2013. Πηγή: Eurostat — μεσαίοι καταναλωτές (επίπεδα κατανάλωσης Δ2 και Ι3, βλ. Eurostat για λεπτομέρειες σχετικά με τα επίπεδα κατανάλωσης).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011193/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: European Commission investigations into Gazprom

According to a statement from the European Commission, Gazprom is to undergo a thorough investigation in relation to its activities in the natural gas market in central and eastern Europe, and specifically in relation to violations of European competition rules.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1) What does the investigation into Gazprom involve? What practices of the company may be in violation of Community law on competition?

2) Can it provide information as to the average wholesale and retail price of natural gas in all EU countries and in Greece? Are there any important variations in natural gas prices, and if so, how does the Commission explains these?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2013)

In September 2012, the Commission announced that it had opened formal proceedings to investigate whether Gazprom might be hindering competition in central and eastern European gas markets, in breach of EU antitrust rules.

The Commission is investigating whether Gazprom may have imposed territorial restrictions in gas supply agreements in order to undermine the integration of European gas markets. The Commission is also investigating whether Gazprom is charging unfair prices to its customers. In addition, Gazprom may have hindered the emergence of competition by preventing gas supply diversification.

DG Energy publishes quarterly reports on European gas and electricity markets ([1]), providing expert analysis on European energy markets, including wholesale and retail natural gas prices. Significant price differentials continue to exist among the EU-28 at wholesale and retail levels. At wholesale level, important differentiating factors include e.g. the diversification of supply routes and suppliers. At retail level taxation is an important component. Average retail gas prices in the second half of 2012 for the EU-27 were 4.04 cEUR/kWh (range: 2.64 — 7.00 cEUR/kWh) for industrial consumers (excluding VAT) and 7.10 cEUR/kWh (range: 2.74 — 12.68 cEUR/kWh) for households ([2]). In contrast, in the second half of 2012, prices for industry and households in Greece were 5.79 cEUR/kWh and 10.17 cEUR/kWh, respectively, higher than the EU average.

([1]) DG Energy`s Market Observatory for Energy — http://ec.europa.eu/energy/observatory/index_en.htm

([2]) EU prices experienced an average increase of +6.9% for industry and +9.6% for households from the second half of 2011 to the second half of 2012. However, on average EU household prices declined -7.2% in the first half of 2013. *Source:* Eurostat — medium-sized consumers (consumption bands D2 and I3, see Eurostat for details on consumption bands).

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011194/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(2 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Θεσμικές πτυχές του προγράμματος ιδιωτικοποιήσεων στην Ελλάδα

Σύμφωνα με δημοσίευμα των Financial Times, αξιωματούχοι της ΕΕ και της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής εκφράζουν ανησυχίες για την πορεία του προγράμματος ιδιωτικοποιήσεων στην Ελλάδα και, ταυτόχρονα, εμφανίζονται θετικοί στην ιδέα αλλαγής της έδρας του Ταμείου Αξιοποίησης Ιδιωτικής Περιουσίας του Δημοσίου (ΤΑΙΠΕΔ) και μετατροπής του σε ιδιωτική εταιρεία ειδικού σκοπού (special purpose vehicle).

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1) Έχουν εκφραστεί ανησυχίες για την πορεία εκτέλεσης του προγράμματος ιδιωτικοποιήσεων στην Ελλάδα, εκ μέρους των δανειστών;

2) Εξετάζεται η ιδέα για αλλαγή του καταστατικού του ΤΑΙΠΕΔ και, αν ναι, σε ποια κατεύθυνση;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(6 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Η αξιολόγηση από την Επιτροπή της διαδικασίας ιδιωτικοποιήσεων στην Ελλάδα έχει δημοσιευτεί στην έκθεση συμμόρφωσης μετά την τρίτη αποστολή ελέγχου στο πλαίσιο του δεύτερου προγράμματος προσαρμογής ([1]).

Στο πλαίσιο της τρέχουσας επανεξέτασης, πραγματοποιείται αξιολόγηση της απόδοσης και των αποτελεσμάτων της διαδικασίας ιδιωτικοποίησης από τη δημιουργία του ΤΑΙΠΕΔ. Προβλέπονται μεταρρυθμίσεις της εταιρικής διακυβέρνησης, ώστε να βελτιωθεί περαιτέρω η τρέχουσα λειτουργία και το πλαίσιο της διαδικασίας ιδιωτικοποίησης.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/2013_07_26_3rd_review_2nd_programme_brussels_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011194/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Institutional aspects of the privatisation programme in Greece

According to the *Financial Times*, EU and European Commission officials have expressed concern about the progress of the privatisation programme in Greece and, at the same time, they appear to be positive about the idea of a change of head office for the Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund (HRADF) and its conversion it to a special purpose vehicle.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Have the lenders expressed any concern over progress in the implementation of the privatisation programme in Greece?

2. Is the idea of amending HRADF's articles of association under consideration, and if so, in what way?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(6 November 2013)

The Commission's assessment of the privatisation process in Greece has been published in the Compliance Report following the third review mission under the 2nd adjustment programme ([1]).

An assesment of the privatisation process' performance and outcomes since the creation of HRADF is taking place in the current review. Corporate governance reforms are being envisaged in order to further improve the current functioning and framework of the privatisation process.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/2013_07_26_3rd_review_2nd_programme_brussels_en.pdf

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011195/13
aan de Raad
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(2 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Gebrek aan respect vanwege de Commissie voor de Raad van de Europese Unie

Op woensdag 25 september 2013 tijdens het debat over het wetgevingspakket inzake eCall ([1]) in de Commissie interne markt en consumentenbescherming van het Europees Parlement sloot de vertegenwoordiger van de Commissie zijn uiteenzetting af met de volgende uitspraak:

„Wat de Raad betreft, voor een keer dat de Raad slaapt, denk ik dus dat het een fantastische gelegenheid is ook voor dit Huis om de richting aan te geven, hopelijk een positieve richting, over een onderwerp dat uit dit Huis afkomstig is".

Kan de Raad in het licht hiervan antwoorden op de volgende vragen:

1. Is de Raad op de hoogte van deze uitspraak?

2. Waren vertegenwoordigers van de Raad aanwezig tijdens bovenvermelde IMCO-vergadering?

3. Heeft de Raad een mening over deze uitspraak?

4. Is de Raad het ermee eens dat deze uitspraak door de Commissie ingaat tegen de interinstitutionele beleefdheid en geen respect toont voor de rol van de Raad als medewetgever?

5. Welke maatregelen is de Raad van plan te nemen?

Antwoord
(25 november 2013)

Het is niet aan de Raad commentaar te geven op verklaringen die door de vertegenwoordigers van de Commissie in commissievergaderingen van het Europees Parlement zijn afgelegd.

([1]) Voorstel voor Besluit van het Europees Parlement en de Raad inzake de uitrol van de interoperabele eCall in de hele EU [COM(2013)0315]; Voorstel voor een verordening van het Europees Parlement en de Raad inzake typegoedkeuringseisen voor de uitrol van het eCall-boordsysteem en houdende wijziging van Richtlijn 2007/46/EG [COM(2013)0316].

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011195/13
to the Council
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Disrespect of the Council of the European Union on the part of the Commission

On Wednesday 25 September 2013, during the debate on the eCall legislative package ([1]) in the Committee on the internal market and Consumer Protection of the European Parliament the Commission representative concluded his speech with the following statement:

'As to the Council, for once the Council is sleeping, so I think it is a fantastic opportunity also for this House on a subject that comes from this House to give the direction and hopefully a positive direction'.

In the light of the above:

1. Is the Council aware of this statement?

2. Did representatives of the Council attend the abovementioned IMCO meeting?

3. Does the Council have an opinion on this statement?

4. Does the Council agree that the statement by the Commission disregards interinstitutional courtesy and disrespects the Council's role as co-legislator?

5. What action does the Council plan to take?

Reply
(25 November 2013)

It is not for the Council to comment on statements made by the representatives of the Commission at Committee meetings of the European Parliament.

([1]) Proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the deployment of the interoperable EU-wide eCall [COM(2013) 0315]; Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning type-approval requirements for the deployment of the eCall in-vehicle system and amending Directive 2007/46/EC [COM(2013) 0316].

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011196/13
aan de Commissie
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(2 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Gebrek aan interinstitutioneel respect vanwege de Commissie

Op woensdag 25 september 2013 tijdens het debat over het wetgevingspakket inzake eCall ([1]) in de Commissie interne markt en consumentenbescherming van het Europees Parlement sloot de vertegenwoordiger van de Commissie zijn uiteenzetting af met de volgende uitspraak:

„Wat de Raad betreft, voor een keer dat de Raad slaapt, denk ik dus dat het een fantastische gelegenheid is ook voor dit Huis om de richting aan te geven, hopelijk een positieve richting, over een onderwerp dat uit dit Huis afkomstig is".

1. Kan de Commissie in het licht hiervan bevestigen dat deze uitspraak overeenstemt met haar standpunt over de kwestie?

2. Zo ja, is de Commissie het er niet mee eens dat haar vertegenwoordiger volledig ingaat tegen de interinstitutionele beleefdheid door geen respect te tonen voor de rol van de Raad als medewetgever naast het Parlement?

3. Zo nee, kan de Commissie de verklaring van haar vertegenwoordiger afwijzen? Welke maatregelen is de Commissie van plan te nemen? Zal de ambtenaar worden onderworpen aan de gepaste disciplinaire maatregelen?

Antwoord van de heer Kallas namens de Commissie
(21 november 2013)

De interoperabele 112 E-Call in heel Europa is een belangrijk initiatief op het gebied van de verkeersveiligheid. Dankzij de 112 E-Call zullen hulpdiensten sneller en beter slachtoffers van verkeersongevallen in de EU kunnen helpen. Dit zal leiden tot een vermindering van het aantal verkeersdoden en van de ernst van verwondingen.

Het Europees Parlement heeft de invoering van de 112 E-Call uitvoerig verdedigd in zijn op 3 juli 2012 goedgekeurde initiatiefverslag en heeft al actief gewerkt aan de door de Commissie op 13 juni 2013 gepresenteerde voorstellen over E-Call. De verklaring van de Commissie op 25 september 2013 was bedoeld om de actieve rol van het Parlement te onderstrepen en toe te juichen en om de Raad aan te moedigen zich aan te sluiten bij deze inspanningen.

([1]) Voorstel voor Besluit van het Europees Parlement en de Raad inzake de uitrol van de interoperabele eCall in de hele EU [COM(2013)0315]; Voorstel voor een verordening van het Europees Parlement en de Raad inzake typegoedkeuringseisen voor de uitrol van het eCall-boordsysteem en houdende wijziging van Richtlijn 2007/46/EG [COM(2013)0316].

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011196/13
to the Commission
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Lack of interinstitutional respect on the part of the Commission

On Wednesday 25 September 2013, during the debate on the eCall legislative package ([1]) in the Committee on the internal market and Consumer Protection of the European Parliament, the Commission representative concluded his speech with the following statement:

'As to the Council, for once the Council is sleeping, so I think it is a fantastic opportunity also for this House on a subject that comes from this House to give the direction and hopefully a positive direction'.

1. In light of the above, can the Commission confirm that this statement reflects its stance on the issue?

2. If so, does the Commission not agree that its representative fully disregarded interinstitutional courtesy, while disrespecting the role of the Council as the co-legislative authority alongside Parliament?

3. If not, can the Commission dismiss its representative's statement? What action will the Commission take in this regard? Will the official be subject to the appropriate disciplinary measures?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The interoperable EU-wide 112 eCall is an important initiative in the field of road safety. Thanks to 112 eCall, emergency services will be able to quicker and better rescue the victims of road accidents in the EU. This will lead to less road fatalities and help reducing the severity of injuries.

The European Parliament has strongly supported the 112 eCall in its own-initiative report adopted on 3 July 2012, and has already actively worked on the eCall proposals presented by the Commission on 13 June 2013. The sense of the Commission's statement on 25 September 2013 was to underline and welcome the active role of the European Parliament and to encourage the Council to join these efforts.

([1]) Proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the deployment of the interoperable EU-wide eCall [COM(2013) 0315]; Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning type-approval requirements for the deployment of the eCall in-vehicle system and amending Directive 2007/46/EC [COM(2013) 0316].

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011197/13
an die Kommission
Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE)
(2. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Überprüfung der Nachhaltigkeitskriterien für Biokraftstoffe/Benachteiligung nationaler Prüfsysteme durch die Kommission

Die Richtlinie 2009/28/EG definiert Nachhaltigkeitskriterien für Biokraftstoffe und flüssige Biobrennstoffe und verpflichtet die Mitgliedstaaten, deren Einhaltung zu überprüfen. Die Mitgliedstaaten müssen nationale Prüfsysteme einrichten. Daneben sind auch freiwillige Systeme zur Überprüfung zulässig, sofern sie von der Europäischen Kommission anerkannt wurden. Die Europäische Kommission teilte kürzlich mit, dass von ihr anerkannte freiwillige Systeme sich untereinander gegenseitig anerkennen können, dass aber freiwillige Systeme keine nationalen Systeme anerkennen dürfen, da nationale Systeme nicht von der Europäischen Kommission genehmigt würden. Dadurch werden nationale Systeme diskriminiert, und dies führt zu Handelshemmnissen, da freiwillige Systeme keine Nachhaltigkeitsnachweise von nationalen Systemen anerkennen dürfen.

1. Auf welcher Rechtsgrundlage untersagt die Europäische Kommission freiwilligen Systemen, auf nationalen Systemen basierende Nachhaltigkeitsnachweise anzuerkennen? Müsste die Europäische Kommission bei Zweifeln an der richtigen Anwendung der Richtlinie durch die Mitgliedstaaten über ein Vertragsverletzungsverfahren tätig werden?

2. Wie argumentiert die Europäische Kommission juristisch, dass die gegenseitige Anerkennung nicht in der Richtlinie vorgesehen sei? Für solche Fälle gibt es grundsätzlich die Verordnung (EWG) Nr. 764/2008 über die gegenseitige Anerkennung technischer Vorschriften; überdies enthält Richtlinie 2009/28/EG in Artikel 15 Absatz 9 spezielle Regelungen zur gegenseitigen Anerkennung.

3. Warum stellt die Europäische Kommission nicht klar, dass die Verordnung (EWG) Nr. 764/2008 sowie Artikel 15 Absatz 9 der Richtlinie 2009/28/EG auch für die nationalen Systeme zur Überwachung der Nachhaltigkeitskriterien für Biotreibstoffe und flüssige Biobrennstoffe gelten, und dass sowohl die Mitgliedstaaten untereinander als auch die freiwilligen Systeme diese anerkennen müssen (gleichrangig zu von der Kommission genehmigten freiwilligen Systemen)?

4. Wie rechtfertigt die Europäische Kommission — im Hinblick auf Artikel 28 AEUV sowie auf die darauf gestützten EUGH-Urteile — Anerkennungsvorschriften für freiwillige Systeme („Scheme" gemäß Art. 18 Abs. 4 der Richtlinie 2009/28/EG), die zu einer Diskriminierung von nationalen Systemen und zu Handelshemmnissen führen?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(28. November 2013)

1. Freiwillige Systeme werden von der Kommission anerkannt, nachdem die Notwendigkeit harmonisierter Normen einer Kosten-Nutzen-Analyse unterzogen wurde. Daher gestattet es die Kommission freiwilligen Systemen, Nachweise anderer anerkannter freiwilliger Systeme anzuerkennen. Nationale Systeme werden nicht von der Kommission geprüft und können in ihrer Struktur variieren. Würden beide Systeme kombiniert, könnte die Kommission die Einhaltung der Nachhaltigkeitskriterien nicht wirksam überwachen. Dies bedeutet jedoch nicht, dass die Kommission die korrekte Anwendung der Richtlinie in den Mitgliedstaaten infrage stellt. Daher beabsichtigt die Kommission in diesem Zusammenhang nicht, ein Vertragsverletzungsverfahren einzuleiten.

2./3. Die Nachhaltigkeitskriterien sind auf EU-Ebene harmonisiert. Die Verordnung (EG) Nr. 764/2008 ist jedoch nicht für die Systeme zur Überprüfung der Nachhaltigkeit relevant, da sie für technische Vorschriften gilt, die nicht auf EU-Ebene harmonisiert sind. Dasselbe gilt für Artikel 15 Absatz 9 der Richtlinie 2009/28/EG, da dieser sich nur auf die gegenseitige Anerkennung von Herkunftsnachweisen für Strom aus erneuerbaren Energiequellen bezieht.

4. Die Kommission benachteiligt nationale Systeme nicht, da diese alternative Möglichkeiten zum Nachweis der Einhaltung der Nachhaltigkeitskriterien aufzeigen. Nationale Systeme könnten außerdem die unverbindliche Anerkennung als freiwillige Systeme beantragen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011197/13
to the Commission
Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Review of the sustainability criteria for biofuels/national verification schemes placed at a disadvantage by the Commission

Directive 2009/28/EC defines sustainability criteria for biofuels and bioliquids and places the Member States under the obligation to verify that these criteria are complied with. The Member States must establish national verification schemes. In addition, voluntary schemes for verification are also permissible, provided they have been recognised by the Commission. The Commission recently stated that mutual recognition could be an option among voluntary schemes that it has recognised, but that voluntary schemes should not recognise national schemes, as national schemes have not been approved by the Commission. This discriminates against national schemes and will lead to barriers to trade, as voluntary schemes cannot recognise any verifications of sustainability by national schemes.

1. On what legal basis is the Commission prohibiting the recognition by voluntary schemes of verifications of sustainability based on national schemes? In the event of doubts concerning the correct application of the directive by the Member States, would the Commission have to initiate infringement proceedings?

2. On the basis of what legal arguments does the Commission claim that mutual recognition is not provided for in the directive? For such cases, there is, in principle, Regulation (EC) No 764/2008 on the mutual recognition of technical regulations; in addition, Article 15(9) of Directive 2009/28/EC contains specific rules concerning mutual recognition.

3. Why does the Commission not make it clear that regulation (EC) No 764/2008 and Article 15(9) of Directive 2009/28/EC also apply to the national schemes for verifying the sustainability criteria for biofuels and bioliquids, and that the Member States must mutually recognise these and they must also be recognised by the voluntary schemes (and have equal status with voluntary schemes recognised by the Commission)?

4. With regard to Article 28 TFEU and the judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union pursuant thereto, how can the Commission justify recognition provisions for voluntary systems ('schemes' in accordance with Article 18(4) of Directive 2009/28/EC) that result in discrimination against national schemes and in barriers to trade?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

1. Voluntary schemes are recognised by the Commission following a cost-benefit analysis of the need for harmonised standards. Therefore, the Commission allows voluntary schemes to acknowledge evidence provided by other recognised voluntary schemes. National schemes have not been assessed by the Commission and might vary in their structure. If both systems were combined the Commission could not effectively monitor compliance with the sustainability criteria. However, this does not imply that the Commission questions the correct application of the directive in the Member States and hence the Commission does not intend to initiate infringement proceedings in this regard.

2 and 3. The sustainability criteria are harmonised at EU level. However, Regulation (EC) No 764/2008 is not relevant for the sustainability verification schemes as it applies to technical rules that are not harmonised at EU level. Nor is Article 15(9) of Directive 2009/28/EC as it concerns only the mutual recognition of guarantees of origin of renewable electricity.

4. The Comission does not discriminate against national schemes as they demonstrate alternative ways of demonstrating compliance with the sustainability criteria. National schemes could also apply to be recognised as voluntary scheme on a non-compulsory basis.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011198/13
aan de Commissie
Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(2 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Chemicaliën gebruikt bij fracking in strijd met REACH richtlijn

Uit de studie „Assessment of the use of substances in hydraulic fracturing of shale gas reservoirs under REACH" van het instituut voor Gezondheid en Consumentenbescherming van de Europese Commissie blijkt dat chemicaliën die gebruikt worden bij fracking illegaal zijn in de EU. Dit ten gevolge van de REACH wetgeving (1907/2006 en 2006/121/EG).

Dit komt omdat de door de industrie ingediende registratiedossiers niet volledig zijn aangezien een beoordeling van de risico's bij het gebruik van de chemicaliën bij fracking ontbreekt. In 2011 werd zelfs gesteld dat geen enkele substantie die voor fracking gebruikt wordt voor deze toepassing geregistreerd is. De chemicaliën zouden daarom niet gebruikt mogen worden tijdens het fracking proces in de EU. Echter, er zijn wel in verschillende Europese landen vergunningen voor proefboringen en effectieve boringen afgegeven.

1. Zijn de bedrijven verplicht om de chemische mix die zij gebruiken tijdens proefboringen of effectieve boringen bekend te maken? Aan wie moeten zij deze bekend maken? Heeft de Commissie aangaande deze dossiers inzage en controle? En kan zij bij inbreuken actie ondernemen?

2 Is deze bekendmaking steeds naar behoren gebeurd voor vroegere en huidige boringen (zowel proefboringen als effectieve boringen voor productie)? Weet de Commissie of er tijdens huidige of vroegere boringen in de EU chemicaliën gebruikt werden die niet geautoriseerd waren onder REACH? Zo ja, werd hiertegen actie ondernomen?

3. Welke stappen kan de industrie ondernemen om de dossiers te vervolledigen en bepaalde chemicaliën geautoriseerd te krijgen onder REACH?

4. Lopen er momenteel aanvraagprocedures (of zijn er in het verleden geweest) om chemicaliën geautoriseerd te krijgen? Zo ja, voor welke chemicaliën?

Antwoord van de heer Potočnik namens de Commissie
(4 december 2013)

Er bestaat geen specifieke EU-verplichting om de chemische mix die wordt gebruikt bij boringen bekend te maken. REACH ([1]) kent echter wel een algemene registratieplicht van stoffen en de plicht het gebruik van de stoffen bekend te maken aan het Europees Agentschap voor chemische stoffen (ECHA) voor openbare verspreiding. Daarnaast vereist de MEB-richtlijn ([2]) dat informatie wordt verstrekt over de aard en hoeveelheden van de gebruikte materialen wanneer een milieu-effectbeoordeling wordt uitgevoerd.

Krachtens REACH worden exploitanten die chemische stoffen of mengsels in hydrofracturering gebruiken, gezien als downstreamgebruikers en zijn zij verplicht om passende risicobeheersmatregelen te nemen om te garanderen dat de risico's voor de menselijke gezondheid en het milieu afdoende worden beheerst. Deze verplichting geldt ook voor niet-geregistreerde stoffen.

De lidstaten, die toegang hebben tot alle gegevens van het ECHA, zijn verantwoordelijk voor de handhaving van de bepalingen van REACH en voor de oplegging van sancties in geval van niet-naleving. Zij moeten er ook voor zorgen dat de autorisatie die wordt verleend voor de exploratie of productie van niet-conventionele koolwaterstoffen waarbij grootschalig gebruik wordt gemaakt van hydrofracturering voldoen aan de REACH-voorschriften ([3]). De Commissie heeft van de lidstaten geen informatie ontvangen met betrekking tot gevallen van niet-naleving.

De Commissie werkt aan een initiatief om te garanderen dat ontwikkelingen op het gebied van schaliegas mogelijk zijn met passende beschermende maatregelen op het gebied van klimaat en milieu, en met maximale juridische duidelijkheid en voorspelbaarheid.

([1]) 1907/2006/EG.
([2]) 2011/92/EU.
([3]) Meer informatie over de REACH-procedures voor de registratie, beoordeling, autorisatie en beperkingen ten aanzien van chemische stoffen is beschikbaar op de website van het ECHA: http://echa.europa.eu.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011198/13
to the Commission
Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Chemicals used in fracking in breach of REACH guidelines

The study entitled 'Assessment of the use of substances in hydraulic fracturing of shale gas reservoirs under REACH', conducted by the Commission's Institute for Health and Consumer Protection, indicates that chemicals being used for fracking are illegal in the EU. This is as a consequence of REACH legislation (1907/2006 and 2006/121/EC).

The reason for this is that the registration dossiers submitted by the industry are incomplete as they do not include any assessment of the risks in using the chemicals for fracking. It was even established in 2011 that not a single substance used for fracking is registered for this application. This is why the chemicals should not be used during the fracking process in the EU. However, permits are being granted in various European countries for test and actual drilling activities.

1. Are the companies obliged to disclose the mix of chemicals they use during test or actual drilling activities? To whom must they disclose this information? Does the Commission have access to inspect these dossiers? Can it take action in the event of any breach?

2 Has this disclosure always been made in the proper way for previous and current drilling activities (both test and actual drilling activities for production)? Is the Commission aware whether chemicals not authorised under REACH were used during current or previous drilling activities in the EU? If so, what action was taken against this?

3. What steps can the industry take to make the dossiers complete and get certain chemicals authorised under REACH?

4. Are there application procedures currently ongoing (or have there been any in the past) aimed at getting chemicals authorised? If so, for which chemicals?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

There is no specific EU obligation to disclose the mix of chemicals used in drilling activities. However there is an obligation under REACH ([1]) to register substances and communicate their uses to ECHA for public dissemination. In addition, the EIA Directive ([2]) requires the provision of information on the nature and quantity of materials used when an environmental impact assessment is carried out.

Pursuant to REACH, operators using chemicals substances or mixtures in hydraulic fracturing operations are considered as downstream users and have the duty to apply any apropriate risk management measure needed to ensure that the risks to human health and the environment are adeqately controlled. This obligation also applies to unregistered substances.

Enforcement of REACH provisions and penalties in case of non-compliance are the responsibility of Member States who have access to all ECHA data. They must also ensure that authorisations given for the exploration or production of unconventional hydrocarbons using high volume hydraulic fracturing take account of REACH requirements ([3]). The Commission has not been informed by Member States of non-compliance issues.

The Commission is working on an initiative ensuring that shale gas developments can be enabled with appropriate climate and environmental safeguards in place and under maximum legal clarity and predictability.

([1]) 1907/2006/EC.
([2]) 2011/92/EU.
([3]) For more information on the REACH registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction procedures, please consult ECHA's website at http://echa.europa.eu

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011199/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(2 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Almacén subterráneo de gas natural en las costas de Amposta, Catalunya

En la costa frente al delta del río Ebre se ha instalado un almacén subterráneo de gas natural para inyectar gas colchón, el cual aprovecha un antiguo yacimiento petrolífero situado a unos 21 kilómetros de la costa, frente a Vinaròs (Castellón), y a 1 700 metros de profundidad. Dicho proyecto, liderado por la empresa Escal UGS y a la vez controlada por ACS (llamado Proyecto Castro), habría causado 220 pequeños terremotos. El más grave hoy mismo, de magnitud 4,2 en la escala de Richter, y el 24 de septiembre, de magnitud 3,6, que son los más fuertes desde el año 1975. Según el director de la Red Sísmica del Instituto Geográfico Nacional (IGN), Emilio Carreño, en esta zona apenas hay actividad sísmica de origen natural.

Según la Plataforma Ciudadana en Defensa de las Tierras del Sènia, en uno de los tramos del gaseoducto no se presentó la evaluación del impacto ambiental.

A la luz de lo anterior y teniendo en cuenta la Directiva 2013/30/EU,

1. ¿Tiene la Comisión conocimiento del Plan Ambiental encargado por el Ministerio de Agricultura y Medio Ambiente?

2. ¿Tiene la Comisión conocimiento de si se presentó la evaluación de impacto ambiental para todos los tramos del gasoducto?

3. ¿Debería la declaración de impacto ambiental, según los estándares europeos, considerar los riesgos sísmicos que conllevan dichos proyectos?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011239/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Almacén subterráneo de gas natural

En la costa frente al Delta del río Ebro se ha instalado un almacén subterráneo de gas natural para inyectar gas colchón, el cual aprovecha un antiguo yacimiento petrolífero situado a unos 21 kilómetros de la costa, frente a Vinaròs (Castellón) a 1 700 metros de profundidad. Dicho proyecto (llamado Proyecto Castor), liderado por la empresa Escal UGS, a su vez controlada por ACS, habría causado 220 pequeños terremotos. El más grave, que ocurrió ayer mismo, con una magnitud 4,2 en la escala de Richter, y el ocurrido el 24 de septiembre, de magnitud 3,6, son los más graves desde el año 1975. Según el director de la Red Sísmica del Instituto Geográfico Nacional (IGN), Emilio Carreño, en esta zona apenas hay actividad sísmica de origen natural.

Teniendo en cuenta el artículo 15 de la Directiva 2013/30/UE y la Directiva 94/22/CE,

1. ¿Tiene la Comisión la certeza de que el público ha sido consultado con antelación y efectividad para participar en la decisión del establecimiento del almacén?

2. ¿Puede informar si el coste del almacén, en lo que se refiere a sus costes totales, es proporcional a sus futuros ingresos previstos y que, según sus informaciones, no generará déficit en el sistema?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011240/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Almacén subterráneo de gas natural

En la costa frente al Delta del río Ebro se ha instalado un almacén subterráneo de gas natural para inyectar gas colchón, el cual aprovecha un antiguo yacimiento petrolífero situado a unos 21 kilómetros de la costa, frente a Vinaròs (Castellón) a 1 700 metros de profundidad. Dicho proyecto (llamado Proyecto Castor), liderado por la empresa Escal UGS, a su vez controlada por ACS, habría causado 220 pequeños terremotos. El más grave, que ocurrió ayer mismo, con una magnitud 4,2 en la escala de Richter, y el ocurrido el 24 de septiembre, de magnitud 3,6, son los más graves desde el año 1975. Según el director de la Red Sísmica del Instituto Geográfico Nacional (IGN), Emilio Carreño, en esta zona apenas hay actividad sísmica de origen natural.

Dada la gravedad de los incidentes y teniendo en cuenta el artículo 19 de la Directiva 2013/30/UE y la Directiva 94/22/CE, ¿cree la Comisión que se deberían de detener todas las operaciones que hasta el día de hoy se están haciendo?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011243/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Seísmos en la costa valenciana y catalana

El proyecto Castor, con una inversión de 1 200 millones de euros, trata de aprovechar un antiguo pozo petrolífero a 1 750 metros de profundidad bajo el nivel del mar para suministrar hasta un tercio de la demanda de gas del sistema durante 50 días, pero, al parecer, la inyección de gas ha provocado desde el pasado 13 de septiembre casi 300 seísmos, la mayoría de baja intensidad. Más de 20 seísmos, uno de ellos de intensidad 4,2 en la escala de Richter, se han registrado este martes en el Golfo de Valencia, en el entorno del almacén subterráneo de gas natural Castor, frente a las costas de Vinarós (Castellón), según datos del Instituto Geográfico Nacional. El Ministerio de Industria ordenó el pasado 26 de septiembre el cese temporal de la actividad de extracción de gas en la planta para investigar las causas del aumento de la actividad sísmica en la zona ([1]). La Generalitat Valenciana ha activado el Plan de riesgo sísmico en fase de seguimiento a los municipios de Peñíscola, Vinarós y Benicarló. El vocal del Colegio de Geógrafos de España, quien también es asesor en la ONU, dice que nos encontramos ante una situación «no controlada» por lo que es necesario «mantener la alerta». Estos movimientos sísmicos podrían tener consecuencias en la zona y, según Gómez Cantero, afectar a la costa y al fondo marino, donde se pueden producir «deslizamientos submarinos». Los seísmos también han llegado a la costa catalana, especialmente a las Terres de l'Ebre, que es reserva de la biosfera por la Unesco. La zona, de 367 729 hectáreas de superficie, abarca el delta y la cuenca del Ebro y alberga «numerosos ecosistemas tanto interiores como costeros» ([2]).

La Directiva marco sobre la estrategia marina (Directiva 2008/56/CE) tiene como uno de sus objetivos proteger y restablecer los ecosistemas marinos europeos, y garantizar la viabilidad ecológica de las actividades económicas relacionadas con el medio marino de aquí al año 2021.

1. ¿Cumple el proyecto Castor con esta Directiva?

2. ¿Cumple el proyecto Castor con la Directiva del Hábitat 92/43/CEE?

Respuesta conjunta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(25 de noviembre de 2013)

En lo referente a si el proyecto Castor cumple o no la Directiva de la evaluación del impacto ambiental y la Directiva de Hábitats ([3]), la Comisión remite a Su Señoría a las respuestas que diera en su día a las preguntas escritas E-3789/2010 ([4]) y E-11478/11.

([1]) http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2013/10/01/castellon/1380618919.html
([2]) http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/medio-ambiente/unesco-designa-terres-ebre-nueva-reserva-biosfera-2402781
([3]) Directiva 2011/92/UE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 13 de diciembre de 2011, relativa a la evaluación de las repercusiones de determinados proyectos públicos y privados sobre el medio ambiente (codificación) (DO L 26 de 28.1.2012).
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).
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2010-3789&language=EN

En cuanto al cumplimiento de las disposiciones de la Directiva marco sobre la estrategia marina ([5]), hay que señalar que, como parte de la evaluación inicial a la que sometió sus aguas marinas en aplicación del artículo 8 de esa Directiva, España consideró el proyecto Castor como un elemento potencial de presión que podía causar daños al medio ambiente. Atendiendo a la definición de buen estado medioambiental y a los objetivos ambientales a él asociados que fueron establecidos por España y comunicados a la Comisión en 2012, es ahora responsabilidad del Estado miembro proceder al control de ese elemento específico de presión y de los efectos de él derivados. Ese control habrá de tener lugar no después del 15 de julio de 2014, una vez que su programa de seguimiento se haya establecido ya y haya comenzado a aplicarse. Asimismo, antes de que finalice 2015, España tendrá que tomar, en su caso, las medidas que sean necesarias al aplicar su programa de medidas. Procediendo de esta forma, España garantizará la consecución o el mantenimiento del buen estado medioambiental que requiere la Directiva para antes de que finalice 2020.

([5]) Directiva 2008/56/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 17 de junio de 2008, por la que se establece un marco de acción comunitaria para la política del medio marino (Directiva marco sobre la estrategia marina) (DO L 164 de 25.6.2008).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011199/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Undersea natural gas storage facility off the coast of Amposta, Catalonia

Just off the coast from the River Ebro delta, an undersea natural gas storage facility for injecting cushion gas has been set up, making use of an old oil reservoir located 21 km off the coast of Vinaròs (Castellón), at a depth of 1 700 m. This project, led by the company Escal UGS and monitored by Actividades de Construcción y Servicios, S.A. (known as the Castor project) may have caused 220 minor earthquakes. The most serious was today, at 4.2 on the Richter scale, and the one on 24 September, with a magnitude of 3.6, the most powerful since 1975. According to the Director of the Seismic Network of the Spanish National Geographic Institute (IGN), Emilio Carreño, there is hardly any natural seismic activity in this area.

According to the Citizen Platform for the Defence of the Sénia River Region, no environmental impact assessment was submitted for one of the stretches of pipeline.

In view of the above and having regard to Directive 2013/30/EU:

1. Does the Commission have any knowledge of the environmental plan commissioned by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the Environment?

2. Does the Commission know whether the environmental impact assessment was submitted for all stretches of the pipeline?

3. Do European standards require the environmental impact statement to take into account the earthquake risks of such projects?

Question for written answer E-011239/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Underground natural gas storage plant

Just off the coast from the River Ebro delta, an undersea natural gas storage facility for injecting cushion gas has been set up, making use of an old oil reservoir located 21 km off the coast of Vinaròs (Castellón), at a depth of 1 700 m. This project (known as the Castor Project), led by the Escal UGS company, and monitored by Actividades de Construcción y Servicios, S.A. (ACS), may have caused 220 minor earthquakes. The most serious of these, which occurred yesterday, with a magnitude of 4.2 on the Richter scale, and one that occurred on 24 September, with a magnitude of 3.6, are the worst since 1975. According to the Director of the Seismic Network of the Spanish National Geographic Institute (IGN), Emilio Carreño, there is hardly any natural seismic activity in this area.

In view of Article 15 of Directive 2013/30/EU and Directive 94/22/EC:

1. Is the Commission satisfied that the public has been consulted effectively in advance, in order to be able to participate in the decision to establish this storage facility?

2. Can the Commission report whether the cost of the storage facility — in terms of its total costs — is proportional to the future revenues expected from it and, according to its information, confirm that it will not generate a deficit in the system?

Question for written answer E-011240/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Underground natural gas storage plant II

Just off the coast from the River Ebro delta, an undersea natural gas storage facility for injecting cushion gas has been set up, making use of an old oil reservoir located 21 km off the coast of Vinaròs (Castellón), at a depth of 1 700 m. This project (known as the Castor Project), led by the Escal UGS company, and monitored by Actividades de Construcción y Servicios, S.A. (ACS), may have caused 220 minor earthquakes. The most serious of these, which occurred yesterday, with a magnitude of 4.2 on the Richter scale, and one that occurred on 24 September, with a magnitude of 3.6, are the worst since 1975. According to the Director of the Seismic Network of the Spanish National Geographic Institute (IGN), Emilio Carreño, there is hardly any natural seismic activity in this area.

Given the seriousness of the incidents, and taking into account Article 19 of Directive 2013/30/EU and Directive 94/22/EC, does the Commission believe that all operations, which are continuing today, should be stopped?

Question for written answer E-011243/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Application of Directive 2007/65/EC in Spain

The Castor project, with an investment of EUR 1.2 billion, aims to make use of an old oil well, lying 1 750 metres below sea level, to supply up to a third of the gas required to meet demand in the system for 50 days. However, it appears injecting gas into the well has caused almost 300 earthquakes — mostly of low intensity — since 13 September 2013. According to Spain's National Geographic Institute, last Tuesday more than 20 quakes were registered, one of them measuring 4.2 on the Richter scale, in the Gulf of Valencia, in the vicinity of the Castor underground natural gas storage plant, off the coast of Vinaròs (Castellón). On 26 September, the Ministry of Industry ordered the temporary cessation of gas extraction at the plant in order to investigate the causes of increased seismic activity in the area ([1]). The Government of the Autonomous Community of Valencia has put the monitoring phase of its seismic risk plan into operation in the municipalities of Peniscola, Vinaròs and Benicarló. A member of the Spanish Association of Geographers, who is also a UN consultant, says we are faced with an 'uncontrolled' situation and, therefore, it is necessary to 'stay on alert'. These seismic movements could have consequences in the area and, according to Gómez Cantero, could affect the coast and seabed, causing 'underwater landslides'. The earthquakes have also reached the coast of Catalonia, especially in Terres de l'Ebre, which is a Unesco Biosphere Reserve. This area of 367 729 hectares, takes in the Ebro delta and Ebro basin, and is home to 'numerous inland and coastal ecosystems' ([2]).

One of the objectives of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (Directive 2008/56/EC) is to protect and restore Europe's marine ecosystems and ensure the ecological viability of economic activities related to the marine environment by 2021.

1. Does the Castor project comply with this directive?

2. Does the Castor project comply with the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)?

Joint answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

Regarding compliance by the Castor project with the Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Directives ([3]), the Commission refers the Honourable Member to the replies given to Written Questions E-3789/2010 ([4]) and E-11478/11.

([1]) http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2013/10/01/castellon/1380618919.html
([2]) http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/medio-ambiente/unesco-designa-terres-ebre-nueva-reserva-biosfera-2402781
([3]) Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (codification). OJ 28.1.2012.
Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. OJ 22.7.1992.
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2010-3789&language=EN

With regard to compliance with the provisions under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive ([5]), Spain has identified the Castor project as a potential pressure that could create physical damage to the environment as part of its initial assessment of its marine waters in accordance with Article 8. On the basis of the definition of Good Environmental Status and related Environmental Targets set by Spain and reported to the Commission in 2012, it is now Spain's responsibility to monitor this specific pressure and related impacts once their monitoring programme will have been established and implemented by 15 July 2014 and to take action, if necessary, by 2015 at the latest, when implementing their programme of measures. These actions shall ensure the achievement or maintenance of good environmental status by 2020 required by the directive.

([5]) Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy. OJ 25.6.2008.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011200/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(2 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Reciprocidad de las importaciones de productos con proteínas transformadas de monogástricos

En su respuesta a la pregunta E-008890/2013 sobre la importación de carne de aves de corral y porcino de países terceros, y, en concreto, sobre los requisitos que impone la Unión Europea para la importación de carne de estas especies alimentadas con proteínas transformadas de monogástricos, práctica que está prohibida en la Unión Europea, la Comisión responde que las normas de la OIE se refieren únicamente a la alimentación de rumiantes y que, en consonancia con estas normas, las disposiciones de la UE referidas a no rumiantes solo se aplican a los Estados miembros. Es una respuesta muy correcta en términos legales, pero pone en evidencia la indefensión del consumidor por lo que respecta a la compra de carne de ave y de porcino, dado que no puede conocer su origen y, en consecuencia, tampoco puede conocer la alimentación recibida por el animal. En otras palabras, el consumidor no está bien informado sobre la seguridad alimentaria del producto que está consumiendo.

Ante esta situación,

1. ¿Qué acciones tiene previstas la Comisión para poder informar a los consumidores del origen de la carne y, por tanto, de los distintos tipos de alimentación que ha recibido el animal?

2. ¿Puede indicar la Comisión en qué casos y situaciones prevalece la aplicación de las recomendaciones de la OIE sobre los criterios de seguridad alimentaria para los consumidores de la UE?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de noviembre de 2013)

1. El origen se refiere al origen geográfico de los productos alimenticios, y no a su producción ni a las prácticas de fabricación. Actualmente, la indicación del origen es obligatoria para la carne de vacuno y los productos a base de carne de vacuno sin procesar ([1]) y para la carne de aves de corral importada ya envasada ([2]), así como en todos los casos en que su omisión pudiera inducir a error al consumidor ([3]). Recientemente, el Parlamento y el Consejo han adoptado el Reglamento (UE) nº 1169/2011 ([4]), que introduce la indicación obligatoria del origen para la carne sin transformar de ovino, caprino, aves de corral y porcino. Además, exige a la Comisión que presente, a más tardar el 13 de diciembre de 2013, un informe al Parlamento Europeo y al Consejo sobre la necesidad de ampliar la indicación obligatoria del origen a la carne utilizada como ingrediente. La Comisión tiene intención de presentar dicho informe antes de lo previsto.

Con arreglo a las normas de la Unión vigentes en materia de etiquetado ([5]), no hay obligación de mencionar en el etiquetado de la carne qué piensos se han administrado al animal. En la reciente revisión de tales normas ([6]), esta información no se ha tenido en cuenta.

([1]) Reglamento (CE) nº 1760/2000 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 17 de julio de 2000, que establece un sistema de identificación y registro de los animales de la especie bovina y relativo al etiquetado de la carne de vacuno y de los productos a base de carne de vacuno (DO L 204 de 11.8.2000, p. 1).

([2]) Reglamento (CE) nº 543/2008 de la Comisión, de 16 de junio de 2008, por el que se establecen normas de desarrollo del Reglamento (CE) nº 1234/2007 del Consejo en lo que atañe a la comercialización de carne de aves de corral (DO L 157 de 17.6.2008, p. 46).

([3]) Directiva 2000/13/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 20 de marzo de 2000, relativa a la aproximación de las legislaciones de los Estados miembros en materia de etiquetado, presentación y publicidad de los productos alimenticios (DO L 109 de 6.5.2000, p. 29).

([4]) La Directiva 2000/13/CE será derogada y sustituida, a partir del 13 de diciembre de 2013, por el Reglamento (UE) nº 1169/2011 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 25 de octubre de 2011, sobre la información alimentaria facilitada al consumidor y por el que se modifican los Reglamentos (CE) nº 1924/2006 y (CE) nº 1925/2006 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, y por el que se derogan la Directiva 87/250/CEE de la Comisión, la Directiva 90/496/CEE del Consejo, la Directiva 1999/10/CE de la Comisión, la Directiva 2000/13/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, las Directivas 2002/67/CE, y 2008/5/CE de la Comisión, y el Reglamento (CE) nº 608/2004 de la Comisión (DO L 304 de 22.11.2011, p. 18).

([5]) Directiva 2000/13/CE.

([6]) Reglamento (UE) nº 1169/2011.

2. La ampliación de la prohibición relativa a la alimentación animal a los no rumiantes en 2001 se decidió en un contexto en el que la prohibición inicial de determinados piensos establecida en 1994 que únicamente prohibió alimentar a los rumiantes con proteínas de mamíferos había demostrado ser insuficiente en lo que respecta a situar bajo total control la epidemia de EEB en Europa. La finalidad de esta ampliación no era, pues, garantizar la seguridad alimentaria de la carne procedente de especies distintas de los rumiantes, sino evitar cualquier posibilidad de contaminación cruzada (durante el transporte, la transformación, el uso, etc.) de los piensos destinados a los rumiantes con proteínas animales destinadas a especies no rumiantes. Habida cuenta de que la epidemia de EEB es una cuestión fundamentalmente europea, habría sido desproporcionado ampliar la medida a nuestros socios comerciales.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011200/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Reciprocity regarding imports of processed proteins from monogastric animals

In its answer to Question E-008890/2013 on poultry and pig meat imports from third countries and, specifically, on EU requirements regarding the import of meat from these species fed on processed proteins from monogastric animals, a practice banned in the EU, the Commission responds that the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) standards pertain only to the feeding of ruminants and that, in line with these international standards, the EU provisions regarding non-ruminant species apply only to EU Member States. In legal terms, it is a perfectly correct answer, but it lays bare the defencelessness of consumers as regards buying poultry and pig meat, since it is impossible to know where such meat came from, meaning that it is also impossible to know how the animal has been fed. In other words, consumers are not well informed about the safety of the food products that they are consuming.

1. What does the Commission plan to do to inform consumers about the origins of meat and, as such, of the various types of feed that the animal has been given?

2. Can the Commission state in which cases and situations implementing OIE recommendations takes priority over food safety for EU consumers?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

1. Origin refers to the geographical origin of foods and not to their production or manufacturing practices. The indication of origin is currently mandatory for unprocessed beef and beef products ([1]) and for prepacked imported poultry meat ([2]) as well as in all cases where its omission could mislead the consumer. ([3]) Recently, the Parliament and the Council adopted Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011, ([4]) introducing mandatory indication of origin for unprocessed sheep, goat, poultry and pig meat. In addition, it requires the Commission to submit a report to the European Parliament and the Council on the need to extend mandatory indication of origin to meat used as an ingredient by 13 December 2013. The Commission intends to deliver this report earlier than foreseen.

Under existing Union labelling rules, ([5]) there is no obligation to mention on the labelling of meat the feeds that the animal has been given. In the recent review of those rules, ([6]) this information has not been considered.

2. The extension of the feed ban to non-ruminant animals in 2001 was decided in a context where the initial feed ban established in 1994 to prohibit the feeding of mammalian protein to ruminants only had proven insufficient to fully bring the BSE epidemic in Europe under control. The purpose of this extension was therefore not to ensure the food safety of the meat of species other than ruminants, but to avoid any possibility of cross-contamination (during transport, processing, use, etc.) of the feed intended to ruminants with animal protein intended for non-ruminant species. The BSE epidemic being essentially a European issue, it would have been disproportionate to extend the measure to our trading partners.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 July 2000 establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products (OJ L 204, 11.8.2000, p. 1).

([2]) Commission Regulation (EC) No 543/2008 of 16 June 2008 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 as regards the marketing standards for poultry meat (OJ L 157, 17.6.2008, p. 46).

([3]) Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 March 2000 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs (OJ L 109, 6.5.2000, p. 29).

([4]) Directive 2000/13/EC will be repealed and replaced as of 13 December 2013 by Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 608/2004, (OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18).

([5]) Directive 2000/13/EC.

([6]) Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011201/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(2 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Equiparación de privilegios

En su respuesta a la pregunta E-008891/2013 sobre la equiparación de privilegios en la lista de material especificado de riesgo, la Comisión argumenta que solamente 8 Estados miembros están clasificados oficialmente como países con riesgo insignificante de EEB, de conformidad con la Decisión 2007/453/CE de la Comisión, modificada por la Decisión de Ejecución 2013/429/CE de la Comisión. Dichos países, aunque sean «solo 8», suponen aproximadamente un 30 % de los Estados miembros de la Unión Europea, una proporción nada menospreciable.

Por otro lado, la Comisión argumenta que la actual legislación, que obliga a todos los Estados miembros a extraer y eliminar el material especificado de riesgo (MER) tiene por objeto «racionalizar la aplicación de los controles oficiales por los Estados miembros en este contexto heterogéneo». Dicho argumento es cuestionable, teniendo en cuenta que existen otras zoonosis en Europa con situaciones muy diversas entre los Estados miembros que aplican medidas diversas según la situación sanitaria de cada país, siempre en el contexto de un plan de lucha coordinado de toda la Unión Europea.

La Comisión también comenta que dicha obligación podría revisarse y que los Estados miembros y la Comisión están debatiendo esta cuestión, de acuerdo con la segunda hoja de ruta contra las ETT.

Teniendo en cuenta lo expuesto anteriormente,

1. ¿Cuál es la posición de la Comisión en el debate sobre esta cuestión?

2. ¿Está dispuesta a aceptar un cambio en la gestión de los MER en los países con riesgo insignificante de EEB?

3. ¿Cuántos países deberían, según la Comisión, estar clasificados como países de riesgo insignificante de EEB para que la Comisión se planteara un cambio en la gestión de los MER?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de noviembre de 2013)

1. La Comisión ha iniciado una reflexión sobre los argumentos a favor y en contra de la obligación de eliminar y destruir el material especificado de riesgo (MER) en Estados miembros con riesgo insignificante de EEB. Esta reflexión está aún en curso y la Comisión no ha adoptado todavía un posición definitiva.

2. La Comisión ha compartido con los Estados miembros su análisis de la situación y las posibles opciones, y tomará también en consideración su opinión.

3. Teniendo en cuenta que el pasado septiembre otros once Estados miembros enviaron solicitudes a la OIE para ser reconocidos como países con riesgo insignificante de EEB, es posible que a partir de mayo de 2014 diecinueve Estados miembros, que tienen el 43 % del vacuno adulto de la UE, se beneficien de este trato favorable. Esta nueva situación será por supuesto incluida en la reflexión en curso.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011201/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Creating a level playing field

In its answer to Question E-008891/2013 on creating a level playing field for specified risk material (SRM), the Commission argues that only eight Member States are officially classified as negligible bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) risk countries according to Commission Decision 2007/453/EC, as amended by Commission Implementing Decision 2013/429/EC. Although 'only eight', these countries account for some 30% of Member States, a proportion that can in no way be discounted.

The Commission also argues that current legislation, which obliges Member States to remove and destroy SRM, aims at 'streamlining the implementation of official controls by Member States in this heterogeneous context'. This argument is questionable, since there are other zoonoses in Europe with huge variation in the situations relating to them between the Member States, which apply a variety of measures, depending on the health situation in each Member State, always as part of a coordinated plan for the entire EU.

The Commission also argues that this situation could be reviewed if an increasing number of Member States achieve a negligible risk status, as stated in TSE Roadmap 2.

1. What is the Commission's position regarding the debate on this issue?

2. Is it prepared to accept a change in SRM management in negligible BSE risk countries?

3. How many countries does the Commission believe should be classified as negligible BSE risk countries so that the Commission could set out changes to SRM management?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

1. The Commission has initiated a reflection on the pros and cons of lifting the current compulsory removal and destruction of specified risk material (SRM) in Member States with a negligible risk of BSE. This reflection is still ongoing and the Commission has not adopted a final position yet.

2. The Commission has shared with the Member States its analysis of the situation and possible options, and will also take their feedback into consideration.

3. Considering that an additional 11 Member States have sent applications to the OIE last September to be recognised with a negligible risk of BSE, chances are that 19 Member states representing about 43% of the adult cattle in the EU will benefit from this favourable status as of May 2014. This new situation will of course be included in the ongoing reflection.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011202/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(2 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Calificación sanitaria

En su respuesta a la pregunta E-008892/2013 sobre calificación sanitaria, y en concreto sobre la regionalización de la encefalopatía espongiforme bovina (EEB) en determinados Estados miembros, la Comisión responde que no es posible la regionalización ya que, siempre según la Comisión, los estudios epidemiológicos indican que la EEB se distribuye homogéneamente en toda la población bovina de un Estado miembro.

Según nuestras informaciones, la distribución de la EEB depende fundamentalmente de la alimentación de los animales, que nada tiene que ver con las barreras administrativas entre países. Así, en los países en los que existen sistemas de producción diferentes (y por lo tanto sistemas de alimentación diferentes) según las regiones, la distribución de la EEB no es homogénea. Así lo demuestran varios estudios científicos. A título de ejemplo, podemos citar las conclusiones de un estudio realizado por universidades de Francia, Inglaterra, Holanda y Suiza y publicado en el año 2008 (Ducrot, C.; Arnold, M.; de Koeijer, A.; Heim, D.; Calavas, D.; 2008. «Review on the epidemiology and dynamics of BSE epidemics», Vet. Res 39:15). Es más, dentro de una región, pueden observarse diferencias importantes en la distribución de la EEB, tal como revela, a título de ejemplo, otro estudio del año 2007 por parte de investigadores de Cataluña (Allepuz, A.; López-Quílez, A.; Forte, A.; Fernández, G.; Casal, J.; 2007. «Spatial analysis of bovine spongiform encephalopathy in Galicia, Spain» 2000-2005, Preventive Veterinary Medicine 79:147-185).

Ante estas evidencias científicas,

1. ¿Qué argumentos tiene la Comisión para no definir diferentes subpoblaciones bovinas con estatus diferentes con respecto a la EEB en un Estado miembro?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de noviembre de 2013)

Cualquier propuesta en el sentido de que la Comisión tome en consideración la situación de un Estado miembro o una región con respecto a la encefalopatía espongiforme bovina (EEB) debe derivarse de la conclusión de que el territorio solicitante cumple los criterios establecidos en el anexo II del Reglamento (CE) n° 999/2001 ([1]).

Muchos de estos criterios se refieren a los riesgos de introducción del agente de la EEB al importar piensos o ingredientes de piensos contaminados, de reciclado del prion en los piensos y, por último, de exposición del ganado a piensos contaminados. Estos riesgos se ven mitigados por las medidas de prohibición relativas a la alimentación del ganado (reglamentación e instrucciones detalladas aplicables a la industria de los piensos, las importaciones, las prácticas de alimentación animal, etc.) y a la manera en que se hacen cumplir (organización, presión de los controles, sanciones, etc.). Dado que las medidas detalladas de prohibición y las políticas de cumplimiento se establecen a nivel nacional, el riesgo de EEB, en principio, no puede ser significativamente diferente en distintas regiones del mismo Estado miembro.

Además, hasta ahora nunca ha recibido la Comisión, ni ha aprobado la Organización Mundial de Sanidad Animal, solicitud alguna de reconocimiento del riesgo de EEB a nivel regional.

([1]) DO L 147 de 31.5.2001, p. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011202/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: BSE status of Member States and third countries

In its answer to Question E-008892/2013 on the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) status of Member States and third countries and, specifically, on BSE regionalisation in some Member States, the Commission responds that regionalisation is impossible because, according to the Commission at least, epidemiological studies have shown that the BSE is homogenously distributed through the cattle population of a Member State.

Our information is that BSE distribution is fundamentally dependant on how animals are fed, which has nothing to do with the administrative barriers between countries. This means that, in countries where different regions have different rearing systems (and therefore different feeding systems), BSE distribution is not homogenous. A number of scientific studies demonstrate this. One example that we could cite is the conclusions of a 2008 study conducted by universities in France, the UK, the Netherlands and Switzerland (Ducrot, C.; Arnold, M.; de Koeijer, A.; Heim, D.; Calavas, D.; 2008. 'Review on the epidemiology and dynamics of BSE epidemics', Vet. Res 39:15). Furthermore, within a region, significant differences in BSE distribution can be observed, as shown, for example, by a 2007 study by Catalonian researchers (Allepuz, A.; López-Quílez, A.; Forte, A.; Fernández, G.; Casal, J.; 2007. 'Spatial analysis of bovine spongiform encephalopathy in Galicia, Spain' 2000-2005, Preventive Veterinary Medicine 79:147-185).

1. What are the Commission's arguments for not defining different bovine subpopulations of distinct BSE status within a Member State?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

Any proposition by the Commission to consider the BSE status of a Member State or region thereof must result from the conclusion that the applicant meets the criteria laid down in Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 ([1]).

A large number of these criteria relate to the risks of introducing the BSE agent by importing contaminated feed or feed ingredients, recycling the prion into feed, and eventually the possible exposure of the cattle population to contaminated feed. These risks are mitigated by the feed-ban rules (regulation and detailed instructions applicable to the feed industry, imports, feeding practises, etc.) and the way they are being enforced (organisation, pressure of control, penalties, etc.). The detailed feed-ban rules and enforcement policies being established at the national level, the risk of BSE in principle could not be significantly different in different regions of the same Member State.

Furthermore, no application for the recognition of the BSE risk at a regional level has ever been received by the Commission or approved by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

([1]) OJ L 147, 31.5.2001.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011203/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(2 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Reforma del sistema nacional ferroviario francés y repercusiones en el ente regulador nacional en el contexto del cuarto paquete ferroviario

Las autoridades francesas están trabajando en una amplia reforma del sistema nacional ferroviario, en virtud de la cual la SNCF y el administrador de la infraestructura (RFF) se integrarían como dos filiales de un único grupo denominado «SNCF». El Estado francés tiene previsto asumir el papel de «estratega» en la nueva organización.

La reforma propuesta afecta también al ente regulador nacional (ARAF). El número de representantes de su junta se reducirá de siete a cinco. Tendrán que tener en cuenta las opiniones expresadas por un funcionario enviado por la administración pública. Además, aún no está claro si las decisiones adoptadas por el ente regulador serán vinculantes y, en caso afirmativo, cuáles de ellas lo serán.

1. ¿Considera la Comisión que la reforma propuesta ofrece todas las garantías necesarias para un acceso no discriminatorio a la infraestructura ferroviaria y, en particular, a los servicios ferroviarios conexos?

2. ¿Está satisfecha la Comisión con la separación de los flujos financieros entre SNCF Mobilités (operador titular) y SNCF Réseau (administrador de la infraestructura ferroviaria)?

3. En caso negativo, ¿cómo piensa evitar la Comisión que se adopte legislación contraria al Derecho de la UE en vigor y al espíritu del cuarto paquete ferroviario, que tiene por objeto reforzar el papel de los administradores de infraestructuras?

4. ¿No considera la Comisión que la creación de un ente regulador europeo evitaría el debilitamiento de los entes reguladores nacionales a través de nueva legislación nacional?

Respuesta del Sr. Kallas en nombre de la Comisión
(19 de noviembre de 2013)

1.-3. A través del proyecto de ley sobre la reforma ferroviaria, Francia se propone ajustar su sector ferroviario al Derecho de la Unión, preparar la apertura a la competencia para el año 2019 y fomentar una mayor eficacia.

La estructura integrada «SNCF» que propone dicho proyecto deberá respetar en particular la Directiva 2012/34/UE. Asimismo, Francia deberá cumplir con los actos que figuran en el cuarto paquete ferroviario, actualmente objeto de examen por parte de los colegisladores europeos, una vez que este sea adoptado.

La Comisión no se pronuncia en lo relativo a proyectos de ley nacionales en fase de elaboración que pueden, por su naturaleza de proyectos, experimentar modificaciones antes de ser adoptados por el legislador.

La Comisión espera que la nueva legislación francesa respete los principios de independencia efectiva del administrador de la infraestructura y de transparencia de la contabilidad de las empresas ferroviarias y tiene la convicción de que Francia cumplirá sus obligaciones derivadas del Derecho de la Unión. A tal fin, los servicios de la Comisión estudiarán la nueva legislación francesa una vez haya sido notificada.

4. La Directiva 2012/34/UE ([1]) ha intensificado la cooperación entre los organismos de control de los Estados miembros al contemplar la creación de una red en la que dichos organismos pueden participar y colaborar. La Comisión efectuará un seguimiento del funcionamiento de dicha red y de las experiencias que puede aportar.

([1]) Directiva 2012/34/UE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 21 de noviembre de 2012, por la que se establece un espacio ferroviario europeo único (versión refundida), DO L 343 de 14.12.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011203/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: French reform of the national railway system — effects on the national regulatory body in the context of the Fourth Railway Package

The French authorities are working on an extensive reform of the national railway system, whereby the SNCF and the railway infrastructure manager (RFF) would be integrated as two subsidiaries of a single group called 'SNCF'. The French state intends to assume the role of a 'strategist' in the new organisation.

The national regulatory body (ARAF) is also affected by the proposed reform. The number of its college representatives will decrease from seven to five. They will have to take into account the views expressed by a seconded agent of the government. What is more, it is not yet clear whether and which decisions taken by the regulatory body will be binding.

1. Does the Commission consider that the proposed reform provides for all the necessary guarantees for non-discriminatory access to rail infrastructure and, in particular, to rail-related services?

2. Is the Commission satisfied with the separation of financial flows between 'SNCF Mobilités' (the incumbent operator) and 'SNCF Réseau' (the railway infrastructure manager)?

3. If not, how does the Commission intend to prevent the adoption of legislation which would go against existing EC law and against the spirit of the Fourth Railway Package which aims at empowering infrastructure managers?

4. Does the Commission not consider that the setting-up of a European regulatory body would prevent the weakening of national regulatory bodies via new national legislation?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(19 novembre 2013)

1-3. Par le projet de loi portant réforme ferroviaire, la France entend mettre son secteur ferroviaire en conformité avec le droit de l'Union, préparer l'ouverture à la concurrence pour 2019 et dégager des gains d'efficacité.

La structure intégrée SNCF mise en place par ce projet devra notamment respecter la Directive 2012/34/UE. De même, la France devra se conformer aux actes contenus dans le 4e paquet ferroviaire, actuellement examiné par les co-legislateurs européens, une fois celui-ci adopté.

La Commission ne s'exprime pas sur des projets de loi nationaux en cours d'élaboration qui peuvent, de part leur nature de projet, subir des modifications avant leur adoption par le législateur.

La Commission s'attend à ce que la nouvelle législation française respecte les principes d'indépendance réelle du gestionnaire d'infrastrucure et de transparence comptable des entreprises ferroviaires et reste convaincue que la France respectera ses obligations découlant du droit de l'Union. La nouvelle législation française sera examinée à cette fin par les services de la Commission après sa notification.

4. La directive 2012/34/EU ([1]) a renforcé la coopération entre les organismes de contrôle des États membres en prévoyant la création d'un réseau où ces organismes participent et collaborent. La Commission observera comment fonctionnera ce réseau et quelles expériences il peut apportera.

([1]) Directive 2012/34/EU du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 21 novembre 2012 établissant un espace ferroviaire unique européen (refonte), JO L 343 du 14.12.2012.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-011204/13
alla Commissione
Francesca Barracciu (S&D)
(2 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Codice doganale dell'Unione — Zona franca, proposte di modifica ed entrata in vigore

Considerato che:

— l'articolo 17, comma 2, del Trattato sull'Unione europea stabilisce che «un atto legislativo dell'Unione può essere adottato solo su proposta della Commissione»;

— il Codice doganale dell'Unione, approvato in seduta plenaria dal Parlamento europeo l'11 settembre 2013, dovrebbe, una volta approvato dal Consiglio europeo, entrare in vigore entro l'1 novembre 2013;

— da notizie apparse sulla stampa italiana e riferite a un incontro tra il Commissario Antonio Tajani e il Presidente della Regione Sardegna Ugo Cappellacci, emerge che il Commissario Tajani avrebbe dichiarato che l'entrata in vigore del Codice sarà sicuramente posticipata in funzione di una modifica necessaria a inserire la Sardegna tra i territori extradoganali dell'UE;

può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se corrisponde al vero che la Commissione intende proporre un rinvio della data di entrata in vigore, stabilita per l'1 novembre 2013, del Codice doganale dell'Unione;

2. se corrisponde al vero che la Commissione intende proporre la modifica del Codice recentemente approvato inserendo la Sardegna tra i territori extradoganali dell'UE;

3. se la Commissione ha ricevuto dagli Stati membri, e nello specifico dal Governo italiano, richieste o comunicazioni o sollecitazioni in tal senso;

4. se a prescindere dalla data di entrata in vigore del Codice, corrisponda comunque al vero l'intenzione di modificare il Codice doganale in funzione delle esigenze della Regione Sardegna?

Risposta di Algirdas Šemeta a nome della Commissione
(6 novembre 2013)

La Commissione non intende proporre un rinvio della data di entrata in vigore del codice doganale dell'Unione ([1]).

La Commissione non ha ricevuto richieste di modifica del codice doganale dell'Unione e non prevede modifiche del regolamento.

Per quanto riguarda le zone franche, la Commissione rinvia alle proprie risposte alle interrogazioni E-002397/2013 ed E-007818/2013.

Inoltre, il Vicepresidente della Commissione responsabile per l'industria e l'imprenditoria non ha fatto alcun riferimento diretto al codice doganale dell'Unione in quanto tale, né alla sua entrata in vigore o a una modifica riguardante le zone franche. Il Vicepresidente ha affrontato la questione delle zone franche nell'UE, in particolare riferendosi alla Sardegna e spiegando la procedura per l'istituzione delle zone franche.

([1]) Regolamento (UE) n. 952/2013 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 9 ottobre 2013, che istituisce il codice doganale dell'Unione (rifusione) (GU L 269 del 10.10.2013, pag. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011204/13
to the Commission
Francesca Barracciu (S&D)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Union Customs Code: free zone, proposed amendment and entry into force

Since:

— Article 17(2) of the Treaty on European Union states that 'Union legislative acts may only be adopted on the basis of a Commission proposal';

— the Union Customs Code, adopted at the plenary sitting of the European Parliament on 11 September 2013 should, following adoption by the EU Council, enter into force on 1 November 2013;

— according to reports in the Italian press, Commissioner Antonio Tajani stated at a meeting with Ugo Cappellacci, President of the Regional Government of Sardinia, that the entry into force of the Customs Code is bound to be delayed as it needs to be amended to extend EU free zone status to Sardinia;

can the Commission state:

1. whether it is true that the Commission plans to postpone the date of entry into force of the Union Customs Code, which was set for 1 November 2013;

2. whether it is true that it plans to bring forward an amendment to the recently-adopted Code that extends EU free zone status to Sardinia;

3. whether it has received any requests, communications or applications from Member States, and more specifically the Italian Government, to that effect;

4. whether, regardless of which date the Customs Code is to enter into effect, it is true that the intention is to amend the Customs Code to meet the requirements of the Regional Government of Sardinia?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(6 November 2013)

The Commission does not plan postponing the date of entry into force of the Union Customs Code ([1]).

The Commission did not receive any request for amending the Union Customs Code and does not plan any amendment to the regulation.

As far as free zones are concerned, the Commission refers to its replies to questions E-002397/2013 and E-007818/2013.

Furthermore, the Vice-President of the Commission responsible for Industry and Entrepreneurship did not refer to the Union Customs Code directly as such, its entry into force or its amendment in relation to free zones. He addressed the question of free zones in the EU, more specifically with view to Sardinia, and explained the procedure for establishing free zones.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 952/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 October 2013 laying down the Union Customs Code (recast) (OJ L 269, 10.10.2013), p. 1).

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-011205/13
aan de Commissie
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(2 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Acties omtrent overschrijding veiliheidslimiet 3-MCPD

Uit een onderzoek, gepubliceerd door EFSA, blijkt dat peuters, kinderen en senioren kans lopen om een hoeveelheid van de giftige stof 3-MCPD binnen te krijgen, die de veiligheidslimiet van 2 microgram/per kg/per dag overschrijdt.

1. Voor sojasaus geldt een grenswaarde voor de concentratie 3-MCPD die dit product mag bevatten. Uit het onderzoek van EFSA blijkt dat margarine en soortgelijke producten het meeste bijdragen aan de inname van 3-MCPD. Gaat de Europese Commissie grenswaardes voor de concentratie 3-MCPD in margarine en soortgelijke producten laten bepalen? Zoja, op welke termijn? Zoniet, wat was de overweging om wel grenswaardes in te stellen voor sojasaus en niet voor margarine en soortgelijke producten?

2. Zal de Commissie bij het instellen van grenswaardes specifiek rekening houden met het consumptiepatroon van senioren, zeker nu het EFSA-onderzoek stelt dat juist zij te grote hoeveelheden 3-MCPD binnenkrijgen?

3. Volgens het onderzoek zijn in enkele gevallen hoge concentraties 3-MCPD teruggevonden in babymelkpoeder en opvolgmelk. Het EFSA-onderzoek bevat echter maar van 2 groepen baby's gegevens over de dagelijkse 3-MCPD-inname. Is dit volgens de Commissie voldoende om te concluderen dat baby's geen dosis binnen krijgen die de veiligheidslimiet overschrijdt?

4. Vormen de door EFSA gevonden hoge concentraties 3-MCPD in babymelk en opvolgmelk aanleiding voor de Commissie om maximumconcentraties 3-MCPD vast te stellen voor deze producten?

Antwoord van de heer Borg namens de Commissie
(28 oktober 2013)

1. De EU-maximumgehalten voor 3-monochloorpropaan-1,2-diol (3-MCPD) in sojasaus en gehydrolyseerd plantaardig eiwit die in 2001 zijn vastgesteld ([1]), hebben betrekking op de vrije vorm van 3-MCPD. 3-MCPD is in gebonden vorm aanwezig in eetbare geraffineerde plantaardige oliën en vetten en margarine, als 3-MCPD-esters. Voor de analyse van 3-MCPD-esters is pas enkele jaren geleden een betrouwbare analysemethode ontwikkeld. Volgens de huidige kennis is de mondelinge biologische beschikbaarheid van 3-MCPD in de estervorm equivalent aan de vrije vorm. In het rapport van de EFSA ([2]) worden de estervorm en de vrije vorm daarom vermeld als totaalgehalte aan 3-MCPD.

2. De Commissie streeft een hoog niveau van bescherming van de menselijke gezondheid na voor alle bevolkingsgroepen, en houdt rekening met de specifieke consumptiepatronen bij het vaststellen van maximumgehalten aan bepaalde verontreinigingen in eten.

3./4. Er zijn dermate weinig gegevens beschikbaar over zuigelingenvoeding en opvolgzuigelingenvoeding (respectievelijk 1 en 2 analytische resultaten) dat de Commissie het voorbarig acht om nu harde conclusies te trekken voor wat betreft potentiële risico's van deze voedingsmiddelen voor de volksgezondheid.

Tegen eind 2013 zal een controleprogramma worden ingesteld voor controle op de aanwezigheid van de verschillende vormen van MCPD en de gerelateerde glycidylesters in voedingsmiddelen, en in het bijzonder die voedingsmiddelen die volgens het EFSA-rapport het meest bijdragen tot de blootstelling van de verschillende bevolkingsgroepen aan die stoffen. Verder zal de EFSA tegen eind oktober 2013 worden verzocht om een volledige risicobeoordeling uit te voeren betreffende de aanwezigheid van de verschillende vormen van MCPD en glycidylesters in voedingsmiddelen. Wanneer de resultaten van het controleprogramma en de risicobeoordeling beschikbaar zijn, zal de Commissie overwegen of het vaststellen van maximumgehalten voor deze stoffen in bepaalde voedingsmiddelen wenselijk is.

([1]) Verordening (EG) nr. 466/2001 van de Commissie, vervangen door Verordening (EG) nr. 1881/2006 van de Commissie van 19 december 2006 tot vaststelling van de maximumgehalten aan bepaalde verontreinigingen in levensmiddelen (PB L 364 van 20.12.2006, blz. 5).

([2]) Europese Autoriteit voor voedselveiligheid.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011205/13
to the Commission
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Measures in response to excessive 3-MCPD intake

A recent EFSA survey has revealed that infants, children and the elderly are at risk of exceeding the maximum admissible daily intake limit of 2µg/kg in respect of 3-MCPD, a toxic substance.

1. While maximum 3-MCPD content has been stipulated for soy sauce, the survey has revealed that it is in fact margarine and similar products that account for the most significant intake of this substance. Will the Commission accordingly lay down 3-MCPD content limits for margarine and similar products? If so, when? If not, what was the reasoning behind establishing limit values for soy sauce and not for margarine and similar products?

2. In setting limit values, will the Commission take special account of the eating habits of senior consumers, whose excessive 3-MCPD intake, according to EFSA findings, gives particular cause for concern?

3. The survey also shows that certain types of baby milk powder and follow-on formula contain high 3-MCPD concentrations. However, it gives daily intake figures for only two groups of babies. Does the Commission consider this sufficient to conclude that their intake does not exceed the safety limit?

4. In view of the high 3-MCPD content in baby milk powder and follow-on formula revealed by the survey, will the Commission seek to impose maximum limits in respect of these products?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(28 October 2013)

1. The EU maximum levels for 3-monochloropropane-1,2-diol (3-MCPD) established in 2001 ([1]) in soy sauce and hydrolysed vegetable protein relate to the free form of 3-MCPD. In edible refined plant oils and fats and margarine, the 3-MCPD is present in its bound form as 3-MCPD-esters. For the analysis of 3-MCPD-esters, a reliable analytical method was elaborated only a few years ago. Based on the current knowledge the oral bioavailability of 3-MCPD in the ester form is equivalent to the free form. In the EFSA ([2]) report, the ester and free form are therefore reported as total 3-MCPD.

2. A high level of human health protection is pursued for all groups of the population and specific consumption patterns are taken into account in the setting of maximum levels for a certain contaminant in food.

3 and 4. The data on powdered infant formula and follow-on formulae are so limited (respectively 1 and 2 analytical results) that the Commission considers it premature to draw firm conclusions as regards the potential risk for public health from these foodstuffs.

A monitoring programme will be established by the end of 2013 for the monitoring of the presence of the different forms of MCPD and the related glycidyl esters in foodstuffs, in particular in the foodstuffs identified in the EFSA report as a major contributor to the exposure to the different groups of the population. Furthermore, EFSA will be requested by the end of October 2013 to perform a comprehensive risk assessment on the presence of the different forms of MCPD and glycidyl esters in food. When the outcome of the monitoring programme and the risk assessment will be available, the Commission shall consider the appropriateness of setting maximum levels for these substances in certain foodstuffs.

([1]) Commission Regulation (EC) No 466/2001 replaced by Commission Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006 of 19 December 2006 setting maximum levels for certain contaminants in foodstuffs (OJ L 364, 20.12.2006, p. 5).
([2]) European Food Safety Authority.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011208/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(2 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ακριβό κόστος υπηρεσιών υγείας για τους Έλληνες πολίτες

Σύμφωνα με πρόσφατη έρευνα του ΟΟΣΑ, η Ελλάδα συγκαταλέγεται στις πρώτες θέσεις μεταξύ των χωρών με τις υψηλότερες κατά κεφαλήν ιδιωτικές δαπάνες υγείας σε σχέση με το εισόδημα των πολιτών. Χαρακτηριστικά, οι Έλληνες πολίτες δαπανούν το 4,76% του εισοδήματός τους για ιδιωτικές δαπάνες υγείας (ανεξάρτητα από τα ποσά που πληρώνουν μέσω φορολογίας και ασφαλιστικών εισφορών για την υγεία), ποσοστό που αντιστοιχεί, κατά μέσο όρο, σε 1 051 δολάρια.

Τα στοιχεία επίσης καταδεικνύουν ότι εκτός από τους Έλληνες πολίτες, δυσβάσταχτο είναι το κόστος της υγείας, εν μέσω κρίσης, και για τους Πορτογάλους, όπου κάθε πολίτης κατά μέσο όρο δαπανά από την τσέπη του το 3,13% του εισοδήματός του για την υγεία (631 δολάρια), τη στιγμή που στην Ολλανδία δαπανάται από τους πολίτες το 0,66%, στο Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο το 0,86% και στη Γαλλία το 0,93%.

Δεδομένου ότι στην Ελλάδα ο δημόσιος τομέας υγείας βρίσκεται σε συνεχή υποχώρηση (συγχωνεύσεις και κλείσιμο μεγάλων νοσοκομειακών μονάδων, εισιτήριο 25 ευρώ για εισαγωγή στα νοσοκομεία κ.ά.) και ο πολίτης επιβαρύνεται ολοένα και περισσότερο με πρόσθετες πληρωμές σε μια προσπάθεια εξασφάλισης ικανοποιητικών υπηρεσιών υγείας, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Πού οφείλονται οι τόσο μεγάλες αποκλίσεις στις κατά κεφαλήν ιδιωτικές δαπάνες υγείας μεταξύ των κρατών μελών;

2. Διαθέτει στοιχεία για τη σύνθεση της χρηματοδότησης του υγειονομικού τομέα στην Ελλάδα αλλά και στα υπόλοιπα κράτη μέλη (ποσοστό από δημόσια χρηματοδότηση, φορολογικά έσοδα, δαπάνες υγείας δημόσιων ασφαλιστικών ταμείων κ.ά.);

3. Σύμφωνα με στοιχεία που διαθέτει η Επιτροπή, ποιο το ποσοστό ικανοποίησης των χρηστών από τις δημόσιες υπηρεσίες υγείας σε κάθε κράτος μέλος ξεχωριστά; Ποια θέση κατέχει η Ελλάδα στην ΕΕ των 28; Υπάρχει συσχετισμός μεταξύ του χαμηλού βαθμού ικανοποίησης από τις δημόσιες υγειονομικές παροχές και της αύξησης των ιδιωτικών δαπανών υγείας στα κράτη μέλη;

4. Ισχύει σε άλλα κράτη μέλη οικονομική επιβάρυνση για την εισαγωγή των ασθενών σε νοσοκομειακές μονάδες, δεδομένου ότι, από 1ης Ιανουαρίου, οι Έλληνες πολίτες καλούνται να καταβάλλουν εισιτήριο ύψους 25 ευρώ για την εισαγωγή τους στα δημόσια νοσοκομεία;

Απάντηση του κ. Borg εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(20 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Οι αποκλίσεις ανάμεσα στα κράτη μέλη στις κατά κεφαλή ιδιωτικές δαπάνες υγείας μπορούν να οφείλονται σε πολλούς παράγοντες, από τους οποίους αναφέρονται ενδεικτικά: το ποσοστό του πληθυσμού που καλύπτεται από την παροχή δημόσιας ιατροφαρμακευτικής περίθαλψης, ο κατάλογος θεραπευτικών αγωγών που προσφέρονται από τη δημόσια ιατροφαρμακευτική περίθαλψη, ο όγκος της περίθαλψης που προσφέρεται και τα επίπεδα τιμών που εφαρμόζονται, τα οποία εξαρτώνται από το τοπικό κόστος εργασίας και το κόστος των ιατρικών βοηθημάτων και φαρμάκων.

Οι στατιστικές για τις δαπάνες των επιλεγμένων λειτουργιών ιατροφαρμακευτικής περίθαλψης με τη χρηματοδότηση φορέων στον τομέα της ιατροφαρμακευτικής περίθαλψης είναι διαθέσιμες από την Eurostat ως μέρος του συστήματος λογαριασμών για την υγεία (SHA) ([1]). Δυστυχώς, μέχρι σήμερα, τα δεδομένα του SHA για την Ελλάδα δεν έχουν δημοσιευθεί στον δικτυακό τόπο της Eurostat.

Μια έρευνα του Ευρωβαρομέτρου, μεταξύ άλλων, σχετικά με την ικανοποίηση των ασθενών από τις υπηρεσίες ιατροφαρμακευτικής περίθαλψης δημοσιεύθηκε το 2007 ([2]). Τα δεδομένα που συλλέχθηκαν είναι, συνεπώς, πολύ παλαιά για να αντικατοπτρίσουν τη σημερινή κατάσταση. Ωστόσο, αξίζει να σημειωθούν τα αποτελέσματά του. Οι ερωτήσεις σχετίζονταν με την εκλαμβανόμενη ποιότητα των υπηρεσιών ιατροφαρμακευτικής περίθαλψης και συμπεριελάμβαναν την ποιότητα των νοσοκομειακών υπηρεσιών, των οδοντιατρικών υπηρεσιών, των εξειδικευμένων και γενικών («οικογενειακών») ιατρών. Σε σύγκριση με τα σημερινά 28 κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ, η Ελλάδα κατατασσόταν σταθερά μεταξύ των τριών πρώτων χωρών με το υψηλότερο ποσοστό των ερωτηθέντων να διαπιστώνει ότι η ποιότητα των προαναφερομένων υπηρεσιών ήταν κακή.

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/health/public_health/data_public_health/database
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_283_en.pdf

Η Επιτροπή, επειδή δεν συγκέντρωσε δεδομένα σε διαχρονικό πλαίσιο, δεν είναι σε θέση να αξιολογήσει, με βάση αξιόπιστα στοιχεία, τον αντίκτυπο της «αύξησης των ιδιωτικών δαπανών για την υγεία» σε ικανοποιητικό επίπεδο.

Πολλά κράτη μέλη εφαρμόζουν μορφές επιμερισμού των δαπανών με τους ασθενείς σε νοσοκομεία συγκρίσιμες με αυτές που ανέφερε το αξιότιμο μέλος. Αυτό τεκμηριώνεται, για παράδειγμα, στο ευρωπαϊκό σύστημα αμοιβαίας πληροφόρησης για την κοινωνική προστασία (MISSOC) ([3]).

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=815&langId=en

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011208/13
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: The high cost of health services for Greek citizens

According to recent OECD research, Greece is among the countries with the highest per capita spending on private health compared to people's incomes. Typically, Greek citizens spend 4.76% of their income on private health (not including the amount they pay through taxation and health insurance contributions), which equates to USD 1 051 on average.

The data show that, in addition to the Greeks, the Portuguese are also finding health costs hard to bear in the midst of the crisis, as they are spending an average of 3.13% of their income on health (USD 631), while for the Netherlands the figure is 0.66%, for the United Kingdom 0.86% and for France 0.93%.

Given that the state health sector in Greece is in continuing decline (with mergers and closures of large hospitals, EUR 25 entry tickets for hospital admission, etc.), and people are increasingly burdened with additional payments to ensure adequate health services, will the Commission say:

1. What are the reasons for the large variations between Member States in per capita spending on private healthcare?

2. Does it have any data on the breakdown of health sector funding in Greece and the other Member States (the percentage from public funding, tax revenues, health expenditure by public insurance funds etc.)?

3. According to the Commission's data, what is the level of satisfaction of public health service users in each individual Member State? What is Greece's ranking in the EU-28? Is there a correlation between low levels of satisfaction with state health provision and increasing private health expenditure in the Member States?

4. Is a charge made for admission to hospital in other Member States, given that Greek citizens will be required from 1 January to pay EUR 25 for admission to state hospitals?

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

Variations between Member States in per capita spending on private healthcare can be attributed to many factors, to name but a few: rate of population covered by public healthcare, the list of treatments offered under public healthcare, the volume of care provided and applicable price levels, themselves depending upon local cost of labour and costs for medical devices and medicinal products.

Statistics on expenditure of selected healthcare functions by financing agents in healthcare are available from Eurostat as part of the System of Health Accounts (SHA) ([1]). Unfortunately, to date, no SHA data for Greece have been published on the Eurostat website.

A Eurobarometer enquiry, *inter alia*, about patient satisfaction with healthcare services was published in 2007 ([2]). Data collected are therefore too old to reflect the current situation. It is however worth noting its results. The questions related to the perceived quality of healthcare services and included the quality of hospital services, dental services, specialist and generalist ('family') physicians. Compared to the current 28 EU Member States, Greece ranked consistently among the top three countries with the highest rates of respondents finding the quality of aforementioned services to be bad.

As the Commission has not collected data in a longitudinal framework, it is not in a position to assess, based upon reliable evidence, the impact of 'increasing private health expenditure' on the level of satisfaction.

Several Member States apply forms of cost sharing for patients in hospital comparable to that mentioned by the Honourable Member. This is, for instance, documented in the EU's Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC) ([3]).

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/health/public_health/data_public_health/database
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_283_en.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=815&langId=en

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011209/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE) και Marietta Giannakou (PPE)
(2 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Προθέσεις βορείων χωρών για πρόταση θέσπισης καθεστώτος διακρίσεων κατά των εργαζομένων του ευρωπαϊκού νότου στο πλαίσιο της κινητικότητας

Δημοσιεύματα τόσο στον ευρωπαϊκό όσο και στον ελληνικό τύπο αναφέρουν ότι το Σώμα των Επιτρόπων ενημερώθηκε για τις προθέσεις κάποιων βόρειων χωρών της ΕΕ να προχωρήσουν στην κατάθεση πρότασης προς την Επιτροπή ώστε να υιοθετηθούν περιορισμοί (π.χ. αριθμητικοί) αναφορικά με τη δυνατότητα μετακίνησης και πρόσβασης σε αγορές εργασίας της ενωσιακής επικράτειας των ευρωπαίων πολιτών που προέρχονται από τα κράτη μέλη του Νότου. Σε αυτήν την περίπτωση, είναι σαφές πως στο στόχαστρο των περιορισμών αυτών τίθενται οι χειμαζόμενοι από την κρίση λαοί του ευρωπαϊκού Νότου, στις χώρες των οποίων παρουσιάζονται τα υψηλότερα ποσοστά ανεργίας, ύφεσης και συρρίκνωσης της απασχόλησης, ενώ ταυτόχρονα ενδεχόμενη εφαρμογή τους θα ισοδυναμούσε με έντονη όξυνση των ήδη υφισταμένων γεωγραφικών ανισοτήτων. Δεδομένου ότι η ίδια η Επιτροπή έθεσε την κινητικότητα των εργαζομένων, μεταξύ άλλων, στο επίκεντρο των πολιτικών της, με σκοπό την καταπολέμηση της ανεργίας, την ενίσχυση της ανταγωνιστικότητας και την αύξηση της οικονομικής ανάπτυξης της ΕΕ υπό το πρίσμα και της ενιαίας αγοράς, ερωτάται:

1. Πώς ξεκίνησε η εν λόγω συζήτηση; Συνάδουν τέτοιες απόψεις με τις αρχές και τις αξίες, τους κανόνες λειτουργίας αλλά και τους μελλοντικούς στόχους της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης;

2. Πώς τοποθετείται η Επιτροπή επ' αυτού; Ποιες πρωτοβουλίες πρόκειται να αναλάβει προκειμένου να διαφυλαχθούν τα δικαιώματα των ευρωπαίων εργαζομένων εντός της ΕΕ, όπως αυτό της ελεύθερης κυκλοφορίας;

3. Προτίθεται να προβεί σε σχετικές συστάσεις με σκοπό να αποσοβηθούν τυχόν προσκόμματα στην ελεύθερη κυκλοφορία των εργαζομένων, γεγονός που μπορεί να πλήξει σημαντικά, αφενός, την οικονομική δραστηριότητα σε επίπεδο ΕΕ και, αφετέρου, την κοινωνική συνοχή;

4. Επεξεργάζεται κάποιο δυναμικό και ηχηρό τρόπο προκειμένου να αποσαφηνιστεί — προς πάσα κατεύθυνση — ο αδιαπραγμάτευτος χαρακτήρας της ελεύθερης και ανεμπόδιστης μετακίνησης των πολιτών της ΕΕ εντός των συνόρων της;

5. Πώς σχολιάζει το γεγονός ότι, ιδιαίτερα μέσα σε αυτή τη δυσμενή κοινωνικοοικονομική συγκυρία, προτάσεις με αυτό το περιεχόμενο τροφοδοτούν τον ευρωσκεπτικισμό στα κράτη μέλη και στρέφονται ενάντια σε κάθε εγχείρημα οικοδόμησης μιας στέρεης και αλληλέγγυας Πολιτικής και Κοινωνικής Ένωσης;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(22 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει τον κ. βουλευτή στις απαντήσεις που έδωσε στις ερωτήσεις E-9726/2013 και E-9848/2013 σχετικά με παρόμοια υπόθεση.

Σε ό,τι αφορά τη λήψη περαιτέρω μέτρων προκειμένου να εξαλειφθούν τα εμπόδια στην ελεύθερη κυκλοφορία των εργαζομένων και να ενθαρρυνθεί η κινητικότητα εντός της ΕΕ, η Επιτροπή, σύμφωνα με το πρόγραμμα εργασίας του 2013, θα υποβάλει πρόταση για την αναβάθμιση του δικτύου EURES με στόχο την ενίσχυση της διακρατικής αντιστοίχισης προσφοράς και ζήτησης εργασίας και των υπηρεσιών τοποθέτησης και πρόσληψης. Επιπλέον, το 2014 η Επιτροπή θα υποβάλει δέσμη μέτρων για την κινητικότητα στην εργασία, με μια σειρά στοιχείων που αποσκοπούν στην ενθάρρυνση της κινητικότητας του εργατικού δυναμικού μεταξύ των κρατών μελών.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011209/13
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE) and Marietta Giannakou (PPE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Intention of the northern countries to propose establishing a discriminatory regime against workers from the European South within the mobility framework

European and Greek press articles report that the College of Commissioners has been informed about the intentions of some northern countries of the EU to submit a proposal to the Commission for the adoption of restrictions (e.g. of a numerical nature) on mobility and access to EU job markets for European citizens originating from the Member States of the South. It is clear that these restrictions target people from the European South who are affected by the crisis, and whose countries are seeing the highest unemployment rates, along with recession and shrinking employment, and that any implementation of these restrictions would only intensify the geographical inequalities that already exist. Given that the Commission has placed worker mobility, among other things, at the centre of its policies, with a view to combating unemployment, strengthening competitiveness and boosting the economic development of the EU through the single market, will it say:

1. How did the above discussion start? Do these viewpoints comply with the principles, values, operational rules and future objectives of the European Union?

2. What is the Commission's position on this matter? What steps does it intend to take to safeguard European workers' rights within the EU, such as the right to freedom of movement?

3. Does it intend to proceed with recommendations aiming to remove any barriers to the free movement of workers, which could have a considerable effect on economic activity at EU level, and also on social cohesion?

4. Is it looking for a dynamic and resounding way of making clear — to all parties — the non-negotiable nature of the free and unhindered movement of EU citizens within the borders of the EU?

5. What does it have to say about the fact that proposals of this kind encourage euroscepticism in the Member States — particularly in these difficult social and economic circumstances — and work against any attempt to build a firm Political and Social Union based on solidarity?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2013)

The Honourable Member is referred to the replies the Commission gave to Questions E-9726/2013 and E-9848/2013 on a similar matter.

In terms of taking further steps to remove barriers to the free movement of workers and to encourage intra-EU mobility, the Commission will, in accordance with its 2013 Work Programme, present a proposal to upgrade the EURES network with a view to strengthening its transnational matching, placement and recruitment services. In addition, in 2014 the Commission will present a labour mobility package, with a range of elements designed to encourage labour mobility between Member States.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011210/13
προς το Συμβούλιο
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(2 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ολοκληρωμένη ευρωπαϊκή χρηματοπιστωτική αγορά και ανισορροπίες

Σε πρόσφατες δηλώσεις ([1]) του μέλους του Διοικητικού Συμβουλίου της ΕΚΤ, κ. Yves Mersch, κατά το διάστημα 2005-2012 ο μέσος ετήσιος αριθμός τραπεζικών συγχωνεύσεων και εξαγορών στις ΗΠΑ ήταν 343, όταν στην ΕΕ ο αντίστοιχος αριθμός ήταν 58, ενώ ο δείκτης τιμής προς την εσωτερική λογιστική αξία μετοχής (price-to-book ratio) στις τράπεζες εκτός ευρωζώνης είναι 1, όταν στις τράπεζες της ευρωζώνης είναι 0,7, καταδεικνύοντας με αυτά τα στοιχεία πόσο μακριά παραμένει η Ευρώπη από μία πλήρως ολοκληρωμένη χρηματοπιστωτική αγορά, αλλά και ένα ταχύτερο ρυθμό αναδιάρθρωσης των τραπεζών εκτός ευρωζώνης. Ο κ. Mersch επίσης εξέφρασε την άποψη πως, παρά την πρόοδο που εισάγει η οδηγία ([2]) για την ανάκαμψη και την εξυγίανση πιστωτικών ιδρυμάτων και επιχειρήσεων επενδύσεων, η ευχέρεια που παρέχεται στις εθνικές αρχές για την απαλλαγή ορισμένων κατηγοριών υποχρεώσεων στο πλαίσιο διάσωσης με ίδια μέσα, δεν συμβάλλει στη δημιουργία ενός ενιαίου συστήματος. Για το λόγο αυτό, ερωτάται το Συμβούλιο της ΕΕ:

1. Πώς αντιμετωπίζει τις παραπάνω εκτιμήσεις για τις αδυναμίες που εντοπίζονται σχετικά με τη δημιουργία ενός ενιαίου συστήματος;

2. Διαθέτει εκτιμήσεις για πιθανές ανισορροπίες που μπορούν να δημιουργηθούν σε επίπεδο εθνικών χρηματοπιστωτικών συστημάτων και σε ποιες χώρες;

3. Θεωρεί πως θα πρέπει να υπάρξουν κίνητρα και δικλίδες ασφαλείας προκειμένου να προστατευθούν τα πιο ευάλωτα εθνικά χρηματοπιστωτικά συστήματα;

Απάντηση
(16 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Το Συμβούλιο έχει επανειλημμένα τονίσει τη σημασία της μεταρρύθμισης του χρηματοπιστωτικού τομέα και της εφαρμογής της Τραπεζικής Ένωσης για την αποφυγή του κατακερματισμού της αγοράς και τη διασφάλιση μιας πλήρως ενοποιημένης χρηματοπιστωτικής αγοράς στην ΕΕ.

Τον Μάρτιο του 2013 (EUCO 23/13), το Ευρωπαϊκό Συμβούλιο τόνισε ότι η πορεία προς ένα περισσότερο ενοποιημένο χρηματοπιστωτικό πλαίσιο ήταν επιτακτική. Τον Ιούνιο του 2013 (EUCO 104/2/13 REV2), υπογράμμισε ότι, βραχυπρόθεσμα, βασική προτεραιότητα είναι η ολοκλήρωση της Τραπεζικής Ένωσης σύμφωνα με τα συμπεράσματα του Δεκεμβρίου 2012 (EUCO 205/12) και του Μαρτίου 2013, καθώς και ότι οι νέοι κανόνες περί κεφαλαιακών απαιτήσεων για τις τράπεζες (CRR/CRD) και ο νέος Ενιαίος Εποπτικός Μηχανισμός (ΕΕΜ) έχουν κεντρικό ρόλο στη διασφάλιση της σταθερότητας του τραπεζικού τομέα. Ανέφερε επίσης ότι κατά τη μετάβαση προς τον ΕΕΜ θα διενεργηθεί αξιολόγηση των ισολογισμών, που θα περιλαμβάνει επισκόπηση της ποιότητας των στοιχείων ενεργητικού και, εν συνεχεία, προσομοίωση ακραίων καταστάσεων. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, τον Οκτώβριο του 2013 (EUCO 169/13), υπενθύμισε ότι, για τα κράτη μέλη που συμμετέχουν στον ΕΕΜ, επείγει να διαμορφωθεί συντονισμένη ευρωπαϊκή προσέγγιση ενόψει της συνολικής αξιολόγησης των πιστωτικών ιδρυμάτων από την Ευρωπαϊκή Κεντρική Τράπεζα. Επίσης, απηύθυνε έκκληση στην Ευρωομάδα να διατυπώσει οριστικά τις κατευθυντήριες γραμμές για την άμεση ανακεφαλαιοποίηση στο πλαίσιο του Ευρωπαϊκού Μηχανισμού Σταθερότητας (ΕΜΣ), προκειμένου να καταστεί δυνατή η άμεση ανακεφαλαιοποίηση των τραπεζών, κατόπιν της θέσπισης του ΕΕΜ. Επιπλέον, σημείωσε ότι για την ολοκλήρωση της Τραπεζικής Ένωσης απαιτείται όχι μόνο ένας ΕΕΜ, αλλά και ένας Ενιαίος Μηχανισμός Εξυγίανσης (ΕΜΕ). Απηύθυνε έκκληση στους νομοθέτες να ενστερνιστούν την οδηγία για την ανάκαμψη και την εξυγίανση των τραπεζών (BRRD) και την οδηγία για την εγγύηση των καταθέσεων έως το τέλος του έτους, ενώ επίσης υπογράμμισε την ανάγκη ευθυγράμμισης του ΕΜΕ και της οδηγίας για την ανάκαμψη και την εξυγίανση των τραπεζών κατά την τελική τους διατύπωση, παράλληλα με τη δέσμευση του Συμβουλίου να συμφωνήσει επί γενικής προσέγγισης σχετικά με την πρόταση της Επιτροπής για έναν ΕΜΕ έως το τέλος του έτους, προκειμένου να καταστεί δυνατή η θέσπισή του πριν από το τέλος της τρέχουσας νομοθετικής περιόδου.

([1]) http://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/key/date/2013/html/sp130926.en.html#
([2]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ecofin/137627.pdf

Τα ερωτήματα που ήγειρε το αξιότιμο μέλος αφορούν κυρίως θέματα που άπτονται της οδηγίας για την ανάκαμψη και την εξυγίανση των τραπεζών και του ΕΜΕ. Η οδηγία για την ανάκαμψη και την εξυγίανση των τραπεζών παρουσιάστηκε από την Επιτροπή στις 6 Ιουνίου 2012 και ο ΕΜΕ στις 10 Ιουλίου 2013. Η οδηγία για την ανάκαμψη και την εξυγίανση των τραπεζών εναρμονίζει τα απαραίτητα βήματα και τις αρμοδιότητες ώστε να διασφαλίζεται ότι η διαχείριση των πτωχεύσεων των τραπεζών ανά την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση γίνεται κατά τρόπο που αποκλείει τη χρηματοπιστωτική αστάθεια και ελαχιστοποιεί τις δαπάνες για τους φορολογούμενους. Σκοπός του ΕΜΕ είναι να συγκεντρώσει βασικές αρμοδιότητες και πόρους για τη διαχείριση της πτώχευσης οιασδήποτε τράπεζας στην ευρωζώνη και σε άλλα κράτη μέλη που συμμετέχουν στην Τραπεζική Ένωση. Αμφότεροι οι φάκελοι έχουν ύψιστη προτεραιότητα για το Συμβούλιο.

Η οδηγία για την ανάκαμψη και την εξυγίανση των τραπεζών εξετάζεται επί του παρόντος στο πλαίσιο του τριμερούς διαλόγου μεταξύ των συννομοθετών, με σκοπό την επίτευξη συμφωνίας σε πρώτη ανάγνωση. Το Συμβούλιο εξετάζει επί του παρόντος την πρόταση για τον ΕΜΕ, με σκοπό την ανάθεση εντολής προς την Προεδρία προκειμένου να διαπραγματευτεί με το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο επιδιώκοντας την επίτευξη συμφωνίας σε πρώτη ανάγνωση.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011210/13
to the Council
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Imbalances in the integrated European financial market

According to recent statements ([1])from Yves Mersch, a member of the European Central Bank's Governing Council, the average number of bank mergers and acquisitions per year in the US between 2005 and 2012 was 343, whilst the yearly average in the EU was 58. At the same time, the price-to-book ratio for banks outside the eurozone is 1, whilst for banks in the eurozone it is 0.7. This data show how far Europe still is from a totally integrated financial market, and how much faster the rate of bank restructuring is outside the eurozone. Mr Mersch also expressed the view that, despite progress over the directive ([2])on the recovery and resolution of credit institutions and investment firms, the discretion provided to national authorities to exempt certain classes of liabilities within the framework of a bail-in does not contribute to the creation of a single system. Therefore, will the Council answer the following:

1. How does it view these weaknesses that have been identified in relation to the establishment of a single system?

2. Does it have any estimates as to the potential imbalances that may arise at the level of national credit systems, and if so, for which countries?

3. Does it believe that incentives and safety valves are required in order to protect the most vulnerable national credit systems?

Reply
(16 December 2013)

The Council has repeatedly stressed the importance of the reform of the financial sector and the implementation of the Banking Union to prevent market fragmentation and to ensure a fully integrated financial market in the EU.

In March 2013, (EUCO 23/13), the European Council stressed that progress towards a more integrated financial framework was urgently needed. In June 2013 (EUCO 104/2/13 REV2), it noted that, in the short term, the key priority was to complete the Banking Union in line with its conclusions of December 2012 (EUCO 205/12) and March 2013 and that the new rules on capital requirements for banks (CRR/CRD) and the new Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM) would have a key role in ensuring the stability of the banking sector. It also announced that during the transition towards the SSM, a balance sheet assessment would be conducted comprising an asset quality review and subsequently a stress test. In that context, in October 2013 (EUCO 169/13), it recalled the urgent need for the Member States taking part in the SSM to establish a coordinated European approach in preparation for the comprehensive assessment of credit institutions by the European Central Bank. It also called on the Eurogroup to finalise guidelines for European Stability Mechanism (ESM) direct recapitalisation so as to enable it to recapitalise banks directly, following the establishment of the SSM. Furthermore, it noted that the completion of the Banking Union required not only a SSM but also a Single Resolution Mechanism (SRM). It called on the legislators to adopt the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD) and the Deposit Guarantee Directive by the end of the year, and underlined the need to align the SRM and the BRRD as finally adopted, as well as the Council's undertaking to agree on a general approach on the Commission's proposal for a SRM by the end of the year in order to enable it to be adopted before the end of the current legislative period.

The questions raised by the Honourable Member concern in particular issues relating to the BRRD and the SRM. The BRRD was presented by the Commission on 6 June 2012 and the SRM on 10 July 2103. The BRRD harmonises the necessary steps and powers to ensure that bank failures across the European Union are managed in a way which avoids financial instability and minimises costs for taxpayers. The SRM aims to centralise key competences and resources for managing the failure of any bank in the Euro Area and in other Member States participating in the Banking Union. The Council attaches top priority to both those dossiers.

The BRRD is currently being examined as part of the trilogue process between the co-legislators with a view to reaching an agreement at first reading. The Council is currently examining the SRM proposal with a view to establishing a mandate for the Presidency to negotiate with the European Parliament with a view to reaching an agreement at first reading.

([1]) http://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/key/date/2013/html/sp130926.en.html#
([2]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ecofin/137627.pdf

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-011211/13
Komisi
Jan Březina (PPE)
(2. října 2013)

Předmět: Návrh Komise týkající se rostlinných odrůd

Podle návrhu, který před nedávnem předložila Komise, budou muset být rostlinné odrůdy zapsány v novém oficiálním rejstříku rostlin a každá bude mít svůj vlastní oficiální popis.

1. Jaká motivace a důvody stojí za tímto návrhem? Jaký cíl svým návrhem Komise sleduje?

2. Provedla Komise posouzení dopadu zahrnující kalkulaci průměrných nákladů na popsání a registraci každé rostliny?

Odpověď pana Borga jménem Komise
(21. listopadu 2013)

Návrh Komise ohledně produkce rozmnožovacího materiálu rostlin a jeho dodávání na trh obsahuje ustanovení o zřízení národních registrů odrůd rostlin a registru odrůd rostlin Unie (články 51 a 52). Odrůdy přibližně 150 druhů uvedených na seznamu musí být registrovány a uvedeny na seznamu.

1. Ustanovení týkající se vnitrostátních a unijních registrů aktualizují zavedený systém, který je v platnosti v Evropské unii od roku 1970 a v mnoha evropských zemích od počátku 20. století. Například Německo přijalo první zákon o osivu, který zahrnoval registraci odrůd, v roce 1929. Seznamy odrůd mají umožnit uživatelům odrůd informované rozhodování a dále zajistit pro zemědělce a zahrádkáře vysoce kvalitní osivo a sadbu odolných a výnosných odrůd.

2. Posouzení dopadů připojené k návrhu obsahuje odhad celkových nákladů na registraci odrůd v Evropské unii (přibližně 55–60 milionů EUR za rok) a poskytuje v příloze XIV podrobnější informace o struktuře nákladů na registraci. Náklady na registraci se liší podle typu druhu (obiloviny, zelenina, traviny atd.) a mezi členskými státy. Tyto náklady jsou součástí referenční úrovně, s níž se srovnávají možnosti politiky analyzované v posouzení dopadů.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011211/13
to the Commission
Jan Březina (PPE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Commission proposal on plant varieties

According to a recent Commission proposal, plant varieties will have to be listed in a new official plant register and each will be given its own official description.

1. What is the motivation and reasoning behind this proposal? What aim does the Commission seek to pursue with this proposal?

2. Has the Commission provided an impact assessment including calculations of the average cost of describing and registering each plant?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The Commission proposal on the production and making available on the market of plant reproductive material includes provisions for the establishment of national and Union registers of plant varieties (Articles 51 and 52). The varieties of approximately 150 listed species need to be registered and listed.

1. The provisions concerning national and Union registers are an update of an established system that has been in force in the European Union since 1970 and in many European countries since the early 20th century. For example, Germany passed the first seed law that included variety registration in 1929. Variety lists serve to offer informed choices to the users of the varieties, and further ensure the provision of high quality seed and planting material of resistant and high performance varieties for farmers and horticulturists.

2. The Impact Assessment accompanying the proposal includes an estimate of the total cost of variety registration in the European Union (approximately EUR 55-60 million per year) and provides in Annex XIV more detailed information on the cost structure of registration. The costs of registration differ between type of species (cereal, vegetable, grass etc.) and between Member States. These costs are parts of the baseline against which the policy options analysed in the impact assessment are compared to.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011212/13
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: VAT on domestic fuel

Could the Commission confirm that a Member State must seek permission to reduce the level of VAT on domestic fuel? What is the minimum VAT level for the UK?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(12 November 2013)

Under the current EU VAT legislation adopted unanimously by Member States ([1]), Member States must apply a standard VAT rate, which may not be less than 15% and may also apply one or two reduced VAT rates of no less than 5% to supplies of goods and services referred to in Annex III to the VAT Directive. Heating fuel is not covered by this Annex and therefore, the standard rate should apply. There is no procedure authorising Member States to depart from these rules.

However, these simple rules are complicated by a multitude of derogations granted to certain Member States until the adoption of EU definitive VAT arrangements. These derogations were granted during the negotiations preceding the adoption of the rules on VAT rates or in the Acts of Accession to the European Union. Some Member States, like the UK, have been granted specific temporary derogations which enable them to apply a reduced VAT rate to heating oil, coal, and similar products.

Based on the information available to the Commission, the UK currently applies a reduced VAT rate of 5% to heating oil for domestic and residential use or for non-business use by a charity whereas the standard rate of 20% applies to fuel for business use.

([1]) Council Directive 2006/112/EC of 28 November 2006 — OJ L 347, 11.12.2006, p. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011213/13
to the Commission
David Martin (S&D)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Role of environmental assessment concerning Rosyth international container terminal

Is the Commission aware of an application being made for a new container terminal at Rosyth, Scotland? Some doubts have been raised over the decision-making process for this terminal, most specifically as regards the role and timing of an environmental impact assessment in the process.

Could the Commission clarify at what stage potential environmental impacts should be considered in this type of planning application? Is considering environmental impacts after the principle of the project has been approved compliant with European law?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(14 November 2013)

The Commission is aware of the application submitted for the new container terminal in Rosyth, Scotland. It has registered a complaint on the same matter and it intends to ask the UK national authorities as to how compliance with the EIA Directive ([1]) and the Habitats Directive ([2]) will be ensured in relation to this container project.

In accordance with the EIA Directive, before consent is given, projects likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue, *inter alia*, of their nature, size or location should be made subject to a requirement for development consent and an assessment with regard to their effects.

The EIA Directive foresees in Article 1(4) the possibility that the directive does not apply to projects adopted by a specific act of national legislation. As the national authorities decided to apply this provision for the container terminal in Rosyth, a draft of a special order (The Rosyth International Container Terminal Order 2013) has been tabled to the Scottish Parliament. In this case and according to the relevant case law, the Member State must ensure the achievement of the objectives pursued by the EIA Directive. This includes the provision that the information available to the parliament at the time, when the details of the projects were approved, was equivalent to that which would have been submitted to the competent authorities in an ordinary procedure.

([1]) Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, OJ L 26, 28.1.2012.
([2]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011214/13
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE)
(2 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Limiti per le aflatossine nel mais

Anche nel 2013, il mais coltivato in Italia risulta attaccato dalle aflatossine e pertanto inadatto alla commercializzazione. I parametri stabiliti dalla direttiva 2003/100/CE, pedissequamente trasposti nel decreto legge 149/2004, risultano essere piuttosto restrittivi, alla luce della presenza registrata nel mais coltivato nella pianura padana.

Si aggiunga che per le autorità statunitensi il limite, in alcuni casi, può superare di 15 volte quello europeo (vedasi il *Food Safety Modernization Act*).

In virtù del danno economico subito dagli agricoltori, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. quali rischi si correrebbero per la salute degli animali e, in ultima analisi, dell'uomo se il limite fosse più elevato?

2. È prevista una forma di indennizzo per gli agricoltori il cui raccolto è colpito da questo microfungo?

3. Cosa intende fare la Commissione, considerando che tale misura avvantaggia il commercio delle carni dei paesi in cui tali limiti sono maggiori?

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

1. Le aflatossine sono agenti cancerogeni genotossici. Numerose relazioni sulla valutazione dei rischi permettono di concludere che anche livelli molto bassi di esposizione alle aflatossine contribuiscono al rischio di tumore del fegato. Qualsiasi possibile aumento del livello massimo di aflatossine nel mais, anche su base temporanea, può essere preso in considerazione unicamente dopo che una valutazione globale del rischio, effettuata dall'Autorità europea per la sicurezza alimentare (EFSA), abbia dimostrato che tale aumento del livello massimo di aflatossine nel mais non comporta un incremento inaccettabile del rischio per la sanità pubblica e animale.

2. Non è previsto alcun indennizzo a livello UE per gli agricoltori il cui mais sia contaminato da aflatossine.

3. La Commissione non dispone di informazioni che indichino che le norme rigorose in materia di aflatossine negli alimenti e nei mangimi nell'UE si traducono in uno svantaggio competitivo per il settore della produzione di carni nell'UE rispetto a quanto accade per i paesi al di fuori dell'UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011214/13
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Aflatoxin levels in maize

This year, maize grown in Italy has once again been contaminated with aflatoxins, which make it unfit for sale. The limits set in Commission Directive 2003/100/CE and faithfully transposed by means of Decree-law 149/2004 are too restrictive, as is clear from the levels of aflatoxins recorded in maize grown in the Po valley.

Furthermore, in some cases, US limits are 15 times higher than those in Europe (see the *Food Safety Modernization Act*).

In light of the losses farmers have suffered, can the Commission say:

1. what health risks would there be for animals and, ultimately, for humans if the limit were to be raised?

2. whether farmers whose maize is affected by this microfungus will receive any form of compensation?

3. what action it intends to take in this matter, not least in view of the fact that the current rules give an advantage to the meat industries of countries which have higher limits?

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

1. Aflatoxins are genotoxic carcinogens. From many reports on risk assessment, it can be concluded that even very low levels of exposure to aflatoxins still contribute to the risk of liver cancer. Any possible increase of the maximum level for aflatoxins in maize, even on a temporary basis, can only be considered after a comprehensive risk assessment, performed by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), has demonstrated that such an increase of the maximum level in maize would not result in an unacceptable increase of animal and public health risk.

2. No compensation is foreseen at EU level for farmers whose maize is contaminated with aflatoxins.

3. The Commission has no information that the strict rules on aflatoxins in feed and food in the EU result in a competitive disadvantage of the EU meat production compared to the meat production in countries outside the EU.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011215/13
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE)
(2 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Coordinamento della vigilanza bancaria

Secondo quanto votato durante la scorsa plenaria, la Banca centrale europea assumerà presto il compito di effettuare la vigilanza prudenziale.

In vista dell'elaborazione definitiva delle norme, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. quali norme regolano, oggi, la cooperazione fra le autorità nazionali di vigilanza bancaria nel caso di gruppi presenti in più Stati membri?

2. In particolare, quali misure sono previste, nel caso in cui un istituto di credito abbia problemi di liquidità o di solvibilità in uno Stato membro, a tutela dei clienti degli altri istituti facenti capo allo stesso gruppo in altri paesi dell'UE?

3. Quale orientamento ha la Commissione per quanto riguarda la nuova normativa in materia di problemi gestionali di enti creditizi presenti in un solo Stato?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(5 dicembre 2013)

Il regolamento (UE) n. 1024/2013 del Consiglio, del 15 ottobre 2013, che attribuisce alla Banca centrale europea compiti specifici in merito alle politiche in materia di vigilanza prudenziale degli enti creditizi ([1]) conferisce e affida alla BCE poteri e compiti fondamentali di vigilanza sugli enti creditizi negli Stati membri partecipanti. La BCE eserciterà i poteri conferitile dalle norme applicabili del diritto dell'Unione, vale a dire, in particolare, le norme del pacchetto CRD4 composto dal regolamento ([2]) e dalla direttiva ([3]) sui requisiti patrimoniali.

Il diritto dell'Unione impone all'autorità di vigilanza dello Stato membro d'origine e alle autorità di vigilanza degli Stati membri ospitanti in cui l'ente creditizio stabilisce filiazioni o succursali, oppure presta servizi transfrontalieri, di coordinarsi nelle rispettive azioni. Tutte le autorità di vigilanza competenti delle filiazioni di un gruppo bancario si riuniscono in collegi delle autorità di vigilanza.

Al coordinamento fra la BCE e le autorità di vigilanza degli Stati membri non partecipanti continueranno ad applicarsi le vigenti procedure sugli Stati d'origine e ospitanti e i collegi. Nella misura in cui le sono trasferiti compiti di vigilanza, la BCE eserciterà negli Stati membri partecipanti le funzioni di autorità dello Stato d'origine o dello Stato ospitante e le nuove modalità andranno a sostituire sia le vigenti procedure sugli Stati d'origine e ospitanti sia i collegi delle autorità di vigilanza.

La vigilanza rigorosa e imparziale della BCE dovrebbe rafforzare la stabilità degli enti creditizi e del sistema finanziario e tutelare quindi depositanti e clienti. Il quadro normativo comune a tutela dei depositi nel mercato unico risulterà ulteriormente potenziato con la direttiva sui sistemi di garanzia dei depositi, la cui proposta è attualmente in discussione.

Il pacchetto CRD4 rafforzerà la capitalizzazione e la governance interna degli enti creditizi ([4]).

([1]) GU L 287 del 29.10.2013, pag. 63.
([2]) Regolamento (UE) n. 575/2013 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 26 giugno 2013, relativo ai requisiti prudenziali per gli enti creditizi e le imprese di investimento e che modifica il regolamento (UE) n. 648/2012.
([3]) Direttiva 2013/36/UE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 26 giugno 2013, sull'accesso all'attività degli enti creditizi e sulla vigilanza prudenziale sugli enti creditizi e sulle imprese di investimento, che modifica la direttiva 2002/87/CE e abroga le direttive 2006/48/CE e 2006/49/CE.
([4]) Ad es., obblighi in materia di remunerazione, gestione dei rischi, organo di amministrazione, trasparenza.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011215/13
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Coordination of banking supervision

On the basis of a vote held during the last part-session, the European Central Bank will soon be taking on the task of prudential supervision.

In order to finalise the rules, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. what rules currently govern cooperation between national banking supervision authorities in the event of groups operating in more than one Member State;

2. in particular, in the event that a credit institution has liquidity or solvency problems in one Member State, what measures are envisaged to protect customers of the other institutions of the same group in other EU countries;

3. what is the Commission's position on the new legislation on the managerial issues of credit institutions operating in a single State?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2013)

Council Regulation (EU) No 1024/2013 of 15 October 2013 conferring specific tasks on the European Central Bank concerning policies relating to the prudential supervision of credit institutions ([1]) entrusts the ECB with key tasks and powers for the supervision of credit institutions in participating Member States (MS). The ECB will apply the powers granted under applicable Union law, i.e. in particular those foreseen in the CRD IV package consisting of the Capital Requirement Regulation ([2]) and the Capital Requirement Directive ([3]).

Under EC law the home supervisor and the host supervisors of other MS where a credit institutions establishes branches, subsidiaries or provides cross-border services have to coordinate their action. Colleges of supervisors bring together all supervisors responsible for subsidiaries in a banking group.

As regards the coordination between the ECB and supervisors in non-participating MS, existing home/host procedures and colleges will continue to exist. To the extent that the ECB has taken over supervisory tasks, it will carry out the functions of the home/host supervisor in participating MS. Within participating MS, the new arrangements will substitute the existing home/host procedures and the colleges.

Strict and impartial supervision by the ECB should strengthen the stability of credit institutions and the financial system, thereby ensuring the protection of depositors and customers. In addition, the currently negotiated proposal for the Deposit Guarantee Schemes Directive will further strengthen the common framework for rules protecting deposits across the single market.

The CRD IV package will strengthen the capitalisation and the internal governance of credit institutions ([4]).

([1]) OJ L287 p. 63.
([2]) Regulation No 575/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 26 June 2013 on prudential requirements for credit institutions and investment firms and amending Regulation (EU) No 648/2012.
([3]) Directive 2013/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on access to the activity of credit institutions and the prudential supervision of credit institutions and investment firms, amending Directive 2002/87/EC and repealing Directives 2006/48/EC and 2006/49/EC.
([4]) E.g. remuneration requirements, risk management, management body, transparency.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011217/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: EU position on exploiting Arctic resources

The Russian Government was expected to discuss the exploitation of Arctic resources when it meets with its Finnish and Icelandic counterparts on Wednesday 25 September 2013.

Has the Commission been monitoring the outcome of these talks? What is the Commission's position on the exploitation of resources from the Arctic?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

The meeting referred to is the Third International Arctic Forum that was organised by the Russian Geographical Society and that took place in Salekhard on September 24 and 25. The main subject of the forum was 'ecological security in the exploration and use of the Arctic's natural resources'. The Commission was not invited to this forum, although the European Environment Agency was present at this meeting.

The Commission's position on the exploitation of resources from the Arctic is laid out in the joint Communication on 'Developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region'. ([1]) First of all, it is important that the views of Arctic inhabitants are taken into account on issues of economic development. Given the Arctic's fragile environment, any exploitation of both natural and mineral resources should be managed with utmost care. The Arctic states and the EU have a shared interest in ensuring that the Arctic's natural resources both on land, at sea and at or below the sea-bed are utilised in a sustainable manner that does not compromise the Arctic environment and benefits local communities.

([1]) JOIN(2012) 19 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011220/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: EU-US travel arrangements

Currently US citizens are afforded the right to travel anywhere in the EU for tourism or business for up to 90 days without a visa. Citizens from 23 of the 28 EU Member States do not require a visa for the USA; however, they must pay USD 14 for an Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) application, whilst citizens from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Poland and Croatia must pay USD 160 for a business or tourism visa.

Why is there no reciprocal arrangement between the EU Member States and the US on this matter? Will it be addressed during the ongoing talks between the US and the EU?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(13 November 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 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 JHA Ministerial meeting and of every EU-US JHA Senior Officials' Meeting. The next Ministerial meeting will take place on 18 November 2013 in Washington.

In this context the Commission follows with great interest the progress made by the US in adopting the new immigration legislation, and especially the provisions permitting expansion of the US VWP by introducing a new way of calculating the visa refusal rate and the possibility for the Secretary of the 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 this opportunity to enquire about the state of play and perspectives of the adoption of the new migration legislation.

Without prejudice to its statement made in the Plenary on 11 September 2013, the Commission will examine any new and the existing cases of non-reciprocity, including with the US, under the revised reciprocity mechanism provided in the amendment of Regulation 539/2001, which will be adopted by co-legislators in the coming weeks. This revised mechanism aims at enhancing the credibility of the common visa policy and ensuring more solidarity amongst Member States.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011221/13
adresată Comisiei
Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu (S&D)
(2 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Numărul 112 pentru apelurile de urgență

Conform articolului 26 din Directiva 2009/136/CE, cetățenii cu deficiențe de vorbire, de auz sau de vedere trebuie să beneficieze de un acces egal la serviciile „112". Tehnologiile recente (precum „Next generation 112") vizează punerea la dispoziție a serviciilor „112" și prin alte metode decât apelurile vocale, de exemplu prin apeluri realizate prin limbajul semnelor sau prin redare de text. Parlamentul a subliniat în trecut faptul că este necesar să se dezvolte aceste capacități ([1]). Cu toate acestea, conform celui mai recent raport al Comitetului pentru comunicații (COCOM), numai în 12 din cele 28 de state membre este posibil să se apeleze numărul 112 și prin alte metode decât comunicarea vocală. Introducerea numărului 112 pentru apelurile de urgență ține de responsabilitatea statelor membre, dar și Comisia poartă o parte din răspundere în calitate de gardian al tratatelor.

Când va pune Comisia la dispoziția Parlamentului un plan detaliat de dezvoltare și de diseminare a unor metode alternative de a apela la serviciile de urgență prin 112?

Răspuns dat de dna Kroes în numele Comisiei
(15 noiembrie 2013)

Directiva privind serviciul universal prevede obligația statelor membre de a se asigura că accesul utilizatorilor cu handicap la serviciile de urgență este echivalent cu cel de care beneficiază ceilalți utilizatori. Considerentul 41 din directivă oferă indicații suplimentare privind obligațiile statelor membre în privința utilizatorilor finali cu handicap.

Comisia și-a asumat un rol activ, sprijinind proiecte relevante menite să faciliteze incluziunea digitală în domeniul serviciilor de urgență. Prin proiectul REACH 112 finanțat în cadrul Programului de sprijinire a politicii în domeniul TIC (tehnologiile informației și comunicațiilor) și intitulat pe larg „Răspundem tuturor cetățenilor care au nevoie de ajutor" (REsponding to All Citizens needing Help) s-a reușit confirmarea introducerii și a interoperabilității alternativelor disponibile la telefonia tradițională prin voce, adaptate pentru toate persoanele care folosesc conceptul de „conversație totală". Introducerea serviciilor de conversație totală ar putea rezolva problema localizării apelantului. În acest context, trebuie reamintit că serviciul de urgență 112 este un parteneriat cu statele membre. Mai precis, în conformitate cu principiul subsidiarității, statele membre sunt responsabile pentru introducerea tehnologiei și a structurilor necesare pentru asigurarea eficienței serviciilor de urgență 112. În plus, potrivit raportului pe care îl elaborăm anual în privința punerii în aplicare a numărului 112, unele state membre au indicat că localizarea apelantului ar fi posibilă și în cazul trimiterii de SMS-uri.

([1]) A se vedea Rezoluția Parlamentului European din 5 iulie 2011 referitoare la serviciul universal de urgență și la numărul 112 pentru apeluri de urgență ; Declarația scrisă 0035/2011 din 12 septembrie 2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011221/13
to the Commission
Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu (S&D)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: 112 emergency number

According to Article 26 of Directive 2009/136/EC, speech-, hearing- or visually-impaired citizens must enjoy equivalent access to 112 services. Recent technologies (like Next Generation 112) aim to make 112 services accessible by means other than voice calls, e.g. by allowing calls using sign language or text relay. Parliament has stressed the need to develop these capacities in the past ([1]). However, according to the latest report from the communications Committee (COCOM), calling 112 by means other than voice communication is possible in only 12 out of 28 Member States. Implementation of the 112 emergency number is the responsibility of the Member States, but the Commission is also partly responsible in this field as guardian of the Treaties.

When will the Commission provide Parliament with a detailed plan for developing and spreading alternative means of reaching the emergency services through 112?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

The Universal Service Directive requires Member States to ensure that access to emergency services for disabled users is equivalent to that enjoyed by other users. Recital 41 of the directive gives further indications as to the Member States obligations relating to disabled end-users.

The Commission took an active role supporting relevant projects to enable e-inclusion in area of emergency services. The ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) funded REACH 112 project 'REsponding to All Citizens needing Help' was successful in validating implementation and interoperability of accessible alternatives to traditional voice telephony suitable for all using the concept of 'Total conversation'. The implementation of Total Conversation could solve the issue of caller location. In this context, it should be borne in mind that 112 is a partnership with the Member States. In particular, it is the Member States that are responsible, under the principle of subsidiarity, for putting in place the technology and organisation to ensure the efficiency of 112 emergency services. Furthermore, according to our yearly 112 implementation report some Member States indicated that caller location could be established also for SMS.

([1]) cf. European Parliament resolution of 5 July 2011 on universal service and the 112 emergency number; Written Declaration 0035/2011 of 12 September 2011.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-011222/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Andreas Pitsillides (PPE)
(2 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ανεργία

Στην Κύπρο σημειώθηκε η μεγαλύτερη ετήσια ποσοστιαία αύξηση της ανεργίας μεταξύ των χωρών της Ευρωζώνης σύμφωνα με τα στοιχεία που δημοσιοποίησε η Eurostat.

Συγκεκριμένα, η ανεργία στην Κύπρο τον Αύγουστο έφθασε στο 16,9% του ενεργού πληθυσμού και, σε απόλυτους αριθμούς, τα 76 000 άτομα, έναντι 16,4% ή 73 000 άνεργους που ήταν τον Ιούλιο.

Όπως προκύπτει από τα εποχικά προσαρμοσμένα στοιχεία της Eurostat, η μέση ανεργία στην Ευρωζώνη κυμάνθηκε τον Αύγουστο στο 12,0% του ενεργού πληθυσμού και, στο σύνολο της ΕΕ, στο 10,9%, ενώ παρέμεινε αμετάβλητη, και στις δύο περιπτώσεις, σε σχέση με τον Ιούλιο.

Ποια πολιτική προτίθεται να ακολουθήσει η Επιτροπή ώστε να αντιμετωπιστεί το εν λόγω φαινόμενο στην Κύπρο, το οποίο δεν είναι μόνο οικονομικό αλλά και κοινωνικό;

Πώς θα βοηθήσει η Επιτροπή ώστε να δημιουργηθούν περισσότερες νέες θέσεις εργασίας για τους άνεργους νέους στην Κύπρο;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(28 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή είναι πλήρως ενήμερη για τις προκλήσεις της ανεργίας, της φτώχειας και της κοινωνικής συνοχής που αντιμετωπίζει η Κύπρος ως αποτέλεσμα της τρέχουσας χρηματοπιστωτικής και οικονομικής κρίσης. Η Επιτροπή έχει δεσμευτεί να βοηθά την Κύπρο στις προσπάθειές της να αναπτύξει ένα βιώσιμο και πιο διαφοροποιημένο οικονομικό μοντέλο, να αμβλύνει τις κοινωνικές συνέπειες της οικονομικής κρίσης και να μετριάσει τον αντίκτυπο στους νέους και τα μειονεκτούντα άτομα.

Το πρόγραμμα οικονομικής προσαρμογής της Κύπρου αποσκοπεί στην αποκατάσταση της εμπιστοσύνης των χρηματαγορών και την αποκατάσταση της υγιούς μακροοικονομικής ισορροπίας ώστε να μπορέσει η οικονομία να επανέλθει σε βιώσιμη ανάπτυξη και να ανανεωθεί η δημιουργία θέσεων εργασίας. Εκτός από το ενδιαφέρον του για τις δημοσιονομικές, τραπεζικές και διαρθρωτικές ανισορροπίες της Κύπρου, το πρόγραμμα δίνει έμφαση στην ανάγκη για ένα αποτελεσματικό και αποδοτικό σύστημα κοινωνικής πρόνοιας.

Το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο (ΕΚΤ) παρέχει στην Κύπρο βοήθεια για την αντιμετώπιση των αναγκών των άνεργων νέων μέσω στοχευμένων μέτρων στο πλαίσιο του σημερινού επιχειρησιακού προγράμματος του ΕΚΤ για την περίοδο 2007-2013. Η δημιουργία θέσεων απασχόλησης αποτελεί επίσης προτεραιότητα βάσει του σημερινού επιχειρησιακού προγράμματος του Ευρωπαϊκού Ταμείου Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης. Κατά την προσεχή περίοδο προγραμματισμού (2014-20), το ΕΚΤ, καθώς και η πρωτοβουλία για την απασχόληση των νέων ([1]) θα συμβάλουν στην εφαρμογή της «εγγύησης για τους νέους» στην Κύπρο.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1829&furtherNews=yes

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011222/13
to the Commission
Andreas Pitsillides (PPE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Unemployment

According to Eurostat, the annually adjusted rise in unemployment has been steeper in Cyprus than any other country in the euro area, rising to 76 000 or 16.9% of the working population in August from 73 000 or 16.4% in July.

By contrast, Eurostat's seasonally adjusted figures show average unemployment figures for August in both the eurozone and the EU as a whole remaining unaltered from July, hovering at around 12% and 10.9% of the working population respectively.

What action is being envisaged by the Commission in response to these developments in Cyprus, which are of a not only economic but also social nature?

How will it help ensure the creation of more new jobs for young unemployed persons in Cyprus?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(28 October 2013)

The Commission is fully aware of the challenges of unemployment, poverty and social cohesion facing Cyprus as a result of the current financial and economic crisis. It is committed to assisting Cyprus in its efforts to develop a sustainable and more diversified economic model, alleviate the social consequences of the economic crisis and mitigate the impact on young people and the disadvantaged.

Cyprus's economic adjustment programme aims to restore financial market confidence and re-establish a sound macroeconomic balance to enable the economy to return to sustainable growth and renewed job creation. In addition to addressing the country's fiscal, banking and structural imbalances, the programme lays emphasis on the need for an efficient and effective welfare system.

The European Social Fund (ESF) provides Cyprus with support to address the needs of young unemployed people through targeted measures under the current ESF operational programme for 2007-13. Job creation is also a priority under the current European Regional Development Fund operational programme. In the forthcoming programming period (2014-20), the ESF as well as the Youth Employment Initiative ([1]) will contribute to the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in Cyprus.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1829&furtherNews=yes

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011223/13
to the Commission
Catherine Bearder (ALDE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Social media bullying

It has come to my attention that social media sites, specifically ask.fm, are being used to direct abuse at individuals, including young children.

There has been a high profile example of this in the UK recently, when a 14-year-old girl tragically resorted to taking her own life due to the level of abuse she was receiving on ask.fm.

In the light of this:

1. Does the commission agree that social media sites have a duty to ensure that all of their users are protected from all forms of abuse when using these websites?

2. Does the Commission have any plans to work with these websites to ensure that they take this matter seriously and reduce levels of abuse on their network to a minimum?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2013)

Cyberbullying qualifies as harassment and/or defamation in many EU countries and complaints can be filed to the national police and justice authorities.

'Delete Cyberbullying' ([1]) is an example of a European awareness raising campaign on cyberbullying. It takes into account that the protection of personal data of children and minors should receive particular attention in the context of SNS ([2]).

Self-regulation is also an instrument of the European Strategy to create a better Internet for Children ([3]).

A pan-European network of Safer Internet Centres ([4]), provides support and promotes awareness of how to manage risks on the Internet. The network produces tip sheets on how to use SNS ([5]) safely and is in contact with some of the main Social Networks to exchange best practices for reporting ([6]).

([1]) http://deletecyberbullying.eu It is financed under the Daphne III Programme.
([2]) Social networking services.
([3]) https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/european-strategy-deliver-better-Internet-our-children.
([4]) www.saferInternet.org Set up and supported by the Commission.
([5]) Eg. Tip sheet about Ask.fm
http://www.saferInternet.org/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=32d5bf23-59b7-4a1b-88c3-4690c646cc7e&groupId=10137
([6]) Social Networks like Facebook and ASK are attending and supporting INSAFE training meetings for helplines and awareness centres.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011224/13
to the Commission
Catherine Bearder (ALDE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Shark-derived squalene

It has come to my attention that millions of sharks are being killed each year for the extraction of squalene, a product used in cosmetics.

There are plant-derived squalene sources available, and the problem is worsened by the lack of clear labelling for consumers as to whether the squalene in the products they are buying is derived from sharks or plant material.

In light of this, does the Commission have any plans to legislate in this area in order to make the labelling of squalene sources on cosmetic products compulsory? Big retailers in the UK, such as Selfridges, are already on-board with this requirement and label or do not use shark-derived squalene. Does the Commission not think that companies throughout Europe should be required to follow suit?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

Cosmetic products placed on the EU market are governed by Regulation (EC) 1223/2009 ([1]) ('Cosmetics Regulation'), which entered into force on 11 July 2013. According to the Cosmetics Regulation product ingredients must be printed on the product packaging. However it is not required to indicate the origin of an ingredient (e.g. animal or plant). As a consequence, the Commission does not have comprehensive information to which extent shark squalene is used in cosmetic products.

Cosmetic product containing ingredients of animal origin must comply with safety requirements laid down in the Cosmetics Regulation. Some ingredients of animal origin are not allowed for use in cosmetic products in the EU. According to Annex II of the Cosmetics Regulation Category c material and Category c material as defined by Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 ([2]) are banned for use in cosmetics. Under certain conditions set out in Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 shark squalene may qualify as Category c material.

The Commission pays close attention to the issue of shark fishing. Several restrictions in relation to shark fishing have been put in place, and an Action Plan for the Conservation and Management of Sharks has been adopted.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on cosmetic products , OJ L 342, 22.12.2009, p. 59.

([2]) Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 laying down health rules as regards animal by-products and derived products not intended for human consumption and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 (Animal by-products Regulation), OJ L 300, 14.11.2009, p. 1.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011225/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Andreas Pitsillides (PPE)
(2 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Μαθητές της Αγγλικής Σχολής Λευκωσίας

Το English School είναι μία ιδιωτική Σχολή Μέσης Εκπαίδευσης στην Λευκωσία. Ιδρύθηκε εν καιρώ Αγγλοκρατίας. Με την ανεξαρτησία της Κύπρου, το 1960, ο έλεγχος της Σχολής πέρασε στο Υπουργικό Συμβούλιο της Κυπριακής δημοκρατίας, μέσω νομοθετικής ρύθμισης.

Από την ίδρυση της, η Σχολή εξυπηρετούσε όλους τους κατοίκους της Κύπρου, με εξαίρεση την περίοδο 1974-2003, κατά την οποία οι Τουρκοκύπριοι μαθητές αποχώρησαν λόγω του στρατιωτικού διαμελισμού του νησιού από την Τουρκία. Οι Τουρκοκύπριοι μαθητές επέστρεψαν πίσω στο σχολείο το 2003, μετά την μερική άρση των περιορισμών διακίνησης.

Ενώ σύμφωνα με τον σχετικό νόμο περί λειτουργίας της Σχολής, όλοι οι μαθητές θα πρέπει να διευκολύνονται ώστε να ασκούν ελεύθερα τα θρησκευτικά τους καθήκοντα, έχει εγερθεί θέμα. Για παράδειγμα, ενώ η ονομαστική εορτή του Αρχιεπισκόπου Κύπρου γιορτάζεται σαν αργία από το Σχολείο (όπως και η γιορτή των Χριστουγέννων κ.λπ.), η γιορτή του Ραμαζάν δεν γιορτάζεται επίσημα. Εκείνες τις μέρες οι Τουρκοκύπριοι μαθητές έχουν την δυνατότητα να μην παρουσιαστούν στην Σχολή αν το επιθυμούν αλλά το σχολείο λειτουργεί κανονικά με τους υπόλοιπους μαθητές.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή κατά πόσο έχει την δυνατότητα παρέμβασης προς το κράτος, ώστε να διασφαλιστεί το συνταγματικά κατοχυρωμένο και αναφαίρετο δικαίωμα των μαθητών στην ισονομία και την ισοπολιτεία και, αν έχει αυτή την δυνατότητα, πώς προτίθεται να το πράξει;

Απάντηση της κ. Reding εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(2 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Η οδηγία του Συμβουλίου θεσπίζει ένα νομοθετικό πλαίσιο για την καταπολέμηση των διακρίσεων λόγω θρησκείας ή πεποιθήσεων, αναπηρίας, ηλικίας ή γενετήσιου προσανατολισμού, όσον αφορά την απασχόληση ή την παραμονή σε αυτήν. Σήμερα ωστόσο, δεν υπάρχει νομοθεσία της ΕΕ που καλύπτει τις διακρίσεις λόγω θρησκείας ή πεποιθήσεων στον τομέα της εκπαίδευσης.

Το 2008, η Επιτροπή υπέβαλε πρόταση για οδηγία του Συμβουλίου ([1]) η οποία θα επέκτεινε το πεδίο εφαρμογής της προστασίας από τις διακρίσεις στους τομείς της κοινωνικής προστασίας, της κατάρτισης και της πρόσβασης σε αγαθά και υπηρεσίες. Ωστόσο, η πρόταση αναφέρει στο άρθρο 3, παράγραφος 3 ότι «η παρούσα οδηγία εφαρμόζεται με την επιφύλαξη των υποχρεώσεων των κρατών μελών όσον αφορά το περιεχόμενο της διδασκαλίας, των δραστηριοτήτων και την οργάνωση των εκπαιδευτικών συστημάτων τους […]. Τα κράτη μέλη δύνανται να προβλέπουν διαφορές μεταχείρισης όσον αφορά την πρόσβαση σε εκπαιδευτικά ιδρύματα βάσει θρησκείας ή πεποιθήσεων».

Επομένως, αν εγκριθεί η οδηγία, δεν εμποδίζονται τα κράτη μέλη να επιτρέπουν στα θρησκευτικά σχολεία να λειτουργούν και σε εκπαιδευτικά ιδρύματα να εορτάζουν θρησκευτικές εορτές.

([1]) COM(2008)426 τελικό.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011225/13
to the Commission
Andreas Pitsillides (PPE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Pupils of the English School, Nicosia

The English School is a private secondary school in Nicosia. It was founded under British rule. With the independence of Cyprus in 1960, control over the school was transferred by law to the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus.

Since its establishment, the school has served all of the inhabitants of Cyprus, except for the period between 1974 and 2003, during which the Turkish Cypriot pupils left as a result of the military partitioning of the island by Turkey. Turkish Cypriot pupils returned to the school in 2003, following the partial lifting of restrictions on freedom of movement.

Whilst the relevant law on the functioning of the school requires that all pupils be able to exercise their religious obligations freely, an issue has risen. For example, although the school celebrates the name day of the Archbishop of Cyprus as a holiday (as it does Christmas, etc.), the festival of Ramadan is not formally celebrated. On those days, Turkish Cypriot pupils have the option not to go to school if they wish, although the school operates normally for the other pupils.

Will the Commission state the extent to which it has competence to intervene with the Government so that the constitutionally-protected and inalienable right of the pupils to equal treatment can be safeguarded, and if it does have this competence, how it intends to act?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

Council Directive 2000/78/EC lays down a legal framework for combating discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation, as regards employment and occupation. There is, however, currently no EU legislation covering discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the field of education.

The Commission submitted in 2008 a proposal for a Council Directive ([1]) that would extend the scope of protection against discrimination to social protection, education and access to goods and services. The proposal, however, states in its Article 3(3) that 'this directive is without prejudice to the responsibilities of Member States for the content of teaching, activities and the organisation of their educational systems […]. Member States may provide for differences in treatment in access to educational institutions based on religion or belief'.

If adopted, the directive would thus not preclude Member States from allowing religious schools to operate and from allowing educational institutions to celebrate specific religious holidays.

([1]) COM(2008) 426 final.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011226/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Andreas Pitsillides (PPE)
(2 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Αγροτική Πολιτική

Λόγω της δεινής οικονομικής κατάστασης στην οποία περιήλθε η Κύπρος τον τελευταίο χρόνο, αρκετοί πολίτες άρχισαν να στρέφονται σε αναζήτηση εργασίας στην πρωτογενή παραγωγή και, ειδικότερα, στην γεωργία και την κτηνοτροφία.

1. Προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να απελευθερώσει περισσότερα κονδύλια και να επιχορηγήσει περισσότερα προγράμματα ώστε να διευκολύνει αυτές τις ομάδες πληθυσμού να προβούν σε μία νέα αρχή και να δημιουργήσουν νέες μονάδες γεωργικής και κτηνοτροφικής παραγωγής ή/και να ενισχύσουν τις υφιστάμενες, ώστε να αποκτήσουν την δυνατότητα να απορροφήσουν περισσότερους άνεργους;

2. Προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να δώσει οικονομικά κίνητρα σε νέους επιστήμονες, των οποίων η κατάρτιση είναι σχετική με τον συγκεκριμένο τομέα, για να στραφούν στον τομέα της γεωργικής-κτηνοτροφικής παραγωγής και δη σε βιολογική βάση;

Απάντηση του κ. Ciolos εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(20 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Βάσει της πολιτικής συμφωνίας σχετικά με την μεταρρύθμιση της Κοινής Γεωργικής Πολιτικής (ΚΓΠ) μεταξύ του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου, του Συμβουλίου και της Επιτροπής, η Κύπρος θα έχει τη δυνατότητα να συμπεριλάβει στο Πρόγραμμα Αγροτικής Ανάπτυξης (ΠΑΑ) 2014-2020 τα μέτρα που ανταποκρίνονται στις ανάγκες της όσον αφορά τους νέους γεωργούς, την κτηνοτροφία και τη βιολογική γεωργία. Θα αυξηθούν οι ενισχύσεις στους νέους γεωργούς για την ίδρυση νέων επιχειρήσεων (70 000 ευρώ το πολύ), για γενικές επενδύσεις σε πάγια περιουσιακά στοιχεία και για υπηρεσίες κατάρτισης και παροχής συμβουλών. Οι ενισχύσεις για τη βιολογική γεωργία και για την αναδιάρθρωση των καλλιεργειών/επενδύσεις/εκσυγχρονισμό θα συνεχίσουν να χορηγούνται (όπως και στο τρέχον ΠΑΑ 2007-2013) και μάλιστα σε ακόμη μεγαλύτερα ποσοστά στήριξης εάν συνδέονται με την Ευρωπαϊκή Σύμπραξη για την Καινοτομία (ΕΣΚ) στον τομέα της γεωργίας. Καταυτόν τον τρόπο θα δίνεται η δυνατότητα στους νέους επιστήμονες να συμμετέχουν σε καινοτόμα έργα.

Όσον αφορά τις άμεσες ενισχύσεις για την περίοδο 2014-2020, η πολιτική συμφωνία για την ΚΓΠ προβλέπει ένα υποχρεωτικό καθεστώς για ετήσια ενίσχυση στους νέους γεωργούς (μέχρι 40 ετών που αρχίζουν τη γεωργική τους δραστηριότητα). Η ενίσχυση αυτή θα χορηγείται σε νέους γεωργούς ως πρόσθετο ποσό στη βασική τους ενίσχυση επί πέντε έτη για τη στήριξη της αρχικής τους εγκατάστασης. Επιπλέον, από το εθνικό απόθεμα θα χορηγούνται υποχρεωτικά δικαιώματα ενίσχυσης στους νέους γεωργούς και στους γεωργούς που αρχίζουν τη γεωργική τους δραστηριότητα (χωρίς όριο ηλικίας).

Τα ποσά που πρόκειται να χορηγηθούν στην Κύπρο για την εφαρμογή της ΚΓΠ 2014-2020 καθορίστηκαν εντός των ορίων του πολυετούς δημοσιονομικού πλαισίου 2014-2020.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011226/13
to the Commission
Andreas Pitsillides (PPE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Agricultural policy

As a result of the difficult economic situation that Cyprus has faced over the past year, a number of citizens have begun looking for work in primary production, and more specifically in agriculture and livestock rearing.

1. Does the Commission intend to release more funds and subsidise more programmes in order to help these groups of people to make a new start and to establish new agricultural and livestock production units, and/or to strengthen existing units so that they can take on more unemployed people?

2. Does the Commission intend to give financial incentives to young scientists with skills related to this sector, so that they can get involved in agricultural and livestock production, including on an organic basis?

Answer given by Mr Cioloș on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

Further to the political agreement on the reform of the common agricultural policy (CAP) between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, Cyprus will have the possibility to include in its Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020 the measures that respond to its needs related to young farmers and livestock/organic farming. Increased aid for business start-ups (max EUR 70 000), general investments in physical assets and training/advisory services will be available for young farmers. Aid for organic farming and farm restructuring/investments/modernisation will continue to be available (as in the current RDP 2007-2013), at even higher support rates when linked to the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) for agriculture. This will also offer the possibility for young scientists to be involved in innovative projects.

Regarding direct payments, for the 2014-2020 period, the political agreement on the CAP provides a compulsory scheme for an annual payment to young farmers (up to 40 years old who commence their agricultural activity). That payment would be granted to young farmers as an additional amount to their basic payment and for a period of maximum five years to support their initial setting up. In addition, a compulsory allocation of payment entitlements from the national reserve is provided to young farmers and to farmers who commence their agricultural activity (no age limit).

Funds to be allocated to Cyprus for the implementation of the CAP 2014-2020 were decided within the context of the multi-annual financial framework 2014-2020.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011227/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Systemrelevante Versicherungen

Am 19. Juli 2013 hat der Finanzstabilitätsrat der G20-Staaten neun internationale Versicherungskonzerne als systemrelevant eingestuft. Der Konkurs eines dieser Konzerne könnte zu einem erheblichen Risiko für das Finanzsystem werden ([1]).

1. Wie beurteilt die Kommission die Systemrelevanz von Versicherungsunternehmen im Allgemeinen und der neun vom Finanzstabilitätsrat aufgeführten Konzerne im Besonderen?

2. Was kann getan werden, um trotz der großen Bedeutung einzelner Versicherungen für das Finanzsystem zu verhindern, dass diese die Stabilität des gesamten Systems negativ beeinflussen?

3. Sind nach Meinung der Kommission durch die Systemrelevanz und das damit verbundene Risiko Versicherungen auch vom Übertragungseffekt bei Zahlungsschwierigkeiten betroffen? Wenn ja, sieht die Kommission vor, Regularien für Abwicklungsmaßnahmen für Versicherungen zu erstellen?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(26. November 2013)

Die Kommission befürwortet den vom Finanzstabilitätsrat der G20-Staaten gewählten Ansatz. Das traditionelle Geschäftsmodell der Versicherungen schließt weder ein Zahlungssystem noch eine Kreditvermittlung oder Investmentbanking-Dienstleistungen ein und ist folglich in geringerem Maße den Risiken des Finanzmarkts ausgesetzt. Hingegen können Versicherungsgruppen mit einer Geschäftstätigkeit außerhalb des klassischen Bereichs und im Nichtversicherungsbereich den Entwicklungen auf dem Finanzmarkt in stärkerem Maße ausgesetzt sein und deshalb systembedingte Risiken wahrscheinlich auch in stärkerem Maße verschärfen oder zu diesen beitragen als traditionelle Versicherungen. Die vom Finanzstabilitätsrat vorgenommene Einstufung der besagten neun internationalen Versicherungsgruppen gründete sich auf eine Bewertungsmethode, bei der der Vernetzung und dem Umfang der Geschäftstätigkeit außerhalb des klassischen Bereichs und außerhalb des Versicherungsbereichs großes Gewicht beigemessen wurde.

Die Kommission ist ferner der Auffassung, dass die politischen Maßnahmen, die der Finanzstabilitätsrat für globale systemrelevante Versicherer vorgeschlagen hat, zur Minderung der systembedingten Risiken für globale systemrelevante Versicherer oder zur Verringerung ihrer Kosten beitragen werden. Diese spezifischen Maßnahmen ([2]) richten sich gegen systembedingte Risiken, stehen im Einklang mit dem „Solvabilität II"-Ansatz und sind dem Umfang und der Komplexität eines globalen systemrelevanten Versicherers angemessen ([3]).

Im Jahr 2012 hat die Kommission eine öffentliche Anhörung zu einem legislativen Rahmen für die Abwicklung von Finanzinstituten, die keine Banken sind, durchgeführt. Aufgrund der dabei gewonnenen Erkenntnisse gelangte sie zu dem Schluss, dass weitere Arbeiten auf diesem Gebiet erforderlich sind. In diesem Zusammenhang wird zudem den anstehenden legislativen Änderungen durch „Solvabilität II" (insbesondere den Befugnissen der Aufsichtsbehörden zu einem frühzeitigen Eingreifen und den Wiedereinziehungsanforderungen) und den aktuellen Entwicklungen auf internationaler Ebene (laufende öffentliche Anhörung des Finanzstabilitätsrats zum Thema Abwicklung von Versicherungsunternehmen) Rechnung zu tragen sein.

([1]) http://www.zeit.de/news/2013-07/19/d-finanzstabilitaetsrat-haelt-neun-versicherer-fuer-systemrelevant-19162603
([2]) Verstärkte Aufsicht, effektive Abwicklung und bessere Fähigkeit zur Übernahme von Verlusten.
([3]) Beispielsweise sollte der Plan für die Bewältigung der systembedingten Risiken Teil eines wirksamen Systems für die Leitung eines globalen systemrelevanten Versicherers sein.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011227/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Systemically important insurance services

On 19 July 2013, the G-20 Financial Stability Board classified nine international insurers as systemically important. The bankruptcy of one of these groups of undertakings could pose a substantial risk to the financial system ([1]).

1. What is the Commission's view of the systemic importance of insurers in general and of the nine groups listed by the Financial Stability Board in particular?

2. Despite the enormous importance of individual insurance services for the financial system, what can be done to prevent these having a negative impact on the stability of the system as a whole?

3. In the Commission's opinion, are insurance services also affected by the spillover effect in the event of payment difficulties as a result of their systemic importance and the risk associated with it? If so, does the Commission intend to establish rules for resolution measures for insurance services?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2013)

The Commission agrees with the approach which has been endorsed by the Financial Stability Board (FSB). The traditional insurance business model does not involve payment system, credit intermediation or investment banking services, and is therefore less exposed to financial market risks. However, insurance groups that engage in non-traditional or non-insurance (NTNI) activities can be more vulnerable to financial market developments and may therefore be more likely to amplify or contribute to systemic risks, than tradional insurers. The designation of the nine groups listed by the FSB was based on an assessment methodology that rightly gave significant weights to the interconnectedness and to the NTNI scores of insurance groups.

The Commission also considers that the Global Systemically Important Insurers (G-SIIs) policy measures proposed by the FSB will help addressing systemic risks for G-SIIs by reducing them or internalising their costs. These specific measures ([2]) focus on systemic risk whilst being consistent with the approach in Solvency 2 and proportionate with the scale and complexity of a G-SII ([3]).

In 2012, the Commission launched a public consultation on a resolution framework for financial institutions other than banks. On that basis, it has been concluded that further work appears necessary. In that context, the forthcoming legislative changes that will be brought by Solvency 2 (in particular, supervisors' powers of early intervention and recovery requirements), as well as current international developments (ongoing public consultation of the FSB annex on resolution of insurance companies) need to be taken into account.

([1]) http://www.zeit.de/news/2013-07/19/d-finanzstabilitaetsrat-haelt-neun-versicherer-fuer-systemrelevant-19162603
([2]) ie. enhanced supervision, effective resolution and higher loss absorption capacity.
([3]) For instance, the Systemic Risk Management Plan should be part of an effective system of governance of a G-SII.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011228/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Ausschluss bestimmter Unternehmen von IKT-Ausschreibungen

In ihrer Antwort auf die Anfrage 6780/2013 von Hans-Peter Martin schreibt die Kommission: „Nach dem im Rahmen der Welthandelsorganisation geschlossenen multilateralen Übereinkommen über das öffentliche Beschaffungswesen (GPA), dem auch die EU angehört, müssen Aufträge der Kommission für bestimmte Lieferungen und Dienstleistungen (darunter auch Computerdienstleistungen und verwandte Dienste) mit einem Wert von über 130 000 EUR auch Anbietern aus Drittländern, die Vertragsparteien des Übereinkommens sind und es ratifiziert haben, offen stehen. Gemäß dem GPA und weiteren anwendbaren Bestimmungen, die insbesondere in Freihandelsabkommen zwischen der EU und anderen Drittstaaten festgelegt wurden, ist es daher nicht möglich, bestimmte Produkte oder Anbieter allein aufgrund ihrer Herkunft auszuschließen. Vielmehr müssen dafür andere in den Abkommen vorgesehene Gründe vorliegen. In diesem Zusammenhang sieht Artikel XXIII des GPA Ausnahmen insbesondere in Bezug auf Aufträge vor, die für die nationale Sicherheit von wesentlicher Bedeutung sind. Diese Ausnahmeregelungen sind restriktiv auszulegen".

Die Enthüllungen der letzten Monate haben dabei deutlich gezeigt, dass US-Geheimdienste nicht nur direkt in die Infrastruktur der EU-Organisationen einbrachen, sondern auch amerikanische Software- und Internetdienstleister dazu gebracht oder gezwungen haben, Hintertüren in ihre System einzubauen. Dadurch könnte EU-Bürgern, EU-Staaten, EU-Unternehmen sowie den EU-Institutionen direkt geschadet werden.

1. Hat die Kommission je die GPA-Ausnahmeregelungen angewandt, um Informations- und Telekommunikationsdienstleister von Auswahlverfahren über 130 000 EUR auszuschließen? Wenn ja, wann und welche Unternehmen waren betroffen, und aus welchen Staaten stammten diese jeweils?

2. Wird die Kommission die Regelungen zukünftig anwenden, um den jüngsten Enthüllungen zufolge der Spionage Vorschub leistende Unternehmen wie Microsoft, Skype, Google, Apple, Yahoo, etc. und deren Produkte (insbesondere Windows- und iOS-Geräte) von Ausschreibungsverfahren auszuschließen?

Antwort von Herrn Šefčovič im Namen der Kommission
(26. November 2013)

In ihren Antworten auf aktuelle parlamentarische Anfragen hat die Kommission bereits ihren Standpunkt zu den jüngsten Medienberichten dargelegt, nach denen die US-amerikanischen Behörden mithilfe großer amerikanischer Online-Dienstleister in großem Umfang auf die Daten europäischer Bürgerinnen und Bürger zugreifen, diese verarbeiten und die Tätigkeiten der EU-Organe in rechtswidriger Weise überwachen. Sie möchte den Herrn Abgeordneten daher auf diese Antworten verweisen ([1]).

Zu den konkreten Fragen des Herrn Abgeordneten:

1) Bisher hat die Kommission die im Übereinkommen über das öffentliche Beschaffungswesen (GPA) vorgesehene, auf Gründen der nationalen Sicherheit basierende Ausnahmeregelung gegen Unternehmen aus Drittländern, die Dienstleistungen oder Produkte im Zusammenhang mit der von ihr verwendeten IT- und Telekommunikationsinfrastruktur anbieten, nicht angewandt.

2) Bei künftigen Vergabeverfahren wird die Kommission weiterhin prüfen, ob

a) Bewerber oder Bieter — die nicht unbedingt die Hersteller der angebotenen Produkte sind — unter die Ausschlusskriterien der Artikel 106 und 107 der Haushaltsordnung (gegebenenfalls vorbehaltlich der allgemeinen Bestimmungen über Nichtdiskriminierung gemäß dem GPA) fallen;

b) die von den Bewerbern oder Bietern angebotenen Produkte alle Anforderungen der Vergabestelle an die Spezifikationen, einschließlich etwaiger verbindlicher Sicherheitsanforderungen, erfüllen.

Bezüglich des letzten Punktes der Anfrage des Herrn Abgeordneten zu den Software- und Hardware-Produkten der in der Anfrage genannten Hersteller, insbesondere denjenigen, die die Kommission verwendet, verfügt die Kommission gegenwärtig nicht über stichhaltige Beweise dafür, dass diese vorsätzlich integrierte Backdoor-Programme enthalten.

([1]) Siehe insbesondere die Antworten auf die schriftlichen Anfragen E-006768/2013, E-006932/2013, E-007932/2013, E-007934/2013, E-008666/2013, E-009773/2013 und E-010163/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011228/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Exclusion of certain companies from ICT calls for tender

In its reply to question 6780/2013 from Hans-Peter Martin, the Commission states the following: 'The Plurilateral Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) concluded within the World Trade Organisation, to which the EU is a Party, provides that contracts for certain supplies and services, including computer and related services, awarded by the Commission for a value above EUR 130 000 must be open to providers from third countries which are Parties to the Agreement and have ratified it. Therefore, according to the GPA and other applicable rules, in particular laid down in Free Trade Agreements between the EU and other third countries, exclusion of specific solutions or providers is not possible on grounds of origin alone but must be substantiated on other grounds foreseen in the Agreements. In this context, Article XXIII of the GPA provides for exemptions, in particular related to procurement indispensible for national security. Exceptions are to be interpreted restrictively'.

The revelations of recent months have clearly shown that US intelligence services have not only hacked directly into the infrastructure of the EU institutions, but have also encouraged or forced US software and Internet service providers to build back doors into their systems. This could harm EU citizens, EU Member States, EU undertakings and the EU institutions directly.

1. Has the Commission ever applied the GPA exemption rules to exclude information and telecommunications service providers from selection procedures above EUR 130 000? If so, when, which undertakings were affected, and from which States did each of these originate?

2. Will the Commission apply the rules in future in order to exclude undertakings which, according to the latest revelations, are facilitating surveillance, such as Microsoft, Skype, Google, Apple and Yahoo, etc., and their products (in particular Windows and iOS devices) from tendering procedures?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2013)

In its replies to recent Parliamentary Questions, the Commission had already the opportunity to outline its position concerning recent media reports that US authorities are accessing and processing, on a large scale, the data of Europeans using major US online service providers and are carrying out unlawful surveillance activities of the EU institutions The Commission would therefore refer the Honourable Member to those replies ([1]).

Concerning the specific questions raised by the Honourable Member:

1) The Commission has not applied so far the exemption rules foreseen in the GPA on grounds of national security against undertakings from third countries providing services or supplies related to its corporate IT and telecommunications infrastructure.

2) For future procurement procedures, the Commission will continue to check:

(a) that candidates or tenderers-which may not be the manufacturers of the products offered- do not find themselves in one of the exclusion situations laid down in Articles 106 and 107 of the Financial Regulation (subject to the general provisions on non-discrimination laid down in the GPA, when applicable);

(b) that any products offered by those candidates or tenderers fully meet the awarding authority's specifications, including any mandatory security requirements.

Concerning the last point, as regards the software and hardware products of the manufacturers to which the Honourable Member refers, and in particular those used by the Commission, at this point in time the Commission does not have conclusive evidence that they contain any deliberately implanted back doors.

([1]) See, in particular, replies to Written Questions E-006768/2013, E-006932/2013, E-007932/2013, E-007934/2013, E-008666/2013, E-009773/2013 and E-010163/2013.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011229/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Verletzung der Fluggastdaten- und SWIFT-Abkommen durch NSA-Personenprofile

Neuen Dokumenten zufolge, die der Whistleblower Edward Snowden der New York Times übergab, verknüpft der US-Geheimdienst „National Security Agency" (NSA) persönliche Informationen aus verschiedenen Quellen, so unter anderem Fluggastdaten, Bankdaten und Informationen aus der Internetüberwachung, um Personen- und Aufenthaltsprofile zu erstellen.

Die EU-USA-Abkommen über Fluggastdaten (PNR-Abkommen) und Bankdaten (SWIFT-Abkommen) sehen Datenschutzrichtlinien vor, nach denen die übermittelten Informationen nur in begrenztem Maße und im Rahmen die Privatsphäre schützender und rechtsstaatliche Prinzipien einhaltender Kriterien genutzt werden können. Eine Verknüpfung der Daten durch die NSA mit dem Ziel, Personen- und Aufenthaltsprofile zu erstellen, ist ohne Zweifel außerhalb der vereinbarten Kriterienkataloge und nicht akzeptabel.

1. Wann wird die Kommission das Fluggastdaten-Abkommen aussetzen?

2. Wann wird die Kommission das SWIFT-Abkommen aussetzen?

3. Welche weiteren Abkommen über Datenschutz, Rechtsstaatlichkeit und Privatsphäre zwischen den USA und der EU werden möglicherweise durch diesen massiven Rechtsbruch der NSA verletzt? Wann werden diese ausgesetzt?

Antwort von Frau Malmström im Namen der Kommission
(29. November 2013)

Die Kommission ist besorgt über die Behauptungen der Medien in Bezug auf die Aktivitäten der NSA. Sie hat die US-Behörden um Aufklärung bezüglich der Programme gebeten, über die in den Medien berichtet wird, und ihrer potenziellen Auswirkungen auf die Grundrechte in der EU.

Im Fluggastdaten-Abkommen mit den USA sind regelmäßige Überprüfungen der Umsetzung des Abkommens vorgesehen. Kürzlich wurde eine Überprüfung vorgenommen. Der entsprechende Bericht wird in Kürze veröffentlicht und dem Europäischen Parlament zugeleitet.

Was das TFTP-Abkommen zwischen der EU und den USA betrifft, hat die Kommission angesichts der Behauptungen der Medien in Bezug auf die Aktivitäten der NSA im Rahmen von Artikel 19 des Abkommens Konsultationen eingeleitet. Die Kommission ist im Rahmen dieser Konsultationen mit der US-amerikanischen Seite zusammengetroffen und hat dabei die schriftliche Versicherung der USA erhalten, dass das Abkommen nicht verletzt worden sei. Die Kommission wird dem Europäischen Parlament die Ergebnisse der Konsultationen unverzüglich mitteilen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011229/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Contravention of the passenger name records and SWIFT agreements as a result of NSA personal profiles

According to new documents submitted by the whistle-blower Edward Snowden to the *New York Times*, the US intelligence service, the National Security Agency (NSA), is creating links between personal data from various sources, including passenger name records, bank data and information obtained from Internet surveillance, in order to build personal and residence profiles.

The EU-US agreements on passenger name records (the PNR Agreement) and bank data (the SWIFT Agreement) provide for data protection directives, according to which the information transferred can be used to only a limited extent and only within the framework of criteria that protect privacy and comply with the principles of the rule of law. The creation of links between data by the NSA with the aim of building personal and residence profiles definitely falls outside the agreed set of criteria and is unacceptable.

1. When will the Commission suspend the PNR agreement?

2. When will the Commission suspend the SWIFT agreement?

3. What other agreements between the US and the EU concerning data protection, the rule of law and privacy are potentially being violated as a result of this substantial contravention of the law by the NSA? When will these be suspended?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2013)

The Commission is concerned by the media allegations concerning the activities of the NSA. It has asked the US authorities for clarifications regarding the programmes reported in the media and their potential impact on EU fundamental rights.

The terms of the PNR agreement with the US allow for regular reviews of the implementation of the Agreement. A review was undertaken recently and the report will be published and communicated to the European Parliament shortly.

With regard to the EU-US TFTP Agreement the Commission opened consultations under its Article 19 in light of media allegations concerning the activities of the NSA. The Commission has met with US counterparts as part of these consultations, and has received written reassurances from the US that the Agreement has not been violated. The Commission will communicate the outcome of the consultations to the European Parliament without delay.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011230/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Spionagefall Belgacom

Belgischen Medien zufolge soll der amerikanische Geheimdienst „National Security Agency" (NSA) in die Computersysteme des belgischen Telekommunikationsunternehmen Belgacom eingedrungen sein. Belgacom und Tochterunternehmen wie Belgacom's Mobilfunktochter Proxmius stellen den EU-Institutionen Internet-, Telefonie- und Mobilfunkdienste zur Verfügung.

1. Ist die Kommission der Ansicht, dass durch die Spionage bei Belgacom Telefongespräche und/oder der Internetverkehr der EU-Institutionen abgefangen wurde oder zumindest abgefangen werden konnte?

2. Ist die Kommission der Ansicht, dass das eigentliche Ziel der Spionage bei Belgacom das Ausspionieren der EU-Institutionen war oder gewesen sein könnte?

3. Verlangt die Kommission besondere Sicherheitsvorkehrungen von Belgacom, zum Beispiel eine Verarbeitung des Telefon- und Datenverkehrs der Institutionen über gesondert gesicherte Systeme?

4. Welchen Betrag bezahlen die Institutionen Belgacom und Belgacom's Tochterunternehmen jährlich für die Bereitstellung von Telefon-, Internet- und Mobilfunkleistungen?

5. Für welchen Zeitraum gilt der Vertrag mit Belgacom, und gibt es Ausstiegsklauseln, zum Beispiel für den Fall, dass die Systeme Belgacoms kompromittiert sind?

6. Plant die Kommission, die Verträge für Telefon-, Internet-, Mobilfunk- und sonstige Dienstleistungen, die Belgacom derzeit erbringt, zu kündigen?

7. Welche Schlüsse zieht die Kommission aus dem Belgacom-Spionagefall für zukünftige Dienstleistungs-Ausschreibungsverfahren?

8. Welche Schlüsse zieht die Kommission aus dem Belgacom-Spionagefall für interne Sicherheitsregeln?

Antwort von Herrn Šefčovič im Namen der Kommission
(2. Dezember 2013)

1.-2. Auch wenn nicht ausgeschlossen werden kann, dass die Überwachungsmaßnahmen, über die berichtet wurde, darauf abzielten, den Gesprächs- oder Datenverkehr der EU-Organe abzuhören, liegen der Kommission keine konkreten Beweise dafür vor, dass dies auch tatsächlich der Fall war.

3.-6. Die Kommission zahlt Belgacom (bzw. Konsortien, an denen Belgacom beteiligt ist) die Standardpreise, für die dieses Unternehmen seinen größten Kunden Festnetz- und Mobiltelefonie sowie spezielle Telekommunikationsdienste bereitstellt.

Alle diese Verträge enthalten angemessene Sicherheitsanforderungen in Bezug auf die Vertraulichkeit, Integrität und Verfügbarkeit von Daten.

Außerdem enthalten sie verschiedene Arten von Kündigungsklauseln, u. a. für Fälle schwerer Vertragsverletzungen durch den Auftragnehmer, die nach einer förmlichen Berichtigungsfrist nicht eingestellt wurden.

Zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt hat die Kommission nicht die Absicht, auf diese Klauseln zurückzugreifen; sie wird die Situation jedoch weiterhin aufmerksam verfolgen.

7.-8. In den Ausschreibungsverfahren der Kommission wie auch in ihren internen Vorschriften sind Sicherheitsanforderungen, die sich auf Risikomanagementverfahren stützen, bereits hinreichend berücksichtigt.

Es werden strenge Sicherheitsmaßnahmen angewandt, auch wenn dies in der Regel nicht öffentlich bekanntgemacht wird. Sofern erforderlich, werden diese Maßnahmen entsprechend den technischen Entwicklungen angepasst. Deshalb erfordern Berichte wie diejenigen über die Überwachung von Belgacom nicht unbedingt neue Herangehensweisen.

Angesichts der zunehmenden Bedrohungen der IT-Sicherheit könnte bei künftigen Ausschreibungen jedoch erwogen werden, die Gewichtung dieses Aspekts zu überprüfen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011230/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Belgacom surveillance case

According to the Belgian media, the US intelligence service, the National Security Agency (NSA), has hacked into the computer systems of the Belgian telecommunications company Belgacom. Belgacom and its subsidiaries, such as Belgacom's mobile radiocommunications subsidiary Proximus, provide Internet, telephony and mobile radiocommunications services to the EU institutions.

1. Does the Commission believe that, through the surveillance of Belgacom, telephone conversations and/or the Internet traffic of the EU institutions were intercepted, or at least could have been intercepted?

2. Does it believe that the actual object of the surveillance of Belgacom was, or could have been, surveillance of the EU institutions?

3. Does it demand special security measures from Belgacom, for example for the telephone and data traffic of the institutions to be processed via separate security systems?

4. How much do the institutions pay Belgacom and Belgacom's subsidiaries per year for the provision of the telephony, Internet and mobile telecommunications services?

5. For what period does the contract with Belgacom run and are there any walkaway clauses, for example in the event that Belgacom's systems were compromised?

6. Is the Commission planning to cancel the contracts for telephony, Internet, mobile telecommunications and other services currently provided by Belgacom?

7. What conclusions does the Commission draw from the Belgacom surveillance case for future tendering procedures for services?

8. What conclusions does it draw from the Belgacom surveillance case for internal security rules?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

1-2. While it cannot be excluded that the reported surveillance activities were aimed at intercepting voice or data traffic of the EU institutions, the Commission does not have concrete evidence that this was indeed the case.

3-6. The Commission pays to Belgacom (or to consortia including Belgacom) the standard prices for which this company provides its major clients with fixed telephony, mobile telephony and special telecommunication services.

All these contracts lay down appropriate security requirements about confidentiality, integrity and availability of information.

They also lay down several types of termination clauses, including in the event of a serious breach of contract by the contractor which has not ceased after a formal rectification period.

At this stage, the Commission is not planning to resort to these clauses, but it will continue to monitor the situation closely.

7-8. The Commission's tendering procedures and internal rules already take due account of security requirements, based on a risk management process.

Although they are generally not disclosed publicly, strict security measures are in place. When necessary, these measures are adapted to technological change. Hence reports like those on the Belgacom surveillance do not necessarily call for a change in the process.

However, the increasing threats to IT security may lead to reconsider the weight of this aspect in future tendering procedures.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011231/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Verhinderung von Spionage

In ihrer Antwort auf die Anfrage 7197/2013 von Hans-Peter Martin schreibt Kommissionsmitglied Viviane Reding, dass Spionageaktivitäten der kanadischen Regierung, welche Medienberichten zufolge gegen EU-Staaten, -Organisationen und -Bürger gerichtet sind, „nicht Gegenstand der aktuellen Verhandlungen über ein Freihandelsabkommen (‚Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement', CETA) sind und somit nicht im Rahmen der Gespräche erörtert werden dürften".

In ihrer Antwort auf die Anfrage 7196/2013 von Hans-Peter Martin zu Möglichkeiten, gegen Spionage des Communications Security Establishment Canada (CSE) vorzugehen, nennt Kommissionsmitglied Viviane Reding weder CETA noch Handelsbeschränkungen als mögliche Druckmittel.

1. Warum ist Spionage im Allgemeinen oder Wirtschaftsspionage im Besonderen in den Verhandlungen über CETA kein Thema?

2. Sieht die Kommission Handelsbeschränkungen als mögliches Druckmittel, um Kanada und andere Staaten zur Unterlassung ihrer Spionagetätigkeiten zu zwingen? Wenn nicht, warum nicht?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(5. Dezember 2013)

Die Kommission verfolgt die Berichte über Überwachungsaktivitäten seitens ausländischer Regierungen und deren Auswirkungen auf die Grundrechte der europäischen Bürgerinnen und Bürger mit großer Aufmerksamkeit und wird unabhängig davon, welche Regierung an derartigen Praktiken beteiligt ist, darin nicht nachlassen.

Jedoch sollte man das am besten geeignete Instrument für die Behandlung dieser Thematik mit Bedacht wählen. Die Kommission glaubt nicht, dass die Verknüpfung vermeintlicher Spionageaktivitäten mit Handelsverhandlungen oder der Einsatz von Handelssanktionen als mögliches Druckmittel am effizientesten wäre, um die betroffenen Staaten zu zwingen, ihre Praktiken offenzulegen.

Insbesondere das CETA-Abkommen mit Kanada dürfte für die EU von bedeutendem wirtschaftlichem Nutzen sein und zur Förderung von Wachstum und Beschäftigung beitragen. Würden diese Verhandlungen, bei denen am 18. Oktober 2013 ein politischer Durchbruch erzielt wurde, als Mittel eingesetzt, um nicht handelsbezogene Ziele zu verfolgen, hätte dies unmittelbare Auswirkungen auf die wirtschaftlichen Interessen der EU. Denn eine Unterbrechung der Handelsverhandlungen würde bedeuten, dass die Europäische Union sich selbst neuer potenzieller Quellen wirtschaftlichen Wachstums beraubt.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011231/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Prevention of espionage

In her answer to question 7197/2013 from Hans-Peter Martin, Commissioner Reding states that the espionage activities of the Canadian Government, which, according to media reports, have targeted EU Member States, EU organisations and EU citizens, are 'not part of the ongoing negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), and therefore [are] not deemed to be discussed within the framework of those talks'.

In her answer to question 7196/2013 from Hans-Peter Martin concerning ways to deal with espionage by the communications Security Establishment Canada (CSE), Commissioner Reding does not mention CETA or trade restrictions as possible bargaining tools.

1. Why is espionage in general or industrial espionage in particular not a topic for discussion in the negotiations on CETA?

2. Does the Commission see trade restrictions as a possible bargaining tool to force Canada and other states to cease their espionage activities? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2013)

The Commission exercises the utmost vigilance with regard to reports of monitoring activities by foreign governments and their impact on the fundamental rights of Europeans, and will continue to do so, whichever government is involved in such practices.

However, one should be careful in choosing the most appropriate means to raise these issues. The Commission does not believe that the most effective way of doing this would be to link the issue of alleged espionage activities with trade negotiations, or use trade sanctions as a possible bargaining tool to force the countries concerned to clarify their practices.

The CETA agreement with Canada in particular is expected to be of significant economic benefit to the EU, fostering growth and employment. Using this negotiation, which came to a political breakthrough on 18 October 2013, as a means to achieve non-trade objectives, would have an immediate and direct impact on the EU's own economic interests, as suspending trade negotiations would mean that the European Union would deprive itself of new potential sources of economic growth.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011232/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Commission action on the safe transportation of workers in the oil industry

On 24 September 2013 a tragic incident occurred when a Super Puma L2 helicopter carrying workers from an oil rig crashed two miles west of Sumburgh airport. Fourteen of the 18 people on board the helicopter at the time survived, but four died. Since 2009 there have been four other incidents in the North Sea involving Super Puma helicopters which have resulted in fatalities. Is the Commission aware of similar incidents occurring in other countries? What is the Commission currently doing to encourage the safe transportation of people working in the oil industry who require the use of a helicopter to go to and from their place of work?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

In accordance with the European aviation safety policy, transportation of people from and to oil rigs must comply with the requirements applicable to Commercial Air Transport (CAT) which is the most strictly regulated part of aviation safety legislation.

For the purpose of ensuring the proper functioning and development of civil aviation safety, the Commission is assited by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). In the specific context of offshore helicopter operations EASA has several ongoing rulemaking activities which in the future might lead to an amendment of the existing requirements. In addition EASA, in charge of the helicopter type continuing airworthiness, also addresses any potential unsafe condition by issuing Airworthiness Directives when this is deemed necessary. With reference to the tragic accidend reported by the Honourable Member there is no such unsafe condition identified in the first report issued by the UK Air Accident Investigation Branch ([1]).

The number of fatal accidents in off-shore helicopter operations involving EU operators amounts to about 10% of the total number of fatal accidents in CAT helicopter operations.

([1]) Special AAIB Bulletin S7/2012 of 18 October 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011233/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: EU trademarks in the US

Scottish products have benefited from approved applications to the EU Protected Geographical Indication schemes. However, the US does not recognise the EU's system of geographical indications. Will EU representatives encourage the US to support existing EU trademarks during the current talks?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(6 November 2013)

The protection of Geographical Indications is a matter of high importance for the EU.

This is reflected in recent bilateral trade agreements that have been recently concluded (such as EU — Canada and EU — Singapore free trade agreements), as well as in ongoing negotiations with EU partner countries.

The Commission can assure the Honourable Member that the concerns of right-holders on this issue, and intellectual property rights more broadly, will be given particular attention in the negotiations of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the United States.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011235/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Decrease in grassland butterfly population in the EU

The population of grassland butterflies declined by almost 50% in the EU between 1990 and 2011, according to recently announced statistics. Is the Commission aware of this situation and the reasons for the decline? What action is being taken to address the problem?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(14 November 2013)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its reply to Written Question E-009689/2013 on the same subject.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011236/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: EU twinning arrangements

The Inchture area in Perthshire, Scotland recently commemorated 20 years of a twinning agreement with Fléac in the Charente département of France. The Twinning Charter sets out an agreement to host exchanges, develop educational, sporting, cultural and business links between the two communities, and foster friendships. The 20th anniversary celebration coincided with the European Year of Citizens, and seeks to strengthen some of the underlying principles of the European Union by sharing experiences between people. What support does the EU give to towns and cities within the EU with twinning arrangements, and what does it do to encourage the creation of new twinning agreements?

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

More than 7 million citizens have taken part in thousands of projects funded by the Europe for Citizens Programme since its inception in 2007 to date. Town-twinning projects and networks of towns have proved to be highly effective means of bringing together European citizens from different countries taking advantage of the partnership between municipalities for strengthening mutual understanding between citizens and cultures. The Inchture area of Scotland participated in the programme through two town-twinning projects. The Perth and Kinross Sport Council was granted EUR 20.644 in 2010 and the Inchture Area Twinning Association EUR 11.000 in 2012.

The future programme 'Europe for Citizens' scheduled for the period 2014-2020 will build on the results produced so far. It will continue to provide financial support to projects bringing together a wide range of citizens from twinned towns around topics in line with the objectives of the programme.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011237/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Tackling the issue of food banks

There has been a rise in the number of food banks in Scotland and across the EU in general in recent years. What action is the Commission taking to provide food security for people in need of support across the EU? What is the EU doing to try and prevent the need for food banks to be created in the first place?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

As part of the Europe 2020 strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive Union, the Member States have committed to reducing by at least 20 million the number of persons at risk of poverty and social exclusion by 2020 (currently around 120 million). Monitoring of the national reforms implementing this strategy takes place via the European Semester and through the adoption by the Council of country specific recommendations.

As regards financial instruments, the European Social Fund (ESF), in collaboration with the European Regional Development Fund, is and will remain the principal tool for combating poverty and social exclusion. It supports actions in the Member States aimed at integrating or improving the prospects of the most vulnerable persons in the workplace. For the future programming period 2014-2020, each Member State should devote at least 20% of its ESF allocation to such support.

There are a growing number of Europeans who are too far removed from the labour market to benefit from ESF activation measures. The Commission therefore proposed in October 2012 the creation of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived. Under this proposal, the European Union would co-finance the distribution of food and essential goods to those who need them most.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011238/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Agricultural shows in the EU

Every year in Scotland in the summer months, a series of agricultural shows take place to promote local agricultural businesses and the local food industry. Do similar events take place around the EU, and what is the level of EU participation in such events?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(14 November 2013)

The Commission confirms that similar events (city farms, open days, fairs, exhibitions) are organised all around the EU at different periods of the year.

The Commission co-finances every year through Regulation (EC) No 814/2000 ([1]) information measures relating to the common agricultural policy which aim, in particular, at explaining, and promoting the European model of agriculture. This contributes to the information of farmers and of those active in rural areas and raises public awareness on the issues and objectives of that policy. Some of the information actions awarded a grant include the organisation of such type of events-city farms, open days, etc. — or the participation of stakeholders in some events such as agricultural shows. For the forthcoming year, more details about communication actions taken at the initiative of third party organisations can be found in the Call for Proposals ([2]) published in September 2013 and available through the following link:
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/grants-for-information-measures/index_en.htm

Besides, the Commission's emphasis on 'going local' and improving the awareness of citizens about the CAP is carried out through direct actions at its own initiative which includes the participation to events such as Grüne Woche Berlin, SIA-Paris or Bruxelles-Champêtre with its own stand or through speakers and experts participating to round tables. The objective of the Commission's participation in those events is to target the general public and stakeholders and to communicate that the CAP and rural development are of relevance to the whole of society.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 814/2000 of 17 April 2000 on Information Measures Relating to the common agricultural policy, OJ L 100, 20.4.2000, p. 7.
([2]) Call for Proposals 'Support for Information Measures relating to the common agricultural policy (CAP' for 2014, OJEU, C 264, 13.9.2013, p. 11.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-011244/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Derechos humanos en Rusia y relaciones exteriores de la UE

El pasado mes de junio, el Parlamento de Rusia aprobó una modificación que introduce enmiendas al artículo 5 de la Ley Federal «Sobre la protección de los niños de la información perjudicial para su salud y desarrollo», que prohíbe la difusión de informaciones o contenidos sobre la homosexualidad a menores y que sancionará a quienes difundan información que pudiese incitar en los mismos «orientaciones sexuales no tradicionales». La nueva legislación recoge estas nuevas infracciones administrativas, que podrán ser sancionadas con multas y con la suspensión de actividades para las personas con cargos en entidades jurídicas. Otra norma prohíbe asimismo la adopción por parejas del mismo sexo y exige tratados bilaterales específicos para la adopción por parte de parejas heterosexuales en los países donde esté vigente el matrimonio igualitario. En España ya hay 180 adopciones con niño asignado paralizadas.

Numerosas organizaciones han informado que desde la aprobación de dicha ley se han multiplicado los actos violentos contra personas del colectivo LGTBI y ello ante la pasividad de las fuerzas de seguridad y de las autoridades rusas. Se trata de una clara discriminación por razón de la orientación sexual o identidad de género y una inaceptable violación de los derechos fundamentales en un país que ha suscrito los compromisos internacionales de derechos humanos. Rusia es, además, miembro del Consejo de Europa y debe cumplir las convenciones regionales que ha firmado, así como acatar la jurisprudencia del Tribunal Europeo de Derechos Humanos.

El Consejo de Asuntos Exteriores del Consejo de la UE aprobó el pasado 24 junio unas recomendaciones para promover y proteger los derechos fundamentales de las personas LGTBI en el contexto internacional. Denunciar las leyes discriminatorias contra este colectivo y combatir los actos de violencia homofóbica son dos áreas de acción prioritaria expresamente enunciadas en el documento del Consejo.

Por ello, pregunto a la Comisión:

¿Qué seguimiento piensa dar la Comisión a las orientaciones dictaminadas por el Consejo de la UE en política exterior y defensa de los derechos humanos del colectivo LGTBI? ¿Qué tratamiento da la Comisión Europea a esta cuestión en las relaciones bilaterales que mantiene con las autoridades rusas?

Respuesta de la alta representante y vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de octubre de 2013)

La alta representante y vicepresidenta está la corriente de los hechos a los que se refiere Su Señoría y ha seguido con mucha atención la evolución de la situación. También ha declarado públicamente su decepción por las leyes regionales y nacionales que prohíben la «propaganda homosexual». La alta representante y vicepresidenta considera que esta legislación propicia la estigmatización de determinados grupos y personas, así como las prácticas y discursos discriminatorios contra ellos. Esta legislación perece oponerse al Convenio Europeo de Derechos Humanos (CEDH).

De conformidad con las directrices de la UE sobre la promoción y la protección de los derechos fundamentales de las personas lesbianas, gays, bisexuales, transexuales e intersexuales (LGBTI), la UE está muy atenta a este tema en Rusia y ha aprovechado las dos últimas rondas de sus consultas periódicas de derechos humanos con la Federación de Rusia (diciembre de 2012 y mayo de 2013) para interesarse por la conformidad de la legislación sobre la «propaganda homosexual» con los compromisos internacionales de Rusia y, en particular, con el Convenio Europeo de Derechos Humanos, así como para instar a dicho país a atenerse a sus compromisos. La próxima ronda de consultas sobre derechos humanos tendrá lugar antes de finales de año y brindará la oportunidad para que la UE reitere su opinión sobre este asunto, que se continuará planteando también en las reuniones bilaterales con las autoridades rusas que se van a celebrar mientras tanto. La UE ha apoyado y seguirá apoyando a las organizaciones de la sociedad civil en Rusia, incluidas las organizaciones LGBTI, sobre todo al amparo del Instrumento Europeo para la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos (IEDDH), y seguirá planteando sus inquietudes de todas las maneras adecuadas y en todos los foros internacionales pertinentes en materia de derechos humanos, tal como hizo el 17 de septiembre de 2013 en el Consejo de Derechos Humanos de las Naciones Unidas.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011244/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Human rights in Russia and the EU's external relations

In June, the Russian Parliament adopted changes amending Article 5 of the Federal Law on the Protection of Children from Information Harmful to their Health and Development so as to prohibit the dissemination of information or content on homosexuality to minors and punish any person who disseminates information that could lead minors into 'non-traditional sexual orientations'. These new administrative offences are now included in the revised law and may be punished with fines and suspension from their posts for people working for legal entities. Another law similarly prohibits couples of the same sex from adopting children and requires specific bilateral treaties for adoption by heterosexual couples in countries where same-sex marriage is permitted. In Spain, 180 adoption procedures where couples have been matched with a child are at a standstill.

Many organisations have reported that the incidence of violence against members of the LGBTI community has increased significantly since this law was passed, while the security forces and the Russian authorities fail to take action. This is clearly discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity and an unacceptable infringement of fundamental rights in a country which has signed international agreements on human rights. Russia is, moreover, a member of the Council of Europe and must abide by the regional conventions it has signed, and comply with the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights.

On 24 June 2013, the Foreign Affairs Council of the Council of the European Union adopted guidelines on promoting and protecting the fundamental rights of LGBTI people in an international context. Denouncing laws that discriminate against this community and combating homophobic violence are two areas for priority action specifically mentioned in the Council document.

How, therefore, does the Commission plan to follow up the Council's guidelines in its foreign policy and in defending the LGBTI community's human rights? What approach does the Commission take to this issue in its bilateral relations with the Russian authorities?

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

The HR/VP is aware of the developments referred to by the Honourable Member and has been following these developments closely, expressing publically her disappointment of adoption of bills prohibiting 'homosexual propaganda', at regional and at national level. The HR/VP believes that this law leads to the stigmatisation of particular groups and individuals and to discriminatory practices and discourse against them. This law therefore appears to be in contradiction with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

In accordance with the EU guidelines on promoting and protecting the fundamental rights of LGBTI people, the EU is closely monitoring this issue in Russia and 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 the 'homosexual propaganda' law with Russia's international commitments, in particular with the ECHR, and to call upon Russia to amend it so as to put it in conformity with its committments. The next round of Human Rights Consultations should take place before the end of the year and should allow the EU to state again its views on the matter. The issue will also continue to be raised during bilateral meetings with the Russian authorities to be held in the meantime. The EU has been supporting and will continue to support civil society organisations in Russia, including LGBTI organisations, notably through the EIDHR and will continue to raise its concerns in all appropriate formats as well as in all relevant Human Rights international fora, as it most recently did on 17 September in the context of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011246/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Probleme des digitalen Binnenmarktes

In ihrer Antwort auf die Anfrage E-006771/2013 von Hans-Peter Martin schreibt Kommissarin Reding im Namen der Kommission, dass US-Internetunternehmen vor allem deshalb den Internetdienstmarkt dominieren, weil sie in den USA „Zugang zu einem ausgereiften und integrierten Markt von mehr als 300 Millionen Verbrauchern haben" und daher „der Ausbau des digitalen Binnenmarktes in Europa weiterhin ein entscheidendes politisches Ziel" ist.

1. Welche konkreten Hauptursachen sieht die Kommission für die anhaltende Zersplitterung des europäischen digitalen Binnenmarktes?

2. Welche Lösungsansätze sind derzeit in Arbeit und welche weiteren Lösungsmöglichkeiten gibt es, um den europäischen digitalen Binnenmarkt besser zu integrieren?

3. In welcher Form ist der europäische digitale Binnenmarkt noch nicht „ausgereift"? Sind die Probleme dabei vor allem struktureller und/oder historischer Natur oder sind vor allem die legislativen Rahmen mangelhaft?

Antwort von Frau Kroes im Namen der Kommission
(25. November 2013)

Die Verwirklichung eines vollständig integrierten digitalen Binnenmarkts könnte der Wirtschaft in der EU durch ein höheres Wirtschaftswachstum von bis zu 4 % des BIP und die Schaffung von Millionen neuer Arbeitsplätze erhebliche Vorteile bringen.

Der Aufbau eines ausgereiften und integrierten digitalen Binnenmarkts in Europa wird durch die anhaltende Zersplitterung infolge abweichender Vorschriften, Normen und Verfahren in unterschiedlichen Bereichen, vom Datenschutz und den elektronischen Signaturen über die Besteuerung bis zum Verbraucherschutz und dem Urheberrecht, erschwert. Die Einhaltung von häufig voneinander abweichenden Vorschriften erhöht insbesondere für KMU die Kosten der Wirtschaftstätigkeit. Gleichzeitig beeinträchtigen diese Unterschiede das Vertrauen der Nutzer, die befürchten könnten, dass sie beim Erwerb bei einem Anbieter in einem anderen Mitgliedstaat weniger gut geschützt sind als bei einheimischen Unternehmen.

Außerdem gefährdet das Fehlen eines voll funktionsfähigen digitalen Binnenmarkts die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit von Unternehmen in der EU, wenn diese mit führenden Internetunternehmen konkurrieren, die durch ihre großen Heimatmärkte (wie die USA oder China) gestärkt werden.

Die Kommission hat im Rahmen der Digitalen Agenda für Europa bereits eine Reihe von Legislativvorschlägen vorgelegt, um diese Zersplitterung zu überwinden und bis 2015 einen echten digitalen Binnenmarkt zu verwirklichen. Hierzu zählen Vorschläge zur gegenseitigen Anerkennung von elektronischen Identitätsdiensten und Signaturen, zur kollektiven Rechtewahrnehmung, zum Datenschutz und zur Computer- und Netzsicherheit sowie das unlängst vorgelegte Paket „vernetzter Kontinent", die alle in Kürze angenommen werden dürften. Außerdem sind Arbeiten zur Besteuerung und zur Aktualisierung des Urheberrechts in Gang.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011246/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Problems associated with the digital single market

In her answer to Question E-006771/2013 from Hans-Peter Martin, Commissioner Reding states on behalf of the Commission that US Internet providers dominate the Internet service market primarily because in the US they have 'access to a sophisticated and integrated market of more than 300 million consumers', and that is why 'completing the digital single market in Europe remains a crucial policy objective'.

1. What specific key reasons does the Commission see for the continued fragmentation of the European digital single market?

2. What solutions are currently in preparation, and what other possible solutions are there for improving the integration of the European digital single market?

3. In what way is the European digital single market not yet 'sophisticated'? Are the problems involved primarily structural and/or historical in nature, or is it principally the legislative framework that is inadequate?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

Achieving a truly integrated Digital Single Market could bring major benefits to the EU economy in terms of higher economic growth, possibly up to 4% of GDP, and the creation of millions of new jobs.

The development of a sophisticated and integrated Digital Single Market in Europe is inhibited by continuing fragmentation, which arises from diverging rules, standards and practices in different areas ranging from data protection, e-signatures and taxation to consumer protection and copy rights. Compliance with often divergent rules increases the costs of doing business, particularly for SMEs. At the same time, these differences affect user trust, who may be concerned that if they purchase from providers established in other Member States they are less protected than when buying from domestic firms.

Moreover, the lack of a fully functioning Digital Single Market also jeopardises the competitiveness of EU where they compete with major Internet companies who are able to draw strength from their large home markets (e.g. US, China).

As part of the Digital Agenda for Europe, the Commission has already made a number of legislative proposals to overcome fragmentation and achieve a genuine Digital Single Market by 2015. These include proposals on the mutual recognition of e-identity services and e-signatures, collective rights management, data protection, cyber security, and the recent Connected Continent Package, which all should be adopted as soon as possible. Work is also underway on taxation and modernising copyrights.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011247/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Investitionen in den Ausbau von Mobilfunknetzen

Kommissarin Neelie Kroes will bis 2014 die Roaminggebühren für eingehende Anrufe und bis 2016 die Roaminggebühren für alle Telekommunikationsdienste innerhalb der EU unterbinden.

Mobilfunkanbieter protestieren gegen dieses Vorhaben und geben an, die Gewinne aus Roaminggebühren seien nötig, um den Netzausbau zu finanzieren. Die Kommissarin hat dem entgegnet, dass hohe Roaminggebühren in der Vergangenheit nicht mit hohen Investitionen korrelierten. Ein weiterer Netzausbau wird von vielen Experten als notwendig angesehen.

1. Welche Gewinnminderungen erwartet die Kommission für die europäische Telekommunikationsindustrie, wenn innereuropäische Roaminggebühren wegfallen?

2. Erwartet die Kommission Auswirkungen auf den Netzausbau?

3. Wie wird die Kommission die Mobilfunkanbieter dazu bewegen, ihre Investitionen zu erhöhen und welche Kosten des Netzausbaus werden dabei von der Union oder den Mitgliedstaaten getragen?

Antwort von Frau Kroes im Namen der Kommission
(15. November 2013)

Das Roaming macht etwa 5 % der Betreibereinnahmen aus. Die Folgenabschätzung der Kommission ergab, dass die Abschaffung der Roamingaufschläge bei den derzeitigen regulierten Preisobergrenzen vom 1. Juli 2014 für die Betreiber EU-weit insgesamt 1,6 Mrd. EUR Einnahmeneinbußen bedeuten würde. Allerdings dürften diese Einbußen wegen der potenziell hohen Nachfrageelastizität von Datendiensten, die voraussichtlich zu einem viel höheren Nutzungsvolumen führen wird (was bei einigen nordeuropäischen Betreibern bereits der Fall ist), letztlich erheblich niedriger ausfallen. Außerdem ermöglicht die vorgeschlagene fakultative Lösung erstens die Anwendung des Kriteriums der üblichen Nutzung und sieht zweitens eine Übergangszeit für die Abschaffung der Roamingaufschläge vor, damit die Betreiber Einnahmenausfälle vorab einkalkulieren und ihr Angebot und ihr Geschäft entsprechend anpassen können.

Der Roamingmarkt ist seit 2007 reguliert, was eine Senkung der Roamingentgelte von völlig überhöhten Preisen auf das heutigen Niveau bewirkt hat. In dieser Zeit sind die Preise inländischer Mobilfunkdienste durch den Wettbewerb auf den inländischen Märkten ebenfalls gesunken. Für Betreiber wird es auch künftig Anreize für intensiven Wettbewerb geben. Maßnahmen wie die Beseitigung administrativer Hindernisse für kleine Funkzellen oder die verstärkte Koordinierung der Frequenznutzung dienen der weiteren Förderung des Ausbaus von Mobilfunknetzen.

Die Kommission hat ferner einen Vorschlag zur Verringerung der Kosten des Ausbaus von hochleistungsfähigen elektronischen Kommunikationsnetzen, einschließlich Mobilfunknetzen, vorgelegt, in dem auch eine Förderung durch die europäischen Strukturfonds und den Europäischen Investmentfonds (unter Einhaltung der Beihilferechts) vorgesehen ist.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011247/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Investments in the development of mobile telecommunications networks

Commissioner Kroes wants to eliminate roaming charges for incoming calls by 2014 and roaming charges for all telecommunications services within the EU by 2016.

Mobile service providers are protesting against this proposal and state that the profit from roaming charges is needed to finance the development of the network. The Commissioner's response to this was that high roaming charges have not correlated with large investments in the past. Further development of the network is considered by many experts to be necessary.

1. What reductions in profit does the Commission expect for the European telecommunications industry if roaming charges within the EU are abolished?

2. Does it expect there to be any impact on the development of the network?

3. How will it encourage mobile service providers to increase their investments, and in this regard what network development costs will be borne by the Union or the Member States?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

Roaming represents about 5% of revenues for operators. The impact assessment undertaken by the Commission suggests that the abolishment of roaming surcharges would have EUR 1.6 billion impact on operator's revenue at the EU level with respect to current regulated price caps of 1 July 2014. However, the loss in revenue is likely to be much less than those, due to the potentially high demand elasticity of data services which will result in much higher volumes of consumption, also as observed by some Nordic operators. In addition, the proposed optional solution allows for the application of a reasonable use criterion and foresees a transitional period for abolishing roaming surcharges so that operators are able to anticipate revenue losses and adapt their offers and business.

The roaming market has been regulated since 2007 lowering roaming prices from exorbitant level to the current level. During this period, the prices of domestic mobile services have also decreased because of competition on domestic markets. Operators will maintain their incentives to compete strongly also in the future. Measures such as the removal of administrative burdens for small cells and enhanced coordination of spectrum will further encourage mobile network roll-out.

The Commission also made a proposal for reducing the cost of deployment of high speed electronic communications networks, including mobile, and network roll-out can also be supported by European Structural and Investment Funds (subject to compliance with state aid rules).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011248/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: NSA-Attacken gegen europäische Unternehmen

Belgischen Medien zufolge soll der amerikanische Geheimdienst „National Security Agency" (NSA) in die Computersysteme des belgischen Telekommunikationsunternehmens Belgacom eingedrungen sein.

1. Sind der Kommission Fälle bekannt, in denen der NSA Einbrüche in die Computersysteme europäischer Unternehmen nachgewiesen wurden?

2. Sind der Kommission Fälle bekannt, in denen der NSA ein Einbruch in die Computersysteme österreichischer Unternehmen nachgewiesen wurde?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(26. November 2013)

Die Kommission verweist den Herrn Abgeordneten auf ihre Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-009773/13.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011248/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: NSA attacks on European undertakings

According to the Belgian media, the US intelligence service, the National Security Agency (NSA), has hacked into the computer systems of the Belgian telecommunications company Belgacom.

1. Does the Commission know of any cases where it has been proven that the NSA has hacked into the computer systems of European undertakings?

2. Does it know of any cases where it has been proven that the NSA has hacked into the computer systems of Austrian undertakings?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-009773/13.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011249/13
an den Rat
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Maßnahmen gegen Spionage

Nach den Enthüllungen über US-amerikanische und kanadische Spionageprogramme haben mehrere europäische Staatsoberhäupter diese Programme scharf verurteilt. Auch China und Russland stehen immer wieder im Verdacht, dass Wirtschaftsspionage von ihrem Territorium ausgeht. Während der Schaden durch politische oder sicherheitsrelevante Spionage wohl kaum zu beziffern ist, schätzte das deutsche Innenministerium im August 2013 den jährlichen Schaden durch Wirtschaftsspionage alleine für Deutschland auf etwa 50 Milliarden EUR und damit mehr als ein Prozent des deutschen Bruttoinlandsprodukts.

1. Hat der Rat Möglichkeiten geprüft, mit denen Spionage und Wirtschaftsspionage, die von Drittstaaten ausgehen, sanktioniert beziehungsweise durch angedrohte Sanktionen verhindert werden können?

2. Hat der Rat Möglichkeiten geprüft, mit denen Spionage und Wirtschaftsspionage gegen EU-Staaten, -Organisationen und -Bürger, die von in Drittstaaten ansässigen Individuen und Organisationen ausgehen und von dem betreffenden Drittstaat geduldet, gefördert oder direkt betrieben werden, sanktioniert beziehungsweise durch angedrohte Sanktionen verhindert werden können?

3. Hat der Rat insbesondere für die Punkte 1. und 2. wirtschaftliche Maßnahmen wie Handelsbeschränkungen in Betracht gezogen?

4. Sollte der Rat noch nicht zu diesem Thema getagt haben, wann werden entsprechende Gespräche erfolgen?

Antwort
(9. Dezember 2013)

Der Rat hat die einzelnen Fragen angeblicher Wirtschaftsspionage, die der Herr Abgeordnete zur Sprache bringt, nicht erörtert.

Allgemeiner wurden die jüngsten Entwicklungen in Bezug auf mögliche Fragen im Zusammenhang mit der Nachrichtengewinnung und die große Besorgnis, die diese Ereignisse unter den euro-päischen Bürgern ausgelöst haben, von den Staats- und Regierungschefs am Rande des Euro-päischen Rates vom 24./25. Oktober erörtert. Sie haben sich auf eine Erklärung verständigt, die den Schlussfolgerungen des Europäischen Rates beigefügt ist (Dokument EUCO 169/13).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011249/13
to the Council
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Measures to prevent espionage

Following the revelations concerning US and Canadian surveillance programmes, several European Heads of State have strongly condemned these programmes. China and Russia are also constantly coming under the suspicion that industrial espionage is being conducted from their territories. While it is not really possible to quantify the losses caused by political or security-related espionage, in August 2013 the German Federal Ministry of the Interior estimated the annual loss caused by industrial espionage to be around EUR 50 billion for Germany alone, and thus more than 1% of German GDP.

1. Has the Council examined possible means by which espionage and industrial espionage carried out by third countries can be penalised or prevented by the threat of penalties?

2. Has it examined possible means by which espionage and industrial espionage against EU Member States, institutions and citizens carried out by individuals and organisations established in third countries and tolerated, supported or directly instigated by the third country in question can be penalised or prevented by the threat of penalties?

3. In particular, has the Council considered economic measures, such as trade restrictions, for points 1 and 2?

4. If the Council has not yet met to discuss this matter, when will the corresponding talks take place?

Reply
(9 December 2013)

The Council has not discussed the specific issues of alleged industrial espionage to which the Honourable Member refers.

More generally, recent developments concerning possible intelligence issues and the deep concerns that these events have raised among European citizens were discussed by the Heads of States or Government in the margins of the European Council on 24/25 October. They agreed on a statement annexed to the Conclusions of the European Council (document EUCO 169/13).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011250/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Schaden durch Spionage und Wirtschaftsspionage

Nach den Enthüllungen über US-amerikanische und kanadische Spionageprogramme haben mehrere europäische Staatsoberhäupter diese Programme scharf verurteilt. Auch China und Russland stehen immer wieder im Verdacht, dass Wirtschaftsspionage von ihrem Territorium ausgeht. Während der Schaden durch politische oder sicherheitsrelevante Spionage wohl kaum zu beziffern ist, schätzte das deutsche Innenministerium im August 2013 den jährlichen Schaden durch Wirtschaftsspionage alleine für Deutschland auf etwa 50 Milliarden EUR und damit mehr als ein Prozent des deutschen Bruttoinlandsprodukts.

1. Wie hoch schätzt die Kommission den Schaden durch Spionage und Wirtschaftsspionage jeweils für (a) die EU und (b) die einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten der EU?

2. Welche Akteure und Organisationen werden besonders geschädigt?

3. Welche Wirtschaftssektoren werden besonders geschädigt?

Antwort von Herrn Tajani im Namen der Kommission
(4. Dezember 2013)

Die Kommission verweist den Herrn Abgeordneten auf ihre Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-009773/2013 von Frau Dubravka Šuica ([1]).

Am 8. September 2013 versicherte der nationale Geheimdienstdirektor der Vereinigten Staaten in einer Erklärung, die USA nutzten ihren Auslandsgeheimdienst nicht dazu, Betriebs- und Geschäftsgeheimnisse ausländischer Firmen für US-amerikanische Unternehmen zu stehlen, damit diese ihre internationale Wettbewerbsfähigkeit oder ihren Gewinn erhöhen könnten. Genauso wenig würden die gesammelten Daten US-amerikanischen Unternehmen zur Verfügung gestellt.

Die Themen Spionage und Wirtschaftsspionage bleiben für die EU und die Mitgliedstaaten jedoch eine große Herausforderung.

Die Kommission hat Rechtsinstrumente für den Schutz der Rechte des geistigen Eigentums in der EU sowie für den Handel mit Drittländern verabschiedet. Ergänzend prüft die Kommission derzeit den Rechtsrahmen für den Schutz von Betriebs- und Geschäftsgeheimnissen.

Allerdings liegt es gegenwärtig im Zuständigkeitsbereich der Mitgliedstaaten, zur Bekämpfung von Spionage und Wirtschaftsspionage sowie als Reaktion auf die damit verbundenen Bedrohungen und Verluste, die Maßnahmen zu treffen, die sie für angebracht halten. Somit verfügen die Mitgliedstaaten möglicherweise über entsprechende Schätzungen. Sie erstatten der Kommission über solche Angelegenheiten normalerweise nicht Bericht und bislang bestand auch nicht die Notwendigkeit, diese Frage auf europäischer Ebene zu regeln.

Die Kommission ist daher nicht in der Lage, Schätzungen über Verluste durch politische oder wirtschaftliche Spionage vorzulegen.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011250/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Loss caused by espionage and industrial espionage

Following the revelations concerning US and Canadian surveillance programmes, several European Heads of State have strongly condemned these programmes. China and Russia are also constantly coming under the suspicion that industrial espionage is being conducted from their territories. While it is not really possible to quantify the losses caused by political or security-related espionage, in August 2013 the German Federal Ministry of the Interior estimated the annual loss caused by industrial espionage to be around EUR 50 billion for Germany alone, and thus more than 1% of German GDP.

1. How high does the Commission estimate the loss through espionage and industrial espionage, respectively, to be in (a) the EU and (b) the individual EU Member States?

2. Which stakeholders and organisations are particularly affected?

3. Which economic sectors are particularly affected?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-009773/2013 by Mrs Dubravka Šuica ([1]).

On 8 September 2013, the US Director of National Intelligence issued a statement, in which he asserted that the US does not 'use [our] foreign intelligence capabilities to steal the trade secrets of foreign companies on behalf of — or give intelligence we collect to — US companies to enhance their international competitiveness or increase their bottom line'.

However, the issue of espionage and industrial espionage remains an important challenge for the EU and the Member States.

The Commission has adopted legal instruments for the protection of intellectual property rights in the EU and for trade with third countries. As a complement, the Commission is also examining the legal framework for trade secrets protection.

However, it is today within the responsibility of the Member States to take measures they consider adequate to combat espionage and industrial espionage, and to respond to related threats and losses. Accordingly, Member States may have corresponding estimates at their disposal. They are usually not reporting to the Commission on such issues, and there has so far not been a necessity to regulate this issue at European level.

The Commission is therefore not in a position to provide estimates on losses caused by political and industrial espionage.

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

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011251/13
an die Kommission
Herbert Reul (PPE)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Entsorgungsgesetz — Artikel 17 KrWG

In Deutschland besteht in der Entsorgungsbranche ein reger Wettbewerb von neun Anbieten, der nach Aussage des Bundeskartellamtes auch zu erheblichen Kosteneinsparungen und Verbesserungen beim Recycling geführt hat. Trotz der Öffnung verbleiben einige Wettbewerbseinschränkungen. Das im Juni 2012 in Kraft getretene Kreislaufwirtschaftsgesetz (KrWG), insbesondere die Zulassung von Wettbewerb im Bereich Hausmüllentsorgung, war großer Streitpunkt. Der Entwurf der Bundesregierung sah eine gewisse Wettbewerbsöffnung für die Nicht-Rest-Müll-Fraktionen vor, dies wurde jedoch vom Bundestag und Bundesrat zugunsten kommunaler Interessen wieder eingeschränkt. Artikel 17 KrWG schafft ein ausdrückliches Monopolrecht der öffentlich-rechtlichen Entsorgungsträger für gemischte Abfälle aus privaten Haushalten (Restmüll).

Das KrWG lässt somit weiterhin zu, dass Kommunen über die Untersagung von Wettbewerb zum eigenen Entsorgungsbetrieb entscheiden und dass Abfallwirtschaftspläne wettbewerbsbeschränkende Anlagenzuweisungen enthalten.

Wie bewertet die Kommission diesen Teil der KrWG im Hinblick auf das Wettbewerbsrecht nach Artikel 106, 102 AEUV? Wie wird die Kommission darauf reagieren?

Antwort von Herrn Almunia im Namen der Kommission
(5. Dezember 2013)

Das im Juni 2012 in Kraft getretene Kreislaufwirtschaftsgesetz ist der Kommission bekannt. Das Gesetz verpflichtet Haushaltungen, recyclebare Abfälle den öffentlichen Sammlungsunternehmen zu überlassen, wenn keine gewerbliche Sammlung angeboten wird. Darüber hinaus berechtigt das Gesetz die zuständigen Behörden, die gewerbliche Sammlung aufgrund überwiegender öffentlicher Interessen zu verbieten.

Aus wettbewerbsrechtlicher Sicht ist es wünschenswert, dass gewerbliche Sammlungsunternehmen auch auf den Müllsammlungsmärkten tätig sind. Das europäische Wettbewerbsrecht bezieht sich in der Regel auf das Verhalten von Unternehmen und kann auf rechtliche Maßnahmen (des Staates) wie das Kreislaufwirtschaftsgesetz nur in sehr begrenztem Rahmen Anwendung finden.

Staatliche Maßnahmen können unter Artikel 106 in Verbindung mit Artikel 102 des Vertrags über die Arbeitsweise der Europäischen Union (im Folgenden „AEUV“) fallen. Die Gewährung eines Monopols an sich stellt keinen Verstoß gegen Artikel 106 in Verbindung mit Artikel 102 AEUV dar. Die Kommission wird die Entwicklungen auf den betroffenen Märkten jedoch weiterhin überwachen und dabei auch aktuelle Informationen von Marktteilnehmern berücksichtigen.

Die Kommission untersucht zurzeit, ob Zuwiderhandlungen gegen den freien Warenverkehr nach Artikel 35 AEUV vorliegen. Im Rahmen des zu diesem Zweck eröffneten Prüfverfahrens wurde Deutschland aufgefordert, Erläuterungen in Bezug auf das Kreislaufwirtschaftsgesetz zu übermitteln. Das Verfahren ist noch nicht abgeschlossen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011251/13
to the Commission
Herbert Reul (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Disposal law — Article 17 KrWG

In the disposal sector in Germany there is keen competition between nine service providers, which, according to a statement by the Federal Cartel Office, has also led to considerable cost savings and improvements in recycling. Despite the sector having opened up, a few restrictions on competition remain. The Act on recycling management (German designation: KrWG), which entered into force in June 2012, in particular the authorisation of competition in the household waste disposal sector, was very controversial. The draft produced by the Federal Government provided for a certain opening up of competition for the non-residual waste fraction, but this was restricted once again by the *Bundestag* and *Bundesrat* in favour of municipal interests. Article 17 KrWG establishes an explicit monopoly right for public waste management agencies for mixed waste from private households (residual waste).

Thus, the KrWG continues to allow municipalities to decide to prohibit competition with their own waste disposal service and waste management plans to contain competition-restricting contributions to facilities.

What is the Commission's view of this part of the KrWG in relation to competition law in accordance with Articles 106 and 102 TFEU? How will it respond to this?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2013)

The Commission is informed about the German waste law which entered into force in June 2012. It obliges households to give recyclable waste to the public collection companies, if no commercial collection is available. It moreover gives the authorities in charge the right to prohibit commercial collections if they go against overriding public interests.

From a competition perspective it is desirable that commercial collectors also be active on the waste collection markets. European competition law, which normally relates to company behaviour, can only be applied within very tight limits in the case of legal (state) measures, such as the German waste law.

State measures may fall under Article 106 in connection with Article 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The mere granting of a monopoly does not constitute an infringement of Article 106 in connection with Article 102 TFEU. The Commission will, however, continue monitoring further developments on the affected markets also on the basis of up-to-date information provided by market participants.

The Commission is currently analysing the situation in view of potential infringements against the principle of free movement of goods pursuant to Article 35 TFEU. For this purpose, an investigation was opened in which the Federal Republic of Germany has been requested to provide explanations regarding the German waste law. This procedure is still ongoing.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011252/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(3 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Εισφορές στα επιμελητήρια στην Ελλάδα και στην Ευρώπη

Σύμφωνα με το «Μνημόνιο Συνεννόησης στις Συγκεκριμένες Προϋποθέσεις Οικονομικής Πολιτικής — Δεκέμβριος 2012» ([1]) η εγγραφή των επιχειρήσεων στα εμπορικά επιμελητήρια της Ελλάδας γίνεται εθελοντική από τον Ιανουάριο του 2015. Ωστόσο, βάσει πρόσφατων νομοθετημάτων ([2]), τα εμπορικά επιμελητήρια επωμίστηκαν επιπρόσθετες και σημαντικές λειτουργίες, αφού η προσπάθεια για ανταγωνιστικότητα των ελληνικών επιχειρήσεων και απορρόφηση των ευρωπαϊκών πόρων πρέπει να ενδυναμωθεί. Αυτά συνεπάγονται την ανάγκη σταθερών πόρων. Στην Ελλάδα, βάσει νόμου ([3]), οι επιμελητηριακές συνδρομές ποικίλλουν, καθώς αποτελεί αρμοδιότητα του Διοικητικού Συμβουλίου του κάθε επιμελητηρίου ο καθορισμός των συνδρομών των μελών του. Εμπειρικά, ο μέσος ετήσιος όρος των επιμελητηριακών συνδρομών ανέρχεται σε 40-50 ευρώ για τις ατομικές επιχειρήσεις, σε 75-100 ευρώ για τις προσωπικές εταιρείες, σε 250-450 ευρώ για κεφαλαιουχικές εταιρείες και σε 750-950 για τις τράπεζες. Δεδομένου ότι υφίστανται ευρωπαϊκές αποφάσεις ([4]) που καθιστούν την υποχρεωτική συνδρομή των επιχειρήσεων στα επιμελητήρια συμβατή με την ευρωπαϊκή νομοθεσία και δεν την χαρακτηρίζουν ως φόρο υπέρ τρίτων, γνωμοδοτήσεις που δεν την καθιστούν εμπόδιο στην ίδρυση επιχειρήσεων ([5]) αλλά, αντιθέτως, ανταποδοτική εισφορά, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

α) Ποια η άποψή της για την εν λόγω μνημονιακή υποχρέωση; Θεωρεί απαραίτητη και αιτιολογημένη την αλλαγή στο καθεστώς των πόρων των ελληνικών επιμελητηρίων και για ποιους λόγους;

β) Θεωρεί πως η αναμενόμενη μείωση πόρων για τα επιμελητήρια, με παράλληλη ανάθεση επιπρόσθετων αρμοδιοτήτων σε αυτά, δεν θα δημιουργήσει δυσχέρειες στη λειτουργία τους αλλά και στους στόχους της ανάπτυξης της αγοράς; Διαθέτει σχετική μελέτη για τον εν λόγω τομέα;

γ) Ποιο είναι το σχετικό καθεστώς στα υπόλοιπα κράτη μέλη; Υπάρχει ανάλογη περίπτωση στην ΕΕ όπως αυτή που επιλέγεται για τα ελληνικά επιμελητήρια και, αν ναι, ποια τα συμπεράσματα;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(27 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

1. Οι ελληνικές αρχές έχουν πράγματι θεσπίσει νομοθεσία η οποία καθιστά εθελοντική την εγγραφή των εταιρειών στα εμπορικά επιμελητήρια από την 1η Ιανουαρίου 2015. Ενώ η νομοθεσία δεν είναι ασύμβατη με το δίκαιο της ΕΕ, η Επιτροπή πιστεύει ότι η υποχρεωτική καταχώριση των ελληνικών επιχειρήσεων στα εμπορικά επιμελητήρια επαυξάνει το κόστος της επιχειρηματικής δραστηριότητας και αποτελεί εμπόδιο για τη δημιουργία επιχειρήσεων. Η νομοθεσία σύμφωνα με την οποία καθίσταται η καταχώριση εθελοντική συμπεριλήφθηκε στο μνημόνιο συμφωνίας που συμφωνήθηκε με τις ελληνικές αρχές, ως μέρος μιας σειράς μέτρων για την προώθηση ενός αποτελεσματικού και ανταγωνιστικού επιχειρηματικού περιβάλλοντος, συμβάλλοντας με τον τρόπο αυτό στην αειφόρο ανάπτυξη και τη δημιουργία θέσεων απασχόλησης στην Ελλάδα.

2. Η Επιτροπή συμφωνεί με το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου ότι τα εμπορικά επιμελητήρια διαδραματίζουν σημαντικό ρόλο στην Ελλάδα, όπως και σε άλλα κράτη μέλη, αλλά πιστεύει ότι η εθελοντική εγγραφή προωθεί μια υπηρεσία που προσαρμόζεται στις ανάγκες των μελών τους.

3. Το ρυθμιστικό πλαίσιο για τα εμπορικά επιμελητήρια υπάγεται στην αρμοδιότητα των κρατών μελών. Η εθελοντική εγγραφή εφαρμόζεται πράγματι σε άλλα κράτη μέλη όπως η Ισπανία, όπου, στις αρχές του 2010, θεσπίστηκε μια νομική διάταξη παρόμοια με αυτή που έχει θεσπιστεί στην Ελλάδα. Τα ισπανικά εμπορικά επιμελητήρια δέχονται χρηματοδοτικούς πόρους από άλλες πηγές και εξακολουθούν να διαδραματίζουν σημαντικό ρόλο στην ισπανική οικονομία.

([1]) http://goo.gl/QaIDri
([2]) Νόμοι υπ' αριθμόν 3898/2010, 3982/2011, 4155/2013.
([3]) http://goo.gl/TE8yMs
([4]) 19.4.2012 απόφαση του ευρωπαϊκού Δικαστηρίου.
([5]) Γνωμοδότηση με αριθμό αναφοράς 0169/2012 της Επιτροπής Αναφορών του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011252/13
to the Commission
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Contributions to chambers of commerce in Greece and Europe

Under the December 2012 'Memorandum of Understanding on Specific Economic Policy Conditionality' ([1]), the registration of enterprises with chambers of commerce will become voluntary in Greece from January 2015. However, under recent legislation ([2]), chambers of commerce have been burdened with additional and important roles, as there is a need to intensify efforts focusing on the competitiveness of Greek enterprises and absorption of European funds. This requires permanent resources. Under Greek law ([3]), subscriptions to chambers vary, as it falls within the competence of the governing body of each chamber to determine the level of members' subscriptions. In practice, annual subscriptions to chambers average EUR 40-50 for sole traders, EUR 75-100 for private companies, EUR 250-450 for limited companies and EUR 750-950 for banks. Given the existence of European decisions ([4]) ([5]) according to which the mandatory subscription of enterprises to chambers is compatible with European legislation and not regarded as a type of tax in favour of third parties, and given that, from this perspective, subscription is not a barrier to the establishment of a business, but, on the contrary, a compensatory levy, will the Commission say:

1. What is its view on the aforementioned Memorandum obligation? Does it consider that the change to the funding regime of the Greek chambers is necessary and justified, and if so, for what reasons?

2. Does it not consider that the expected funding cuts for the chambers, along with the simultaneous assignment of additional roles, will result difficulties in terms of their operations, and also in terms of the objectives of market development? Does it have a relevant study on this sector?

3. What is the corresponding regime in the other Member States? Are there any similar systems in the EU to the one selected for the Greek chambers, and if so, what can we learn from them?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(27 November 2013)

1. The Greek authorities have indeed passed legislation making voluntary the registration of companies with the chambers of commerce as of January 2015. While not incompatible with EC law, the Commission believes that mandatory registration of Greek companies with chambers of commerce increases the cost of doing business and is a hurdle for company creation. Legislation to make registration voluntary was included in the MoU agreed with the Greek authorities as part of a set of measures to promote an efficient and competitive business environment, thereby contributing to sustainable growth and employment creation in Greece.

2. The Commission agrees with the Honourable Member that chambers of commerce play an important role in Greece, as well as in other Member States, but believes that voluntary subscription promotes a service that is tailored to its members' needs.

3. The regulatory framework for chambers of commerce is a matter for Member States. Voluntary registration is indeed applicable in other Member States such as Spain, where a legal provision similar to the one approved in Greece was adopted by the authorities in 2010. Spanish chambers of commerce obtain financial resources from other sources and continue to play an important role in the Spanish economy.

([1]) http://goo.gl/QaIDri
([2]) Laws 3898/2010, 3982/2011, 4155/2013
([3]) http://goo.gl/TE8yMs
([4]) Decision of the European Court of 19.4.2012.
([5]) Opinion No 0169/2012 of the Committee on Petitions of the European Parliament.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011253/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(3 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Αποτελεί «ευθύνη» της Ελλάδας η διαχείριση των υδάτινων πόρων της

Στην απάντησή της P-007557/2013, η Επιτροπή αναφέρει πως «αναγνωρίζει ότι το νερό είναι δημόσιο αγαθό που έχει ζωτική σημασία για τους πολίτες και ότι η διαχείριση των υδάτινων πόρων αποτελεί ευθύνη των κρατών μελών».

Σε πρόσφατη έκθεση της Ελληνικής Οικονομικής και Κοινωνικής Επιτροπής αλλά και της Διεθνούς Ερευνητικής Ομάδας Δημοσίων Υπηρεσιών (PSIRU), αναφέρεται ότι, όσον αφορά στη μέχρι τώρα εμπειρία από τις ιδιωτικοποιήσεις των εταιρειών ύδρευσης, παρατηρούνται κατ' επανάληψη φαινόμενα όπως ιλιγγιώδεις αυξήσεις της τιμής του νερού, παντελής έλλειψη νέων επενδύσεων, δημιουργία καρτέλ, διαφθορά και απάτη, έλλειψη λογοδοσίας, επίπλαστα οικονομικά οφέλη, χαμηλή αποδοτικότητα. Ειδικότερα για τις εταιρείες που εμφανίζονται ως υποψήφιες για την αγορά των ελληνικών επιχειρήσεων ύδρευσης, εταιρείες Suez και Veolia, αναφέρεται ότι «Δικαστήρια στη Γαλλία, στην Ιταλία και στις ΗΠΑ έχουν καταδικάσει στελέχη και αξιωματούχους του Δημοσίου για δωροδοκίες που έλαβαν από θυγατρικές των Suez και Veolia. Αμφότεροι οι όμιλοι έχουν τεθεί υπό έλεγχο σε ουκ ολίγες ποινικές και αστικές υποθέσεις, για κατηγορίες όπως δωροδοκία αξιωματούχων του Δημοσίου, παράνομες πολιτικές δωρεές, μίζες, μη ανταγωνιστικό καθορισμό τιμών, σύναψη καρτέλ και λογιστικούς χειρισμούς που ισοδυναμούν με απάτη».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Επιβεβαιώνει τις πληροφορίες για καταδίκη εταιρειών που συνδέονται με τις Suez και Veolia από δικαστήρια χωρών της ΕΕ ή και χωρών εκτός ΕΕ, για «δωροδοκίες αξιωματούχων του Δημοσίου, παράνομες πολιτικές δωρεές, μίζες, μη ανταγωνιστικό καθορισμό τιμών, σύναψη καρτέλ και λογιστικούς χειρισμούς που ισοδυναμούν με απάτη»;

2. Αφού η ίδια η Επιτροπή, στην απάντησή της P-007557/2013, «αναγνωρίζει ότι το νερό είναι δημόσιο αγαθό που έχει ζωτική σημασία για τους πολίτες και ότι η διαχείριση των υδάτινων πόρων αποτελεί ευθύνη των κρατών μελών», δεν αποτελεί δικαίωμα της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης να αποσύρει από τη διαδικασία ιδιωτικοποίησης τις 2 εταιρίες ύδρευσης, ΕΥΑΘ και ΕΥΔΑΠ; Ή μήπως η Επιτροπή, υπό την ιδιότητα του μέλους της τρόικας και εκπροσώπου των δανειστών της Ελλάδας, επιμένει στην απαράδεκτη πολιτική εκποίησης αυτού του δημόσιου αγαθού στην Ελλάδα; Θα δεχόταν λοιπόν η Επιτροπή την απόσυρση των δύο αυτών εταιρειών από τη λίστα των «προς εκποίηση» εταιριών του ΤΑΙΠΕΔ;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(2 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή δεν διαθέτει πολιτική επιβολής στα ΚΜ την ιδιωτικοποίηση των υπηρεσιών υδροδότησης. Η Επιτροπή αναγνωρίζει ότι το νερό συνιστά δημόσιο αγαθό θεμελιώδους σημασίας για τους πολίτες και ότι η διαχείριση των υδάτινων πόρων αποτελεί αρμοδιότητα των ΚΜ. Η Επιτροπή τοποθετείται ουδέτερα όσον αφορά τη δημόσια ή ιδιωτική κυριότητα των υδάτινων πόρων, σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 345 της ΣΛΕΕ. Η παροχή πόσιμου νερού έχει αφαιρεθεί από το πεδίο εφαρμογής της οδηγίας σχετικά με την ανάθεση συμβάσεων παραχώρησης. Η Επιτροπή θα συνεχίσει να παρακολουθεί εκ του σύνεγγυς την κατάσταση στον τομέα αυτό.

Η απόφαση όσον αφορά τα περιουσιακά στοιχεία του Δημοσίου ή τις δημόσιες επιχειρήσεις που θα ιδιωτικοποιηθούν, τον βαθμό και τη σειρά με την οποία θα διεξαχθούν οι εν λόγω ιδιωτικοποιήσεις, θα ληφθεί αποκλειστικά και μόνον από τα κράτη μέλη, αφού ληφθούν υπόψη οι ανάγκες που αντιμετωπίζουν και οι στόχοι που τα ίδια έχουν θέσει. Η κτηθείσα σε επίπεδο ΕΕ πείρα προσφέρει μια ποικιλία διαφορετικών δημόσιας ή ιδιωτικής ιδιοκτησίας μοντέλων για τη λειτουργία των υδρικών εγκαταστάσεων. Τόσο σε δημόσια, όσο και σε ιδιωτικά πρότυπα, υπάρχουν περιπτώσεις προβληματικών αποτελεσμάτων, αλλά και επιτυχίες. Η Επιτροπή θεωρεί ότι η δημιουργία ρυθμιστικής αρχής και κατάλληλου περιβάλλοντος αγοράς είναι απαραίτητες προϋποθέσεις για τη διασφάλιση της επιτυχίας του καθενός από αυτά τα συστήματα, ώστε να προστατευθούν τα συμφέροντα των καταναλωτών και να διαφυλαχθούν οι περιβαλλοντικές αξίες.

Για τα περιουσιακά στοιχεία που περιλαμβάνονται στο πρόγραμμα ιδιωτικοποιήσεων για τις χώρες του προγράμματος αποφασίζουν αποκλειστικά οι εθνικές αρχές. Οι συζητήσεις στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος επικεντρώνονται στην συνολικές ανάγκες χρηματοδότησης, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των εσόδων από ιδιωτικοποιήσεις, αλλά ο σχεδιασμός του προγράμματος ιδιωτικοποιήσεων και η επιλογή των στοιχείων ενεργητικού παραμένουν αποκλειστικά στις αρμοδιότητες του ενδιαφερόμενου ΚΜ.

Οι απόψεις των υπηρεσιών της Επιτροπής σχετικά με τη διαδικασία ιδιωτικοποιήσεων στην Ελλάδα είναι διαθέσιμες στις σχετικές ενότητες των εκθέσεων συμμόρφωσης που δημοσιεύονται μετά από κάθε αξιολόγηση ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/assistance_eu_ms/greek_loan_facility/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011253/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Greece's 'competence' to manage its own water resources

In its answer P-007557/2013, the Commission 'recognises that water is a public good which is vital to citizens and that the management of water resources is a matter for Member States'.

A recent report from the Economic and Social Council of Greece and the Public Services International Research Unit (PSIRU) notes, with regard to the experience to date of water company privatisations, that phenomena such as vertiginous increases in water prices, a total absence of new investment, the establishment of cartels, corruption and fraud, lack of accountability, artificial economic advantages and low efficiency are regularly reported. More specifically, in relation to companies such as Suez and Veolia that are bidding to buy Greek water companies, the report states that 'courts in France, Italy and the US have convicted executives and public officials over bribes received from subsidiaries of Suez and Veolia. Both groups have come under scrutiny in a host of criminal and civil cases, with accusations that include bribery of public officials, illegal political donations, kick-backs, price fixing, creating cartels, and fraudulent accounting'.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Can it confirm the information concerning the convictions of companies linked to Suez and Veolia by courts in EU countries and/or non-EU countries for 'bribery of public officials, illegal political donations, kick-backs, price fixing, creating cartels, and fraudulent accounting'.

2. Since the Commission itself, in written answer P-007557/2013, 'recognises that water is a public good that is vital to citizens and that the management of water resources is a matter for Member States', is the Greek Government not entitled to withdraw the Thessalonica and Athens water and sewerage utilities from the privatisation process? Is it rather the case that the Commission, in its capacity as a member of the Troika and as the representative of Greece's lenders, insists on the unacceptable policy of selling off this public good in Greece? Would the Commission accept the withdrawal of these two companies from the 'for sale' list of the Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

The European Commission does not have a policy of forcing MS to privatise water services. The Commission recognises that water is a public good which is vital to citizens and that the management of water resources is a matter for MS. The Commission has a neutral position on the public or private ownership of water resources, in accordance with Article 345 of the TFEU. Provision of drinking water has been removed from the scope of the directive on the award of concessions contracts. The Commission will continue to monitor the situation in this sector closely.

The choice of what, how far and in which sequence public assets or companies should be privatised remains entirely with the MS, taking into account the various constraints they face and objectives they set for themselves. EU-wide experience offers a variety of different public or private property models for water utilities. In both public and private models, there are cases of problematic outcomes, but also success stories. The Commission considers that the creation of a regulatory authority and an appropriate market environment are crucial prerequisites for guaranteeing the success of any of these models to protect consumers' interests and maintain environmental values.

The assets included in the privatisation programme for programme countries are the exclusive result of the national authorities' decision. Discussions under the programme are focusing on the overall financing needs, including privatisation receipts, but the design of the privatisation programme and the choice of assets remain entirely with the MS concerned.

The views of the Commission services on the privatisation process in Greece are available in dedicated sections of the compliance reports published after each review ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/assistance_eu_ms/greek_loan_facility/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011254/13
to the Commission
Struan Stevenson (ECR)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Early retirement schemes

Under the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) and the socioeconomic compensation element, provision was made for Member States to 'benefit from EFF financing to implement socioeconomic measures designed to help fishermen who are victims of resource depletion or of the sector's poor economic situation. Such measures may include training or conversion programmes, the financing of early retirement, etc.'

Is the Commission aware of whether any Member States sought and obtained approval for early retirement schemes for their fishermen?

If so, which Member States? How much was paid from the EFF to each of the Member States? What did each individual fisherman receive in each of the participating Member States?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

According to data submitted by Member States on the expenditure of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) for the period 2007 to 31 May 2013, five Member States financed early retirement schemes for their fishermen. The total EFF contribution to this measure was EUR 16.9 million, which averages around EUR 20 000 per beneficiary.

The five Member States are Poland (EUR 8.2 million, EUR 22 116 per fisher), Spain (EUR 8.1 million, EUR 20 971 per fisher), Cyprus (EUR 0.5 million, EUR 31 356 per fisher), the Netherlands (EUR 80 000, EUR 13 458 per fisher) and France (the only information available is the number of beneficiaries, 80).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011255/13
to the Commission
Fiona Hall (ALDE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: EED online platform

Article 25 of Directive 2012/27/EU stipulates that the Commission shall establish an online platform in order to foster the implementation of the Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) at national, regional and local levels.

1. Has the Commission established such a platform? If not, when does it envisage launching this?

2. What steps will the Commission undertake to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the existence of such a platform and the assistance it offers?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The Commission will launch the online platform pursuant to Article 25 of the Energy Efficiency Directive in spring 2014. The online platform will allow for interactive exchanges of best practices and experiences amongst Member States and it will be constructed in such a way as to include implementation at local and regional level as well as national.

It will be promoted in various ways, including via the Energy Efficiency Directive Committee and the Concerted Action ([1]) that brings together representatives of the Member States to discuss practical implementation of the Energy Efficiency Directive.

([1]) http://www.esd-ca.eu

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011258/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Niki Tzavela (EFD)
(3 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Αναπροσαρμογή τιμών αργού πετρελαίου και απόφαση στην υπόθεση RWE κατά Gazprom

Σύμφωνα με απόφαση διαιτητικού δικαστηρίου στη Βιέννη, η Gazprom υποχρεούται να προβεί σε αναπροσαρμογές τιμών στη σύμβασή της με τη γερμανική επιχείρηση ηλεκτροδότησης RWE. Η απόφαση αυτή του δικαστηρίου ανοίγει το δρόμο για τον τερματισμό της πρακτικής να συνδέονται οι τιμές του φυσικού αερίου με αυτές του πετρελαίου σε μακροπρόθεσμες συμφωνίες, η οποία ίσχυε για δεκαετίες, και για την εφαρμογή τιμαριθμικής αναπροσαρμογής στην αγορά του φυσικού αερίου.

Προτίθεται η Επιτροπή, δεδομένου ότι έχει δρομολογήσει αντιμονοπωλιακή έρευνα κατά της Gazprom όσον αφορά τις συναλλαγές της με τη Λιθουανία, να χρησιμοποιήσει τη δικαστική απόφαση στην υπόθεση RWE, προκειμένου να ασκήσει περαιτέρω πίεση στην Gazprom όσον αφορά το εν λόγω ζήτημα;

Προτίθεται, εκτός αυτού, η Επιτροπή να χρησιμοποιήσει την υπόθεση RWE ως δικαστικό προηγούμενο, με σκοπό να εμποδίσει την Gazprom να ενισχύσει την κυρίαρχη θέση της ως προμηθευτή και σε άλλες χώρες, όπως η Ελλάδα, η Βουλγαρία και η Ρουμανία;

Εκτιμά η Επιτροπή ότι η απόφαση για την RWE συνιστά πραγματική ευκαιρία για την απομάκρυνση από την παραδοσιακή αναπροσαρμογή των τιμών του φυσικού αερίου με βάση το αργό πετρέλαιο, προκειμένου να εφαρμοστεί η τιμαριθμική αναπροσαρμογή στην αγορά του φυσικού αερίου, παράλληλα με τη δημιουργία τιμών άμεσης παράδοσης και νέων κόμβων διαπραγμάτευσης στην Ευρώπη;

Απάντηση του κ. Almunia εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(25 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Τον Σεπτέμβριο του 2012 η Επιτροπή κίνησε επίσημη διαδικασία προκειμένου να διερευνήσει εάν η Gazprom παρακώλυε τον ανταγωνισμό στις αγορές φυσικού αερίου της Κεντρικής και Ανατολικής Ευρώπης, κατά παράβαση των αντιμονοπωλιακών κανόνων της ΕΕ. Μία από τις εξεταζόμενες πρακτικές είναι η εικαζόμενη αθέμιτη τιμολογιακή πολιτική της Gazprom.

Τα πορίσματα των διαιτητικών αποφάσεων μεταξύ εμπορικών μερών δεν είναι δεσμευτικά για την Επιτροπή και δεν συνιστούν προηγούμενο για τις έρευνες της Επιτροπής για παραβίαση της αντιμονοπωλιακής νομοθεσίας. Ωστόσο, η ύπαρξη διαιτητικής απόφασης αποτελεί πραγματολογικό στοιχείο το οποίο μπορεί να ληφθεί υπόψη στο πλαίσιο της έρευνας της Επιτροπής.

Η αντιμονοπωλιακή έρευνα κατά της Gazprom βρίσκεται σε εξέλιξη. Ως εκ τούτου, είναι πολύ νωρίς να συναχθούν τελικά συμπεράσματα ως προς τη συμβατότητα της τιμολογιακής πολιτικής της Gazprom με την αντιμονοπωλιακή νομοθεσία της ΕΕ.

Σε γενικές γραμμές, η Επιτροπή εκφράζει την ικανοποίησή της για την ανάπτυξη κόμβων διαπραγμάτευσης υγροποιημένου φυσικού αερίου κατά τα τελευταία έτη και σημειώνει την προκύπτουσα τάση προς την κατεύθυνση της αυξημένης εφαρμογής τιμαριθμικής αναπροσαρμογής στην αγορά φυσικού αερίου στις συμφωνίες προμήθειας φυσικού αερίου της ΕΕ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011258/13
to the Commission
Niki Tzavela (EFD)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Crude oil indexation and the decision in RWE v Gazprom case

Following a ruling by an arbitration tribunal in Vienna, Gazprom will have to make price adjustments to its contract with German utility RWE. This court ruling could pave the way for ending the decades-long practice of linking gas prices in long-term deals to oil prices and moving towards gas market indexation.

Given that it has launched an anti-trust investigation against Gazprom concerning its dealings with Lithuania, does the Commission intend to make use of the court ruling in the RWE case to exert further pressure on Gazprom in this case?

Furthermore, does the Commission intend to use the RWE case as a precedent with a view to preventing Gazprom from overplaying its dominant position in other countries which it supplies, such as Greece, Bulgaria and Romania?

Does the Commission see the RWE ruling as a real opportunity to move away from the traditional crude oil indexation of gas prices, and, instead, move towards gas market indexation, in addition to the development of spot prices and new trading hubs in Europe?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

In September 2012, the Commission opened formal proceedings to investigate whether Gazprom might be hindering competition in central and eastern European gas markets, in breach of EU antitrust rules. One of the practices under investigation is Gazprom's allegedly unfair pricing policy.

The findings in arbitration awards between commercial parties are not binding on the Commission and do not constitute precedents for the Commisison's antitrust investigations. However, the existence of an arbitral award is a factual element which can be considered within the Commission's investigation.

The antitrust investigation against Gazprom is ongoing. It is, therefore, too early to draw any final conclusions as to the compatibility of Gazprom's pricing policy with EU antitrust rules.

In general, the Commission welcomes the development of liquid gas trading hubs in recent years and notes the resulting trend towards increased gas market indexation in EU gas supply agreements.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011259/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Niki Tzavela (EFD)
(3 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Αποτελέσματα της αναβολής δημοπράτησης των δικαιωμάτων εκπομπής διοξειδίου του άνθρακα («backloading») και διαρθρωτική μεταρρύθμιση του συστήματος εμπορίας εκπομπών της ΕΕ (ETS)

Η πρόταση για την αναβολή της δημοπράτησης των δικαιωμάτων εκπομπής διοξειδίου του άνθρακα («backloading») είχε ως σκοπό την απόσυρση των πλεοναζόντων δικαιωμάτων από την αγορά, ώστε να αυξηθεί η τιμή του άνθρακα και να παρασχεθούν κίνητρα για επενδύσεις σε πιο αποδοτικές πηγές και τεχνολογίες χαμηλών επιπέδων ανθρακούχων εκπομπών.

Μετά την έγκριση από το Κοινοβούλιο της πρότασης για το «backloading» σχετικά με το σύστημα εμπορίας εκπομπών της ΕΕ (ETS), η τιμή του άνθρακα εξακολουθεί να διαμορφώνεται σε πολύ χαμηλά επίπεδα, ανερχόμενη σε λιγότερο από 3 Ευρώ. Η επίπτωση στις τιμές υπήρξε, στην καλύτερη περίπτωση, τεχνητή και η πρόταση για το «backloading» από μόνη της δεν μπορεί να επιλύσει τα διαρθρωτικά προβλήματα του ETS.

Πότε σκοπεύει η Επιτροπή να προτείνει τις νέες και πολυαναμενόμενες διαρθρωτικές μεταρρυθμίσεις στο ETS;

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τη μέχρι τούδε κτηθείσα εμπειρία από την αποτυχία του ETS, ποιές μεταρρυθμίσεις σχεδιάζει η Επιτροπή από άποψη περιεχομένου και ουσίας;

Απάντηση της κ. Hedegaard εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(14 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Η προσωρινή επανεξισορρόπηση της προσφοράς και της ζήτησης μέσω αναβολής της δημοπράτησης των δικαιωμάτων εκπομπής έχει κύριο στόχο να αντισταθμίσει τις επιπτώσεις των αυξανόμενων ανισορροπιών που εμφανίζονται κατά τη μετάβαση στην 3η φάση του συστήματος εμπορίας εκπομπών της ΕΕ, αρχίζοντας από το 2013. Αυτό θα αυξήσει την εμπιστοσύνη της αγοράς στο ΣΕΕ με την πρόληψη της περαιτέρω πτώσης της τιμής του άνθρακα, η οποία σε διαφορετική περίπτωση θα προέκυπτε από τις εν λόγω ανισορροπίες και θα είχε αρνητικές επιπτώσεις στις επενδύσεις σε τεχνολογίες χαμηλών ανθρακούχων εκπομπών στην Ευρώπη.

Εκτός από την αναβολή της δημοπράτησης των δικαιωμάτων εκπομπής χρειάζονται πράγματι μέτρα διαρθρωτικής μεταρρύθμισης που θα παρέχουν μόνιμη λύση. Ως εκ τούτου, η Επιτροπή έχει ολοκληρώσει τη διαβούλευση σχετικά με τις δυνατότητες για διαρθρωτικά μέτρα με σκοπό την ενίσχυση του ΣΕΕ της ΕΕ, όπως ορίζεται στην έκθεση σχετικά με την κατάσταση της ευρωπαϊκής αγοράς άνθρακα τον Νοέμβριο του 2012.

Στη βάση αυτή, η Επιτροπή αναλύει επί του παρόντος τις δυνατότητες για διαρθρωτικά μέτρα για την ενίσχυση του συστήματος εμπορίας εκπομπών της ΕΕ, τα οποία μπορούν να τεθούν σε εφαρμογή κατά τη διάρκεια της φάσης 3 και/ή ως μέρος του πλαισίου για το κλίμα και την ενέργεια έως το 2030. Συγκεκριμένες προτάσεις αναμένεται να υποβληθούν κατά τους επόμενους μήνες.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011259/13
to the Commission
Niki Tzavela (EFD)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Effects of backloading and structural reform of the ETS

The 'backloading' proposal was intended to remove surplus allowances from the market in order to raise the price of carbon and stimulate investment in more efficient low-carbon sources and technologies.

Following Parliament's approval of the backloading proposal for the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), the price of carbon remains very low, standing at less than EUR 3. The effect on prices has been artificial at best, and the backloading proposal alone cannot solve the structural problems of the ETS.

When does the Commission intend to propose the new and highly anticipated structural reforms to the ETS? Bearing in mind the lessons learned from the failure of the ETS thus far, what sort of reforms does the Commission have in mind in terms of content and substance?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(14 November 2013)

The temporary rebalancing of supply and demand through back-loading is primarily intended to counteract the effects of growing imbalances occurring in the transition to Phase 3 of the EU ETS starting in 2013. This would increase market confidence in the ETS by preventing a further fall in the carbon price that would otherwise result from such imbalances and which would have adverse effects on low-carbon investment in Europe.

In addition to back-loading, structural reform measures that can provide a lasting solution are indeed necessary. The Commission has therefore completed a consultation on the options for structural measures to strengthen the EU ETS as set out in the report on the state of the European carbon market of November 2012.

On this basis, the Commission is currently analysing options for structural measures to strengthen the EU Emissions Trading System that can be implemented during Phase 3 and/or as part of the 2030 climate and energy framework. Concrete proposals are expected to be made in the coming months.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011260/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(3 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Possibili finanziamenti per la realizzazione della «Casa della Cultura e delle Arti Applicate» nell'area denominata Marcigliana-Cinquina a Roma

Nell'area denominata Marcigliana-Cinquina, a Roma, è presente una struttura, ormai in disuso, che rappresenta un patrimonio artistico dal valore inestimabile. Affascinante e suggestiva, anche sotto il profilo architettonico, è stata il luogo in cui sono stati ambientati vari film che hanno fatto la storia del cinema italiano.

La bonifica e il recupero dell'intera area, pertanto, sarebbe un'opportunità per trasformare l'intero immobile nella «Casa della Cultura e delle Arti Applicate», dove poter organizzare eventi culturali e iniziative didattiche, laboratori, oltre a diventare sede di concerti, spettacoli, mostre e seminari.

Di conseguenza, la nascita di questo centro polifunzionale servirà anche ad aggregare tutta la popolazione dell'intero quartiere e diventare un luogo di ritrovo e svago per bambini e anziani.

Tutto ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere se vi sono programmi o finanziamenti per il progetto suesposto nella nuova programmazione 2014-2020?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(28 novembre 2013)

Al momento attuale la Commissione può soltanto indicare gli obiettivi generali d'intervento nel settore culturale poiché le priorità di finanziamento per le regioni italiane nel periodo 2014-2020 non sono state ancora determinate. Inoltre, in linea con il principio di gestione concorrente, la responsabilità della selezione e dell'implementazione dei singoli progetti continuerà a competere alle autorità di gestione negli Stati membri.

Nel periodo 2014-2020 saranno possibili interventi a favore della cultura a determinate condizioni. In particolare, le risorse della politica di coesione potrebbero essere utilizzate per massimizzare il contributo della cultura quale strumento per lo sviluppo locale e regionale, il risanamento urbano, lo sviluppo rurale e l'occupabilità. Esempi di investimenti potenziali nel campo della cultura potrebbero essere gli investimenti nella ricerca, l'innovazione, la competitività delle PMI e l'imprenditorialità nelle industrie culturali e creative. Inoltre, le attività a sostegno del turismo sostenibile, della cultura e del patrimonio naturale dovrebbero rientrare in una strategia territoriale definita per aree specifiche, tra cui anche la conversione delle regioni industriali in declino. Il sostegno a tali attività dovrebbe anche contribuire a rafforzare l'innovazione e l'uso delle TIC, le PMI, l'ambiente e l'efficienza nell'uso delle risorse ovvero la promozione dell'inclusione sociale.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011260/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Possible funding for the creation of the Home of Culture and Applied Arts in the Marcigliana-Cinquina area of Rome

A now disused building in the Marcigliana-Cinquina area of Rome represents an artistic heritage of inestimable value. Fascinating and charming, including in terms of its architecture, it was the setting for several key films in the history of Italian cinema.

The reclamation and restoration of the entire area would therefore be an opportunity to turn the whole building into the 'Home of Culture and Applied Arts', which could host cultural events, educational initiatives and workshops, as well as concerts, performances, exhibitions and seminars.

Consequently, the creation of this multifunctional centre will also serve to bring together all the residents of the area, and become a place for children and the elderly to meet and enjoy themselves.

Can the Commission state whether there are any programmes or funding for the above project under the 2014-2020 programming period?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

At this time, the Commission can only indicate the general objectives of interventions in the cultural sector, as the funding priorities for the Italian regions for the 2014-2020 period are not yet determined. Moreover, in line with the shared management principle, the responsibility for the selection and implementation of individual projects will continue to lie with managing authorities in the Member States.

In the 2014-2020 period, interventions in favour of culture will be possible under specific conditions. In particular, cohesion policy resources could be used to maximise the contribution of culture as a tool for local and regional development, urban regeneration, rural development and employability. Examples of potential investments in culture could include investments in research, innovation, SME competitiveness and entrepreneurship in cultural and creative industries. Moreover, activities supporting sustainable tourism, culture and natural heritage should be part of a territorial strategy for specific areas, including the conversion of declining industrial regions. Support for such activities should also contribute to strengthening innovation and the use of ICTs, SMEs, environment and resource efficiency or the promotion of social inclusion.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011263/13
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(3 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Gezi Park-protesten: mensenrechtenschendingen door Turkse autoriteiten

In het rapport „Gezi Park Protests — Brutal Denial of the Right to Peaceful Assembly in Turkey" concludeert Amnesty International „dat de Turkse autoriteiten zich rond de protesten van deze zomer op grote schaal schuldig hebben gemaakt aan mensenrechtenschendingen". Amnesty zegt dat er zeker drie doden vielen door excessief geweld van de politie; meer dan 8 000 demonstranten raakten gewond door politiekogels, traangas, waterkanonnen, rubberkogels en stokslagen. Zeker één demonstrant zou zijn doodgeslagen door agenten. Ook werden chemische stoffen toegevoegd aan het water van waterkanonnen en werden vrouwelijke betogers aangerand en misbruikt.

1. Hoe reageert de Commissie op het rapport „Gezi Park Protests — Brutal Denial of the Right to Peaceful Assembly in Turkey" ([1]) van Amnesty International?

2. Heeft het rapport gevolgen voor de toetredingsonderhandelingen tussen de EU en Turkije? Zo ja, is de Commissie ertoe bereid deze — nu eindelijk! — definitief te beëindigen? Zo neen, waarom niet?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(25 november 2013)

De Commissie verwijst het geachte Parlementslid naar haar antwoord op vorige schriftelijke vragen E-006193/2013, E-006403/2013, E-006871/2013, P-006302/2013, E-006922/2013, E-007265/2013, E-007260/2013, E-007036/2013, E-007238/2013, E-006378/2013, E-006390/2013, E-006507/2013, E-006891/2013, E-006721/2013, E-007023/2013, E-007093/2013, E-007264/2013, E-007259/2013, E-010832/2013 ([2]).

([1]) http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR44/022/2013/en/0ba8c4cc-b059-4b88-9c52-8fbd652c6766/eur440222013en.pdf
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/nl/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011263/13
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Gezi Park protests: human rights violations by the Turkish authorities

In the report 'Gezi Park Protests — Brutal Denial of the Right to Peaceful Assembly in Turkey' Amnesty International concludes that the Turkish authorities have committed human rights violations on a massive scale this summer against the protests. Amnesty states that three deaths were definitely caused by excessive police violence. More than 8 000 demonstrators were wounded by police bullets, tear gas, water cannon, rubber bullets and beatings. One demonstrator was definitely reported to have been killed by officers. Chemicals were also added to the water from the water cannon and female demonstrators were sexually assaulted and abused.

1. What is the Commission's response to the report 'Gezi Park Protests — Brutal Denial of the Right to Peaceful Assembly in Turkey' ([1]) compiled by Amnesty International?

2. Does the report have any ramifications for the accession negotiations between the EU and Turkey? If so, is the Commission prepared — at long last — to end them once and for all? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to previous written questions E-006193/2013, E-006403/2013, E-006871/2013, P-006302/2013, E-006922/2013, E-007265/2013, E-007260/2013, E-007036/2013, E-007238/2013, E-006378/2013, E-006390/2013, E-006507/2013, E-006891/2013, E-006721/2013, E-007023/2013, E-007093/2013, E-007264/2013, E-007259/2013, E-010832/2013 ([2]).

([1]) http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR44/022/2013/en/0ba8c4cc-b059-4b88-9c52-8fbd652c6766/eur440222013en.pdf
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011264/13
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(3 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Richiesta di misure di sostegno nei confronti di 204 lavoratori dell'azienda «Plasmon» a rischio di licenziamento

L'azienda italiana «Plasmon Dietetici Alimentari S.r.l.», uno dei marchi italiani più popolari, impegnata dal 1902 nell'importazione e nel commercio dell'ingrediente plasmon, riveste una posizione leader nel settore dell'alimentazione.

Negli scorsi giorni, l'azienda Plasmon, su decisione dei nuovi proprietari Berkshire Hathaway e 3G Capital, ha comunicato di voler tagliare il 25 % dei dipendenti distribuiti nelle varie sedi italiane. Ciò comporterebbe il licenziamento di 204 lavoratori su 946. Solo nella sede di Milano, sono 112 su 261 gli addetti che rischiano di perdere il posto di lavoro. Oltre alla sede centrale di Milano, l'azienda conta due stabilimenti produttivi a Ozzano Taro (PR) e a Latina.

I nuovi proprietari hanno annunciato un processo di ristrutturazione e di riorganizzazione con conseguente riduzione degli organici e apertura immediata della procedura di mobilità. Tuttavia tale processo dovrebbe essere completato attraverso idonee strategie di mercato e non tramite l'espulsione di lavoratori e lavoratrici.

Un marchio simbolo della qualità del made in Italy come quello Plasmon, rischia di essere messo in discussione o addirittura di scomparire.

Tutto ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere se è a conoscenza di finanziamenti comunitari, diretti o indiretti, erogati a favore di questa multinazionale?

Per quanto concerne il diritto d'informazione dei lavoratori nelle imprese con più di 50 dipendenti, come intende agire la Commissione per evitare che i dipendenti di tali imprese si trovino, senza alcun preavviso, improvvisamente disoccupati?

Intende la Commissione introdurre, in occasione della prossima programmazione e della revisione del FSE, un Fondo di emergenza destinato a sostenere lavoratori come quelli della «Plasmon»?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(21 novembre 2013)

1. Sulla base delle informazioni in nostro possesso e del sito web «Open Cohesion» ([1]), Plasmon Dietetici Alimentari S.r.l. non ha ricevuto nessun finanziamento dai Fondi strutturali europei in Italia.

2. La Commissione non è in condizione di verificare i fatti menzionati dall'onorevole deputato né di stabilire se una società privata abbia ottemperato alle disposizioni nazionali che attuano direttive unionali le quali fanno obbligo al datore di lavoro di informare e consultare i lavoratori prima di procedere a licenziamenti collettivi ([2]). Spetta alle autorità nazionali competenti, compresi i tribunali, assicurare che la legislazione nazionale a recepimento delle direttive dell'UE sia applicata in modo corretto ed efficace dal datore di lavoro interessato considerate le circostanze specifiche del caso.

3. L'obiettivo del FSE è migliorare le opportunità occupazionali, promuovere l'istruzione e l'apprendimento permanente nonché sviluppare politiche attive di inclusione conformemente all'articolo 162 del trattato. In quanto tale, l'FSE non fornisce un aiuto di emergenza ai lavoratori come quelli impiegati da Plasmon Dietetici Alimentari S.r.l. Tuttavia, i lavoratori interessati possono beneficiare delle attività cofinanziate dal FSE e, se sono soddisfatte determinate condizioni, del Fondo europeo di adeguamento alla globalizzazione.

L'onorevole deputato può rivolgersi alla persona di contatto del FEG in Italia per sapere se è prevista una domanda di sostegno ai lavoratori licenziati da Plasmon Dietetici Alimentari S.r.l. Gli estremi della persona di contatto sono reperibili sul sito web del FEG ([3]).

([1]) http://www.opencoesione.gov.it

([2]) In particolare, la direttiva 98/59/CE del Consiglio, del 20 luglio 1998, concernente il ravvicinamento delle legislazioni degli Stati membri in materia di licenziamenti collettivi,(GU L 225 del 12.8.1998) e la direttiva 2002/14/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, dell'11 marzo 2002, che istituisce un quadro generale relativo all'informazione e alla consultazione dei lavoratori (GU L 80 del 23.3.2002).

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=581&langId=it

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011264/13
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Request for measures to support 204 workers facing dismissal at Plasmon

The Italian company Plasmon Dietetici Alimentari S.r.l., which has been importing and selling the 'plasmon' ingredient since 1902, is one of the most popular Italian brands and a leader in the food sector.

In recent days, the Plasmon company has announced its intention to cut staff numbers by 25% across its various Italian sites following a decision by its new owners, Berkshire Hathaway and 3G Capital. This would lead to the dismissal of 204 workers out of a total of 946. At the Milan site alone, 112 of the 261 employees risk losing their job. Apart from its headquarters in Milan, the company also has two production facilities in Ozzano Taro (province of Parma) and Latina.

The new owners have announced a restructuring and reorganisation process, with the consequent reduction of personnel and immediate launch of a redundancy procedure. This process, however, should be carried out using appropriate market strategies and not by removing workers.

The Plasmon brand, a symbol of Italian quality, is at risk or may even disappear.

Is the Commission aware of any direct or indirect EU funding which has been granted to this multinational?

With regard to the right to information enjoyed by workers in businesses with more than 50 employees, what action does the Commission intend to take to prevent employees of such businesses suddenly finding themselves unemployed, without being given any notice?

Does the Commission envisage introducing, during the next programming period and ESF review, an emergency fund to support workers such as those employed by Plasmon?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

1. According to the information in our possession and to the 'Open Cohesion' website ([1]), Plasmon Dietetici Alimentari S.r.l. has not received any funding from the European structural funds in Italy.

2. The Commission is not in a position to assess the facts referred to by the Honourable Member or state whether a private company has complied with national provisions implementing EU directives which impose on the employer to inform and consult workers before effecting collective redundancies ([2]). It is for the competent national authorities, including the courts, to ensure that the national legislation transposing EU Directives is correctly and effectively applied by the employer concerned, having regard to the specific circumstances of the case.

3. The aim of the ESF is to improve employment opportunities, promote education and life-long learning, and develop active inclusion policies in accordance with Article 162 of the Treaty. As such, it does not provide emergency support to workers such as those employed by Plasmon Dietetici Alimentari S.r.l.. However, the workers concerned may benefit from the activities co-financed by the ESF and, if the necessary conditions are met, from the European Adjustment Globalisation Fund.

The Honourable Member may wish to communicate with the EGF Contact Person in Italy, should she wish to know whether an application is being planned in support of workers made redundant by Plasmon Dietetici Alimentari S.r.l., the relevant contact details can be found on the EGF website ([3]).

([1]) http://www.opencoesione.gov.it/

([2]) In particular, Council Directive 98/59/EC of 20 July 1998 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to collective redundancies, OJ L 225, 12.8.1998 and Directive 2002/14/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2002 establishing a general framework for informing and consulting employees in the European Community, OJ L 80, 23.3.2002.

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=581&langId=it

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011265/13
an die Kommission
Jörg Leichtfried (S&D)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Flyer der Kommission zu Tierschutz und darin verwendete Begriffe

In einem Flyer der Kommission zu anstehenden Tierschutzthemen ([1]) heißt es: „(…) Im Vertrag von Lissabon werden Tiere als fühlende Wesen anerkannt, und als Ergebnis erlangte der Schutz von Nutztieren in der EU einen höheren Stellenwert (…)".

Allerdings umschließt Artikel 13 des Vertrages (AEUV) definitionsgemäß alle Tiere als fühlende Wesen, nicht nur Nutztiere, da es sich nicht um einen Rechtsbegriff, sondern um einen ethischen Begriff handelt.

In der Richtlinie zum Schutz der für wissenschaftliche Zwecke verwendeten Tiere 2010/63/EU ([2]) steht sogar in der Präambel, dass das Wohlergehen von Tieren ein Wert der Union ist, welcher in Artikel 13 AEUV verankert ist. Auch dies zeigt, dass sich Artikel 13 nicht nur auf Nutztiere beschränkt, sondern alle Tiere umschließt.

Kann die Kommission ihre Gründe darlegen und die rechtliche Grundlage dafür liefern, warum sie den Geltungsbereich von Artikel 13 auf Nutztiere beschränken möchte, wie in genanntem Flyer geschehen?

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(21. November 2013)

Es stimmt, dass Artikel 13 des Vertrags über die Arbeitsweise der Europäischen Union ([3]) alle Tiere und nicht nur Nutztiere umfasst. In der EU-Tierschutzstrategie 2012-2015 ([4]) werden mögliche Maßnahmen für Wild- oder Heimtiere erwogen. Die Kommission hat nicht die Absicht, den Geltungsbereich von Artikel 13 zu beschränken, sondern möchte im Gegenteil die Bemühungen unterstreichen, die zum Schutz von Nutz- und Labortieren ([5]) unternommen wurden, und dazu einige der wichtigsten Errungenschaften der letzten Zeit in diesem Bereich anführen.

([1]) Milestones in improving Animal Welfare, EU Commission: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/information_sources/docs/ahw/milestones_aw_en.pdf

([2]) Richtlinie 2010/63/EU des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 22. September 2010 zum Schutz der für wissenschaftliche Zwecke verwendeten Tiere, Erwägungsgrund 2. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:276:0033:0079:de:PDF

([3]) ABl. C 326 vom 26.10.2012.

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/index_de.htm

([5]) Siehe Absatz zum Verbot von Tierversuchen bei Kosmetika im selben Dokument.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011265/13
to the Commission
Jörg Leichtfried (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Commission flyer on animal welfare and the terms it uses

A Commission flyer on topical issues relating to animal welfare ([1]) states: '(…) The EU Lisbon Treaty recognised animals as "sentient beings" and as a result the welfare of farm animals became valued in the European Union. (…)'

However, Article 13 of the Treaty (TFEU) defines all animals as sentient beings, not just farm animals, as this is not a legal concept, but an ethical one.

Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes ([2]) even states in the preamble that animal welfare is a value of the Union that is enshrined in Article 13 TFEU. This also indicates that Article 13 is not just limited to farm animals, but includes all animals.

Can the Commission explain its reasons and the legal basis for restricting the scope of Article 13 to farm animals, as it has done in the aforementioned flyer?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

It is correct that Article 13 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union ([3]) concerns all animals and not only those that are farmed. In the EU Animal Welfare Strategy 2012-2015 ([4]), possible measures in relation to wild animals and pets will be considered. It is not the Commission's intention to restrict the scope of Article 13 but rather to highlight the efforts that have been made to improve the welfare of both farmed animals and those used for scientific purposes ([5]) while listing some of the most recent achievements in this area.

([1]) Milestones in improving Animal Welfare, EU Commission http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/information_sources/docs/ahw/milestones_aw_en.pdf
([2]) Directive 2010/63/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2010 on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes, Recital 2. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:276:0033:0079:en:PDF
([3]) OJ C 326, 26.10.2012.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/index_en.htm
([5]) See paragraph on the ban on animal testing for cosmetics in the same document.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011267/13
προς το Συμβούλιο
Ioannis A. Tsoukalas (PPE)
(3 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Πρόληψη εγκεφαλικού και αντιμετώπιση κολπικής μαρμαρυγής

Σύμφωνα με την χρηματοδοτούμενη από την ΕΕ έκθεση του Παγκόσμιου Οργανισμού Υγείας (ΠΟΕ) «Φάρμακα προτεραιότητας για την Ευρώπη και τον κόσμο — Επικαιροποίηση 2013», τα εγκεφαλικά αποτελούν την δεύτερη κύρια αιτία αναπηρίας στην Ευρώπη, μετά την ισχαιμική καρδιοπάθεια και την έκτη κύρια αιτία παγκοσμίως. Ο αριθμός των εγκεφαλικών επεισοδίων στην Ευρώπη αναμένεται να ανέλθει στο 1,5 εκατομμύριο ετησίως έως το 2025, εξαιτίας του γηράσκοντος πληθυσμού. Η έκθεση αναφέρει ότι «στα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ 27, το ετήσιο οικονομικό κόστος για τα εγκεφαλικά εκτιμάται σε 27 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ:18,5 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ (68,5%) για άμεσα έξοδα και 8,5 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ (31,5%) για έμμεσα έξοδα. Επιπλέον, 11,1 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ υπολογίζονται για την αξία των ανεπίσημων υπηρεσιών φροντίδας». Η συντριπτική πλειοψηφία των εγκεφαλικών επεισοδίων (87%) προκαλούνται από έναν θρόμβο ή έμβολο που παρεμποδίζει την ροή του αίματος στον εγκέφαλο. Οι πήξεις του αίματος εμβολικού τύπου προκαλούνται συχνά από κολπική μαρμαρυγή (ΚΜ). Η ΚΜ προσβάλλει 6 εκατομμύρια Ευρωπαίους και πενταπλασιάζει τον κίνδυνο για εγκεφαλικό. Η έκθεση του ΠΟΥ αναφέρει ότι πρέπει να καταβληθούν μεγαλύτερες προσπάθειες, ώστε να βελτιστοποιηθεί η δευτερογενής πρόληψη του εγκεφαλικού, δεδομένου ότι υφίσταται αποτελεσματική φαρμακευτική αγωγή. Η τρέχουσα συνήθης θεραπεία είναι μη ικανοποιητική και στοιχειώδης και οι επενδύσεις στη βασική και κλινική έρευνα, καθώς και στην καλύτερη διαχείριση, π.χ. διάγνωση και φροντίδα, κρίνονται αναγκαίες. Ενόψει των ανωτέρω και των επικείμενων συμπερασμάτων του Συμβουλίου σχετικά με τα βιώσιμα συστήματα υγείας και τις χρόνιες παθήσεις, προτίθεται το Συμβούλιο να δηλώσει:

1. Πώς σκοπεύει να διασφαλίσει την τήρηση και εφαρμογή των πορισμάτων της χρηματοδοτούμενης από την ΕΕ έκθεσης του ΠΟΕ σχετικά με την πρόληψη των εγκεφαλικών, καθώς και τον προσδιορισμό και τη διάδοση των ορθών πρακτικών;

2. Θα συμφωνούσε το Συμβούλιο ότι μία εντολή προς την Επιτροπή για διευκόλυνση του διαλόγου με εξειδικευμένα ενδιαφερόμενα μέρη σε επίπεδο ΕΕ και σε εθνικό επίπεδο θα αποτελούσε βήμα προόδου;

Απάντηση
(9 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Το Συμβούλιο δεν έχει συζητήσει την έκθεση στην οποία αναφέρεται το αξιότιμο μέλος, ούτε καμία εντολή προς την Επιτροπή σχετικά με την παρακολούθηση της εφαρμογής της.

Η έκθεση αυτή [1] δημοσιεύθηκε αρχικά το 2004 και η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή ζήτησε να γίνει ενημέρωσή της το 2013, προκειμένου να χρησιμοποιηθεί για το σχεδιασμό του συνδυασμένου προγράμματος ερευνών της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης στο πλαίσιο του «Ορίζοντα 2020».

Σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 168 της Συνθήκης για τη Λειτουργία της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, τα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ είναι υπεύθυνα για την οργάνωση των συστημάτων τους υγειονομικής περίθαλψης και την παροχή υγειονομικής περίθαλψης, οι δε δράσεις της Ένωσης στον τομέα αυτό αποσκοπούν στο να συμπληρώνουν τις εθνικές πολιτικές.

[1] Έκθεση της ΠΟΥ σχετικά με τα Φάρμακα προτεραιότητας για την Ευρώπη και τον κόσμο.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011267/13
to the Council
Ioannis A. Tsoukalas (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Stroke prevention and atrial fibrillation management

According to the EU-funded WHO report 'Priority Medicines for Europe and the World 2013 Update', strokes are the second leading cause of disability in Europe after ischaemic heart disease, and the sixth leading cause worldwide. The number of stroke events in Europe is expected to rise to 1.5 million per year by 2025 due to the ageing population. The report states: 'In the EU-27 countries, the annual economic cost of stroke is an estimated EUR 27 billion: EUR 18.5 billion (68.5%) for direct costs and EUR 8.5 billion (31.5%) for indirect costs. An additional EUR 11.1 billion is calculated for the value of informal care'. The overwhelming majority of stroke events (87%) are caused by a thrombus or embolus that blocks blood flow to the brain. Embolus-type blood clots are often caused by atrial fibrillation (AF), which affects 6 million Europeans and causes a fivefold increase in risk of stroke. The WHO report states that greater efforts have to be made to optimise the secondary prevention of stroke in view of the fact that effective medication exists. The current prevalent treatment is unsatisfactory and basic, and investment in basic and clinical research, as well as in better management, i.e. diagnosis and care, is needed.

In view of the above and of the upcoming Council conclusions on sustainable health systems and chronic diseases:

1. Can the Council state how it plans to ensure that the findings of the EU-funded WHO report with regard to stroke prevention will be respected and implemented, and that good practice will be identified and disseminated?

2. Would the Council agree that a mandate to the Commission to facilitate a dialogue with expert stakeholders at EU and national level is a good way forward?

Reply
(9 December 2013)

The Council has not discussed the report the Honourable Member refers to, nor any mandate to the Commission related to its follow-up.

This report ([1]) was originally published in 2004 and the European Commission requested an update in 2013 with a view to using it as a resource in planning the 'Horizon 2020' combined research programme for the European Union.

According to Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the EU Member States are responsible for the organisation of their healthcare systems and the delivery of healthcare and Union action in this area is intended to complement national policies.

([1]) WHO Report on Priority Medicines for Europe and the World.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011268/13
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(3 ta' Ottubru 2013)

Suġġett: L-appoġġ tal-BEI lill-Bulgarija

Il-Bank Ewropew għall-Investiment (BEI) iddeċieda li jżid l-appoġġ tiegħu għall-SMEs industrijali u agrikoli fil-Bulgarija (BEI/13/149). Il-BEI ser jipprova jappoġġa l-impjieg billi jsellef EUR 50 miljun lill-bank Bulgaru CIBANK biex jiffinanzja l-proġetti "mhejġa minn intrapriżi żgħar u medji u kumpaniji b'kapitalizzazzjoni medja fil-Bulgarija".

Ladarba din il-linja ta' kreditu hija tkomplija taż-żewġ selfiet intermedjati l-oħra maħsuba għall-SMEs Bulgari, x'inhi l-evalwazzjoni tal-Kummissjoni dwar l-impatt tas-self tal-BEI fuq l-SMEs Bulgari? Instabet xi rabta bejn is-self u l-effetti fuq l-impjieg?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Rehn f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(11 ta' Novembru 2013)

Il-Kummissjoni identifikat l-aċċess li għandhom l-SMEs għall-finanzi bħala qasam problematiku fejn il-Bulgarija għandha tieħu azzjoni ta' politika, kif imfisser fir-Rakkomandazzjonijiet Speċifiċi għall-Pajjiżi (CSR) f'Ewropa 2020 ([1]). (Kwotazzjoni mis-CSR 5: "Jitjieb l-aċċess tal-SMEs u ta' impriżi ġodda għall-finanzi.") Għaldaqstant, nilqgħu b'mod pożittiv l-appoġġ tal-Bank Ewropew għall-Investiment (il-BEI) biex din il-kwistjoni tiġi indirizzata.

Il-Kummissjoni ma tevalwax l-impatti preċiżi ta' proġetti individwali tal-BEI. Iżda b'mod aktar ġenerali nemmnu li l-proġetti li jkollhom l-għan li jtaffu l-kundizzjonijiet biex l-SMEs jiksbu l-finanzjament fil-fatt huma ta' kontribut għat-tkabbir ekonomiku u għall-impjiegi.

([1]) Ir-Rakkomandazzjonijiet Speċifiċi għall-Pajjiżi u d-dokumenti ta' prova jistgħu jinkisbu minn dan l-indirizz elettroniku li ġej: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-your-country/bulgaria/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011268/13
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: EIB support for Bulgaria

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has decided to increase its support for industrial and agricultural SMEs in Bulgaria (BEI/13/149). It will attempt to support employment by lending EUR 50 million to the Bulgarian bank CIBANK to finance projects 'promoted by small and medium-sized enterprises and mid-cap companies in Bulgaria'.

Considering that this credit line is a continuation of the other two intermediated loans targeted on Bulgarian SMEs, what is the Commission's evaluation of the impact of EIB loans on Bulgarian SMEs? Has any link been made between the loans and effects on employment?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(11 November 2013)

The Commission has identified access to finance of SMEs as one problem area where Bulgaria should take policy action, as detailed in the Europe 2020 Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) ([1]). (A quote from CSR 5: 'Improve the access to finance for SMEs and start-ups.') Therefore, we welcome the support of European Investment Bank (EIB) to address the issue.

The Commission does not evaluate the precise impacts of individual EIB projects. But more generally we believe that projects aimed at easing SME financing conditions do contribute to economic growth and employment.

([1]) The Country Specific Recommendations and supporting documents can be accessed at the following address: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-your-country/bulgaria/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011269/13
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(3 ta' Ottubru 2013)

Suġġett: L-UE għandha tistabbilixxi fl-Unjoni kollha aktar kompetizzjonijiet f'aktar oqsma

Għal dwan l-aħħar 25 sena, il-Kummissjoni organizzat b'suċċess il-Kompetizzjoni tal-Unjoni Ewropea għal Xjenzati Żgħażagħ (EUCYS) (MEMO/13/812). Kompetizzjonijiet bħal dawn qegħdin kull ma jmur isiru dejjem iktar pjattaforma għal żgħażagħ ta' talent sabiex juru l-kapaċitajiet tagħhom, u hekk ikunu preparati għal opportunitajiet akbar.

Il-Kummissjoni tista' tindika kompetizzjonijiet simili li kellhom l-istess suċċess li kellha l-EUCYS, jew saħansitra aktar minnha? Il-Kummissjoni qiegħda tippjana li tespandi kompetizzjonijiet bħal dawn għal numru ikbar ta' oqsma, u jekk iva, x'inhuma wħud minn dawn l-oqsma?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sna Geoghegan-Quinn f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(20 ta' Novembru 2013)

Il-biċċa l-kbira tal-Istati Membri tal-UE jospitaw kompetizzjonijiet nazzjonali annwali tax-xjenza għal tfal ta' età ta' bejn l-14 u l-20 sena. Ir-rebbieħa ta' dawn il-kompetizzjonijiet nazzjonali tax-xjenza jikkompetu fl-EUCYS, il-Konkors tal-Unjoni Ewropea għal Xjenzjati Żgħażagħ.

Fost il-kompetizzjonijiet nazzjonali tax-xjenza tal-UE l-aktar magħrufa u stabbiliti hemm:

L-Irlanda: BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition
Il-Ġermanja: Stiftung Jugend forscht e. V.
Il-Polonja: Krajowy Fundusz na Rzecz Dzieci — Il-Fond Pollakk għat-Tfal
Il-Portugall: Fundação da Juventude

L-ikbar fiera tax-xjenza fid-dinja hija l-Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (Intel ISEF), li ssir kull sena l-Istati Uniti. L-EUCYS ġie mistieden jibgħat sa disa' studenti biex jieħdu sehem f'din il-fiera.

Il-EUCYS jaċċetta proġetti fid-dixxiplini kollha tax-xjenza u tal-inġinerija; ma hemm ebda pjanijiet biex l-għadd ta' dixxiplini jiżdied aktar.

Il-Kummissjoni qed tippjana li tintroduċi premjijiet ġodda bħala parti mill-EUCYS mill-2014, fl-ambitu tal-aġendi ta'"Riċerka u Innovazzjoni Responsabbli" sabiex l-istudenti jitħeġġu jitgħallmu kif tista' titnaqqas id-differenza bejn il-komunità xjentifika u s-soċjetà inġenerali. Proġetti interdixxiplinari u transdixxiplinari se jiġu ppremjati għall-interazzjoni tagħhom mas-soċjetà, għall-qsim b'mod liberu tar-riżultati tagħhom u talli juru li kwistjonijiet etiċi u kwistjonijiet relatati mal-ugwaljanza tas-sessi jkunu ġew indirizzati b'mod xieraq.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011269/13
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: EU to establish more Union-wide level competitions in more fields

The Commission has successfully organised the European Union Contest for Young Scientists (EUCYS) for the past 25 years (MEMO/13/812). Competitions of this nature have increasingly become a platform for young talents to showcase their ability, preparing them for greater opportunities.

Can the Commission list similar competitions that share the same success as or are more successful than the EUCYS? Does the Commission plan to expand such competitions to a larger number of fields, and if so, what are some of those fields?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

Most EU Member States host annual national science competitions for 14 to 20 year olds. The winners of these national science competitions compete at EUCYS.

Among the best known and most well established EU national science competitions are:

Ireland: BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition
Germany: Stiftung Jugend forscht e. V.
Poland: Krajowy Fundusz na Rzecz Dzieci — Polish Children's Fund
Portugal: Fundação da Juventude

The biggest science fair in the world is the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (Intel ISEF), held annually in the US. EUCYS are invited to send up to nine students to this fair.

Projects are accepted to EUCYS in all scientific and engineering disciplines; there are no plans to expand the number of disciplines further.

The Commission plans to introduce new prizes as part of EUCYS from 2014 under the umbrella of 'Responsible Research and Innovation' to encourage students to learn to bridge the gap between the scientific community and society at large. Inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary projects will be rewarded for engaging with society, for sharing their results freely and for demonstrating that gender and ethical issues have been addressed appropriately.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011270/13
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(3 ta' Ottubru 2013)

Suġġett: Ftehim dwar il-Kummerċ Ħieles bejn l-UE u l-Indja

Il-Kummissjoni rrikonoxxiet l-importanza ta' ftehimiet kummerċjali bilaterali (MEMO/13/734) biex jinħolqu impjiegi ġodda għall-forza tax-xogħol u biex jiżdied il-PDG totali. Per eżempju, in-negozjati għal Ftehim ta' Kummerċ Ħieles (FTA) bejn l-UE u l-Korea t'Isfel bdew fl-2007, bl-FTA li ġie ffirmat fl-2009 u l-applikazzjoni proviżorja tiegħu li daħlet fis-seħħ f'Lulju tal-2011.

Fl-2007 ukoll, l-UE bdiet negozjati għal FTA mal-Indja, wara li ġiet identifikata bħala "sieħba strateġika". Madankollu, wara sitt snin ta' negozjati, l-FTA bejn l-UE u l-Indja għadu ma jeżistix. Il-Kummissjoni tista' tindika id-disputi ewlenin kollha li hemm fis-seħħ, u l-istatus attwali għal kull disputa? Il-Kummissjoni tista' tindika wkoll fejn kienet ta' suċċess fl-indirizzar ta' xi wħud minn dawk id-disputi?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur De Gucht f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(8 ta' Novembru 2013)

Sar progress sostanzjali mill-bidu tan-negozjati bejn l-UE u l-Indja għal Ftehim ta' Kummerċ Ħieles. L-oqsma relatati mal-kummerċ tal-oġġetti, il-miżuri sanitarji u fitosanitarji, l-ostakli tekniċi għall-kummerċ, il-konkorrenza u r-regoli tal-oriġini huma lesti jew kważi lesti.. Madankollu għad hemm lakuni f'uħud mill-interessi ċentrali tal-UE fl-aċċess għas-suq u mingħajr soluzzjoni għal dawn in-nuqqasijiet, il-Kummissjoni mhix ser tkun tista' tikkonkludi n-negozjati ta' dan il-Ftehim ta' Kummerċ Ħieles. Xi wħud minn dawn il-lakuni huma fis-settur tas-servizzi, b'mod partikolari fis-servizzi bankarji u tal-assigurazzjoni, u fl-akkwist pubbliku, marbuta ma' dewmien fl-adozzjoni tal-liġijiet meħtieġa fl-Indja. Il-Kummissjoni Ewropea tistenna wkoll li l-Indja toffri ftuħ tas-suq aħjar għal prodotti ta' interess għall-esportazzjoni lejn l-UE bħal karozzi, partijiet tal-karozzi u x-xorb alkoħoliku.

Wara ħafna reżistenza inizjali mill-Indja, in-negozjati dwar il-kapitolu fuq l-Iżvilupp Sostenibbli tal-Ftehim ta' Kummerċ Ħieles li se jsir fil-ġejjieni għamlu progress tajjeb iżda hemm bżonn ta' aktar diskussjonijiet sabiex elementi importanti bħar-referenzi għal Konvenzjonijiet tal-Organizzazzjoni Internazzjonali tax-Xogħol rilevanti u l-Ftehimiet Ambjentali Multilaterali u l-Konsultazzjonijiet tal-Partijiet Interessati jiġu nklużi b'mod aċċettabbli għaż-żewġ naħat.

Il-Kummissjoni tibqa' lesta li tipparteċipa sabiex issib soluzzjonijiet għall-kwistjonijiet pendenti kollha iżda minħabba l-elezzjonijiet Parlamentari li ġejjin fl-Indja hemm livell għoli ta' inċertezza dwar jekk il-leġiżlazzjoni neċessarja ser tiġi adottata mill-Indja f'din il-leġiżlatura u jekk l-Indja se tkunx f'pożizzjoni fix-xhur li ġejjin biex turi l-flessibilità neċessarja biex jittejjeb l-aċċess għas-suq f'ċerti setturi sensittivi ta' interess għall-esportaturi tal-UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011270/13
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: India-EU Free Trade Agreement

The Commission has recognised the importance of bilateral trade agreements (MEMO/13/734) in generating new jobs for the workforce and increasing our total GDP. For example, Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations between the EU and South Korea began in 2007, with the FTA being signed in 2009 and its provisional application taking effect in July 2011.

Also in 2007, the EU started FTA negotiations with India, identifying it as a 'strategic partner'. However, six years of negotiations have yet to produce an EU-India FTA. Would the Commission list all the main contentions in place, and the current status for each of those contentions? Would the Commission also list the successful steps we have taken in addressing some of those main contentions?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(8 November 2013)

Substantial progress has been made since the start of the negotiations between the EU and India for a Free Trade Agreement. Areas related to trade in goods, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, competition and rules of origin are either finalised or nearly finalised. However there still remain gaps in some of the EU's core market access interests and without resolving these, the Commission will not be able to conclude negotiations of this Free Trade Agreement. Some of these gaps are in the services sector, in particular on banking and insurance, and in public procurement, linked to a delay in the adoption of necessary legislation in India. The European Commission also expects India to offer improved market opening for products of important export interest to the EU such as cars, car parts and alcoholic beverages.

After much initial resistance from India, negotiations of the Sustainable Development chapter of the future Free Trade Agreement have advanced well but further discussions are required to ensure that important elements such as references to relevant International Labour Organisation Conventions and Multilateral Environment Agreements and Stakeholder Consultations are included in a mutually acceptable manner.

The Commission remains ready to engage so as to find solutions to all outstanding issues but the upcoming Parliamentary elections in India mean that there is a high level of uncertainty on whether the necessary legislation will be adopted by India in this Parliamentary term and whether India will be in position in the next months to show the necessary flexibility in improving market access in certain sensitive sectors of interest for EU exporters.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011272/13
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(3 ta' Ottubru 2013)

Suġġett: Il-multilingwiżmu fl-Ewropa

F'dak li għandu x'jaqsam mal-multilingwiżmu fl-Ewropa għad hemm ħafna kwistjonijiet mhux ċari. Wieħed mill-għanijiet tal-Unjoni Ewropea huwa li jkollna Ewropa fejn kull ċittadin jitgħallem minn tal-inqas żewġ lingwi oħra barra lsien art twelidu, u dan minn età żgħira (MEMO/13/825). Għal dan il-għan, programmi bħalma huwa "l-ilsien omm +2" ġew stabbiliti waqt is-Summit ta' Barċellona f'Marzu 2002.

Il-Kummissjoni tista' tagħmel lista tal-inizjattivi tal-multilingwiżmu li ġew implimentati b'suċċess mill-2002 'l hawn? Ladarba l-multilingwiżmu għadu meqjus bħala prijorità, il-Kummissjoni qed tippjana li tadotta approċċ aktar b'saħħtu sabiex tħeġġeġ il-multilingwiżmu fl-Ewropa?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Vassiliou f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(15 ta' Novembru 2013)

L-inizjattivi tal-Kummissjoni mill-2002 iffukaw fuq l-appoġġ tal-għan tas-Samit ta' Barċellona, dak li l-Ewropej jitgħallmu żewġ lingwi barranin minn età bikrija. Dan l-aħħar ħafna inizjattivi edukattivi ta' suċċess kienu kkofinanzjati minn programmi edukattivi, bħall-Programm ta' Tagħlim Tul il-Ħajja, li permezz tiegħu kull sena ntefqu madwar EUR 50 miljun fuq il-multilingwiżmu u l-proġetti dwar it-tagħlim tal-lingwi ([1]). Il-Kummissjoni tat l-appoġġ tagħha wkoll lil ħafna partijiet interessati, bħal pereżempju l-Pjattaforma tal-Intrapriżi għall-Multilingwiżmu u l-Pjattaforma tas-Soċjetà Ċivili għall-iskambju tal-opinjonijiet u l-esperjenzi dwar il-multilingwiżmu u t-tagħlim tal-lingwi.

F'Novembru 2012, l-istrateġija "Reviżjoni tal-Edukazzjoni" adottata mill-Kummissjoni enfasizzat l-importanza kruċjali tal-ħiliet fil-lingwi barranin għall-impjegabbiltà u kien fiha gwida speċifika għall-Istati Membri dwar l-fatturi li jikkontribwixxu għat-tagħlim effettiv tal-ilsna ([2]). L-istrateġija kienet tinkludi l-proposta tal-Kummissjoni għal parametru referenzjarju tal-UE dwar il-profiċjenza fil-lingwi barranin sabiex sal-2020 mill-inqas 50% taż-żgħażagħ ta' 15-il sena jilħqu l-livell ta' utent indipendenti f'lingwa barranija waħda, u mill-inqas 75% tal-istudenti fl-edukazzjoni sekondarja inferjuri jistudjaw żewġ lingwi barranin. Il-proposta għall-parametru referenzjarju tissejjes fuq l-għan tas-Samit ta' Barċellona tal-2002.

Il-Kummissjoni se tkompli tappoġġja bil-qawwa l-multilingwiżmu u t-tagħlim tal-lingwi barranin fil-ġejjieni. It-tagħlim tal-lingwi u d-diversità lingwistika huma fost il-prijoritajiet ġenerali tal-programm Erasmus+, il-programm ġdid tal-UE għall-edukazzjoni, it-taħriġ, iż-żgħażagħ u l-isport. Se jkun hemm kofinanzjament għal proġetti kreattivi għat-tagħlim tal-lingwi u appoġġ lingwistiku għall-mobilità tal-istudenti.

([1]) Għal aktar tagħrif dwar dan: http://ec.europa.eu/education/transversal-programme/langprojects_en.htm. Deskrizzjoni ta' dawn il-proġetti tista' tinsab fl-ħekk imsejħa "compendiums" tal-websajt tal-EACEA fuq http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/results_projects/project_compendia_en.php. Ara l-linja KA3.

([2]) Aktar tagħrif dwar din l-istrateġija jinsab fuq http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking/sw372_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011272/13
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Multilingualism in Europe

There are still many grey areas when it comes to multilingualism in Europe. One of the European Union's goals is to achieve a Europe in which every citizen is taught at least two languages in addition to their own mother tongue from an early age (MEMO/13/825). To this end, programmes such as 'mother-tongue +2' were established at the Barcelona Summit in March 2002.

Can the Commission list all of the successful multilingualism initiatives put in place since 2002? Given that multilingualism is still considered a priority, does the Commission plan to take a stronger approach in encouraging multilingualism in Europe?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

Commission initiatives since 2002 have focused on supporting the Barcelona Summit's objective of teaching Europeans two foreign languages from an early age. Many successful educational project initiatives were co-financed in recent years by educational programmes like the Life Long Learning Programme, under which about EUR 50 million has been spent annually on multilingualism and language teaching projects ([1]). The Commission has also supported various stakeholder forums, such as the Business Platform for Multilingualism and the Civil Society Platform for the exchange of views and experiences about multilingualism and language teaching.

In November 2012, the 'Rethinking Education' strategy adopted by the Commission highlighted the critical importance of foreign language skills for employability and contained specific guidance to Member States about the factors contributing to effective language teaching ([2]). The strategy included the Commission's proposal for an EU benchmark on foreign languages proficiency so that by 2020 at least 50% of 15-year-olds attain the level of independent user in one foreign language, and at least 75% of pupils in lower secondary education study two foreign languages. The proposal for the benchmark is based on the 2002 Barcelona Summit objective.

The Commission will continue to strongly promote multilingualism and the teaching of foreign languages in the future. Language learning and linguistic diversity are among the over-arching priorities of the new programme for education, training, youth and sport, Erasmus+. There will be co-financing for creative language teaching projects and linguistic support for mobility of students.

([1]) For more information on this: http://ec.europa.eu/education/transversal-programme/langprojects_en.htm. A description of these projects can be found in the so-called 'compendiums' on the webpage of EACEA at http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/results_projects/project_compendia_en.php. See line KA3

([2]) Further information about this strategy can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking/sw372_en.pdf

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011273/13
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(3 ta' Ottubru 2013)

Suġġett: Servizzi tal-broadband b'veloċità baxxa

Skont il-MEMO/13/756, l-Ewropa qed taqa' lura fit-tellieqa gobali biex tibni konnessjonijiet fissi tal-broadband b'veloċità għolja. Il-korporazzjonijiet tat-telekomunikazzjoni mhux qegħdin jagħtu l-prestazzjoni mistennija minħabba s-sistema regolatorja ineffiċjenti li qed tintuża bħalissa. Hu rikonoxxut li hemm bżonn iktar inċentivi sabiex l-UE tilħaq il-mira tagħha li tipprovdi broadband b'veloċità għolja liċ-ċittadini kollha tagħha sal-2020.

Il-Kummissjoni tista' tindika l-ostakli ewlenin li qed iżommuha milli tilħaq din il-mira? Tista' wkoll tindika kemm huma kbar id-differenzi fil-prestazzjonijiet bejn l-Istati Membri? Liema huma l-Istati Membri bl-aqħar prestazzjoni?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Kroes f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(18 ta' Novembru 2013)

Il-Komunikazzjoni tal-Kummissjoni "Il-Broadband Ewropew: investiment fi tkabbir ekonomiku mmexxi diġitalment" ([1]) iddeskriviet l-ostakli ewlenin li hemm għall-ilħiq tal-miri tal-broadband u l-istrateġija sabiex jingħelbu. L-ewwel ostaklu huwa l-ispiża għolja ta' investiment meħtieġa għal netwerk li jkun jaħdem b'rata mgħaġġla ħafna. Il-Kummissjoni wieġbet għal dan billi pproponiet proposti dwar it-tnaqqis tal-ispejjeż tal-investiment u billi żiedet ir-riżorsi għall-investiment fil-broadband permezz tal-faċilità Nikkollegaw l-Ewropa. It-tieni ostaklu huwa l-fatt li ħafna mill-Istati Membri ma kellhomx strateġija operattiva biex jilħqu l-miri għall-broadband. It-tielet ostaklu huwa l-fatt li ċerti partijiet tal-Ewropa ma kinux attraenti għall-investiment mil-lat kummerċjali u għalhekk il-Fondi Strutturali jeħtieġ li jissaħħu u jiġu ssimplifikati.

Fl-2012, studju tal-Kummissjoni dwar l-ispiża f'każ li l-Ewropa ma tkunx inkluża fil-komunikazzjonijiet elettroniċi ([2]) wera li suq intern stabbilit sew iżid il-PDG tal-UE b'ammont li jkun sa EUR 110 biljun. Dan l-istudju wera li l-UE hija maqsuma fi swieq nazzjonali separati u li, minħabba f'hekk, l-Ewropa qed titlef sors ewlieni ta' tkabbir potenzjali. Fil-11 ta' Settembru 2013, il-Kummissjoni adottat proposta għal Regolament biex jinbena kontinent konness u kompetittiv ([3]) u Rakkomandazzjoni dwar obbligi konsistenti mhux diskriminatorji u metodoloġiji tal-kalkolu tal-ispejjeż sabiex tiġi promossa l-kompetizzjoni u jitjieb l-ambjent tal-investiment fil-broadband.

It-tabella ta' valutazzjoni tal-Aġenda Diġitali ([4]) tkopri fid-dettall il-kejl tal-adozzjoni tal-broadband fl-Istati Membri differenti. Il-kopertura tal-broadband għal linji fissi tvarja minn 100 % għal 69.1 % iżda, kif intqal dan l-aħħar mill-Viċi President tal-Kummissjoni responsabbli għall-Aġenda Diġitali, din hija ta' 100 % fl-UE kollha jekk jiġu inklużi l-kopertura tat-teknoloġija mingħajr wajers u bis-satellita. F'dak li għandu x'jaqsam mal-użu, l-għadd ta' familji li għandhom aċċess għall-broadband id-dar ivarja minn 87 % għal 50.4 %.

([1]) COM(2010)472.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/steps-towards-truly-internal-market.
([3]) Kontinent konness li jibni suq uniku tat-telekomunikazzjoni — https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/communication-commission-european-parliament-council-european-economic-and-social-committee-a-0.
([4]) https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/scoreboard.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011273/13
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Slow broadband services

According to MEMO/13/756, Europe is falling behind in the global race to build fast fixed broadband connections. Telecommunications corporations are underperforming as a result of the inefficient regulatory system currently in place. It is acknowledged that more incentives are necessary if the EU is to reach its target of providing fast broadband for all its citizens by 2020.

Can the Commission list the main hurdles in the way of achieving this objective? Can it also say how great the differences in performance are between Member States? Which are the worst-performing Member States?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

The main hurdles to achieving the broadband targets and the strategy to overcome them were set out in the Commission Communication European Broadband: investing in Digitally Driven Growth ([1]). The first is the high cost of investment needed for a superfast network. The Commission responded to this by proposals on cutting the cost of investment and added more resources to broadband investment through the Connecting Europe Facility. Secondly, that many Member States did not have an operational broadband strategy to achieve the targets. Thirdly that some parts of Europe were not commercially attractive to investment and the Structural Funds therefore need to be reinforced and rationalised.

In 2012, a Commission study on the cost of non-Europe in electronic communications ([2]) showed that a fully-fledged internal market would increase EU GDP by up to EUR 110 billion. It highlighted how the EU is fragmented into distinct national markets and as a result Europe is losing out on a major source of potential growth. On 11 September 2013, the Commission adopted a proposal of Regulation to build a connected, competitive continent ([3]) and a recommendation on consistent non-discrimination obligations and costing methodologies to promote competition and enhance the broadband investment environment.

Measurement of broadband deployment by Member State is covered in detail by the Digital Agenda Scoreboard ([4]). Fixed line broadband coverage ranges from 100% to 69.1% but, as recently announced by the Vice-President of the Commission responsible for Digital Agenda, coverage is 100% throughout the EU if wireless and satellite coverage is included. In terms of take-up, proportion of households with broadband access at home ranges from 87% to 50.4%

([1]) COM(2010) 472.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/steps-towards-truly-internal-market
([3]) Connected Continent Building a Telecoms Single Market, — https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/communication-commission-european-parliament-council-european-economic-and-social-committee-a-0
([4]) https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/scoreboard

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011274/13
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(3 ta' Ottubru 2013)

Suġġett: Inbejjed mill-Moldova

Fil-25 ta' Settembru 2013 il-Kummissjoni ħarġet stqarrija għall-istampa (IP/13/872) fejn ħabbret id-deċiżjoni tagħha li tiftaħ is-suq tal-Unjoni Ewropea għall-importazzjoni tal-inbid mir-Repubblika tal-Moldova. Din il-miżura waslet qabel iż-żona ta' kummerċ ħieles, bl-għan li "ttaffi xi diffikultajiet li r-Repubblika tal-Moldova qed tesperjenza fl-esportazzjoni tal-inbid lejn parti mis-suq tradizzjonali tagħha" ([1]).

Liema swieq tal-UE huma attwalment fil-mira ta' produtturi tal-inbid mill-Moldova? Liema kwantità tal-inbid prodott fil-Moldova qed jiġi attwalment importat lejn l-UE? Kif mistennija tiżdied?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Cioloş f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(25 ta' Novembru 2013)

Fl-2012, ir-Repubblika tal-Moldova esportat 156 741 ettolitru (hl) lejn l-UE, jiġifieri 8% aktar mis-snin ta' qabel. L-inbejjed bl-ingrossa laħqu s-60 339 ettolitru (39% tal-inbejjed importati mill-Moldova). Fl-UE, id-destinazzjonijiet ewlenin tal-esportazzjoni huma r-Rumanija, il-Polonja u r-Repubblika Ċeka.

Għall-UE dawn l-importazzjonijiet jgħaqqdu 1.1% biss tal-importazzjonijiet tal-inbid kollha minn pajjiżi terzi u 0.1% biss tal-konsum tal-inbid kollu fl-UE.

Fl-2012, il-Moldova produċiet b'kollox 1.6 miljun ettolitru u 300 000 minnhom ġew esportati lejn ir-Russja, is-suq ewlieni tal-Moldova. Barra minn hekk, il-Moldova ma mlietx il-Kwota tar-Rata Tariffarja (TRQ) Nru 09-0514 ta' 180 000 ettolitru fl-2012. Għalkemm għal dik is-sena t-TRQ ġiet stabbilita għal 240 000 ettolitru, l-esportazzjonijiet skont din it-TRQ laħqu biss il-160 529 ettolitru sat-13 ta' Novembru 2013.

Il-Kummissjoni ma tistax tbassar kif se jevolvu l-importazzjonijiet futuri mill-Moldova.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-872_mt.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011274/13
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Moldovan wines

On 25 September 2013 the Commission issued a press release (IP/13/872) announcing its decision to open the European Union's market to wine imports from the Republic of Moldova. This measure comes ahead of the free trade area, aiming to ease 'some of the difficulties the Republic of Moldova is experiencing with its wine exports to some of its traditional market' ([1]).

What EU markets are currently targeted by Moldovan wine producers? What quantity of the wine produced in Moldova is currently imported to the EU? How is this expected to increase?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

In 2012, the Republic of Moldova exported 156 741 hectolitres (hl) to the EU, an increase of 8% compared to previous years. Bulk wines amounted to 60 339 hl (39% of the imported wines from Moldova). The main export destinations in the EU are Romania, Poland and Czech Republic.

For the EU these imports represent only 1.1% of all imports of wine from third countries and only 0.1% of the entire wine consumption in the EU.

Moldova's total production in 2012 amounted to 1.6 million hl of which 300 00 hl were exported to Russia, Moldova's main market. In addition, Moldova did not fill the Tariff Rate Quota No 09-0514 of 180 000 hl in 2012. For this year, although the TRQ was set at 240 000 hl, exports under this TRQ have amounted to only 160 529 hl by 13 November 2013.

The Commission cannot predict the evolution of future imports from Moldova.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-872_en.htm

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011275/13
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(3 ta' Ottubru 2013)

Suġġett: Ftehim bejn l-UE u l-Indoneżja sabiex jitrażżan il-kummerċ illegali fl-injam

Il-Kummissjoni, fi stqarrija għall-istampa (IP/13/887), irrapurtat li l-UE u l-Indoneżja ffirmaw ftehim storiku sabiex irażżnu attivitajiet illegali ta' qtugħ ta' siġar fl-Indoneżja, b'konformità ma' ftehimiet eżistenti bejn l-UE u pajjiżi oħra. Minħabba li l-UE hi l-akbar suq tal-esportazzjoni għal prodotti tal-injam Indoneżjani, dan il-ftehim jikkontribwixxi għall-indirizzar tat-theddida li l-qtugħ illegali ta' siġar jirrappreżenta għall-foresti.

Kemm ġie ttrasportat injam illegali mill-Indoneżja lejn l-UE kull sena? Din iċ-ċifra kemm mistennija tonqos bis-saħħa ta' dan il-ftehim?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Potočnik f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(18 ta' Novembru 2013)

Huwa diffiċli li wieħed jivvaluta l-volum ta' kummerċ ta' xi prodott bażiku illegali minħabba li dawn il-prodotti jinħbew jew ma jistgħux jiġu identifikati faċilment. Studju li sar mill-grupp ta' riflessjoni mir-Renju Unit imsejjaħ "Chatham House" ([1]) issuġġerixxa li fl-2006, kien stmat li sa 40 % mill-qtugħ tas-siġar fl-Indoneżja sar illegalment. Madankollu, minn dakinhar "l hawn il-Gvern Indoneżjan ħa għadd ta" miżuri kontra l-qtugħ illegali tas-siġar u biex itejjeb il-verifika tal-legalità tal-injam, b'mod partikulari fejn jidħlu l-esportazzjonijiet.

Mindu daħal fis-seħħ ir-Regolament tal-UE dwar l-injam ([2]) fit-3 ta' Marzu 2013, sar reat li wieħed iqiegħed fis-suq tal-UE l-injam maqtugħ b'mod illegali u l-operaturi tal-UE li jqiegħdu l-injam u l-prodotti tal-injam fis-suq sar għandhom obbligu li jeżerċitaw id-diliġenza dovuta biex inaqqsu kemm jista' jkun ir-riskju ta' injam illegali fil-katina tal-provvista tagħhom.

L-impatt ewlieni tal-Ftehim ta' Sħubija Volontarju dwar l-Infurzar tal-Liġi tal-Foresta, il-Governanza u l-Kummerċ (FLEGT) mal-Indonezja għandu jkun li jagħti iktar ċertezza lill operaturi tal-UE li jimpurtaw l-injam mill-Indoneżja, minħabba li l-liċenzja tal-FLEGT maħruġa skont il-Ftehim hija rrikonoxxuta, fil-kuntest tar-Regolament imsemmi hawn fuq, bħala liċenzja li turi l-konformità mad-dispożizzjonijiet tiegħu. Il-Parlament Ewropew bħalissa qed iqis il-Ftehim ta' Sħubija Volontarju fil-kuntest tal-proċedura ta' approvazzjoni.

([1]) Studju tal-2010 ta' S. Lawson u L. MacFaul imsejjaħ "Illegal Logging and Related Trade — Indicators of the Global Response" ("Il-qtugħ illegali tas-siġar u l-kummerċ marbut mieġħu — indikaturi tat-tweġiba globali").
([2]) Ir-Regolament (UE) Nru 995/2010 tal-20 ta' Ottubru 2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011275/13
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Agreement between the EU and Indonesia to curb illegal timber

The Commission has reported in a press release (IP/13/887) that the EU and Indonesia have signed a historic agreement to curb illegal logging activities in Indonesia, in line with similar agreements already in existence between the EU and other countries. Since the EU is the biggest export market for Indonesian timber products, this agreement would contribute to addressing the threat to forests posed by illegal logging.

How much illegal timber from Indonesia has been transported to the EU annually? How far is this figure projected to fall thanks to the agreement?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

Assessing the volume of trade of any illegal commodity is difficult as such products are hidden or not easily identifiable. A study by the UK think-tank Chatham House ([1]) suggested that in 2006 up to 40% of logging in Indonesia was estimated to be illegal. However since then the Indonesian Government has taken a number of measures against illegal logging and to improve verification of the legality of timber, in particular with regard to exports.

Since the entry into application of the EU Timber Regulation ([2])on 3 March 2013 it has been an offence to place illegally harvested timber on the EU market and EU operators placing timber and timber products on the market have had an obligation to exercise due diligence to minimise the risk of illegal timber in their supply chain.

The main impact of the FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement with Indonesia will be to provide greater certainty to EU operators importing timber from Indonesia, as the FLEGT licence issued under the Agreement is recognised under the abovementioned Regulation as demonstrating compliance with its provisions. The Voluntary Partnership Agreement is currently being considered by the European Parliament under the consent procedure.

([1]) Illegal Logging and Related Trade — Indicators of the Global Response (2010); S. Lawson, L. MacFaul.
([2]) Regulation (EU) 995/2010 of 20 October 2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011276/13
to the Commission
Julie Girling (ECR) and James Nicholson (ECR)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Civets and coffee beans

Leading figures in the British coffee industry have recently called for an import ban on Indonesian kopi luwak coffee. Evidence indicates that kopi luwak now predominantly comes from caged civets which have been caught by poachers, caged and force-fed coffee cherries. The coffee beans, which are excreted by these wild animals, are then sold on to the British market under false claims that the coffee beans have come from wild civets in their natural habitat.

Earlier this year, the British public made it clear that they want to know where their food comes from and were keen to see tighter controls introduced within the food chain. In light of this, can the Commission comment on the misleading trade which promotes the abovementioned luxury coffee beans as coming from free wild animals? Is the Commission aware of such ill-treatment of the civet?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

Responsibility for enforcing EC law applicable to the provision of correct information to consumers (including through food labels and advertising) lies with the Member States. The Commission is not aware of any case where a Member State would be failing its duties with respect to the case referred to by the Honourable Member.

As a consequence, the Commission is not in a position to take specific actions regarding alleged ill-treatment of civets in Indonesia.

Although animal welfare is not explicitly mentioned in the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) 1994 or in other World Trade Organisation agreements, the Commission takes every opportunity to raise and to promote improved animal welfare standards at European and at international level.

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