Euroopan unionin
virallinen lehti

C 275

Suomenkielinen laitos

Tiedonantoja ja ilmoituksia

57. vuosikerta

21. elokuuta 2014

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EUROOPAN UNIONIN TOIMIELINTEN, ELINTEN, TOIMISTOJEN JA VIRASTOJEN TIEDOTTEET

Euroopan parlamentti

KIRJALLISESTI VASTATTAVAT KYSYMYKSET

2014/C 275/01 Euroopan parlamentin jäsenten esittämät kirjalliset kysymykset ja Euroopan unionin toimielinten vastaukset niihin 1

(Ks. Tietoja lukijalle)

FI

Tietoja lukijalle

Tämä julkaisu sisältää Euroopan parlamentin jäsenten esittämiä kirjallisia kysymyksiä ja Euroopan unionin toimielinten niihin antamia vastauksia.

Kustakin kysymyksestä ja vastauksesta esitetään alkuperäinen kieliversio ennen mahdollista käännöstä.

Joissakin tapauksissa vastaus on saatettu antaa eri kielellä kuin kysymys. Tämä johtuu siitä, että vastauksessa on käytetty kyseisen elimen työkieltä.

Kysymykset ja vastaukset julkaistaan Euroopan parlamentin työjärjestyksen 117 ja 118 artiklan mukaisesti.

Kaikki kysymykset ja vastaukset ovat tarkasteltavissa Euroopan parlamentin verkkosivuston (Europarl) osiossa ”Parlamentin kysymykset” osoitteessa

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

POLIITTISISTA RYHMISTÄ KÄYTETTÄVÄT LYHENTEET

PPE	Euroopan kansanpuolueen ryhmä (kristillisdemokraatit)
S&D	Euroopan parlamentin sosialistien ja demokraattien ryhmä
ALDE	Euroopan liberaalidemokraattien liiton ryhmä
Verts/ALE	Vihreät / Euroopan vapaa allianssi -ryhmä
ECR	Euroopan konservatiivit ja reformistit
GUE/NGL	Euroopan yhtyneen vasemmiston konfederaatioryhmä / Pohjoismaiden vihreä vasemmisto
EFD	Vapaa ja demokraattinen Eurooppa
NI	Sitoutumattomat

IV

(Tiedotteet)

EUROOPAN UNIONIN TOIMIELINTEN, ELINTEN, TOIMISTOJEN JA VIRASTOJEN TIEDOTTEET

EUROOPAN PARLAMENTTI

KIRJALLISESTI VASTATTAVAT KYSYMYKSET

Euroopan parlamentin jäsenten esittämät kirjalliset kysymykset ja Euroopan unionin toimielinten vastaukset niihin

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Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014297/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Nuovi sviluppi nella gestione coordinata della lotta all'Alzheimer

Sono stati resi pubblici in questi giorni i risultati di un progetto nazionale italiano sviluppato dall'Istituto neurologico Carlo Besta di Milano con l'obiettivo di migliorare la diagnosi precoce della malattia di Alzheimer e di sviluppare un modello integrato ospedale-territorio. Secondo le statistiche, in Italia i malati di Alzheimer superano la quota di 700 mila, mentre in Europa i malati arriveranno a 115 milioni nel 2050, con un costo sociale stimato di oltre 100 miliardi di euro l'anno. I servizi erogati ad oggi dalle Regioni italiane presentano una grande eterogeneità in termini sia di valutazione, sia di diagnosi e gestione dei malati, rendendo il riconoscimento precoce della malattia ancora difficoltoso. Lo studio ha prodotto un protocollo condiviso per una diagnosi precoce, in particolare nelle fasi iniziali di declino cognitivo lieve, fondata sulla ricerca di marker biochimici e genetici, sulla diagnostica per immagini e sui test di valutazione cognitivo-comportamentale. I primi risultati indicano che l'applicazione di questo percorso diagnostico-terapeutico migliora sia l'appropriatezza dell'invio dei pazienti agli specialisti da parte dei medici di famiglia, sia il loro rapporto con gli specialisti stessi. Questo nuovo modello di valutazione per l'Alzheimer in prospettiva potrà consentire di far confluire in un database nazionale tutti i dati relativi a marker cognitivi e comportamentali, oltre a quelli di neuroimaging.

Considerate:

— le raccomandazioni formulate dalla Commissione agli Stati membri nel documento «Council Conclusions on public health strategies to combat neurodegenerative diseases associated with ageing and in particular Alzheimer's disease» del dicembre 2008;

— la comunicazione della Commissione al Parlamento europeo del 2009 (COM(2009)0380) che promuove tra l'altro il coordinamento dei ricercatori europei, la diffusione delle migliori pratiche e un approccio comune alla lotta alla patologia;

si chiede alla Commissione:

1. se intenda acquisire i risultati della suddetta ricerca;

2. se ritiene che tale protocollo condiviso possa costituire un valido modello europeo per una gestione coordinata della lotta all'Alzheimer.

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(24 febbraio 2014)

La Commissione è stata informata riguardo allo studio citato, effettuato dall'Istituto neurologico Carlo Besta di Milano.

In tale contesto la Commissione desidera richiamare l'attenzione sul fatto che il Trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea stabilisce che l'organizzazione e la prestazione dei servizi sanitari e delle cure mediche, compresi i servizi medici per la diagnosi della demenza, sono di competenza degli Stati membri.

Nell'azione comune «Alzheimer Cooperative Valuation in Europe» (2011-2013), che fa parte del programma dell'UE per la salute ([1]), 19 Stati membri hanno collaborato per trovare soluzioni ai problemi legati alla demenza. Uno dei risultati di tale collaborazione è una serie di raccomandazioni sulla «diagnosi tempestiva della demenza».

Per quanto riguarda il coordinamento e lo scambio di buone prassi, il partenariato europeo per l'innovazione sull'invecchiamento attivo e in buona salute ([2]) si concentra soprattutto sulla prevenzione e sulla diagnosi precoce della fragilità e del declino funzionale, sia fisico che cognitivo, degli anziani. Tale partenariato condivide soluzioni innovative e buone prassi in campi come la metodologia per lo screening e l'individuazione dello stato pre-fragile nei pazienti anziani e le ricerche sui diversi aspetti della fragilità, del declino cognitivo e della qualità di vita dei pazienti anziani fragili.

([1]) http://www.alcove-project.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=28&Itemid=141
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?section=active-healthy-ageing

La Commissione sostiene inoltre, tramite l'azione coordinata JUMPAHEAD ([3]) (2 milioni di EUR), l'attuazione dell'iniziativa di programmazione congiunta per combattere le malattie neurovegetative, in particolare la malattia di Alzheimer. Si tratta di un'iniziativa guidata dagli Stati membri per coordinare e consolidare le ricerche tra 27 paesi partecipanti, comprendenti Stati membri dell'UE, paesi associati e il Canada.

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/medical-research/brain-research/projects/jumpahead_en.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014297/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: New developments in the coordinated management of the fight against Alzheimer's disease

In recent days, the results of an Italian national project have been published. The project was carried out by the Carlo Besta Neurological Institute in Milan with the aim of improving the early diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and of developing an integrated hospital-regional model. According to statistics, over 700 000 people suffer from Alzheimer's disease, while there will be over 115 million with the disease in Europe by 2050, with an estimated welfare cost of over EUR 100 billion per year. There is great variation in the services currently provided by Italian regional authorities in terms of assessment, diagnosis and management of those with the disease, making early detection of the disease difficult. The study has devised a common protocol for early diagnosis, particularly in in the initial stages of mild cognitive decline, based on looking for biochemical and genetic markers, diagnostic imaging and cognitive and behavioural tests. The initial results show that applying this diagnostic and therapeutic approach improves the appropriateness of patient referrals to specialists by family doctors, and their relationship with specialists. This new prospective assessment model for Alzheimer's disease will make it possible to bring together all cognitive and behavioural marker-related data, as well as neuroimaging data, in a national database.

The Commission made recommendations to the Member States in the document 'Council conclusions on public health strategies to combat neurodegenerative diseases associated with ageing and in particular Alzheimer's disease' in December 2008.

The 2009 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council (COM(2009)0380) promotes coordination among European researchers, sharing best practices and a joint approach in the fight against the disease.

1. Will the Commission obtain the results of the aforementioned research?

2. Does it think that this common protocol could be a valid European model for coordinated management of the fight against Alzheimer's disease?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(24 February 2014)

The Commission has received information about the study referred to by the Carlo Besta Neurological Institute in Milan (Italy).

In this context, the Commission would like to draw attention to the fact that the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care, which includes medical services to diagnose dementia, falls under the responsibility of Member States .

In the Joint Action 'Alzheimer Cooperative Valuation in Europe' (2011-2013) under the EU-Health Programme ([1]), 19 Member States worked together on challenges related to dementia. One deliverable is a set of recommendations on the 'timely diagnosis of dementia'.

As regards coordination and sharing of best practices, the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing ([2]) has a strong focus on prevention and early diagnosis of frailty and functional decline, both physical and cognitive, in older people. The Partnership shares innovative solutions and best practices in areas such methodology for the screening and identification of pre-frail status in older patients, and also the development of research on different aspects of frailty, cognitive decline and the quality of life of frail elderly patients.

Furthermore, the Commission is supporting through the coordinated action JUMPAHEAD ([3]) (EUR 2 million), the implementation of the Joint Programming Initiative for Combating Neurodegenerative Diseases, in particular Alzheimer's disease — This is a Member State-led initiative to coordinate and consolidate research efforts among 27 participating countries including EU-Member States, Associated countries and Canada.

([1]) http://www.alcove-project.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=28&Itemid=141
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?section=active-healthy-ageing
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/medical-research/brain-research/projects/jumpahead_en.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014298/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Nuovi sviluppi nella ricerca e nella cura della sindrome di Down

La sindrome di Down è la più comune anomalia cromosomica nell'uomo. Il QI medio dei giovani adulti con sindrome di Down è di circa 50, rispetto ai bambini senza la condizione che dimostrano un QI di 100. Colpisce circa 1 su 600-1000 individui. L'aspettativa di vita delle persone con tale sindrome è tra 60 e i 65 anni.

La rivista di neuroscienze «Brain» ha recentemente pubblicato uno studio di un gruppo di ricerca del Dipartimento di Scienze Biomediche e Neuromotorie dell'Università di Bologna. Per la prima volta è stato possibile correggere in laboratorio, sui topi, prima della nascita, le alterazioni cerebrali e le disabilità cognitive causate dalla sindrome di Down utilizzando una terapia farmacologica con un antidepressivo e dimostrando la possibilità di ripristinare farmacologicamente, in esemplari appena nati, il corretto sviluppo cerebrale tramite la somministrazione di fluoxetina, un antidepressivo di largo uso.

La ricerca dimostra come sia possibile ripristinare, in laboratorio, lo sviluppo di tutto il cervello affetto da sindrome di Down mediante terapia prenatale con fluoxetina. La disabilità cognitiva tipica della sindrome di Down è sempre stata considerata irreversibile. Queste ricerche aprono ora una strada innovativa verso una possibile cura, grazie a terapie farmacologiche precoci, durante le primissime fasi dello sviluppo cerebrale.

L'articolo 26 della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea recita: «L'Unione riconosce e rispetta il diritto delle persone con disabilità di beneficiare di misure intese a garantirne l'autonomia, l'inserimento sociale e professionale e la partecipazione alla vita della comunità».

L'Unione europea ha ratificato la convenzione delle Nazioni Unite sui diritti delle persone con disabilità, che stabilisce norme minime universali volte a tutelare tutta una serie di diritti civili, politici, sociali ed economici e a garantirne il rispetto.

Ciò premesso, quale sarà la posizione della Commissione riguardo a questa nuova terapia prenatale? Ritiene opportuno destinare nuovi canali di finanziamento a tale settore?

Risposta di Máire Geoghegan-Quinn a nome della Commissione
(13 febbraio 2014)

La Commissione è a conoscenza dello studio citato dall'onorevole deputato ([1]), che dimostra che la fluoxetina può essere utilizzata come nuova terapia prenatale per correggere la sindrome di Down sui topi da laboratorio.

Per scelta politica, la Commissione non valuta progetti di ricerca individuali che non riguardino direttamente la sua attività di finanziamento.

Orizzonte 2020, il nuovo programma dell'UE per la ricerca e l'innovazione (2014-2020) ([2]), offrirà ulteriori opportunità di finanziamento per la ricerca in questo settore, in particolare grazie al finanziamento destinato all'obiettivo «Salute, cambiamento demografico e benessere», contenuto nella priorità «Sfide per la società». Le informazioni sulle attuali possibilità di finanziamento possono essere ottenute attraverso il portale dedicato alla ricerca e all'innovazione ([3]).

([1]) Brain, 12 dicembre 2013.
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0809:FIN:IT:PDF.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/index.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014298/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: New developments in the research into and treatment of Down's syndrome

Down's syndrome is the most common chromosome abnormality in humans. The average IQ of young adults with Down's syndrome is around 50, whereas children without the condition have an IQ of 100. It affects around 1 in 600-1 000 people. The life expectancy for people with this syndrome is between 60 and 65.

The 'Brain' journal of neuroscience recently published a study carried out by a research group from the Department of Biomedical and Neuromotor Sciences of the University of Bologna. For the first time, scientists have managed to correct the brain alterations and cognitive disabilities caused by Down's syndrome in laboratory mice prior to birth. They used pharmacotherapy with an antidepressant and demonstrated the possibility of using drugs to restore correct brain development in newborn individuals through the administration of fluoxetine, a widely used antidepressant.

The research shows how it is possible to restore the development of all the brain affected by Down's syndrome in the laboratory through prenatal treatment with fluoxetine. The cognitive disability typical of Down's syndrome has always been considered irreversible. This research has opened an innovative path towards a potential cure, thanks to early pharmacotherapy during the earliest phases of brain development.

Article 26 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union states that: 'The Union recognises and respects the right of persons with disabilities to benefit from measures designed to ensure their independence, social and occupational integration and participation in the life of the community'.

The European Union has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which sets minimum universal standards to protect a series of civil, political, social and economic rights and ensure they are respected.

In light of the above, what position will the Commission adopt with regard to this new prenatal therapy? Does it believe it would be a good idea to allocate new channels of funding to this sector?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(13 February 2014)

The Commission is aware of the study referred to by the Honourable Member ([1]), which shows that the drug fluoxetine can be used as a new prenatal therapy for Down's syndrome in a mouse model.

As a matter of policy, the Commission does not assess individual research projects that do not relate directly to its funding activities.

Horizon 2020, the new EU programme for research and innovation (2014-2020) ([2]), will offer further funding opportunities for research in this area, in particular through the societal challenge 1 'Health, demographic change and well-being'. Information on current funding opportunities can be obtained through the Research and Innovation Participant Portal ([3]).

([1]) Brain, December 12, 2013.
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0809:FIN:EN:PDF
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/index.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014300/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Rapporto Unicef sulle registrazioni alla nascita: quali azioni europee a tutela dei bambini «invisibili»

Il recente rapporto *Every Child's Birth Right: Inequities and trends in birth registration* pubblicato da UNICEF segnala dati allarmanti: circa 230 milioni di bambini sotto i 5 anni non sono mai stati registrati alla nascita, 1 su 3 nel mondo. L'analisi raccoglie i dati statistici in 161 paesi e le ultime stime disponibili per paese sulla registrazione alla nascita. A livello globale, nel 2012 solo circa il 60 % di tutti i neonati è stato registrato alla nascita. Il tasso varia a seconda della regione, con i livelli più bassi nell'Asia meridionale e nell'Africa subsahariana. I 10 paesi con i tassi più bassi di registrazione alla nascita sono: Somalia (3 %), Liberia (4 %), Etiopia (7 %), Zambia (14 %), Ciad (16 %), Repubblica Unita della Tanzania (16 %), Yemen (17 %), Guinea-Bissau (24 %), Pakistan (27 %) e Repubblica democratica del Congo (28 %). Tra i bambini registrati, 1 su 7 non possiede un certificato, e anche quando sono registrati, molti bambini perdono le tracce della loro registrazione e non sono in grado di fornire una documentazione che comprovi la loro nascita e la loro stessa esistenza. Tra le cause principali del fenomeno figurano tasse di registrazione troppo onerose per le famiglie più indigenti, le barriere culturali e il timore di subire discriminazioni in considerazione del proprio status civile. In alcuni paesi le famiglie sono inghiottite dall'apparato burocratico-amministrativo e spesso non è disponibile alcun documento di registrazione.

Considerato che:

— l'articolo 7 della convenzione delle Nazioni Unite sui diritti dei bambini afferma che ogni bambino ha diritto a essere registrato alla nascita e ad avere un'identità;

— i bambini non registrati alla nascita o senza documenti di identificazione sono spesso esclusi dall'accesso all'istruzione, alle cure sanitarie e alla sicurezza sociale;

— quando un bambino viene separato dalla sua famiglia durante un disastro naturale, un conflitto o a causa di sfruttamento, la riunificazione è molto più difficile per via della mancanza di documenti ufficiali;

— gli attuali sistema per assicurare un'identità civile alle persone (basati sulla registrazione alla nascita e sull'anagrafe) sono inefficaci;

si chiede alla Commissione:

1. quali azioni e iniziative intenda intraprendere per sostituire i processi di registrazione correnti che, quando esistono, spesso presentano uno scarso livello di qualità e portano alla dispersione dei dati registrati;

2. se intenda garantire un sistema di registrazione gratuito e accessibile, utilizzando eventualmente tecniche digitali più efficaci, compresa la tecnologia mobile, in modo che i bambini possano essere registrati anche in aree remote;

3. quali misure di protezione sociale e sanitaria intenda promuovere affinché i bambini ricevano il sostegno cui hanno diritto da parte dello Stato.

Risposta di Andris Piebalgs a nome della Commissione
(18 febbraio 2014)

1. L'UE lavora a stretto contatto con l'UNICEF per migliorare i servizi di registrazione delle nascite. A tal fine, essa ha partecipato al finanziamento di un programma congiunto di grande visibilità, rivolto a diversi paesi dell'Asia e dell'Africa ([1]). Detto programma (concordato nel 2012, con un bilancio di 5,4 milioni di euro) mira ad aumentare di almeno il 20 % il tasso di registrazione delle nascite e a ridurre di almeno il 50 % il divario tra il numero di registrazioni nelle zone urbane e quello nelle zone rurali.

2. Per migliorare i sistemi di registrazioni delle nascite, e, in generale, i sistemi anagrafici, sono stati attivati diversi progetti pilota intesi a testare l'impiego di tecnologie dell'informazione, quale ad esempio l'utilizzo dei telefoni cellulari per la raccolta dei dati da parte degli operatori sanitari delle comunità (in Ruanda, Bangladesh, e India (Gujurat e Bihar)). I risultati sono positivi, ma i problemi che restano da risolvere prima di estendere i progetti a livello nazionale sono ancora troppi: l'interoperabilità tra i diversi software, la necessità di registrare la voce per gli utenti scarsamente istruiti, i problemi relativi alla riservatezza delle informazioni inviate dai telefoni cellulari e registrate nei computer, ecc. Inoltre, in alcuni paesi è difficile coordinare le diverse autorità che dovrebbero essere coinvolte (ministero degli interni, della salute e della giustizia) per garantire che i programmi possano essere attuati in maniera efficace.

([1]) Burkina Faso, Mozambico, Nigeria, Myanmar e tre paesi insulari del Pacifico (Kiribati, Isole Salomone e Vanuatu).

3. Le questioni di governance che interessano direttamente i diritti dell'uomo — quale appunto la registrazione delle nascite — rimangono una priorità nella programmazione degli aiuti dell'UE per il periodo 2014-2020, come questione sia a sé stante che intersettoriale. Nell'ambito delle azioni dell'UE, i diritti dei minori rappresentano una priorità nel quadro dell'iniziativa europea per la democrazia e i diritti umani. Il programma tematico sui beni pubblici e le sfide globali comprenderà priorità come l'istruzione, la protezione sociale e l'assistenza sanitaria anche per i bambini.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014300/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: UNICEF report on birth registration: EU action to protect 'invisible' children

The figures in the recent report *Every Child's Birth Right: Inequities and trends in birth registration*, published by UNICEF, are shocking: the births of around 230 million children under the age of five years, or one in three, have never been registered. The study brings together statistics from 161 countries and the latest available estimates for birth registration per country. Worldwide, the births of only around 60% of all babies were registered in 2012. The rate varies depending on the region, with lower levels of registration in southern Asia and in sub-Saharan Africa. The 10 countries with the lowest rates of birth registration are: Somalia (3%), Liberia (4%), Ethiopia (7%), Zambia (14%), Chad (16%), United Republic of Tanzania (16%), Yemen (17%), Guinea-Bissau (24%), Pakistan (27%) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (28%). Of children who are registered, one in seven have no birth certificate, and even when they are registered, many children lose their registration and are unable to provide any documentation proving their birth or even that they exist. The main causes of this phenomenon are unaffordable registration fees for the poorest families, cultural barriers and fear of discrimination on grounds of civil status. In some countries, families are swallowed up by bureaucracy and red tape and often no registration document is available.

Article 7 of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child lays down that every child is entitled to be registered at birth and to have an identity.

Children who are not registered at birth or those without identification documents are often excluded from education, healthcare and social security.

When a child is separated from their family during a natural disaster, a conflict or because of exploitation, reuniting them is made much more difficult by not having official documents.

Current systems for providing people with a civil identity (based on birth registration and registers) are ineffective.

1. What action and initiatives will the Commission take to replace current registration processes which, where they exist, are often of poor quality and lead to registered data being lost?

2. Does it plan to guarantee a free and accessible registration system, potentially using more effective digital techniques, including mobile technology, so that children can be registered in remote areas?

3. What social protection and health measures will it promote so that children receive the support to which they are entitled from the State?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

1. The EU is working closely with UNICEF to improve birth registration services. To this end, it has cofounded a joint flagship protection programme targeting 8 countries in Asia and Africa ([1]). This joint programme (agreed in 2012, with a budget of EUR 5.4 million) aims at increasing birth registration by at least 20% and reducing the disparity rates between urban and rural registrations by at least 50%.

2. The use of information technologies to improve the birth, and in general civil registration systems, is being tested by several pilot projects, for instance the use of mobile phones for data collection by community health workers (in Rwanda, Bangladesh, and India -Gujurat and Bihar). The results are positive but too many problems remain to be solved (inter-operability between the different software; the need for voice recording for users with low literacy; data confidentiality problems with respect to information being sent by mobile phones and recorded in computers, etc.) before scaling up the pilot projects at national level. In addition in some countries it is difficult to coordinate the different authorities that should be involved (home; health, and justice ministries) to ensure that programmes can effectively be implemented.

3. Governance issues such as birth registration which directly affect human rights remain a priority in EU aid programming for 2014 to 2020, both as a stand-alone issue and as a cross-sectoral concern. Child rights will feature highly in EU actions under the 'European initiative for democracy and human rights' and the thematic programme 'Global Public Goods and Challenges' will cover priorities like education, social protection and healthcare also for children.

([1]) Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Nigeria, Myanmar and 3 Pacific Island Countries (Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu).

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-014301/13
à Comissão
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(18 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: UE incentiva desenvolvimento tecnológico das PME com pacotes financeiros

Em comunicado de 7 de outubro de 2013 (IP/13/916), a Comissão Europeia divulgou que irá libertar fundos para auxílio a empresas que invistam no digital.

Considerando que:

— De acordo com o mesmo, a União Europeia quer que as pequenas e médias empresas (PME) tenham uma presença mais influente no meio «online» e que as suas estratégias também envolvam as tecnologias de informação e comunicação (TIC);

— Para atingir este objetivo, estará a ser desenvolvido um plano que permitirá que as regiões europeias comprem pacotes de investimento que podem ascender aos 10 mil euros;

— Supostamente, o plano já estará a ser testado nas regiões de Múrcia e da Extremadura, em Espanha, sendo que os representantes do poder local adquirem os «vouchers», que são depois oferecidos às empresas locais. As verbas serão acompanhadas de uma estratégia de investimento, «de forma rápida e eficaz»;

— A comissária europeia para os assuntos digitais, Neelie Kroes, reconheceu que as empresas que apostam nas TIC e na presença «online» conseguem crescer duas vezes mais rápido e conseguem faturar até duas vezes mais. Ainda segundo a comissária, este plano é muito importante no cumprimento da Agenda Digital Europeia e na proteção daquele que é um dos segmentos mais relevantes da economia europeia, ou seja, o das pequenas e médias empresas.

Pergunto à Comissão:

Confirma a existência do referido plano e a realização de testes em Espanha?

Quando é que estará disponível para outras empresas, nomeadamente portuguesas?

Considera possível o alargamento dos aludidos testes, com recurso a empresas sediadas em Portugal?

E em que condições?

Resposta dada por Neelie Kroes em nome da Comissão
(18 de fevereiro de 2014)

A Comissão confirma o lançamento de um plano para a aplicação eficaz dos cupões para a inovação no domínio das TIC ([1]). O documento dirige-se sobretudo aos Estados-Membros e regiões que gostariam de usufruir deste regime, explicando os benefícios decorrentes dos cupões para a inovação em TIC e referindo as principais opções para a instituição de um regime deste tipo.

Um projeto-piloto de cupões para a inovação em TIC está em curso na região de Múrcia ([2]) e terá início em breve na região da Extremadura, em Espanha.

A programação deste regime é descentralizada e depende dos Estados-Membros e das regiões que tiverem optado por um regime deste tipo. Em seguida, cada regime é concebido pela região e as suas modalidades de aplicação serão adaptadas às necessidades da região. Assim, as normas de elegibilidade e participação são também fixadas pela região que institui o regime. No período de programação de 2007 a 2013 para o FEDER já foram utilizados regimes semelhantes de cupões para as TIC e a inovação em Portugal ([3]).

Os serviços da Comissão estão dispostos a encorajar as regiões que tencionam instituir regimes deste tipo, dando-lhes mais informações acerca do mecanismo dos cupões e estimulando a cooperação entre regiões a fim de aproveitar o mais possível as experiências bem-sucedidas das regiões que já aplicaram regimes deste tipo.

([1]) «SMEs Going Digital — A blueprint for ICT Innovation Vouchers».
([2]) http://www.institutofomentomurcia.es/web/innova/chequetic
([3]) Nomeadamente nas regiões do Alentejo e Centro.

O objetivo da Comissão ao promover os cupões para a inovação em TIC é encorajar as regiões a utilizar os seus FEIE ([4]) para apoiar a adoção das TIC por parte das microempresas e das PME, sempre que se revelarem importantes para o seu desenvolvimento. A Comissão propõe que as regiões instituam os cupões para as TIC como um instrumento fácil de usar para apoiar a digitalização das suas PME, aproveitando a prioridade dada aos investimentos em TIC no programa dos FEIE.

([4]) Fundos Estruturais e de Investimento Europeus.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014301/13
to the Commission
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: EU encouragement of SMEs' technological development with financial packages

In a press release dated 7 October 2013 (IP/13/916), the Commission announced that it would release funds to help companies go digital.

According to the press release, the European Union wants small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to have a more effective online presence and for their strategies also to involve information and communication technology (ICT).

To achieve this goal, a plan will be developed to enable European regions to buy investment packages worth up to EUR 10 000.

The plan is already being piloted in the Spanish regions of Murcia and Extremadura, with local authorities buying vouchers, which are then offered to local businesses. The funds will be accompanied by a quick and effective investment strategy.

The Commissioner for the Digital Agenda, Neelie Kroes, has acknowledged that companies using ICT and maintaining an online presence grow twice as fast and make twice as much money. According to the Commissioner, this plan is very important for achieving the European Digital Agenda, and for protecting small and medium-sized enterprises, one of the most important sectors of the European economy.

Can the Commission confirm the existence of this plan and that it is being piloted in Spain?

When will it be available for other companies, particularly those in Portugal?

Does the Commission think that the aforementioned pilot could be expanded to include Portugal-based companies?

Under what circumstances?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The Commission confirms the release of a blueprint for effective implementation of ICT Innovation Vouchers ([1]). The document is mainly addressed to Member States and regions that would like to implement such a scheme. It explains the benefits stemming from the implementation of ICT innovation vouchers and addresses the main choices to make for setting up a scheme.

A pilot scheme for ICT innovation vouchers is underway in the Region of Murcia ([2]) and will soon start in Extremadura in Spain.

The programming of such a scheme is decentralised and depends on the Member States and regions that opted for or will opt for such a scheme. Then, each scheme is designed by the region and its implementation modalities are tailored for the needs of the region. Therefore, the eligibility and participation rules are also fixed by the region launching the scheme. In the programming period for 2007-2013 for the ERDF, similar ICT and innovation voucher schemes have already been used in Portugal ([3]).

The Commission services are willing to encourage regions which intend to deploy such a scheme by providing them with a better understanding of the mechanism of the voucher scheme and stimulate the peer-to-peer process between regions to make the best use of successful experience from regions that already implemented a scheme.

The objective of the Commission by promoting the ICT innovation voucher scheme is to encourage regions to use their ESIF ([4]) to support the uptake of ICT by microenterprises and SMEs whenever relevant to their development needs. The Commission proposes regions to embrace the ICT voucher scheme as an easy to use instrument to support the digitisation of their SMEs in keeping with the priority given to ICT investments the ESIF programme.

([1]) 'SMEs Going Digital — A blueprint for ICT Innovation Vouchers'.
([2]) http://www.institutofomentomurcia.es/web/innova/chequetic
([3]) Namely in the regions of Alentejo and Centro.
([4]) European Structural and Investment Funds.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-014302/13
Komisi
Olga Sehnalová (S&D)
(18. prosince 2013)

Předmět: Mezinárodní autobusová přeprava cestujících

V posledních dvou letech se na polském hraničním přechodu Korčova u mezinárodní autobusové přepravy z Ukrajiny směrem do Polska vyskytují problémy pro české autobusové přepravce s případy cestujících, kteří cestují s vízovým dokladem, který nabývá platnosti například až od následujícího dne.

Dříve v těchto případech podle mě dostupných informací pohraniční stráž upozornila cestujícího, že jeho vízum je platné až od následujícího dne, a vrátila jej zpět na Ukrajinu, aby si do příslušného dne počkal.

Přibližně před dvěma lety však začaly být autobusovým přepravcům za tyto cestující udělovány pokuty, jejichž výše činí až 3 000 EUR za osobu. Na ostatních hraničních přechodech, tedy na slovenském přechodu Vyšné Německé nebo na polském přechodu Šehyně, se takové pokuty neudělují.

Je toto řešení celé situace podle Komise oprávněné a v souladu s platnými mezinárodními úmluvami a evropskou legislativou?

Odpověď Cecilie Malmströmové jménem Komise
(18. února 2014)

Otázka odpovědnosti dopravce v souvislosti s vnějšími hranicemi Evropské unie se řídí článkem 26 Úmluvy k provedení Schengenské dohody ([1]) a směrnicí Rady 2001/51/ES ([2]).

V těchto aktech je stanoveno, že dopravci jsou odpovědní za zajištění toho, aby státní příslušníci třetích zemí, které přepravují ze třetích zemí do schengenského prostoru, měli platné cestovní doklady, včetně platného víza, je-li požadováno, a měly by jim být uloženy sankce při přepravě cestujících, kteří nemají náležité doklady.

Uložení pokut závisí na nezbytné péči, kterou dopravce věnuje kontrole cestovních dokladů předtím, než cestujícím umožní nastoupit do příslušného dopravního prostředku.

([1]) Úmluva k provedení Schengenské dohody ze dne 14. června 1985 mezi vládami států Hospodářské unie Beneluxu, Spolkové republiky Německo a Francouzské republiky o postupném odstraňování kontrol na společných hranicích; Úř. věst. L 239, 22.9.2000, s. 19-62.

([2]) Směrnice Rady 2001/51/ES ze dne 28. června 2001, kterou se doplňuje článek 26 Úmluvy k provedení Schengenské dohody ze dne 14. června 1985; Úř. věst. L 187, 10.7.2001, s. 45-46.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014302/13
to the Commission
Olga Sehnalová (S&D)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: International coach transport

Over the past two years, problems have arisen for Czech coach companies which serve international routes passing through the Korczowa border crossing from Ukraine into Poland in connection with travellers with visas which are only valid from the following day, for example.

Previously, according to the information available to me, the normal procedure in such cases was for the border guards to alert travellers to the fact that their visas were not valid until the following day and to return them to Ukraine to wait.

Since around two years ago, however, coach companies have been fined up to EUR 3 000 for each such case. This does not happen at other border crossings with Ukraine, for example the Vyšné Nemecké crossing into Slovakia or the Shehyni crossing into Poland.

Does the Commission believe that this approach is justified and compatible with the international agreements and European legislation in force?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The issue of carrier liability in the context of the external borders of the European Union is regulated by Article 26 of the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement ([1]) and Council Directive 2001/51/EC ([2]).

These provide that carriers are liable for ensuring that third-country nationals whom they bring from third countries into the Schengen area are in possession of valid travel documents, including a valid visa if required, and should be sanctioned when transporting insufficiently documented passengers.

The imposition of fines depends on the necessary diligence of the carrier in checking travel documents before allowing passengers to board the means of transport concerned.

([1]) Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985 between the Governments of the States of the Benelux Economic Union, the Federal Republic of Germany and the French Republic on the gradual abolition of checks at their common borders; OJ L 239, 22.9.2000, p. 19-62.

([2]) Council Directive 2001/51/EC of 28 June 2001 supplementing the provisions of Article 26 of the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985; OJ L 187, 10.7.2001, p. 45-46.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-014304/13
komissiolle
Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE), Sari Essayah (PPE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Petri Sarvamaa (PPE), Nils Torvalds (ALDE), Liisa Jaakonsaari (S&D), Anneli Jäätteenmäki (ALDE), Hannu Takkula (ALDE), Sampo Terho (EFD), Satu Hassi (Verts/ALE), Tarja Cronberg (Verts/ALE) ja Mitro Repo (S&D)
(18. joulukuuta 2013)

Aihe: Päätös alueellisen LNG-terminaalin sijoituspaikasta

Komissio julkaisi lokakuussa 2013 luettelon yleisen edun mukaisista energia-alan infrastruktuurihankkeista, jotka ovat oikeutettuja rahoitustukeen Verkkojen Eurooppa -välineen kautta. Baltian energiamarkkinoiden yhteenliittämissuunnitelma (BEMIP) määriteltiin siinä ensisijaiseksi kaasukäytäväksi ([1]), jolla päästään eroon alueen eristyneestä asemasta, monipuolistetaan toimituksia ja parannetaan toimitusvarmuutta. Suomella, joka on suurin alueellinen kaasumarkkina-alue ja yksi EU:n syrjäisimmistä markkinoista, on luettelossa kaksi hanketta: Suomen ja Viron välille rakennettava kaasuputki Balticconnector ja nesteytetyn maakaasun (LNG) suuri alueellinen terminaali Finngulf LNG. Kolme kilpailevaa terminaalihanketta sijaitsevat Virossa ja Latviassa.

Tammikuussa 2013 BEMIP-suunnitelmaa käsittelevä alueellinen tilapäinen työryhmä myönsi Finngulf LNG -hankkeelle korkeimman luokituksen ([2]) ja totesi, että se vastaisi parhaiten alueellisiin tarpeisiin. Marraskuussa 2012 energia-asioiden pääosaston tutkimuksessa ([3]) vahvistettiin, että suurimpien kaasuasiakkaiden lähellä Suomessa sijaitseva hanke olisi kaikkein hyödyllisin huipuntasausjärjestelyjen ja kantaverkon ulkopuolisille markkinoille pääsyn kannalta.

Tämän huomioon ottaen:

1. Katsooko komissio, että LNG-terminaalin sijoituspaikkaa koskevan päätöksen olisi perustuttava yksinomaan tiukasti asiaperustaiseen taloudelliseen ja tekniseen analyysiin? Jos näin on, mitä muita tietoja komissio edellyttää edellä mainittujen analyysien lisäksi?

2. Voiko komissio vahvistaa, että Balticconnector-kaasuputkihankkeeseen tarvittaisiin huomattavasti lisää investointeja ja että sen toimintakustannukset kasvaisivat merkittävästi, jos muista terminaalin vaihtoehtoisista sijoituspaikoista pyrittäisiin toimittamaan Suomeen sama määrä kaasua kuin Finngulf LNG voi toimittaa?

3. EU pyrkii lopettamaan energiasaarekkeiden syrjäisen aseman. Balticconnector-kaasuputki on tässä suhteessa merkittävässä roolissa. Ovatko kaikki hankkeen kehittäjät osoittaneet yhtäläistä omistautuneisuutta Balticconnector-kaasuputken rakentamiseen?

4. Millaisella aikataululla Itämeren alueen suuren alueellisen terminaalin lopullista sijoituspaikkaa koskeva päätös tehdään?

Günther Oettingerin komission puolesta antama vastaus
(10. helmikuuta 2014)

1. LNG-terminaalin toteuttaminen vähentää osaltaan merkittävästi Baltian maiden eristyneisyyttä, mikä on EU:n energiapolitiikan yhtenä päätavoitteena. Terminaalin sijaintipäätöksen olisi todellakin perustuttava tosiasioihin, ja siinä on otettava huomioon hankkeen tekninen ja taloudellinen tehokkuus.

2. LNG-terminaalihankkeiden ja Balticconnector-kaasuputken hyötyjä ja kustannuksia koskevia tietoja arvioidaan parhaillaan. Arvioinnissa muun muassa vertaillaan hankkeiden toiminta- ja investointikustannuksia.

3. Komissio on samaa mieltä siitä, että Balticconnector on tärkeä osatekijä ns. energiasaarekkeiden eristyneisyyden vähentämisessä. Suomalainen siirtoverkonhaltija on toimittanut Balticconnectorin yhteiseen etuun liittyvien hankkeiden valintamenettelyyn LNG-terminaaleista erillisenä hankkeena.

4. Komissio on toiminut aktiivisesti helpottaakseen osapuolten välisiä keskusteluja, jotta kompromissiratkaisuun päästäisiin. Ratkaisuun pyritään tulevien kuukausien aikana.

([1]) Euroopan parlamentin ja neuvoston 17. huhtikuuta 2013 antama asetus (EU) N:o 347/2013 Euroopan laajuisten energiainfrastruktuurien suuntaviivoista.
([2]) Methodology for project assessment, Booz&Co, 7. tammikuuta 2013.
([3]) Analysis of costs and benefits of regional liquefied natural gas solution in the East-Baltic Area, including proposal for location and technical options under the Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan, DG Energy, 20. marraskuuta 2012.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-014304/13
till kommissionen
Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE), Sari Essayah (PPE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Petri Sarvamaa (PPE), Nils Torvalds (ALDE), Liisa Jaakonsaari (S&D), Anneli Jäätteenmäki (ALDE), Hannu Takkula (ALDE), Sampo Terho (EFD), Satu Hassi (Verts/ALE), Tarja Cronberg (Verts/ALE) och Mitro Repo (S&D)
(18 december 2013)

Angående: Beslut om placering av den regionala terminalen för flytande naturgas (LNG)

I oktober 2013 lade kommissionen fram en förteckning över energiinfrastrukturprojekt av gemensamt intresse som är berättigade till stöd via Fonden för ett sammanlänkat Europa. Den baltiska energimarknadens sammanlänkningsplan fanns upptagen som en prioriterad korridor för gas ([1]), för att bryta isoleringen och öka diversifieringen och försörjningstryggheten. Finland, som är den största regionala gasmarknaden och en av de mest isolerade marknaderna i EU, har två projekt med i förteckningen: förbindelseledningen Balticconnector, som ska byggas mellan Finland och Estland, och en storskalig regional terminal för flytande naturgas (LNG), Finngulf LNG. Tre konkurrerande terminalprojekt planeras i Estland och Litauen.

I januari 2013 beslutade den regionala ad hoc-gruppen för den baltiska energimarknadens sammanlänkningsplan att ranka Finngulf LNG högst ([2]), och rapporterade att projektet lämpade sig bäst för att möta det regionala behovet. I november 2012 bekräftade GD Energi i sin kostnads- och nyttoanalys av regionala LNG-lösningar i Östersjöområdet ([3]) att placeringen i Finland, vilken ligger närmast de största gaskunderna, skulle vara mest fördelaktig i fråga om toppbelastningsutjämning och tillgång till de marknader som inte är anslutna till gasnätet.

Mot denna bakgrund undrar jag följande:

1. Håller kommissionen med om att beslutet om var LNG-terminalen ska ligga helt och hållet bör baseras på en välgrundad och faktabaserad ekonomisk och teknisk analys? Om så är fallet, vilken ytterligare information behöver kommissionen, utöver ovannämnda analyser?

2. Kan kommissionen bekräfta att det med avseende på Balticconnector-ledningen skulle behövas avsevärt större investeringar och att driftskostnaderna skulle behöva öka betydligt för att terminaler på de andra tänkbara platserna skulle kunna tillhandahålla samma gaskapacitet till Finnland som Finngulf LNG kan tillhandahålla?

3. EU vill bryta den isolering som ”energiöar” befinner sig i. Balticconnector-ledningen är avgörande för att detta mål ska kunna uppnås. Har alla projektutvecklare visat ett liknande engagemang för byggnationen av Balticconnector-ledningen?

4. Vilken är tidsplanen för ett slutligt beslut om placeringen av en regional storskalig terminal i Östersjöregionen?

Svar från Günther Oettinger på kommissionens vägnar
(10 februari 2014)

1. Genomförandet av LNG-terminalen kommer att utgöra ett viktigt bidrag till att bryta de baltiska staternas isolering, vilket är en av de viktigaste energipolitiska prioriteringarna i EU. Ett beslut om lokaliseringen av terminalen bör vara faktabaserat och måste ta hänsyn till projektets tekniska och ekonomiska effektivitet.

2. Uppgifter om fördelarna med och kostnaderna för LNG-terminalprojekten och Balticconnector-ledningen håller på att bedömas. Bedömningen omfattar bland annat en jämförelse av projektens drifts- och investeringskostnader.

3. Kommissionen håller med om att Balticconnector-ledningen är en viktig faktor när det gäller att bryta den isolering som ”energiöar” befinner sig i. Projektet har lämnats in till PCI:s urvalsprocess av den finska systemansvarige för överföringssystemet som ett separat projekt vid sidan av LNG-terminalerna.

4. Kommissionen har aktivt underlättat diskussioner mellan de båda parterna för att hitta en kompromisslösning. Ansträngningar görs för att komma fram till en lösning de kommande månaderna.

([1]) Europaparlamentet och rådets förordning (EU) nr 347/2013 av den 17 april 2013 om riktlinjer för transeuropeiska energiinfrastrukturer.
([2]) Methodology for project assessment, Booz&Co, den 7 januari 2013.
([3]) Analysis of costs and benefits of regional liquefied natural gas solution in the East-Baltic Area, including proposal for location and technical options under the Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan, GD Energi, den 20 november 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014304/13
to the Commission
Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE), Sari Essayah (PPE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Petri Sarvamaa (PPE), Nils Torvalds (ALDE), Liisa Jaakonsaari (S&D), Anneli Jäätteenmäki (ALDE), Hannu Takkula (ALDE), Sampo Terho (EFD), Satu Hassi (Verts/ALE), Tarja Cronberg (Verts/ALE) and Mitro Repo (S&D)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Decision on the regional LNG terminal location

In October 2013, the Commission submitted a list of energy infrastructure projects of common interest eligible for financial support through the Connecting Europe Facility. The Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan (BEMIP) was defined as a priority gas corridor ([1]), to end isolation and increase diversification and security of supply. Finland, the largest regional gas market and one of the most isolated markets in the EU, has two projects on the list: the Balticconnector pipeline, to be built between Finland and Estonia, and a large-scale regional LNG terminal, Finngulf LNG. Three competing terminal projects are located in Estonia and Latvia.

In January 2013, the BEMIP regional ad-hoc group awarded Finngulf LNG the highest ranking ([2]), and reported that it was the best suited to meet regional demand. In November 2012, a DG Energy study ([3]) confirmed that the Finnish location, being closest to the biggest gas customers, would be most beneficial in terms of peak shaving and access to the off-grid markets.

In light of this:

1. Does the Commission agree that the decision on the LNG terminal location should be based purely on a sound, fact-based economic and technical analysis? If so, what further information does the Commission require besides the mentioned analyses?

2. Can the Commission confirm that, with regard to the Balticconnector pipeline, there would need to be substantial increases in investment, and that operating costs would increase significantly, in order for other terminal locations to provide the same level of gas capacity to Finland that Finngulf LNG can provide?

3. The EU wishes to end the isolation of energy islands. The Balticconnector pipeline is of key importance in achieving this. Have all project developers shown similar commitment to constructing the Balticconnector pipeline?

4. What is the timetable for a decision on the final location of a regional large-scale terminal in the Baltic Sea region?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

1. The realisation of the LNG terminal will make a major contribution to ending the isolation of the Baltic States which is one of the key energy policy priorities of the EU. A decision on the location of the terminal should indeed be fact-based and needs to take into account the projects' technical and economic efficiency.

2. Information on the benefits and costs of the LNG terminal projects and the Balticconnector pipeline is currently under assessment. This assessment includes *inter alia* a comparison of the projects' operational and investment costs.

3. The Commission agrees that the Balticconnector pipeline is an important element to end the isolation of energy islands. The Balticconnector pipeline has been submitted to the PCI selection process by the Finnish transmission system operator as a separate project from the LNG terminals.

4. The Commission has been actively facilitating discussions between both parties to find a compromise solution. Efforts are being made to come to a solution in the coming months.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2013 on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure.
([2]) Methodology for project assessment, Booz&Co, 7 January 2013.
([3]) Analysis of costs and benefits of regional liquefied natural gas solution in the East-Baltic Area, including proposal for location and technical options under the Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan, DG Energy, 20 November 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014306/13
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: British Summer Time (BST)

I have been contacted by a constituent who would like to see an extension of British Summer Time (BST) within the European Union to align it to the dates which are currently implemented in the USA, i.e. from the first weekend in March to the first weekend in November.

My constituent tells me that since its introduction, BST has been progressively extended from four to the current seven months and that the last change was in 2001.

My constituent tells me that this extension would guarantee an extra month of BST, which he believes would lead to a great amount of energy savings and that Britain, as well as the whole of Europe, would benefit from a further extension.

Could the Commission confirm whether it supports any proposals to extend BST within the European Union?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

There is at present no international coordination of summer-time and summer-time in the EU is implemented on other dates than in the USA.

Within the Union, Directive 2000/84/EC ([1]) coordinates summer-time by organising the start of summer-time (Article 2) at 1.00 a.m. GMT on the last Sunday of March and the end (Article 3) at 1.00 a.m. GMT on the last Sunday of October. This directive, in force since 2001, still applies.

The Commission issued in 2007 a report on the impact of the provisions of Directive 2000/84/EC and implications of summer-time ([2]), which confirmed that the energy savings related to summer-time are in fact difficult to gauge and would in any event be relatively small. Therefore, the Commission believes that the summer-time arrangements as established by this directive remain suitable, as explained in previous answers to written questions E-004523/2013, E-004724/2012, H-103/2010, E-009802/2011 and E-9209/2011 ([3]), and does not currently plan any revision.

([1]) Directive 2000/84/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 January 2001, OJ L 31, 2.2.2001.
([2]) COM(2007) 739 final, 23.11.2007.
([3]) Available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014307/13
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Funding for 'Visit to our Heritage' programme

I have been contacted by a constituent who represents the Clapton Common Boys Club which aims to improve the lives of disengaged, deprived and disadvantaged parents and young people.

My constituent tells me that the club provides activities during out-of-school hours and school holidays and its key objectives are to support, develop and increase the talents, skills and capabilities of its participants as well as their social and emotional wellbeing.

My constituent tells me that, as part of its 'Visit to our Heritage' programme, the club would like to take a group of young people to Eastern Europe to teach them about its history and heritage both before and during the Second World War.

My constituent tells me that the club would like to arrange a visit to cemeteries, synagogues, villages and concentration camps. My constituent also says that the trip, which will be led by a guide and a holocaust survivor, will include speeches, several workshops and lessons to help raise awareness, knowledge and understanding of Eastern European history.

1. Could the Commission confirm whether my constituent is able to apply for any EU funding for this programme?

2. If so, how can my constituent request such funding?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The two EU Programmes which appear to offer the greatest potential to support these activities are Erasmus+ and the Europe for Citizens programme.

Erasmus+, the new EU programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport for the years 2014-2020, ([1]) provides financial support to transnational non-formal learning activities involving partners from different participating countries. National Agencies, which provide assistance to potential applicants, have been established in all Member States. ([2])

In addition, the Remembrance strand in the Europe for Citizens programme 2014-2020 will support projects — implemented transnationally or with a European dimension — that reflect on causes of totalitarian regimes or concern other aspects of recent European history. The regulation establishing this programme still has to be adopted by the Council. ([3])

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm
([2]) Details of the UK National Agency can be found at http://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014308/13
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Freedom of speech for Egyptian athletes

I have been contacted by a constituent who is concerned that the Egyptian dictatorship is attempting to undermine democracy in other countries.

My constituent informed me that the government is passing a law which would restrict the freedom of speech of international sportsmen and women even outside Egypt. A FIFA footballer was recently banned from playing in any national or international football competitions because he showed four fingers during an international match. This is apparently a remembrance gesture for all the innocent people killed by the army while they were taking part in a protest for democracy. According to my constituent, the footballer denies that he was doing this as an act of protest.

My constituent has also told me that a kung fu world champion had an international gold medal confiscated and has been banned from representing Egypt in the next world championships.

My constituent believes that these athletes are desperate for the world to speak up on their behalf. They demand democracy and not another dictatorship or government which abuses its position and oppresses the rights of its citizens.

1. Could the Commission confirm whether it has raised the issue of this new law with the Egyptian Government?

2. If so, what results have come from the discussions to ensure that a ban on freedom of speech for international sportsmen and women is not implemented?

Answer given by High-Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2014)

The EU is committed to promote human rights in all areas of its external action, including the freedom of speech and expression. The EU is following with concern the recent clamp down in Egypt on fundamental human rights, notably the freedom of expression and is conveying its concern both privately and in public.

In this context, the EU welcomes that the new Constitution enshrines fundamental rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression, assembly and women's rights and we expect existing and future national legislation to be in full compliance with the Constitution and international standards.

EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, travelled to Egypt in early February. He raised a number of issues with the authorities both of general concern and individual cases.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014309/13
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Application for a Spanish visa

I have been contacted by a constituent who informed me that he applied for a Schengen visa at the Spanish Embassy in London so that he could go on holiday to Spain.

He met all the conditions for the visa, including having fully paid accommodation and travel insurance, and the holiday was purchased through an Air Travel Organisers' Licensing (ATOL) protected travel agent, which provided him with a certificate of protection.

My constituent had his application checked by VFS Global, a service which checks visas for most of the Schengen area. A few days after he submitted his application, he was asked to provide a valid ticket from the airline, proof of insurance and a receipt to show that he had paid for the aforementioned documents in full, even though he had already submitted them during an interview at the VFS Global office.

He was advised to write a letter to the Spanish Embassy explaining this situation and re-submit copies of the documents. He contacted the courier when he did not receive his visa on the promised day of delivery, and then found out that his passport had been sent to the wrong address.

My constituent received his passport four days before he was due to go on holiday, but his visa was refused on the grounds that 'the information submitted regarding the justification for the purpose and conditions of the intended stay was not reliable'.

Given that my constituent had booked a fully paid holiday package which included air travel, insurance, accommodation and an ATOL certificate of protection, could the Commission confirm whether the Spanish authorities are in breach of any EC law by refusing him a visa?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2014)

The Visa Code ([1]) sets out the procedures and conditions for issuing visas for transit through or intended stays in the territory of the participating Member States of no more than 90 days in any 180 days period.

Under the Visa Code visa applicants must present certain supporting documents to prove that they fulfil the entry conditions as set out in the Schengen Borders Code ([2]), and to enable the assessment of the applicants' intention to leave the territory of the Schengen Member States before the expiry of the visa applied for.

The Commission Implementing Decision establishing the supporting documents to be presented by visa applicants in the United Kingdom ([3]) lists the supporting documents to be submitted by applicants there, among others 'proof of confirmed return ticket to the United Kingdom or to the country of origin'.

However, even if an applicant has submitted all the required documents, this does not entail a right to obtain the visa. The recent judgment by the Court of Justice in the Koushkaki case ([4]) confirms that Member States authorities have 'a wide discretion in the examination' of visa applications.

Based on the information provided by the Honourable Member, the Commission is therefore not in a position to establish that the Spanish Embassy in London would have acted in breach of Union law.

([1]) Regulation (EC) 810/2009 of the European Parliament and the Council establishing a Community Code on Visas, OJ L 243, 15.9.2009, page 1.
([2]) Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006 establishing a Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code); OJ L 105, 13.4.2006, p. 1-32.
([3]) Commission Implementing Decision C(2012) final of 11.7.2012 establishing the list of supporting documents to be presented by visa applicants in the United Kingdom (Edinburgh, London and Manchester).
([4]) Koushkaki C-84/12.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014310/13
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Repair of solar panels

I have been contacted by a constituent, who informed me that she had some solar panels installed on her roof two years ago by Ing Solar. The panels were produced by the German company Scheuten Solar and came with a 25 year warranty.

My constituent told me that a fault in the junction boxes was notified to her by the Microgeneration Certification Scheme in July and that it presents a fire risk.

A company called Suncycle has been appointed to carry out the repairs as Scheuten Solar has gone into receivership, but my constituent claims that they will not pay for them. She has been told by the Dutch receiver Boels Zanders NV that she is likely to have to pay for the repairs herself then submit a claim which they will pass on to the insurers with no guarantee that she will receive her money back.

My constituent told me that she requested a quote a number of weeks ago but has received no reply from Suncycle. Ing Solar have informed her that they are going to cease trading at the end of the year.

Given that my constituent had to switch off her solar panels in July, and has therefore not been able to generate power for several months and has not received her feed-in tariff payments, could the Commission confirm:

1. Whether Suncycle are in breach of any EU legislation by not agreeing to cover the cost of repairs?

2. Whom my constituent should contact to request financial support for the repair of her solar panels?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

Directive 1999/44/EC provides consumers with a minimum two-year legal guarantee for goods. A consumer who has bought a faulty good has the right to ask the seller to have it repaired or replaced free of charge within two years from the time of delivery.

Member States are free to extend the minimum period of the legal guarantee. Indeed, in the United Kingdom, the consumer can ask for repair or replacement at any time up to six years after the purchase of the goods as long as it is reasonable for the goods to have lasted this long.

The commercial guarantee, on the other hand, is a voluntary undertaking by a trader to reimburse the price or to repair, replace or service goods, if they do not meet the requirements of the guarantee statement or the related advertising. The commercial guarantee offered to your constituent for the period of 25 years is regulated by EC law only to a limited extent. For example, the seller must always inform the consumer about their basic rights under the directive.

EU provisions on legal and commercial guarantees do not regulate however who takes over rights and obligations, including any claims arising from commercial guarantees, in case a trader has gone into receivership. This matter is regulated by national law and the Commission would therefore advise the Honourable Member's constituent to seek legal advice from the Citizens Advice service which provides publicly available information to consumers ([1]).

([1]) http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/consumer_e/consumer_common_problems_with_products_e/ faulty_goods_e/faulty_goods.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014311/13
to the Commission
Chris Davies (ALDE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Re-use, recycling and recovery of printer toner cartridges

Can the Commission confirm that about 70% of ink jet cartridges, and 42% of laser cartridges, end up in landfill after they have been used?

What steps is the Commission taking to promote the re-use, recycling and recovery of these cartridges?

Is it the case that such cartridges that include electrical or electronic components are included within the provisions of the WEEE Directive?

Does the Commission believe that measures that might require original manufacturers to arrange for the collection of their used cartridges are compatible with the continued existence of a remanufacturing sector in its present form?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(13 February 2014)

In reply to the first question, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-002691/2013 ([1]).

The Commission's position on whether printer cartridges fall under the scope of the directive and are subject to take-back obligations and recycling targets will be set out in the planned 'Frequently Asked Questions' document on the recast Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive ([2]) which is currently being finalised.

As to the continued viability of the remanufacturing sector, the end-user would in any case have the option to re-use the used cartridges instead of taking them to the WEEE collection points. Moreover, the WEEE Directive requires Member States to encourage the design and production of electrical and electronic equipment with a view to facilitate their re-use.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Directive 2012/19/EU (OJ L 197, 24.7.2012).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014312/13
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Coventry Arena project

In response to a freedom of information request made to Coventry City Council about the Foleshill Gas Works Site, Coventry Arena project, we have received the following answer to a question as to how European Regional Development Funding was used at the site:

'Coventry City Council received two ERDF grants. On 29 August 2003 the Council received GBP 4 750 000.00 plus VAT to assist the purchase of the site from HBG Holdings Limited. This grant was not used for the construction of the arena'.

This answer differs significantly from the answer received to Question E-009700/2013, to which I received a reply on 16 October 2013.

Could the Commission comment on the answer that Coventry City Council gave me with regard to this ERDF funding?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

The Commission has contacted the managing authority, which has in turn contacted Coventry City Council. Both the managing authority and the Council have reconfirmed that the European Regional Development Fund money was used as set out in the reply to Written Question E-009700/13 ([1]) and not for the purchase of land.

Clarification on the initial information provided to the Honourable Member's request may be sought from Coventry City Council by contacting Liz Kantor at: +44 (0)2476 833777 or Liz.Kantor@coventry.gov.uk.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014313/13
to the Commission
Phil Bennion (ALDE), Fiona Hall (ALDE), George Lyon (ALDE), Andrew Duff (ALDE), Edward McMillan-Scott (ALDE), Catherine Bearder (ALDE), Baroness Sarah Ludford (ALDE), Rebecca Taylor (ALDE) and Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Energy prices

Consumer energy prices across the European Union are increasing at unsustainable levels.

What steps is the Commission taking under EU competition law to investigate any alleged rigging or collusion relating to the price paid by consumers for energy?

Can the Commission outline when it will publish any conclusions from its investigations in May regarding the manipulation of markets relating to oil? What further action will the Commission take in this regard?

What work has the Commission done with NCAs to look into asymmetries in the speed at which retail prices for energy adjust to variations in international fuel prices?

What can European authorities do to promote competition in the European energy markets?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2014)

With regard to the three first questions, the Commission refers the Honourable Members to its answer to Written Question E-014314/2013.

The Commission undertakes several initiatives to promote competition in the European energy markets. Measures forming part of the Commission's Action Plan to complete the EU internal energy market by 2014 ([1]) include rigorous enforcement of the rules included in the Third Energy Package through infringement procedures. In order to ensure a level playing field for all market players, the Commission also continues vigorously to enforce EU antitrust, merger and state aid rules, and will provide guidance on State support in the field of energy and the environment.

In order to have a full picture on energy subsidies, resulting in potential distortions of the competition in energy markets, European Commission is preparing an analysis on energy costs and subsidies, covering all the 28 member states of the EU, all major energy sources and kinds of energy subsidies, occurring in any part of the energy value chain, and in various forms (direct-indirect, financial-non financial, national-EU level, etc.). This study will be finalised and made public in summer 2014.

([1]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'Making the internal energy market work' (COM(2012)0663 final).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014314/13
to the Commission
Phil Bennion (ALDE), Fiona Hall (ALDE), George Lyon (ALDE), Andrew Duff (ALDE), Edward McMillan-Scott (ALDE), Catherine Bearder (ALDE), Baroness Sarah Ludford (ALDE), Rebecca Taylor (ALDE) and Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Petrol and diesel prices

Given the ever-increasing costs faced by consumers at the petrol pumps, particularly in rural regions, will the Commission coordinate more closely with national regulatory authorities to urgently investigate cases of possible collusion between companies and abuse of dominant positions on the fuel retailing markets?

What work has the Commission done with NCAs to look into asymmetries in the speed at which pre-tax retail prices adjust to variations in international fuel prices?

What more does the Commission believe could be done to analyse this and to investigate whether anti-competitive behaviour is occurring in rural areas across the EU?

Will the Commission and national regulators investigate whether the 'Monday effect' — an alleged manipulation of petrol prices by companies depending on the specific day of the week — can be substantiated?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

Given the differing national (or even regional or local) characteristics of the fuel retailing markets, National Competition Authorities (NCAs) are well placed to investigate possible anti-competitive practices concerning these markets.

Indeed, several NCAs have considerable experience and are very active in this regard ([1]). For example, market transparency initiatives have recently been undertaken in Austria and Germany ([2]), which make comparisons of retail fuel prices easier for consumers. These initiatives can also help relevant national authorities to monitor price changes and facilitate investigations by the NCAs into potential anti-competitive behaviour.

Concerning the issue of asymmetries in the speed with which pre-tax retail prices for petrol and diesel adjust to variations in international fuel prices, this was investigated by the Portuguese ([3]) and Spanish ([4]) NCAs.

Existence of possible manipulation of fuel retail petrol prices depending on the specific day of the week was investigated by the NCAs in Germany ([5]) and Norway ([6]).

In its competition enforcement efforts, the Commission regularly monitors competition on the European oil and refined products markets. In this respect, the Commission launched on 14 May 2013 an investigation into the behaviour of companies active in and providing services to the crude oil, refined oil products and biofuel sectors ([7]). The investigation is on-going.

In accordance with Regulation No 1/2003 ([8]), enforcement activities of the Commission and the NCAs under Articles 101 and 102 TFEU are coordinated through the European Competition Network ('ECN'). Enforcement activities in the fuel sector are also regularly discussed in the ECN context.

([1]) e.g. in Austria, Germany, the UK, Portugal and Spain.
([2]) ECN Brief of October 2013: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/ecn/brief/04_2013/DE_fuel.pdf
([3]) Report of March 2009: http://www.concorrencia.pt/vEN/Estudos_e_Publicacoes/Estudos_Economicos/Energia_e_Combustiveis/Documents/Final_Report_on_Liquid_and_Gas_Fuels_March_2009_English_version.pdf
([4]) Report of June 2012: http://www.cncompetencia.es/Inicio/GestionDocumental/tabid/76/Default.aspx?EntryId=154118&Command=Core_Download&Method=attachment
([5]) Report of May 2011: http://www.bundeskartellamt.de/SharedDocs/Publikation/DE/Sektoruntersuchungen/Sektoruntersuchung%20Kraftstoffe%20-%20Abschluss-bericht. pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=5
([6]) Annual Report of 2010 (summary in English): http://www.konkurransetilsynet.no/en/2010/Social-impact/Effects-of-competition-policy/The-fuel-market/
([7]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-435_en.htm
([8]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2003 of 16 December 2002 on the implementation of the rules on competition laid down in Articles 81 and 82 of the Treaty, Official Journal L 1, 4.1.2003, p.1-25.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014315/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Ahwazi political activists on death row in Iran

Hadi Rashedi, a 40-year-old teacher, and Hashem Shabani, a 33-year-old married teacher, are members of the Al-Hiwar cultural group, members of which were collectively arrested in Iran in February and March 2011, charged with 'enmity of God, corruption on earth, and a danger for the security of the state' and sentenced to death. Some members of the group have already been executed.

It is believed that on 7 December 2013 the Iranian intelligence services sent Rashedi and Shabani to a secret detention location that belongs to the Iranian intelligence services.

It is believed that their execution is imminent following the recent execution of other Ahwazi political activists which occurred without the authorities informing their families first of the time or location of the executions.

Can the High Representative, in the regular meetings held with the government of Iran, raise this urgent matter and make a plea to the authorities to commute the death sentence of these two men?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

As the Honourable Parliamentarian mentions, some members of the so-called Ahwazi Al-Hiwar Cultural Group in Iran were already executed in November or December 2013.

It would seem that the two Ahwazi teachers referred to in this question were also executed around that time with no warning or information to their families.

The HR/VP recalls that the European Union on several occasions has called on the Iranian authorities to halt all pending executions and to install a moratorium on the death penalty.

The HR/VP would also like to underline the importance of respect for minorities and recall the European Union's call on Iran to live up to all the international human rights obligations that Iran has itself signed up to, including those that are related to the rights of and respect for ethnic and religious minorities.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014317/13
à la Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 décembre 2013)

Objet: L'Europe des «clusters»

Le cadre légal et financier pour le soutien à la recherche et au développement, ainsi qu'aux PME, est aujourd'hui connu pour 2014-2020. Je suis heureux d'avoir voté en faveur de textes qui viennent aider nos entrepreneurs les plus innovants.

La Commission peut-elle me préciser les outils (financiers et non financiers) qu'elle met aujourd'hui directement en place ou indirectement à disposition (Fonds structurels) en faveur des «clusters»?

Réponse donnée par M. Hahn au nom de la Commission
(7 mars 2014)

Le soutien à l'innovation, et en particulier aux PME, est un domaine d'investissement essentiel dans tous les États membres soutenus par les Fonds ESI ([1]), notamment le FEDER ([2]). Les PME bénéficient de l'investissement direct pour les entreprises ainsi que d'autres investissements financés par les Fonds ESI. Les programmes relatifs aux clusters ainsi que d'autres soutiens aux PME au moyen de clusters font partie de la boîte à outils de la politique de cohésion et peuvent bénéficier d'un cofinancement, au titre de «Recherche et innovation» et «Compétitivité des PME». Le soutien en faveur des clusters de la part des États membres et des régions dépend principalement de leurs choix de priorités, d'actions et d'allocations financières, qui seront fondés sur une stratégie de spécialisation intelligente de la recherche et de l'innovation. Les programmes sont en cours de négociation. Bien qu'il ne soit pas possible de quantifier avec exactitude le soutien aux PME pour la période 2014-2020, l'objectif est d'investir environ 140 milliards d'euros, — soit le double de la somme investie pour la période 2007-2013.

Au titre d'Horizon 2020, un montant indicatif de 140 millions d'euros — à commencer par un montant de 25 millions d'euros en 2015 — est prévu pour «Cluster facilitated projects for new industrial value chains» ([3]). Ces financements soutiendront la collaboration et l'innovation transsectorielles et transrégionales mises en œuvre par les PME, qui recevront au moins 75 % des fonds directement ou indirectement. Une action de mise en équipe ([4]) établira de nouveaux centres d'excellence — en partenariat avec des organismes de recherche et d'innovation d'excellence — qui ont le potentiel pour contribuer à la formation des clusters.

Au titre du programme COSME ([5]), 31 millions d'euros favoriseront l'internationalisation des clusters ainsi que l'élaboration d'une stratégie transsectorielle commune afin de soutenir la compétitivité des PME sur les marchés de pays tiers; lanceront un Programme «Excellence Clusters» contribuant à l'analyse comparative et à la formation afin de professionnaliser les services d'appui aux PME; et faciliteront la coopération politique entre les clusters ainsi que la collecte d'information.

([1]) Fonds structurels et d'investissement européens.
([2]) Fonds européen de développement régional.
([3]) JO C 361 du 11.12.2013, p. 9. Le programme de travail «Innovation dans les PME» pertinent est disponible à l'adresse suivante: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/innovation-smes
([4]) Le programme de travail «Propager l'excellence et élargir la participation» pertinent est disponible à l'adresse suivante: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/spreading-excellence-and-widening-participation
([5]) Le programme de travail 2014 est disponible à l'adresse suivante: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/initiatives/cosme/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014317/13
to the Commission
Franck Proust (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Clusters in Europe

The legal and financial framework to support research and development and SMEs from 2014 to 2020 has now been disclosed. I am happy to have voted in favour of texts which will come to the aid of our most innovative entrepreneurs.

Can the Commission tell me what financial and non-financial tools it is currently putting directly in place or making indirectly available via the Structural Funds in favour of clusters?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(7 March 2014)

Support to innovation and particularly SMEs is a key investment area in all Member States supported by the ESI ([1]) Funds notably the ERDF ([2]). SMEs benefit from direct investment in business and through other investments funded through ESI Funds. Cluster programmes and other SME support via clusters are part of the tool box of cohesion policy and are eligible for co-funding, under 'Research and Innovation' and 'SME competitiveness'. The extent to which Member States and regions will support clusters depends largely on their choices of priorities, actions and financial allocations which will be based on a Research and Innovation Smart Specialisation Strategy. The programmes are currently being negotiated. Though it is not possible to provide exact figures on SME support in the 2014-2020 period, the objective is to invest around EUR 140 billion — doubling the figure from 2007-2013 period.

Under Horizon 2020, an indicative EUR 140 million — starting with EUR 25 million in 2015 — is foreseen for 'Cluster facilitated projects for new industrial value chains'. ([3]) These will support cross-sectoral and cross-regional collaboration and innovation driven by SMEs, who will receive at least 75% of the funds directly or indirectly. A Teaming action ([4]) will establish new centres of excellence — in partnership with excellent research and innovation organisations — with the potential to contribute to cluster formation.

Under COSME ([5]), EUR 31 million will promote cluster internationalisation and joint cross-sectoral strategy building to support SME competitiveness in third markets; launch a Cluster Excellence Programme for benchmarking and training to professionalise SME support services; and facilitate cluster policy cooperation and intelligence gathering.

([1]) European Structural and Investment.
([2]) European Regional Development Fund.
([3]) OJ C 361/9 of 11 December 2013. The relevant 'Innovation in SMEs' work programme is available at http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/innovation-smes
([4]) The relevant 'Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation' work programme is available at http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/spreading-excellence-and-widening-participation
([5]) The 2014 work programme is available at http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/initiatives/cosme/index_en.htm

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014318/13
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(18 december 2013)

Betreft: Uitspraken Bağış n.a.v. voortgangsverslag (vervolgvraag)

Op 17 december 2013 heeft de heer Füle namens de Commissie antwoord gegeven op schriftelijke vragen E-012134/2013, E-012137/2013 en E-012138/2013. Daarin stelt hij: „De Europese Commissie is verheugd over de positieve sfeer waarin het voortgangsverslag van 2013 over Turkije werd ontvangen. Naar aanleiding van de recente opening van hoofdstuk 22 „regionaal beleid en coördinatie van structuurinstrumenten" drukte minister Bağış als volgt zijn mening uit over het voortgangsverslag: „Het is het meest objectieve en motiverende van het recente decennium"."

De heer Füle gaat echter niet in op de in genoemde vragen aangehaalde kwesties.

1. Hoe definieert de Commissie de door haar geconstateerde „positieve sfeer"?

2. Waarom verschuilt de Commissie zich achter abstracties zoals een „positieve sfeer" en één enkele in haar ogen gunstige uitspraak van minister Bağış, maar weigert zij stelselmatig op diens voor haar „pijnlijke" uitlatingen te reageren?

3. Is de Commissie het eens met de uitspraak van minister Bağış dat het voortgangsverslag „het meest objectieve en motiverende van het recente decennium" zou zijn? Waarom wel of waarom niet? Wat zegt deze uitspraak over voorgaande voortgangsverslagen die volgens minister Bağış blijkbaar „minder objectief" en „minder motiverend" zouden zijn?

4. Hoe verklaart de Commissie de ongerijmdheid dat de uitspraak van minister Bağış het voortgangsverslag betreft, maar naar aanleiding van de opening van hoofdstuk 22 is gedaan? Deelt de Commissie aldus de mening dat het minister Bağış klaarblijkelijk louter om de opening van het betreffende hoofdstuk te doen is? Zo neen, hoe ziet de Commissie dit dan wel?

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014394/13
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(20 december 2013)

Betreft: Bağış: „Voortgangsverslag Turkije niet op een religieuze feestdag publiceren" (vervolgvraag)

De Europese Commissie heeft haar „Voortgangsverslag 2013 betreffende Turkije" en de „Uitbreidingsstrategie en belangrijkste uitdagingen 2013-2014" gepubliceerd op 16 oktober 2013, en dat is — zo klaagde Egemen Bağış, de Turkse minister van Europese Zaken — de tweede dag van een reeks Turkse religieuze feestdagen. Hij stelde dat deze Turkse religieuze feestdagen een inspiratie zijn voor „liefde, vrede, vriendschap, broederschap, eenheid en solidariteit". Hij verzocht de Commissie haar rapporten in het vervolg op een andere dag te publiceren — aangezien de EU een „unie van waarden" is.

Op 19 december 2013 heeft de heer Füle namens de Commissie antwoord gegeven op schriftelijke vraag E-012090/2013 over het geklaag van minister Bağış. De heer Füle schrijft: „De Commissie is zich ervan bewust dat de Turkse autoriteiten liever gezien hadden dat het voortgangsverslag over Turkije van 2013 op een andere dag was gepubliceerd. Helaas was dit niet haalbaar, omdat de goedkeuring van het gehele uitbreidingspakket daardoor zou zijn uitgesteld."

1. Impliceert de Commissie met haar antwoord dat zij daadwerkelijk gehoor had gegeven aan het verzoek van minister Bağış door haar rapport op een andere dag te publiceren, indien dit mogelijk was geweest? Ja of neen?

2. Zo ja:

— deelt de Commissie aldus de mening van minister Bağış dat de dag van publicatie van haar rapporten de waarden „liefde, vrede, vriendschap, broederschap, eenheid en solidariteit" zou ondermijnen? Zo neen, waarom is zij, in beginsel, dan voornemens überhaupt op het verzoek van minister Bağış in te gaan?

— waarom buigt de Commissie voor de, puur uit arrogantie voortvloeiende, zogenaamde „waarden" van Turkije?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(3 februari 2014)

De Commissie heeft niets toe te voegen aan haar antwoord op de vragen E-012090/2013, E-012134/2013, E-012137/2013 en E-012138/2013 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014318/13
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Mr Bağış's comments in response to the progress report (follow-up question)

On 17 December 2013 Mr Füle replied on behalf of the Commission to written questions E-012134/2013, E-012137/2013 and E-012138/2013. In his answer, he said that 'The European Commission welcomes the overall positive atmosphere in which the 2013 Progress Report on Turkey was received. Furthermore, commenting on the recent opening of Chapter 22 "Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments" Minister Bağış referred to the progress report saying that "It has been the most objective and the most motivating of the recent decade".'

However, Commissioner Füle fails to deal with the issues raised in the questions referred to.

1. How does the Commission define the 'positive atmosphere' to which it refers?

2. Why does the Commission hide behind abstractions like 'a positive atmosphere' and a single statement by Mr Bağış that it views as favourable but systematically refuses to react to those of his comments that it views as embarrassing?

3. Does the Commission agree with Mr Bağış's comment that the progress report is 'the most objective and the most motivating of the recent decade'? Why does it think that, or why not? What does this comment say about previous progress reports that the Minister would apparently regard as 'less objective' and 'less motivating'?

4. How does the Commission explain the paradox that Mr Bağış's comments relate to the progress report but were issued in response to the opening of Chapter 22? Does the Commission, in other words, share the view that the Minister's comments clearly and solely related to the opening of the chapter in question? If not, what is the Commission's interpretation?

Question for written answer E-014394/13
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Egemen Bağış: 'Do not publish the Turkey progress report on a religious holiday' (follow-up question)

The European Commission published its 'Turkey 2013 progress report' and its 'Enlargement strategy and main challenges 2013-2014' on 16 October 2013 which, Egemen Bağış, the Turkish Minister for EU Affairs, has complained, is the second day of a series of religious holidays in Turkey. He argued that the Turkish religious holiday is a source of inspiration for 'love, peace, friendship, brotherhood, unity and solidarity'. He therefore asked the Commission to publish its reports on a different date in future, given that the EU is a 'union of values'.

On 19 December 2013 Mr Füle answered my Written Question E-012090-13 on Mr Bağış's complaint. He writes: 'The Commission is aware that the Turkish authorities would have preferred for the 2013 Progress Report on Turkey to have been published on a different day. Unfortunately, this was not feasible as it would have meant postponing the adoption of the entire enlargement package.'

1. Does the Commission's answer imply that it would really have complied with Mr Bağış's request by publishing the report on a different day had this been possible? Yes or no?

2. If the answer to the first question is 'yes':

— Does the Commission then agree with Mr Bağış that the publication date of its reports undermines the values of 'love, peace, friendship, brotherhood, unity and solidarity'? If not, why is it prepared in principle to comply with Mr Bağış's request?

— Why is the Commission bowing to Turkey's so-called 'values', which stem solely from arrogance?

Joint answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(3 February 2014)

The Commission has nothing to add to its answers to questions E-012090/2013, E-012134/2013, E-012137/2013 and E-012138/2013 ([1]).

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

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014320/13
aan de Commissie
Philip Claeys (NI)
(18 december 2013)

Betreft: PA betaalt „terroristensalarissen" uit

Op 3 december werd in de Nederlandse Tweede Kamer een motie goedgekeurd waarin wordt geprotesteerd tegen de zogenaamde „terroristensalarissen" die door de Palestijnse Autoriteit worden uitbetaald ([1]): Palestijnse veroordeelden die een straf uitzitten in Israëlische gevangenissen, ontvangen van de Palestijnse Autoriteit een maandelijks bedrag dat stijgt naarmate de straf (en dus de misdaad) zwaarder is. Dit bedrag, dat de veroordeelden beschouwen als hun salaris, loopt van 282 euro voor een gevangenisstraf van minder dan drie jaar tot 2 419 euro voor een gevangenisstraf van meer dan 30 jaar.

Is de Commissie hiervan op de hoogte?

Dit gebeurt gedeeltelijk met fondsen die ter beschikking gesteld worden door de Europese Unie.

Acht de Commissie zoiets aanvaardbaar? Welke maatregelen overweegt?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(21 februari 2014)

De Commissie is zich ervan bewust dat de Palestijnse Autoriteit (PA) een systeem heeft waarbij vergoedingen rechtstreeks aan gevangenen worden verstrekt. Dit vergoedingensysteem (uitkeringen voor de kantine) werd opgezet op verzoek van de Israëlische autoriteiten. De Commissie levert gewoonlijk geen commentaar op door buitenlandse regeringen verleende uitkeringen.

Bovendien wordt het programma niet door de Europese Unie (EU) ondersteund. Van de aan de Palestijnse Autoriteit betaalde EU-middelen komt niets bij veroordeelde criminelen of terroristen terecht. Via het PEGASE-mechanisme worden middelen verstrekt waarmee het Ministerie van Financiën enerzijds met name genoemde ambtenaren en gepensioneerden betaalt die daarvoor in aanmerking komen, en anderzijds sociale uitkeringen verstrekt aan kwetsbare Palestijnse families die in absolute armoede leven. Naast de controles vooraf en achteraf om vast te stellen of de betrokkenen voor ondersteuning in aanmerking komen en of de betalingen correct zijn uitgevoerd, controleert de Commissie voor elke betaling alle namen aan de hand van een erkende database met namen van personen die banden hebben met terroristische organisaties. Elke naam die bij die controle wordt gesignaleerd, wordt onmiddellijk van de lijst van begunstigden geschrapt.

([1]) http://www.cidi.nl/motie-terroristensalarissen-aangenomen/.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014320/13
to the Commission
Philip Claeys (NI)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: PA pays 'terrorist salaries'

On 3 December, a motion was passed in the Lower House of the Dutch Parliament protesting against the so-called 'terrorist salaries' paid by the Palestinian Authority ([1]): convicted Palestinians serving a sentence in Israeli jails receive a monthly payment from the Palestinian Authority that increases with the severity of the sentence (and thus of the crime in question). This sum, which the prisoners regard as their salary, amounts to between EUR 282 for a prison term of less than three years up to EUR 2 419 for terms of over 30 years?

Is the Commission aware of this?

These payments are being made in part using funds provided by the European Union.

Does the Commission regard such activities as acceptable? What action is it planning to take?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

The Commission is aware that the Palestinian Authority (PA) has a system of allowances provided directly to prisoners. This system of allowances (canteen allowances) operates at the request of the Israeli authorities. The Commission does not habitually comment on the granting of allowances by foreign governments.

Furthermore, the programme is not supported by the European Union (EU). No EU funds paid to the Palestinian Authority end up in the hands of convicted criminals or terrorists. The PEGASE mechanism provides funds to the Ministry of Finance to pay a nominative list of eligible civil servants and pensioners on the one hand, and social allocations to vulnerable Palestinian families living in absolute poverty, on the other. In addition to the *ex-ante* and *ex-post* checks carried out to determine respectively eligibility and that payments have been correctly carried out, the Commission submits all names for each payment to a check on a recognised data-base of names of persons listed as being associated with terrorist organisations. Any name which is signalled by the check is automatically deleted from the list of beneficiaries.

([1]) http://www.cidi.nl/motie-terroristensalarissen-aangenomen/

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014321/13
aan de Commissie
Saïd El Khadraoui (S&D)
(18 december 2013)

Betreft: Ondersteuning van mensen met een beperking

Het European Foundation Centre ondernam een studie getiteld „Assessing the impact of European governments" waarin de impact van de besparingsplannen van de Europese lidstaten op mensen met een beperking in kaart wordt gebracht. De studie toont aan dat besparingen in welzijns- en sociale diensten op onevenredige wijze mensen met een beperking aantast. Zowel op vlak van werk, onafhankelijk wonen, scholing, eerstelijnsgezondheidszorg en assistentie tasten de besparingen de rechten van deze mensen aan.

1. Heeft de Commissie zicht op de negatieve impact van deze besparingen op mensen met een beperking? Beschikt de Commissie over concrete cijfers van de schade die de besparingsplannen op mensen met een beperking in kaart brengt? Welk advies geeft de Commissie hierover aan de verschillende lidstaten?

2. Welke specifieke acties onderneemt de Commissie om het VN-Verdrag inzake de rechten van personen met een beperking en om de Europese strategie inzake handicaps 2010-2020 te implementeren en te promoten bij de lidstaten?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(28 februari 2014)

1. De volledige economische en sociale participatie van mensen met een handicap is essentieel om de Europa 2020-doelstellingen van een slimme, duurzame en inclusieve groei, in het bijzonder de doelstellingen inzake werkgelegenheid en armoede te verwezenlijken. Het academisch netwerk van Europese deskundigen inzake handicaps (ANED) ([1]) heeft met de ontwikkeling van relevante indicatoren de Commissie ondersteund bij de bewaking op de bestaande verschillen die er tussen mensen met een handicap en de bevolking in het algemeen bestaan wat betreft de deelname aan het arbeidsproces, onderwijs en sociale insluiting. Uit gegevens blijkt dat mensen met een handicap en hun gezinnen een groter risico op armoede of sociale uitsluiting lopen. Op basis van de communautaire statistiek van inkomens- en levensomstandigheden van 2011 (de EU-SILC 2011) loopt (in de leeftijdscategorie van 16-64 jaar) 38 % van de mensen met een handicap het risico op armoede en sociale uitsluiting en is dit bij mensen zonder handicap 22,1 %. Het percentage van mensen met een equivalent beschikbaar inkomen onder de armoederisicodrempel bedraagt 22,3 % in geval van mensen met handicap tegenover 15,2 % in geval van mensen zonder handicap ([2]). Gezinnen die een familielid met een handicap hebben, worden geconfronteerd met extra kosten die hun werkelijk beschikbare inkomen verminderen.

2. De Commissie is vastbesloten om het potentieel van alle instrumenten van de EU te benutten, met name de Europese structuur- en investeringsfondsen, ter bevordering van de integratie, de gelijke kansen, de actieve participatie in de samenleving en de economie, en de toegankelijkheid van de fysieke omgeving, het vervoer en de nieuwe technologieën.

De Commissie verwijst de geachte Parlementsleden tevens naar haar antwoord op schriftelijke vraag E-010955/2013 ([3]).

([1]) http://www.disability-europe.net/.
([2]) Deze percentages voor de EU-28 werden zeer recentelijk door Eurostat samengesteld op basis van de EU-SILC 2011.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/nl/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014321/13
to the Commission
Saïd El Khadraoui (S&D)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Support for people with disabilities

The European Foundation Centre has produced a study entitled 'Assessing the impact of European governments' austerity plans on the rights of people with disabilities', covering Member States of the EU. The study shows that cuts in welfare and social services have a disproportionate impact on people with disabilities. The cuts affect these people's rights in relation to work and employment, living independently, education, primary healthcare and assistance.

1. Is the Commission aware of the negative impact of these cuts on people with disabilities? Does it have specific figures for the harm that the austerity plans are causing people with disabilities? What advice does the Commission have for the various Member States in this respect?

2. What specific steps does the Commission intend to take to implement and promote the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 in the Member States?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

1. Attaining full economic and social participation of persons with disabilities is essential to achieve the Europe 2020 objectives of creating smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, in particular for reaching employment and poverty targets. By developing relevant indicators, the Academic Network of European Disability Experts (ANED) ([1]) has been supporting the Commission in monitoring the existing gaps between persons with disabilities and the general population in relation to participation in employment, education and social inclusion. Data reveal that people with disabilities and their families face a higher risk of poverty or social exclusion. Based on EU-SILC 2011, the percentage of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion (age 16-64) is 38% for people with disabilities versus 22.1% for persons without disabilities. The percentage of persons with an equalised disposable income below the risk-of poverty threshold is 22.3% for disabled persons versus 15.2% for persons without disabilities ([2]). Families with a member with a disability face additional costs that reduce their actual disposable income.

2. The Commission is committed to harness the potential of all relevant EU instruments, in particular the EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs), to promote inclusion, equal opportunities, active participation in society and the economy, and accessibility of the physical environment, transport and new technologies.

The Commission would also refer the Honourable Members to its answer to Written Question E-010955/2013. ([3])

([1]) http://www.disability-europe.net/
([2]) These percentages for EU28 were compiled very recently by Eurostat on the basis of EU-SILC 2011.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-014322/13
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(18 decembrie 2013)

Subiect: Inchiderea portalului de ştiri PressEurop

Portalul de ştiri PressEurop ar urma să fie închis până la finele acestui an, după ce Comisia Europeană, care susţinea financiar proiectul, a anunţat că nu va mai prelungi contractul scadent la 22 decembrie 2013.

Operaţional din 25 mai 2009 şi având sediul la Paris, site-ul are 600 000 de vizitatori unici pe lună şi publică zilnic, în zece limbi, cele mai bune articole cu referire la Uniunea Europeană din presa internaţională.

Având în vedere că, în perspectiva alegerilor pentru Parlamentul European de anul viitor, este nevoie de o informare permanentă şi corectă a cetăţenilor în legătură cu politicile europene:

1. Are Comisia în vedere posibilitatea de a sprijini în continuare proiectul PressEurop, pe care-l caracteriza, în 2012, ca fiind „un adevărat exemplu de multilingvism şi profesionalism"?

2. Are în vedere Comisia iniţierea unor măsuri de contracarare a crizei cu care se confruntă sectorul presei din statele membre ale Uniunii Europene?

Răspuns dat de dna Reding în numele Comisiei
(17 februarie 2014)

1. Comisia invită distinsul membru să consulte răspunsul oferit de Comisie la întrebarea scrisă E-011724/2013 [1].

2. Comisia este conştientă de faptul că presa tipărită, în special, ar trebui să îşi adapteze modelele de afaceri şi că aceasta se confruntă cu dificultăţi financiare. În 2012, Centrul Comun de Cercetare a publicat mai multe studii privind situaţia sectorul mass-media, inclusiv asupra situaţiei industriei de editare a ziarelor ([2]). Este, în principal, la latitudinea statelor membre să ia decizii de sprijinire a presei scrise, ţinând seama de normele aplicabile ajutoarelor de stat prevăzute la articolele 107-109 din Tratatul privind funcţionarea Uniunii Europene.

Comisia contribuie la identificarea riscurilor şi a oportunităţilor legate de apariţia unor noi modele de afaceri. Forumul UE pentru viitorul mass-mediei ([3]), înfiinţat în 2011, şi-a prezentat în 2012 concluziile şi recomandările privind viitorul industriilor mass-media din Europa.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2013-011724&language=EN
([2]) http://ipts.jrc.ec.europa.eu/publications/pub.cfm?id=5380
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/eu-media-futures-forum

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014322/13
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Closure of Presseurop news portal

The Presseurop news portal is due to close at the end of this year, after the Commission, which provided financial support for this venture, announced that it was not going to extend the contract due to expire on 22 December 2013.

This site, which has been operating since 25 May 2009 and is based in Paris, has 600 000 individual visitors every month and publishes every day in 10 languages the best articles on the European Union appearing in the international press.

Given that, with the prospect of European Parliament elections next year, citizens need to be provided with a permanent source of trustworthy information about European policies:

1. Is the Commission considering the possibility of continuing to support the Presseurop venture, which it described in 2012 as being 'a genuine example of multilingualism and professionalism'?

2. Does the Commission intend to introduce measures to tackle the crisis facing the press sector in EU Member States?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(17 February 2014)

1. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-011724/2013.[1]

2. The Commission is aware that print media in particular need to adapt their business models and are facing financial difficulties. The Joint Research Centre in 2012 published several studies on the situation of media sector, including also on the situation of the newspaper publishing industry ([2]). It is primarily up to Member States to take decisions on the support of printed press, taking into account the rules on state aid foreseen in Articles 107-109 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

The Commission contributes to identifying risks and opportunities related to the emergence of new business models. Established in 2011, the EU Media Futures Forum ([3]) presented in 2012 its conclusions and recommendations on the futures of media industries in Europe.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2013-011724&language=EN
([2]) http://ipts.jrc.ec.europa.eu/publications/pub.cfm?id=5380
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/eu-media-futures-forum

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-014323/13
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(18 decembrie 2013)

Subiect: Marea Britanie plănuiește să introducă un prag maxim anual de 75 000 de imigranți din statele Uniunii Europene

Guvernul britanic plănuiește să introducă un prag maxim anual de 75 000 de imigranți din statele Uniunii Europene, în cadrul unui plan de revizuire a politicilor din domeniul liberei circulații, dar și o înăsprire a criteriilor de angajare.

Documentul, întocmit de Ministerul de Interne de la Londra și dat publicității de către cotidianul „The Sunday Times", subliniază că imigrația nelimitată din statele Uniunii Europene a afectat planurile britanicilor necalificați de a-și găsi locuri de muncă, a încurajat „turismul pentru beneficii sociale", a exercitat anumite presiuni asupra serviciilor publice și a provocat o „amplificare a tensiunilor sociale".

Comisia este rugată să exprime un punct de vedere cu privire la această inițiativă.

Răspuns dat de dl Andor în numele Comisiei
(20 februarie 2014)

În temeiul articolului 21 din Tratatul privind funcționarea Uniunii Europene (TFUE), cetățenii europeni au dreptul să circule și să se stabilească liber pe teritoriul statelor membre. Fixarea unui plafon pentru numărul de cetățeni europeni care se pot stabili în Regatul Unit, așa cum s-a sugerat, nu ar fi compatibilă cu prevederile acestui articol fundamental.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014323/13
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: UK plans to introduce a maximum annual cap of 75 000 immigrants from European Union Member States

The British Government intends to introduce a maximum annual cap of 75 000 immigrants from European Union Member States as part of a plan to revise its free movement policies, as well as to tighten employment criteria.

The document, drafted by the Home Office in London and disclosed by the *Sunday Times*, stresses that unlimited immigration from EU Member States has damaged the job prospects of low-skilled Britons, encouraged 'benefit tourism', put pressure on public services and caused a 'build-up of social tensions'.

Can the Commission give its view on this initiative?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

Article 21 TFEU guarantees all EU citizens the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States. The suggestion of a 'cap' on numbers of EU citizens moving to live in the UK would not be compatible with that fundamental provision.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-014324/13
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(18 decembrie 2013)

Subiect: Statistici alarmante legate de cancer

Organizația Mondială a Sănătății a lansat un avertisment privind creșterea alarmantă a numărului de cazuri noi de cancer raportate la nivel global. În 2012, acesta a atins pragul de 14,1 milioane, crescând cu 11% față de numărul total raportat în 2008.

Organizația Mondială a Sănătății a estimat, de asemenea, aproximativ 8,2 milioane de decese, cu 8,4% mai multe decât cele înregistrate în 2008, atunci când specialiștii organizației contabilizau 7,6 milioane de decese cauzate de această boală. Cele mai frecvente tipuri de cancer diagnosticate anul trecut sunt cel pulmonar (1,8 milioane de cazuri, 13% din total), la sân (1,7 milioane de cazuri, 11,9% din total) și colorectal (1,4 milioane de cazuri, 9,7% din total), în timp ce formele care au produs cele mai multe decese în 2012 sunt cancerul pulmonar (1,6 milioane de decese, 19,4% din total), de ficat (0,8 milioane de decese, 9,1% din total) și de stomac (0,7 milioane de decese, 8,8% din total).

Previziunile Organizației Mondiale a Sănătății anticipează că, până în anul 2025, numărul cazurilor de cancer diagnosticate anual va ajunge la 19,3 milioane.

În acest context, este Comisia pregătită să ia măsuri suplimentare în vederea reducerii impactului acestor forme de cancer asupra populației din statele membre ale Uniunii Europene?

Răspuns dat de dl Borg în numele Comisiei
(14 februarie 2014)

Începând din 1985, când Consiliului European de la Milano a lansat primul program „Europa împotriva cancerului”, cancerul este în prima linie de acțiune a UE în domeniul sănătății.

Cooperarea dintre UE și statele membre și-a dovedit valoarea adăugată în lupta împotriva cancerului. Cooperarea la nivelul UE a contribuit la reducerea mortalității cauzate de cancer. În perioada 2000-2010, de exemplu, mortalitatea cauzată de cancer pulmonar a scăzut cu 10,8 % în rândul bărbaților. Scăderea a coincis cu numărul tot mai mare de campaniile de luptă împotriva tabagismului din întreaga Europă.

Pornind de la aceste realizări, Comisia și-a reînnoit angajamentul de lungă durată asumat în lupta împotriva cancerului prin lansarea, în 2009, a Parteneriatului european privind lupta împotriva cancerului, care a luat sfârșit recent. Mai mult, așa cum se prevede în Decizia de punere în aplicare a Comisiei din 28 noiembrie 2012 privind planul de lucru pentru 2013 din cadrul Programului UE în domeniul sănătății, Comisia intenționează să lanseze o nouă acțiune comună în vederea elaborării unui ghid european privind îmbunătățirea calității în controlul cancerului.

Aceste acțiuni urmăresc să ajute statele membre să reducă incidența cazurilor de cancer cu 15 % până în 2020, prin coordonarea acțiunilor în toate domeniile care țin de cancer: planurile naționale de combatere a cancerului în toate statele membre, prevenirea, depistarea și colectarea de date comparabile.

De asemenea, în cursul anului 2014, Comisia intenționează să prezinte un raport care să vizele atât rezultatele Comunicării Comisiei referitoare la Parteneriatul privind lupta împotriva cancerului, cât și punerea în aplicare a recomandării Consiliului privind depistarea cancerului.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014324/13
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(18 December 2013)

Subject: Alarming cancer statistics

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has issued a warning about the alarming rise in the number of new cancer cases reported worldwide. In 2012 this figure reached 14.1 million, marking an 11% increase on the total number reported in 2008.

According to the WHO's estimates, there have also been 8.2 million deaths, which is 8.4% more than the number recorded in 2008 when the organisation's experts registered 7.6 million deaths caused by this disease. The most common types diagnosed last year were lung cancer (1.8 million cases, 13% of the total), breast cancer (1.7 million cases, 11.9%) and bowel cancer (1.4 million cases, 9.7%), while the types which caused the most deaths in 2012 were lung cancer (1.6 million deaths, 19.4% of the total), liver cancer (0.8 million deaths, 9.1%) and stomach cancer (0.7 million deaths, 8.8%).

According to the WHO's forecasts, the number of cancer cases diagnosed every year will reach 19.3 million by 2025.

Based on this information, is the Commission prepared to take additional measures aimed at reducing the impact of these types of cancer on the population of the European Union's Member States?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

Since 1985, when the European Council in Milan launched the first 'Europe Against Cancer' programme, cancer is at the forefront of EU action on health.

The EU cooperation with Member States has proven its added value in the fight against cancer. Cooperation at EU level contributed to reducing cancer mortality. Over the period 2000-2010, for example, lung cancer mortality decreased by 10.8% in men. The decrease coincided with the rising number of anti-smoking campaigns across Europe.

Building on these achievements, the Commission renewed its long-standing commitment to fighting cancer by launching the European Partnership for Action against Cancer in 2009, which has recently came to an end. In addition, as foreseen in the Commission Implementing Decision of 28 November 2012 on the Work Plan 2013 of the EU Health Programme, the Commission intends to launch a new Joint Action to produce a European Guide on Quality Improvement in Cancer Control.

These actions aim to help Member States reduce cancer incidence by 15% by 2020, through coordination of action on all cancer-related fronts: national cancer plans in all the Member States, prevention, screening, and comparable data collection.

Also during 2014, the European Commission intends to put forward an Implementation Report on the results of the Commission Communication on the Partnership for Action against Cancer and on the implementation on the Council Recommendation on cancer screening.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-014326/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Marietta Giannakou (PPE)
(19 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: VP/HR — Συμμετοχή ευρωπαίων πολιτών στην εμφύλια σύρραξη στη Συρία

Ανησυχητικές διαστάσεις τείνει να λάβει η συμμετοχή ευρωπαίων πολιτών στη εμφύλια σύρραξη στη Συρία. Όπως προκύπτει και από τις πρόσφατες κοινές δηλώσεις των Υπουργών Εσωτερικών της Γαλλίας και του Βελγίου, χιλιάδες νέοι ευρωπαίοι φεύγουν για να πολεμήσουν στη Συρία, στο πλευρό οργανώσεων που συνδέονται με την Αλ Κάιντα.

Σύμφωνα με εκτιμήσεις που επικαλέστηκαν οι δύο υπουργοί στη διάρκεια κοινής συνέντευξης Τύπου, 1 500 έως 2 000 νέοι από την Ευρώπη έχουν μεταβεί στη Συρία, ενώ μέχρι τον Ιούνιο ο αριθμός τους είχε εκτιμηθεί ότι έφτανε τους 600.

Ερωτάται η Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος:

— Διαθέτει αξιόπιστα στοιχεία σχετικά με τον αριθμό ευρωπαίων πολιτών οι οποίοι πολεμούν αυτή τη στιγμή στο πλευρό οργανώσεων που συνδέονται με την Αλ Κάιντα;

— Τι προτίθεται να κάνει για να ανατρέψει τη στρατολόγηση ευρωπαίων πολιτών από εξτρεμιστικές ισλαμιστικές οργανώσεις;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(18 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η ΥΕ/ΑΠ γνωρίζει τις εκτιμήσεις που κυμαίνονται μεταξύ 1 000 και 1 500 Ευρωπαίων πολιτών οι οποίοι πολεμούν στο πλευρό οργανώσεων που συνδέονται με την Αλ Κάιντα.

Ενόψει του κινδύνου να ενταχθούν οι ξένοι μαχητές που μεταβαίνουν στη Συρία, μεταξύ άλλων από την Ευρώπη, σε ομάδες εξτρεμιστών και σε συνέχεια των εργασιών του Συμβουλίου Δικαιοσύνης και Εσωτερικών Υποθέσεων, η ΕΕ καλεί όλα τα κράτη που συνορεύουν με τη Συρία ή διατηρούν απευθείας αεροπορικές ή ακτοπλοϊκές συνδέσεις με τη Συρία να επιδείξουν προσοχή. Παροτρύνει τα κράτη αυτά να λάβουν τα κατάλληλα μέτρα για να αποτρέψουν τη ροή ξένων μαχητών προς και από τη Συρία. Η ΕΕ είναι αποφασισμένη να συνεργαστεί με τρίτες χώρες, ούτως ώστε να αντιμετωπίσει αποτελεσματικά την τρομοκρατία και τη ροή ξένων μαχητών, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της χρηματοδότησης.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014326/13
to the Commission
Marietta Giannakou (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Involvement of Europeans in the civil conflict in Syria

Involvement of Europeans in the civil conflict in Syria is assuming alarming proportions. It has recently been revealed in joint statements issued by the French and Belgian Interior Ministers that thousands of young Europeans are leaving to fight in Syria alongside organisations affiliated to Al Qaeda.

During a joint press conference, the two ministers indicated that between 1500 and 2000 young people were now believed to have entered Syria from Europe, compared with an estimated 600 up to June.

In view of this:

— Does the High Representative have any reliable data regarding the number of European citizens currently fighting alongside organisations affiliated to Al Qaeda?

— What action will she take to end the recruitment of European citizens by Islamic fundamentalist organisations?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The HR/VP is aware of estimates ranging from 1 000 to 1 500 of European citizens fighting alongside organisations affiliated with al-Qaeda.

In view of the risks posed by foreign nationals traveling to Syria, including from Europe, to join extremist groups and following the work of the Justice and Home Affairs Council, the EU has called on all states bordering Syria or with direct air or maritime routes to Syria to remain vigilant. It encourages those states to take appropriate measures to prevent the flow of foreign fighters to and from Syria. The EU is determined to engage with third countries to deal effectively with terrorism and the flows of foreign fighters, including financing.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-014327/13
aan de Commissie
Ivo Belet (PPE)
(19 december 2013)

Betreft: Aanpakken van match-fixing vanuit Azië

Bij verschillende recente gevallen van match-fixing in Europa, blijkt dat de fixers vaak vanuit Asean-landen opereren, met name vanuit de Filipijnen, Singapore, Maleisië, Thailand en Indonesië. Het gaat vaak om criminele personen die bij de lokale autoriteiten bekend staan vanwege illegale praktijen, maar toch hun gang kunnen blijven gaan, omdat zij niet of onvoldoende adequaat worden bestraft.

Heeft de Commissie dit probleem al aangekaart bij de autoriteiten van de betrokken landen?

Is de Commissie bereid dit probleem aan de orde te stellen en de autoriteiten in de betrokken landen op te roepen om prioriteit te maken van de opsporing van match-fixers en om hen te vervolgen en te straffen?

Antwoord van mevrouw Vassiliou namens de Commissie
(29 januari 2014)

Het is de Commissie bekend dat georganiseerde criminele netwerken die hun basis in de ASEAN-landen lijken te hebben, betrokken zijn bij de recente gevallen van matchfixing waardoor de uitslagen van Europese sportwedstijden werden beïnvloed.

Om matchfixing beter te kunnen bestrijden, moet volgens de Commissie de internationale samenwerking op multilateraal niveau worden versterkt. In dit verband vestigt de Commissie de aandacht van het geachte Parlementslid op de lopende onderhandelingen over een internationaal verdrag van de Raad van Europa ter bestrijding van de manipulatie van sportwedstrijden. Naar verwachting kan dit verdrag eind 2014 worden aangenomen.

Het is de bedoeling dat het verdrag een platform biedt voor internationale samenwerking bij en coördinatie van de inspanningen ter bestrijding van matchfixing. Het toepassingsgebied van het verdrag zal zich niet alleen over Europa uitstrekken, aangezien een aantal niet-Europese landen reeds aan de onderhandelingen deelneemt en in beginsel nog meer niet-Europese landen partij bij het verdrag kunnen worden zodra het openstaat voor toetreding.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014327/13
to the Commission
Ivo Belet (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Tackling match-fixing from Asia

In various recent cases of match-fixing in Europe, it has come to light that the match-fixers often operate from ASEAN countries, particularly the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. Many of them are criminals who are known to the local authorities on account of illegal practices but can nonetheless continue to operate because they are punished inadequately, if at all.

Has the Commission raised this issue with the authorities of the countries concerned?

Will the Commission raise this problem and call on the authorities in the countries concerned to assign priority to identifying match-fixers and then to punish them?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2014)

The Commission is aware of the involvement of organised criminal networks that appear to be based in the ASEAN countries in the recent episodes of match-fixing that affected European sports competitions.

The Commission considers that strengthening international cooperation at multilateral level is a necessary step to improve the fight against match-fixing. In this respect, the Commission would like to draw the attention of the Honourable Member to the ongoing negotiations for an international Convention of the Council of Europe against the manipulation of sports competitions. It is expected that the Convention may be adopted at the end of 2014.

The Convention should provide a platform for international cooperation and coordination of efforts to combat match-fixing. Its scope will go beyond Europe since non-European countries are already participating in the negotiations and since in principle additional non-European countries may join the Convention once it is open for accession.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés P-014328/13
a Bizottság számára
Herczog Edit (S&D)
(2013. december 19.)

Tárgy: Forráshatékony megoldások az alumínium-előállítás terén

Annak ellenére, hogy az olyan lényeges ágazatokban, mint a közlekedés, az építőipar és a csomagolóipar, egyre nagyobb a kereslet az alumíniummal kapcsolatos forráshatékony megoldások iránt, az alumínium-előállítás terén Európában drasztikus visszaesés tapasztalható, és az EU egyre inkább függővé válik a – különösen a Közel-Keletről származó – alumíniumbehozataltól. Az alumínium újrahasznosítása révén az alumínium elsődleges előállításához szükséges energia 95%-a takarítható meg, és az újrahasznosítás jelenti Európa alumíniumforrásának felét. Ennek ellenére 2002 után az EU nettó fémhulladék-exportőrré vált – a kivitel egyik elsődleges célországa Kína –, és ez a trend nagy ütemben erősödik, ami egy rendkívül értékes, energiabanknak is tekintett erőforrás elfogadhatatlan elvesztegetéséhez vezet.

Ahhoz, hogy Európa elérje a 2020-ra kitűzött fenntarthatósági céljait és az alumíniumipar világelső maradhasson az újrahasznosítás terén, egyre sürgetőbb lenne hozzáférést biztosítani Európa számára másodlagos nyersanyagokhoz. A hulladékgazdálkodásról szóló uniós jogszabálycsomag közelgő felülvizsgálata alkalmat kínál annak megfontolására és figyelembevételére, hogy Európának szüksége van stratégiai erőforrásainak megtartására.

1. Mit szándékozik tenni a Bizottság annak érdekében, hogy javítsa az alumíniumhulladék-szállítmányok mozgásának nyomon követését?

2. Milyen intézkedésekkel óhajtja a Bizottság előmozdítani a jobb hulladékgyűjtési rendszerek és az innovatív szétválasztási technológiák elterjedését?

3. Tervezi-e a Bizottság, hogy fokozatos tilalmat vezet be a fogyasztók által kidobott újrahasznosítható árucikkek hulladéklerakókban történő elhelyezésére?

4. Mi a tervezett menetrendje az újrahasznosító üzemekre vonatkozó, a környezetkímélő irányítási folyamatok igazolására szolgáló globális tanúsítási rendszer bevezetésének?

Antonio Tajani válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2014. február 5.)

1. A Bizottság az alumíniumhulladék-kivitelre vonatkozóan uniós szintű statisztikákat tesz közzé.

A hulladékstátuszát elvesztett alumínium azonban már nem tartozik a hulladékszállításra vonatkozó uniós jogszabályok hatálya alá, amelyek befolyásolhatnák az alumínium-újrahasznosítási piacot. A hulladékstátusz megszűnéséről szóló 333/2011/EU tanácsi rendelet hatásainak felmérésére a Bizottság elindított egy projektet, amelynek célja, hogy kidolgozzon egy rendszert az említett rendelet újrahasznosítási piacokra gyakorolt hatásának jövőbeni nyomon követésére.

2. Jelenleg a hulladékgazdálkodási szakpolitika felülvizsgálata és a nyersanyagokkal foglalkozó európai innovációs partnerség keretében több olyan intézkedés bevezetésének lehetőségét vizsgáljuk, amelyek célja a jobb hulladékgyűjtési rendszerek és az innovatív szétválasztási technológiák elterjedésének előmozdítása. Idetartozik a különböző projektek támogatása is a Horizont 2020 ([1]) keretében.

3. A jelenlegi uniós környezetvédelmi cselekvési program célkitűzésének értelmében 2020-ig biztosítani kell, hogy a hulladéklerakóban való elhelyezés a visszamaradó (nem újrahasznosítható és nem hasznosítható) hulladékra korlátozódjon, ezért a hulladékgazdálkodási szakpolitika felülvizsgálata során jelenleg mérlegeljük a bizonyos anyagokra vonatkozó hulladéklerakási tilalom fokozatos, uniós szintű bevezetését.

4. 2013-ban a Bizottság megvalósíthatósági tanulmányt tett közzé arról, hogy az újrahasznosító létesítmények esetében alkalmazható-e tanúsítási rendszer. E tanulmány alapján a Bizottság nyilvános konzultációt kezdeményezett, amely 2014. Március 17-én zárul le. A Bizottság azt tervezi, hogy 2014 végéig elkészíti a kapcsolódó hatásvizsgálatot.

([1]) Az EU kutatási és innovációs keretprogramja (2014–2020).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014328/13
to the Commission
Edit Herczog (S&D)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Aluminium resource-efficient solutions

Despite a growing demand for aluminium resource-efficient solutions in key markets such as transport, construction and packaging, Europe's production is sharply declining and the EU is increasingly dependent on imports, in particular from the Middle East. Aluminium recycling saves 95% of the energy required to produce primary aluminium and recycling provides half of Europe's aluminium metal input. However, since 2002, the EU has become a net exporter of scrap, in particular to China, and this trend is rapidly increasing, leading to the unacceptable loss of a very valuable resource that is considered an energy bank.

It is becoming urgent for Europe to secure access to secondary raw materials in order to achieve its 2020 sustainability targets and help the aluminium industry remain the world leader in recycling. The upcoming revision of the EU waste legislation package is an opportunity to address the need for Europe to keep strategic resources on its territory.

1. What does the Commission intend to do to improve the monitoring of aluminium scrap flows?

2. What measures does the Commission intend to take in order to promote better collection schemes and innovative sorting technologies?

3. Is the Commission envisaging a progressive landfill ban on post-consumer recyclable goods?

4. What is the proposed calendar for a global certification scheme for recycling facilities certifying environmentally sound management processes?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(5 February 2014)

1. EU-wide statistics on aluminium scrap exports are published by the Commission.

However, aluminium scrap that has achieved end-of-waste status falls out of the scope of EU legislation on shipment of waste, which could have an effect on the market for recycling of aluminium. In order to assess the impacts of Council Regulation (EU) No 333/2011 on end-of-waste, the Commission has initiated a project which should develop a system for future monitoring of the influence of this regulation on recycling markets.

2. Various measures to promote better collection schemes and innovative sorting technologies are currently being considered as part of the ongoing waste policy review and the European Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials. This includes support for projects through Horizon 2020 ([1]).

3. Based on the objective set out in the current EU Environment Action Programme to ensure that by 2020 landfilling is limited to residual (i.e. non-recyclable and non-recoverable) waste, the introduction of progressive material-based landfill bans at EU level is currently being considered as part of the ongoing waste policy review.

4. In 2013, the Commission published a feasibility study on a certification scheme for recycling facilities. Based on this study, the Commission has launched a public consultation ending on 17 March 2014. Before the end of this year, the Commission intends to complete its assessment.

([1]) The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014329/13
a la Comisión
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(19 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Ilusión por pertenecer al proyecto europeo

En las últimas semanas, miles de ciudadanos ucranianos se han echado a las calles para protestar contra el presidente Víctor Yanukóvich por haberse negado a firmar el Acuerdo de Asociación con la UE a finales del pasado mes de noviembre en Vilna.

Durante cuatro semanas consecutivas, miles de manifestantes se han opuesto a un mayor acercamiento con la vecina Rusia recordando al gobierno que «Ucrania es Europa».

Dichas muestras desbocadas en pro de la UE no han sido muy habituales en el contexto de crisis económica y de identidad por la que atraviesa Europa.

¿Considera la Comisión que la capacidad de la UE para exigir reformas políticas mediante la cooperación económica ha perdido eficacia a raíz del estallido de la crisis económica? ¿Cuáles son las prioridades en materia de política de ampliación de la UE en los próximos años?

En la actualidad, hay cinco países oficialmente candidatos a formar parte de la UE. Uno de ellos, Turquía, lleva llamando a la puerta de la UE desde hace más de 50 años. ¿Cree la Comisión que se corre el riesgo de que, ante la imposibilidad de avanzar significativamente en las negociaciones, Turquía acabe optando por aliarse con otras regiones vecinas?

A mediados de 2013, Islandia interrumpió las negociaciones de adhesión y el Reino Unido amenaza con convocar un referéndum sobre la conveniencia de permanecer o no en la EU en 2015. ¿Cómo pretende hacer frente la UE a estos desafíos?

Respuesta del Sr. Füle en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de febrero de 2014)

Pasados más de 20 años desde el establecimiento de los criterios de Copenhague, el proceso de ampliación de la UE sigue ejerciendo su atractivo transformador. Un ejemplo reciente es de adhesión de Croacia a la UE en julio de 2013, que supuso la culminación de un ambicioso proceso de reformas motivado por la perspectiva de la adhesión a la UE. El acuerdo histórico alcanzado por Serbia y Kosovo ([1]) en abril de 2013 es una prueba más de la capacidad de influencia de la perspectiva de la UE

Los criterios de Copenhague siguen siendo la base de la política de ampliación. El proceso de adhesión también refleja en la actualidad la evolución de las políticas de la UE y las enseñanzas de las ampliaciones anteriores. Una enseñanza clave es la importancia de abordar en primer lugar los fundamentos. Tal como se indica en su estrategia de ampliación para 2013-2014 ([2]), la Comisión está prestando más atención a las cuestiones económicas, a la consolidación de las instituciones democráticas, a los derechos fundamentales y a las relaciones de buena vecindad en el proceso de adhesión. El Estado de Derecho sigue siendo central en este proceso.

Turquía es un socio estratégico de la UE. La UE y Turquía siguen estando plenamente comprometidas con el proceso de negociación sobre la base del marco de negociación de 2005. En noviembre, el Consejo decidió abrir un nuevo capítulo en las negociaciones ([3]).

En 2013, el Gobierno de Islandia decidió dejar en suspenso las negociaciones, que no podrán reanudarse salvo que su reapertura se apruebe por referéndum. Islandia sigue siendo un socio importante para la UE a través de su participación en Schengen y el EEE.

([1]) Esta denominación se entiende sin perjuicio de las posiciones sobre su estatuto y está en consonancia con la Resolución 1244 (99) del Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas y con la Opinión de la Corte Internacional de Justicia sobre la declaración de independencia de Kosovo.
([2]) Estrategia de ampliación y principales retos para 2013-2014 [COM(2013) 700 final].
([3]) Capítulo 22: Política regional y coordinación de los instrumentos estructurales.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014329/13
to the Commission
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Enthusiasm for taking part in the European project

In recent weeks, thousands of Ukrainian citizens have taken to the streets to protest against President Viktor Yanukovych for having refused to sign the Association Agreement with the EU at the end of November 2013 in Vilnius.

For four consecutive weeks, thousands of protesters have opposed closer ties with neighbouring Russia, reminding the government that 'Ukraine is Europe'.

Such unbridled displays of enthusiasm for the EU have not been very common in the context of the economic crisis and the crisis of identity being experienced in Europe.

Does the Commission believe that the EU's ability to demand political reform through economic cooperation has been weakened by the outbreak of the economic crisis? What are the priorities in the policy of enlargement of the EU in the coming years?

Currently, five countries are official candidates to join the EU. One of these, Turkey, has been knocking at the EU's door for over 50 years. Does the Commission believe that, faced with the impossibility of making significant progress in negotiations, there is a risk that Turkey will finally choose to ally itself with other neighbouring regions?

Iceland suspended accession negotiations in mid-2013, and the United Kingdom is threatening to call a referendum in 2015 on whether or not to stay in the EU. How does the EU aim to address these challenges?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

More than 20 years after the establishment of the Copenhagen criteria, the EU's enlargement process continues to exercise its transformative power. A recent example is Croatia's EU accession in July 2013, which was the culmination of a process of far reaching reforms motivated by the prospect of EU membership. The historic agreement reached by Serbia and Kosovo ([1]) in April 2013 is further proof of the power of the EU perspective.

The Copenhagen criteria remain the basis for enlargement policy. The accession process today also reflects the evolution of EU policies and lessons learned from previous enlargements. A key lesson is the importance of addressing fundamentals first. As set out in its Enlargement Strategy for 2013-2014 ([2]) the Commission is enhancing the focus on economic issues, the strengthening of democratic institutions, fundamental rights and good neighbourly relations in the accession process. The rule of law remains at the heart of the enlargement process.

Turkey is a strategic partner for the EU. The EU and Turkey remain fully committed to the negotiating process based on the 2005 Negotiating Framework. In November the Council decided to open a new chapter in the negotiations ([3]).

In 2013, Iceland's government decided to put the negotiations on hold, not to be resumed unless approved by a referendum. Iceland remains an important partner for the EU through its participation in Schengen and the EEA.

([1]) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.
([2]) Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges for 2013-2014 (COM(2013) 700 final).
([3]) Chapter 22 — Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014330/13
a la Comisión
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(19 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Asentamiento del islamismo extremista en Cataluña

Según investigaciones policiales recientes, Cataluña ha acabado por convertirse en el foco de expansión del extremismo salafí-wahabí en toda Europa. La celebración de varios «congresos» salafistas en Cataluña a lo largo del presente año confirma un extremismo creciente.

En Cataluña reside un amplio colectivo musulmán pacífico, el cual representa más del 26 % del censado en España. Según fuentes policiales, los extremistas, camuflados entre este amplio colectivo, han creado diferentes «bases» desde las que tratan de captar miembros radicales y se comunican con representantes de otros grupos venidos del exterior.

Se calcula que en el área de Barcelona hay un centenar de extremistas dispuestos a propiciar acciones violentas elaboradas como las habidas en Londres, Boston o París.

¿Tiene conocimiento la Comisión de esta realidad?

La seguridad del Estado español ha desplegado una tupida red de agentes por todo Cataluña tejiendo un sigiloso sistema de alerta preventiva destinado a detectar y abortar la amenaza terrorista procedente de los grupos islamistas radicales. ¿Conoce la Comisión el funcionamiento y la existencia de dicha red preventiva?

El asentamiento del islamismo extremista en Cataluña se perfila como el principal foco del radicalismo en España y uno de los más importantes de la UE. ¿Está llevando a cabo la Comisión alguna acción en el marco de la *Estrategia de la Unión Europea* de *Lucha contra el Terrorismo* en Cataluña?

Respuesta de la Sra. Malmström en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de febrero de 2014)

Las actividades judiciales y policiales operativas en materia de lucha contra el terrorismo competen esencialmente a los Estados miembros. La propia Comisión no hace un seguimiento de las actividades de las autoridades policiales ni de los grupos extremistas violentos. Su función es facilitar la cooperación y prestar apoyo a los Estados miembros sobre cuestiones relacionadas con la prevención del terrorismo. En cuanto a los grupos terroristas y sus actividades, la Comisión se basa en herramientas disponibles a nivel de la UE, como el informe sobre la situación y las tendencias del terrorismo en la EU, realizado por Europol sobre la base de información facilitada y comprobada por las autoridades competentes de los Estados miembros.

La Comisión sigue trabajando sobre las posibles maneras de ayudar a los Estados miembros en la prevención del terrorismo, con independencia de la motivación subyacente. Más concretamente, la Red de la UE para la Sensibilización frente a la Radicalización (RSR), puesta en marcha en septiembre de 2011, sirve de nexo para los profesionales en materia de prevención de la radicalización que conduce al terrorismo y al extremismo violento. La Red tiene por objeto poner en común la experiencia, los conocimientos y las lecciones aprendidas a fin de equipar mejor a los profesionales de primera línea en su trabajo cotidiano con los individuos y grupos de riesgo.

Basándose en las actividades de la RSR, la Comisión Europea ha adoptado una Comunicación ([1]) que identifica diez ámbitos en los que los Estados miembros y la UE deben intensificar sus actuaciones para prevenir todos los tipos de extremismo que conducen a la violencia, independientemente de qué o quién los inspire. Además, establece un marco para el intercambio de buenas prácticas y un aumento de la cooperación entre todas las partes interesadas pertinentes.

Además de la Comunicación, la Comisión ha publicado un depósito de datos en línea sobre las prácticas de la RAN ([2]) dirigidas a seguir apoyando las acciones propuestas en la Comunicación.

([1]) Comunicación «Prevenir la radicalización hacia el terrorismo y el extremismo violento: una respuesta más firme de la UE», http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/news/news/2014/20140115_01_en.htm

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/docs/collection_of_approaches_lessons_learned_and_practices_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014330/13
to the Commission
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Establishment of Islamic extremism in Catalonia

According to recent police investigations, Catalonia has now become the focus for expansion of Salafi/Wahhabi extremism in Europe. The fact that several pro-Salafi 'conferences' have been held in Catalonia this year confirms the growth of extremism.

Catalonia has a large, peaceful Muslim community, representing over 26% of all Muslims recorded in Spain's national census. According to police sources, the extremists, who are camouflaged among this large community, have created different 'bases' which they use to try to capture radical members and to communicate with representatives of other groups coming from abroad.

It is estimated that there are around a hundred extremists in the Barcelona area willing to promote planned violent actions of the kind seen in London, Boston and Paris.

Is the Commission aware of this situation?

Spain's State security has deployed a dense network of agents throughout Catalonia, weaving a secret warning system to detect and remove terrorist threats posed by radical Islamist groups. Is the Commission aware of the operations and existence of this preventive network?

The establishment of Islamic extremism in Catalonia is emerging as the main focus of radicalism in Spain and one of the most significant in the EU. Is the Commission taking any action in Catalonia in the framework of the European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(13 February 2014)

Operational law enforcement and judicial activities in the fight against terrorism are essentially under the competence of Member States. The Commission itself does not monitor the activities of either the law enforcement authorities or violent extremist groups. Its role is to facilitate cooperation and provide support to Member States on issues related to the prevention of terrorism. As far as terrorist groups and their activities are concerned, the Commission relies on tools available at the EU level, such as the EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report produced by Europol on the basis of information provided and verified by the competent authorities of the Member States.

The Commission continues to work on ways to assist Member States in preventing terrorism regardless of the underlying motivation. More specifically the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), launched in September 2011, connects practitioners involved in preventing radicalisation leading to terrorism and violent extremism. The Network aims to pool experience, knowledge and lessons learned to better equip front-line practitioners in their daily work with at-risk individuals and groups.

Building on the RAN activities, the Commission has published a communication ([1]) identifying 10 areas where Member States and the EU could reinforce their actions to prevent all types of extremisms that lead to violence, regardless of who or what inspires it. It sets a framework for the exchange of good practice and increased cooperation between all relevant stakeholders.

In addition to the communication, the Commission has published an online repository of practices developed by the RAN ([2]) intended to further support actions proposed in the communication.

([1]) 'Communication on preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism: Strengthening the EU's Response', http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/news/news/2014/20140115_01_en.htm

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/docs/collection_of_approaches_lessons_learned_and_practices_en.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014334/13
a la Comisión
Josefa Andrés Barea (S&D)
(19 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Uso presuntamente fraudulento de los Fondos Ruralter-Leader por la Generalitat Valenciana

Entre 2008 y 2013, la Generalitat Valenciana, a través de la Consejería de Agricultura, gestionó alrededor de 200 millones de euros destinados al desarrollo rural, de los cuales muchos eran, en realidad, fondos europeos, como el fondo Ruralter-Leader. Una funcionaria de la Generalitat denunció en septiembre de 2012 el uso que se le había dado a esos fondos, que habían tenido destinos totalmente prohibidos por la legislación europea, como obras y compras para parroquias y ayudas a peñas taurinas.

A raíz de la denuncia de la funcionaria, que fue despedida después de poner en conocimiento de la justicia los hechos, se ha abierto una investigación por parte de la Fiscalía de Valencia, que ha remitido el grueso de la investigación a la OLAF.

Se pide a la Comisión que responda a las siguientes preguntas:

1. ¿Tiene conocimiento la OLAF de estas irregularidades?

2. ¿Qué actuaciones ha realizado al respecto?

3. ¿Cuando existen obstáculos por parte del Estado miembro para esclarecer dudas sobre el uso de los fondos, porque son consecuencia de una mala gestión del Gobierno, ¿qué mecanismos utiliza la OLAF en sus pesquisas?

4. ¿En qué etapa del proceso nos encontramos?

5. ¿Cuándo calculan que terminarán sus averiguaciones?

6. ¿Qué sanciones impondrá la Comisión en el caso de que se demuestre que ha habido un mal uso de los fondos y quién debe hacer frente a estas sanciones?

Respuesta del Sr. Šemeta en nombre de la Comisión
(26 de febrero de 2014)

En respuesta a su Señoría, la Comisión Europea (CE) ha sido informada por la OLAF de que hay una investigación en curso sobre los temas planteados en la pregunta. Esta investigación, iniciada en noviembre de 2013, se lleva a cabo en estrecha cooperación con las autoridades judiciales españolas competentes. Puesto que la investigación está en curso y teniendo debidamente en cuenta los requisitos de confidencialidad administrativa y judicial en la materia, la OLAF no puede hacer ningún otro comentario sobre el asunto. Pese a la envergadura del asunto y al carácter técnico o jurídico de las cuestiones tratadas, la OLAF ha declarado que prevé concluir su investigación para finales de 2014. Entonces se facilitará más información al respecto.

Al investigar asuntos relacionados con fondos de la UE, la OLAF lo hace normalmente en estrecha colaboración con las autoridades competentes del Estado miembro de que se trate. No obstante, en los raros casos en los que esta colaboración no funcione, la OLAF puede actuar directamente y con independencia de esos servicios y así lo hace ([1]).

Si las investigaciones de la OLAF sobre un asunto llegan a la conclusión de que ha habido gastos fraudulentos o ilegales relacionados con un proyecto o programa, la OLAF así lo recoge en su informe final y formula una recomendación a los servicios competentes de la CE y el Estado miembro de que se trate al efecto de recuperar los fondos correspondientes y, cuando proceda, de incoar, por parte del Estado miembro, una acción judicial contra los infractores. Posteriormente, en caso de fraude o irregularidad probada, corresponde en última instancia a las autoridades competentes del Estado miembro interesado recuperar el dinero del infractor.

([1]) En lo que respecta a la supuesta mala gestión administrativa del gasto de la UE en agricultura y Fondos Estructurales, la responsabilidad de la gestión y el control de estos fondos recae conjuntamente en los servicios de la Comisión y los Estados miembros en el marco de la gestión compartida. Por lo tanto, cualquier problema de mala gestión de los fondos incumbe a los servicios de auditoría de la CE y al Estado miembro de que se trate.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014334/13
to the Commission
Josefa Andrés Barea (S&D)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Allegedly fraudulent use of Ruralter-Leader funds by the Regional Government of Valencia

Between 2008 and 2013, the Regional Government of Valencia, through its Department of Agriculture, managed some EUR 200 million assigned to rural development, much of which was, in fact, in the form of European funds, such as the Ruralter-Leader fund. In September 2012, an official from the Regional Government of Valencia reported the use that had been made of these funds, which had been assigned for uses strictly prohibited by European legislation, such as parish works and purchases, and aid to bullfighting clubs.

Following the complaint made by this officer — who was dismissed after bringing the facts to the attention of the judiciary — an investigation was opened by the Prosecutor of Valencia, who turned the bulk of the investigation over to the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

1. Is OLAF aware of these irregularities?

2. What action has it taken in this regard?

3. When the Member State puts obstacles in the way of clarifying doubts over the use of funds — as a result of government mismanagement — what mechanisms does OLAF use in its investigations?

4. What stage of the process has been reached?

5. When does OLAF expect to complete its inquiries?

6. What sanctions will the Commission impose if it is proved that funds have been misused and on whom?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(26 February 2014)

In response to the Honourable Member, the Commission (EC) has been informed by OLAF that it has an ongoing investigation into the matters raised in the question. This investigation, opened in November 2013, is being conducted in close cooperation with the competent judicial authorities in Spain. Given that the investigation is ongoing, and having due regard to the requirements of administrative and judicial secrecy in such matters, OLAF cannot comment further on the case. Notwithstanding the size of the case and the technical/legal nature of the issues involved, OLAF has advised that it hopes to complete its investigation by the end of 2014. More information will be given in the matter at that stage.

When investigating EU fund cases, OLAF normally does this in close cooperation with the competent authorities in the Member State (MS) concerned. However, in those rare instances where such cooperation may not be forthcoming, OLAF can and does act directly and independently of such services ([1]).

If OLAF's enquiries in a case conclude that there has been fraudulent or illegal expenditure involved in a project or programme, OLAF records this in its Final Report and makes a recommendation to the competent EC service and the MS to recover the funds in question and, when appropriate, to the latter to initiate judicial action against the perpetrators. Subsequently, in cases of proven fraud and/or irregularity, it is ultimately for the competent authorities in the MS concerned to recover the monies from the fraudster.

([1]) In the matter of alleged government mismanagement of EU expenditure in Agriculture and Structural Funds, the responsibility for the management and control of such funds is a role that is held jointly between the EC services and the MS in the framework of shared management. Thus any issue of such general fund mismanagement is a matter for the audit services of the EC service and MS concerned.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014336/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(19 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Segregación de niños gitanos en escuelas especiales

En algunos países de la Unión, especialmente los del este de Europa, los niños gitanos son enviados a escuelas especiales, bien compartiendo clase con niños discapacitados, bien en colegios exclusivos para gitanos, en un claro ejemplo de discriminación hacia este colectivo.

El Tribunal Europeo de Derechos Humanos se ha pronunciado varias veces a este respecto: véanse las sentencias D.H. y otros contra la República Checa, de 13 de noviembre de 2007, Sampanis y otros contra Grecia, de 5 de junio de 2008 y la más reciente Oršuš y otros contra Croacia, de 16 de marzo de 2010. Fue la primera, conocida como el caso Ostrava, la que marcó un hito en la protección de las minorías raciales, al condenar al Estado a indemnizar a la familia demandante. La sentencia concluye que existió una discriminación de impacto o indirecta, que provocó segregación y menos oportunidades para los niños gitanos, y añade también que la posición vulnerable de los gitanos exige que se consideren de modo especial sus necesidades y estilos de vida diferentes en los marcos regulatorios generales y en las decisiones sobre casos particulares (apartado 181).

De igual modo se pronuncia el Parlamento Europeo en su Resolución, aprobada el pasado 12 de diciembre, sobre los progresos en la aplicación de las estrategias nacionales de integración de los gitanos. En el texto se pide de manera clara a los Estados miembros que «eliminen la segregación en el ámbito educativo y la escolarización ilícita de niños gitanos en centros educativos especiales».

Teniendo en cuenta todo lo anterior, ¿qué acciones tiene pensado emprender la Comisión para acabar con la segregación de niños gitanos en escuelas especiales?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de febrero de 2014)

La segregación escolar constituye un grave obstáculo que impide el acceso a una educación de calidad. Mediante su Comunicación sobre «Un marco europeo para las estrategias nacionales de integración de la población gitana hasta 2020», adoptada en 2011, la Comisión insta a los Estados miembros a garantizar que todos los niños gitanos puedan acceder a una educación de calidad y que no sean objeto de discriminación. Sin embargo, la persistencia de la separación de los niños gitanos en escuelas o clases especiales sigue planteando dificultades en algunos Estados miembros. La Comisión alienta a estos países a tomar medidas concretas para proteger de forma eficaz la igualdad de acceso de todos los niños gitanos a una educación general accesible y de calidad.

La Directiva 2000/43/CE, relativa a la aplicación del principio de igualdad de trato de las personas independientemente de su origen racial o étnico, prohíbe la discriminación por motivos de etnia o raza en una serie de ámbitos, incluido el educativo. La Comisión vigila el cumplimiento de la Directiva por los Estados miembros y tomará las medidas oportunas en caso de infracción.

La Recomendación del Consejo, de 9 de diciembre de 2013, relativa a un sistema eficaz de medidas de integración de los gitanos en los Estados miembros (2013/C 378/01), insta a estos a garantizar la igualdad de trato, eliminando la segregación escolar y poniendo fin a la escolarización inadecuada de los alumnos gitanos en las escuelas de educación especial.

En el marco del Semestre Europeo de 2013, a propuesta de la Comisión, el Consejo adoptó oficialmente recomendaciones específicas por países para cinco Estados miembros (Bulgaria, Chequia, Eslovaquia, Hungría y Rumanía), en las que se hace un llamamiento para mejorar el acceso de los niños gitanos a una educación integradora. Las prioridades señaladas en las recomendaciones específicas por país, constituyen las prioridades de financiación de la Comisión en las negociaciones en curso sobre la utilización de los fondos de la UE para el período de programación 2014-2020.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014336/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Segregation of Roma children into special schools

Some countries in the Union, especially in eastern Europe, clearly discriminate against Roma children by sending them to special schools, whether shared with disabled children or exclusively for Roma children.

The European Court of Human Rights has issued several rulings in this regard: see the judgments in D.H. and others v the Czech Republic, of 13 November 2007, Sampanis and others v Greece, of 5 June 2008 and, most recently, Oršuš and others v Croatia, of 16 March 2010. The first of these judgments, in what was known as the Ostrava case, represented a milestone for the protection of racial minorities, as it ordered the State to compensate the family that made the complaint. The judgment concluded that direct or indirect discrimination existed, causing segregation and reduced opportunities for Roma children. It added that Roma people's vulnerable position meant their needs and different lifestyles had to be given special consideration in the general regulatory frameworks and in decisions on individual cases (paragraph 181).

Similarly, Parliament has taken a stand in its Resolution, adopted on 12 December 2013, on the progress made in the implementation of national Roma integration strategies. The text expressly calls on Member States to 'eliminate segregation in the field of education and the illicit placement of Roma children in special schools'.

What action does the Commission intend to take to end segregation of Roma children into special schools?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

School segregation is a serious barrier preventing access to quality education. With its communication on the EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, adopted in 2011, the Commission invited Member States to ensure that all Roma children have access to quality education and are not subject to discrimination or segregation. However, the persistence of segregation of Roma children in special schools or classes remains a challenge in some Member States. The Commission encourages these countries to take concrete measures to provide effective equal access for all Roma children to quality and accessible mainstream education.

Directive 2000/43/EC on Racial Equality prohibits discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin in a number of fields, including education. The Commission monitors Member States compliance with the directive and will take appropriate action whenever there is a breach.

Council Recommendation of 9 December 2013 on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States (2013/C 378/01) calls for the Member States to ensure equal treatment by eliminating any school segregation and by putting an end to any inappropriate placement of Roma pupils in special needs schools.

Within the framework of the European semester in 2013 on the proposal of the Commission the Council formally adopted Country Specific Recommendations for five Member States (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia) calling for improving Roma children's access to inclusive education. The priorities highlighted in the Country Specific Recommendations represent funding priorities for the Commission in the ongoing negotiations on the use of EU funds for the 2014-2020 programming period.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014337/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(19 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Informe PISA 2012: los Estados miembros de la UE no avanzan en la misma dirección

A principios del mes de diciembre se publicaron los resultados del informe PISA 2012, elaborado por la OCDE en colaboración con la Comisión Europea. Este informe se elabora cada tres años y constituye la más famosa evaluación internacional sobre los resultados escolares de todo el mundo.

Un examen global de los resultados sitúa a la Unión Europea por delante de EE. UU., dato que no debe considerarse un logro ya que este país ha sufrido un retroceso importante. Otro dato que se extrae es el cambio de tendencia producido en cuanto al modelo de enseñanza elegido, siendo el de los países asiáticos el más exitoso de acuerdo con el *ranking* publicado.

Analizando los resultados de cada uno de los Estados miembros, se observa que varios de ellos han progresado y mejorado su posición: tal es el caso de Estonia, Irlanda o Polonia. Algunos se han mantenido en las posiciones que venían ocupando otros años y otros han sufrido importantes retrocesos. En este grupo se encuentra Finlandia, algo que llama la atención, ya que durante las últimas ediciones de este informe ha sido el país que ha ocupado el podio.

Los resultados ponen de manifiesto el desequilibrio que existe en materia de educación en la Unión Europea. Cada Estado miembro utiliza un modelo educativo, con mayor o menor éxito, sin prestar atención a los resultados y modelo del país vecino. La excelencia que persigue la Unión Europea en los diferentes ámbitos se alcanzará consolidando una base del conocimiento común, fuerte y estable. Ese objetivo se puede lograr estableciendo pautas comunes a tener en cuenta al diseñar los sistemas de enseñanza en cada Estado.

¿Ha valorado la Comisión adoptar algún tipo de iniciativa a fin de frenar el desequilibrio educativo existente entre los Estados miembros? ¿Ayudaría a alcanzar este objetivo el establecimiento de unas pautas comunes que guiaran el diseño de los modelos educativos de cada Estado? ¿Ha realizado la Comisión un análisis en profundidad de los resultados del informe en lo relativo al éxito del modelo educativo asiático y el retroceso del occidental?

Respuesta de la Sra. Vassiliou en nombre de la Comisión
(25 de febrero de 2014)

El informe PISA evalúa el nivel alcanzado en las competencias básicas en lectoescritura, matemáticas y ciencias de los jóvenes de quince años. Los Ministros de Educación de la UE adoptaron en 2010 el programa de trabajo «Educación y Formación 2020», que incluye un objetivo de referencia relativo a las competencias básicas. Dicho objetivo de referencia pretende disminuir el porcentaje de personas con un bajo nivel, medido por el informe PISA, en lectoescritura, matemáticas y ciencias, hasta situarlo por debajo del 15 % de aquí al 2020.

Su Señoría sabe que, de conformidad con el artículo 165 del Tratado de Funcionamiento de la Unión Europea, la responsabilidad en cuanto al contenido y la organización de los sistemas de educación y formación es responsabilidad exclusiva de los Estados miembros. Sin embargo, a través del Método Abierto de Coordinación, la Comisión apoya a los Estados miembros en sus esfuerzos para mejorar sus sistemas de educación. Además, estimula la cooperación política mediante intercambios de las mejores prácticas, enfoques y políticas. Los resultados del informe PISA 2012 nos hacen pensar que esos esfuerzos han sido beneficiosos. La UE en su conjunto está bien situada para cumplir el objetivo de bajar del 15 % el nivel insatisfactorio en ciencias y lectoescritura, mientras que para alcanzar ese objetivo en matemáticas harán falta nuevas mejoras.

En un contexto global, los resultados de la UE son mejores que los de los Estados Unidos, que tienen un tamaño y un nivel de diversidad similares. Por otra parte, varios Estados miembros de la UE, así como determinadas regiones de algunos de ellos, muestran unos resultados comparables a los de los países mejor situados de Asia Oriental (Corea del Sur y Japón). La Comisión ha estado estudiando los resultados del último informe PISA y hará un análisis secundario más profundo de su resultado en relación con posibles nuevas iniciativas políticas. El modelo educativo de Asia Oriental también se incluirá en este análisis.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014337/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012 report: EU Member States not advancing in the same direction

The results of the 2012 PISA report, prepared by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development in collaboration with the Commission, were published in early December. This report, produced every three years, is the best-known international assessment of worldwide educational attainment.

A global review of the results places the European Union ahead of the US, but this cannot be seen as an achievement since the latter country's results have worsened notably. The report also reveals a change of trend in the chosen teaching model, with Asian countries having the most success, according to the published rankings.

An analysis of each of the Member States' results shows that several have made progress and improved their position: this is the case for Estonia, Ireland and Poland. Some have maintained the position they occupied in previous years and others have suffered significant setbacks. This last group includes Finland, which is surprising because it had been in top place in recent editions of the report.

The results highlight the imbalance in education in the European Union. Each Member State uses its own educational model, with varying degrees of success, ignoring the results obtained and models used in neighbouring countries. The excellence pursued by the European Union in different areas will be achieved by consolidating a common, strong and stable knowledge base. This objective can be achieved by establishing common guidelines for use in designing each State's education system.

Has the Commission considered taking any action to curb the educational imbalance that exists between Member States? Would establishing common guidelines for use in designing each State's educational model help to achieve this objective? Has the Commission made a thorough analysis of the results of the report with regard to the Asian educational model's success and the setbacks experienced in the western model?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(25 February 2014)

PISA evaluates the level of achievement of 15-year olds in the basic skills of literacy, maths and science. EU Education Ministers adopted in 2010 the Education and Training 2020 work programme, which includes a benchmark related to basic skills. This benchmark aims to reduce the percentage of low achievers, as measured by PISA, in reading, maths, and science to below 15% by 2020.

The Honourable Member will be aware that, in accordance with Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the responsibility for the content and organisation of education and training systems rests entirely with Member States. However, through the Open Method of Coordination, the Commission supports Member States in their efforts to improve their education systems. It fosters policy cooperation through exchanges of best practices, approaches and policies. The 2012 PISA results would suggest that these efforts have been beneficial. The EU as a whole is well on its way to meeting the below-15% target for science and literacy, while maths achievement requires further improvement.

In a global context, the EU's performance is ahead of that of the USA, which has a similar size, and level of diversity. Furthermore, several EU Member States, as well as regions in some Member States, show performance on par with the top performing countries in East Asia (KO and JP). The Commission has been studying the latest PISA results and will deliver a more thorough secondary analysis of its outcome in relation to possible new policy initiatives. The East Asian educational model will also be included in this analysis.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014338/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(19 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Finalización del proyecto Presseurop y participación ciudadana

Hace cinco años se creó un medio de comunicación digital paneuropeo y multilingüe denominado Presseurop, destinado a ofrecer información sobre Europa, traducida a diez lenguas, a partir de las noticias publicadas en la principal prensa europea e internacional.

La Comisión Europea respaldó este interesante proyecto, dotándolo de recursos y firmando un contrato por cinco años con el ganador del concurso público convocado. Este contrato expira el próximo 20 de diciembre y Presseurop se verá obligada a cesar su actividad, ya que la Comisión parece haber optado por dedicar estos recursos a otras iniciativas.

Según he podido saber, la Comisión Europea anuló en el último momento un concurso convocado para dar continuidad a proyectos como el que ahora concluye, aunque el Parlamento ha aprobado durante este año partidas dedicadas a financiar proyectos de este tipo. Temo que un cambio de rumbo como este perjudique a la idea de ciudadanía europea a la que todos aspiramos, más ahora cuando los próximos comicios europeos están tan cerca y fomentar la participación ciudadana es uno de sus principales objetivos, como lo demuestra la campaña «Acción. Reacción. Decisión» lanzada por el Parlamento.

¿Es coherente que el Parlamento Europeo lance una campaña como «Acción. Reacción. Decisión» para alentar la participación en las próximas elecciones europeas y la Comisión retire su apoyo financiero a proyectos como Presseurop? ¿Tiene previsto la Comisión lanzar algún otro concurso para desarrollar proyectos que favorezcan la consolidación de la ciudadanía europea?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta dada a las preguntas escritas E-011724/2013 ([1]) y E-014224/2013 ([2]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014338/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: The end of the Presseurop project and citizen involvement

Five years ago, a pan-European, multilingual digital communication platform called Presseurop was created, with the aim of providing information about Europe, translated into 10 languages, taken from news items published in major European and international newspapers.

The Commission supported this interesting project, providing resources and signing a five-year contract with the successful tenderer. This contract expires on 20 December 2013 and Presseurop will be forced to close, because the Commission appears to have chosen to assign these resources to other initiatives.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, the Commission cancelled at the last minute a tender to continue with projects like the one now ending, despite Parliament having approved funds to finance such projects this year. I fear that such a change of course may undermine the idea of European citizenship to which we all aspire, especially now when the forthcoming European elections are so close at hand, and encouraging citizen involvement is one of their main objectives, as seen in the 'Action. Reaction. Decision' campaign launched by Parliament.

Does it make sense for Parliament to launch a campaign like 'Action. Reaction. Decision' to encourage participation in the forthcoming European elections while the Commission is withdrawing its financial support for projects like Presseurop? Does the Commission intend to announce any other tender procedure to undertake projects that promote the consolidation of European citizenship?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to written questions E-011724/2013 ([1]) and E-014224/2013 ([2]).

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014339/13
a la Comisión
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(19 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Inicio de negociaciones de un nuevo Protocolo de Pesca con Mauritania

El pasado 8 de octubre de 2013 el Parlamento Europeo concedía su aprobación al Protocolo de Pesca entre Mauritania y la Unión Europea, firmado por la Comisión Europea un año antes, el 24 de septiembre de 2012, cerca de dos años después del inicio formal de las negociaciones, el 31 de marzo de 2011.

Como continuación a mi pregunta E-012195/2013 de 24 de octubre, pendiente de respuesta, vistos los antecedentes y considerando que el actual Protocolo tiene una validez de tan solo dos años desde su firma, es decir, que expirará el próximo 26 de julio de 2014, ¿cuándo tiene previsto la Comisión iniciar las negociaciones para la firma de un nuevo Protocolo con Mauritania?

Vista la exclusión del sector cefalopodero del actual Protocolo por primera vez desde 1987, ¿considera una prioridad recuperar su presencia entre los segmentos de pesca del nuevo Protocolo?

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(26 de febrero de 2014)

El Protocolo actual con Mauritania expira en diciembre de 2014. La Comisión tiene la intención de iniciar, desde el momento en que reciba la autorización del Consejo, las negociaciones tendentes a su renovación. Para ello ha presentado al Consejo una recomendación por la que se autoriza a la Comisión a entablar negociaciones, recomendación que está aún examinándose. Esta propuesta está en consonancia con otros mandatos similares adoptados recientemente en negociaciones para otros acuerdos de asociación en el sector pesquero y con los principios de la reforma de la política pesquera común, incluida su dimensión exterior (explotación sostenible de los recursos pesqueros de acuerdo con los mejores dictámenes científicos disponibles, explotación circunscrita a los excedentes e inclusión de una cláusula de derechos humanos). Para apoyar la recomendación, la Comisión ha presentado al Parlamento Europeo y al Consejo un estudio en el que se hace una evaluación del Protocolo vigente.

En lo relativo a los cefalópodos, la Comisión tiene la intención de seguir trabajando a nivel científico, como se acordó en el comité mixto celebrado en Nouakchott los días 17 y 18 de septiembre de 2013, y ensayar un nuevo modelo experimental al objeto de obtener información actualizada sobre la situación de las poblaciones de cefalópodos. En esta perspectiva será necesaria la colaboración activa de los científicos europeos competentes, y en particular la del *Instituto Español de Oceanografía*.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014339/13
to the Commission
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Start of negotiations on the new EU-Mauritania Fisheries Partnership Agreement

On 8 October 2013, Parliament approved the Fisheries Protocol between Mauritania and the Union, signed by the Commission a year earlier, on 24 September 2012, nearly two years after negotiations formally began, on 31 March 2011.

Further to my Question E-012195/2013, of 24 October 2013, which has not been answered, given the background and that the current Protocol is valid for only two years from its signature, i.e. it expires on 26 July 2014, when does the Commission intend to start negotiations to sign a new Protocol with Mauritania?

Given that the cephalopod sector has been excluded from the current Protocol for the first time since 1987, does the Commission consider returning this sector to the fishing segments included in the new Protocol to be a priority?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(26 February 2014)

The current Protocol with Mauritania is due to expire in December 2014. The Commission aims therefore to start the negotiations for the renewal of this Protocol as soon as it will receive the authorisation to negotiate from the Council. To this end, a recommendation authorising the Commission to open negotiations has been submitted to the Council and it is still under its scrutiny. This draft is consistent with similar mandates adopted recently for other sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement negotiations and with the principles of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy and its external dimension (including sustainable exploitation of fish resources based on the best available scientific advice, limitation to the surplus, and inclusion of a human rights clause). The Commission has circulated, in support of this recommendation, an evaluation study assessing the implementation of the current Protocol to the European Parliament and to the Council.

On cephalopods, the intention of the Commission is to continue working at a scientific level, as agreed during the Joint Committee held in Nouakchott on 17 and 18 September 2013, and to test a new experimental model to obtain updated information on the status of the cephalopod stocks. In that perspective, the active involvement of the competent European scientists would be needed, in particular those of the *Instituto Espanol de Oceanografia*.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014341/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(19. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Empfehlung über relevante Produkt- und Dienstmärkte des Bereichs der elektronischen Kommunikation

Die Kommission überarbeitet derzeit die Märkteempfehlung von 2007. Eine Studie von ECORYS im Auftrag der Kommission kommt zu dem Ergebnis, das die bislang ex-ante regulierten Märkte 1 und 2 in Zukunft die Voraussetzungen des „Drei-Kriterien-Tests" nicht mehr erfüllen werden.

1. Wie bewertet die Kommission die Empfehlung der Studie zur Herausnahme der beiden Märkte?

2. Welche Auswirkungen erwartet die Kommission im Fall der Herausnahme der Märkte 1 und 2 für diejenigen Endkunden, die derzeit Call-by-Call, Pre-Selection oder Anschluss-Resale nutzen? Welche Auswirkungen auf das Niveau des Minutenpreises für Endkunden erwartet die Kommission?

3. Kann die von der Kommission in Artikel 21 Absatz 3 des Vorschlags für eine Verordnung zur Schaffung eines digitalen Binnenmarkts vorgeschlagene Angleichung der Tarife für Anrufe in einen anderen Mitgliedstaat an die Tarife für inländische Festnetzverbindungen nicht auf der Basis von Call-by-Call und Pre-Selection erreicht werden, die über Markt 1 oder Markt 2 auferlegt werden ?

4. Welche Alternativprodukte sollen die zumeist älteren Pre-Selection-Kunden nach Auffassung der Kommission nutzen, vor allem wenn diese Kunden keinen Breitbandanschluss nutzen wollen?

5. Wie sollen Geschäftskunden umfassende Angebote von alternativen Anbietern gemacht werden können, wenn durch den Wegfall von Markt 1 auch das Anschluss-Resale entfällt?

6. Markt 2 umfasst den Verbindungsaufbau im öffentlichen Telefonnetz an festen Standorten und damit auch die Zuführung zu einer Sonderrufnummer. Wie kann nach Auffassung der Kommission die Erreichbarkeit dieser Dienste gewährleistet werden?

Antwort von Frau Kroes im Namen der Kommission
(21. Februar 2014)

Nach dem EU-Rechtsrahmen für elektronische Kommunikation muss die Kommission ihre Empfehlung über relevante Produkt- und Dienstmärkte auf vorausschauende Weise überarbeiten. Vor diesem Hintergrund stimmt die Kommission mit Ecorys darin überein, dass die Märkte 1 und 2 in allen Mitgliedstaaten i) keine hohen, dauerhaften Markteintrittsbarrieren mehr aufzuweisen scheinen und ii) die Tendenz zu einem wirksamen Wettbewerb erkennen lassen. Sie beabsichtigt daher, diese Märkte von der Liste relevanter Märkte der Empfehlung zu nehmen. Der von alternativen Infrastrukturen ([1]) ausgehende Wettbewerbsdruck erscheint stark genug, um die Verbraucher vor ungerechtfertigten Preiserhöhungen zu schützen, was durch mehrere unabhängige Studien — darunter eine für das Europäische Parlament ([2]) — belegt wird. Es scheint, dass den Verbrauchern ein breites Spektrum attraktiver Dienstleistungen zu wettbewerbsfähigen Preisen zur Verfügung steht, die von Betreibern angeboten werden, die entweder über ihre eigene Infrastruktur verfügen ([3]) oder auf der Grundlage der angebotenen Vorleistungsprodukte in den Markt eintreten. In jedem Fall stünde eine Streichung der Märkte 1 und 2 von der Liste einer Regulierung dieser Märkte durch die nationalen Regulierungsbehörden nicht entgegen, wenn die Behörden nachweisen können, dass in ihrem Gebiet hohe, nicht nur vorübergehende Markteintrittsbarrieren bestehen und keine Entwicklung zu einem wirksamen Wettbewerb zu erkennen ist.

Zu Frage 3: Die in der vorgeschlagenen Verordnung über einen vernetzten Kontinent vorgesehene Angleichung der Tarife könnte durch eine anrufabhängige Betreiberwahl und -vorauswahl (CS/CPS) in den Märkten 1 und 2 nicht erzielt werden, da solche Verpflichtungen weder Preisverpflichtungen darstellen noch auf Mobilfunkdienste angewandt werden.

Zu Frage 6: Dienstleistungen für den Verbindungsaufbau auf Vorleistungsebene sind grundsätzlich getrennt von Transitdiensten zu betrachten, die im Allgemeinen dereguliert sind.

([1]) Mobilfunk und VoIP.
([2]) PE 518.736, „How to Build a Ubiquitous EU Digital Society", Abschnitt 6.3.1.
([3]) Mobilfunkbetreiber, Kabelfernsehanbieter.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014341/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Recommendation on relevant product and service markets within the electronic communications sector

The Commission is currently revising the market recommendation from 2007. A study by ECORYS on behalf of the Commission concludes that markets 1 and 2 currently subject to *ex-ante* regulation will no longer meet the requirements of the Three Criteria Test in future.

1. What is the Commission's view on the recommendation of the study to remove the two markets?

2. What impact would it expect the removal of markets 1 and 2 to have for those final customers currently using call-by-call selection, carrier pre-selection or line resale? What impact would it expect this to have on the per-minute price?

3. Can the alignment of the tariffs, proposed by the Commission in Article 21(3) of the proposal for a regulation establishing a digital single market, for calls to another Member State with the tariffs for domestic fixed communications not be achieved on the basis of call-by-call selection and carrier pre-selection imposed via market 1 or market 2?

4. In the Commission's opinion, what alternative products should the pre-selection customers, who are mostly older people, use, particularly if these customers do not want to use a broadband connection?

5. How will it be possible for alternative providers to put a wide range of offers to business customers if line resale will also cease to exist with the removal of market 1?

6. Market 2 includes call origination in the public telephone network provided at a fixed location and therefore also transfer to a special telephone number. How, in the Commission's opinion, can the accessibility of these services be ensured?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

Under the EU Regulatory Framework for electronic communications, the Commission must be forward-looking when reviewing the recommendation on relevant product and service markets. Against this background, the Commission concurs with Ecorys that markets 1 and 2, across all Member States, appear to (i) no longer exhibit high, non-transitory barriers to entry and (ii) show a tendency to effective competition and therefore envisages to delete their markets from the list of relevant markets of the recommendation. Constraints from alternative infrastructures ([1]) seem strong enough to protect consumers from abusive price increases, as supported by various independent studies, including one for the European Parliament ([2]). Consumers appear able to enjoy a variety of attractive services, provided at competitive prices, by different operators, who either have their own infrastructure ([3]), or enter the market based on available wholesale inputs. A potential removal of markets 1 and 2 from the list would in any event not prevent national regulatory authorities from regulating these markets, provided they prove that, in their given territory, high and non-transitory barriers to entry and no tendency to effective competition prevail. In reply to point 3 of the question, the alignment of tariffs under the proposed Regulation to achieve a Connected Continent, could not be achieved on the basis of call selection and call-pre-selection (CS/CPS) in market 1 and 2, as such obligations are neither price-related remedies nor apply to mobile services. In reply to point 6 of the question, wholesale call origination services are in principle distinct and separate services from transit services, which are in general deregulated.

([1]) e.g. mobile telephony and VoIP.
([2]) PE 518.736, 'How to Build a Ubiquitous EU Digital Society', Section 6.3.1.
([3]) e.g. mobile operators, cable tv.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014342/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Marietta Giannakou (PPE)
(19 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Παραβίαση του εμπάργκο εξαγωγής όπλων προς τη Συρία από την Τουρκία

Σύμφωνα με πρόσφατο δημοσίευμα της τουρκικής εφημερίδας «Χουριέτ», το οποίο επικαλείται στοιχεία του ΟΗΕ, αλλά και της τουρκικής στατιστικής υπηρεσίας, η Τουρκία εμφανίζεται να πραγματοποίησε εξαγωγή πολεμικού υλικού 47 τόνων στην Συρία, από τον Ιούνιο έως και τον Οκτώβριο του 2013.

Μετά από καθυστέρηση αρκετών ημερών, ο υπουργός Άμυνας της Τουρκίας, κ. Ισμέτ Γιλμάζ, διέψευσε τελικά τις εν λόγω κατηγορίες, υποστηρίζοντας ότι οι εν λόγω εξαγωγές αφορούσαν κυνηγετικά και όπλα-ρεπλίκες, κατάλληλα για αθλητικές δραστηριότητες.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Είναι εν γνώσει των εν λόγω εξαγωγών και, εάν ναι, θεωρεί ότι τίθεται θέμα παραβίασης του εμπάργκο εξαγωγής όπλων προς την Συρία από πλευράς της Τουρκίας;

2. Σκοπεύει να ζητήσει περαιτέρω πληροφορίες από τις τουρκικές αρχές σχετικά με τις εξαγωγές πολεμικού υλικού προς τη Συρία για το επίμαχο χρονικό διάστημα και ιδιαίτερα για τους παραλήπτες των σχετικών οπλικών συστημάτων;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(27 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η ΕΕ παραμένει σε στενή επαφή με την Τουρκία σχετικά με την κρίση στη Συρία. Στο πλαίσιο του ενισχυμένου διαλόγου εξωτερικής πολιτικής της ΕΕ με την Τουρκία σχετικά με θέματα κοινού ενδιαφέροντος, η ΥΕ/ΑΠ και η ΕΥΕΔ διατηρούν στενές και τακτικές διαβουλεύσεις με την Τουρκία σε διάφορα επίπεδα για όλες τις πτυχές της κρίσης στη Συρία. Η τουρκική κυβέρνηση έχει αναγνωρίσει την παροχή μη θανατηφόρου υλικού (όπως επιτρέπεται επίσης στην ΕΕ) τον περασμένο Δεκέμβριο. Ταυτόχρονα, οι τουρκικές αρχές αρνούνται συνεχώς κάθε καταγγελία για οποιαδήποτε σύνδεση με την al Qaida και άλλες εξτρεμιστικές ομάδες στη Συρία.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014342/13
to the Commission
Marietta Giannakou (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Turkish violation of the embargo on arms exports to Syria

According to a recent story in the Turkish newspaper *Hurriyet*, which quotes information from the United Nations and the Turkish statistical authority, Turkey appears to have exported 47 tonnes of military material to Syria between June and the end of October 2013.

Following a delay of some days, Turkish Defence Minister Ismet Yilmaz finally rejected the accusations, claiming that the exports in question related to hunting and replica weapons suitable for sports activities.

1. Is the Commission aware of the aforementioned exports, and if so does it believe that there is an issue of the arms embargo against Syria being violated by Turkey?

2. Does it plan to request further information from the Turkish authorities regarding the export of military materials to Syria in the period in question, and in particular the recipients of the military systems in question?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2014)

The EU remains in close contact with Turkey on the crisis in Syria. In the framework of the enhanced EU foreign policy dialogue with Turkey on issues of common interest, the HR/VP and the EEAS hold close and regular consultations with Turkey at various levels on all aspects of the Syrian crisis. The Turkish government has acknowledged the provision of non-lethal aid (as authorised also in the EU) in December last year. At the same time, the Turkish authorities have been constantly rejecting allegations of any link with AQ and other extremist groups in Syria.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014344/13
a la Comisión
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
(19 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Ratificación por parte de la UE del Tratado de Marrakech

El pasado junio se firmó en Marruecos el Tratado de Marrakech sobre facilidades de acceso a obras publicadas para personas con discapacidades visuales o con problemas de lectura.

Este tratado internacional vinculante de las Naciones Unidas y la OMPI tiene por objeto acabar con «la hambruna de libros» que priva a 250 millones de personas del acceso a la cultura y a la educación. Las personas con discapacidades visuales únicamente tienen acceso a entre el 1 y el 5 % de los libros publicados. El acuerdo se centra en excepciones a los derechos de autor para facilitar la creación de versiones accesibles y asequibles de libros y otras obras con derechos de autor. Fija una norma para que los países que ratifiquen el Tratado establezcan excepciones nacionales a los derechos de autor para cubrir estas actividades, y permite la importación y exportación de este material.

Más de 5 meses después de aprobar el texto del tratado, la UE sigue sin firmarlo y ni si quiera ha decidido qué procedimiento jurídico deberán aplicar los Estados miembros y el Parlamento Europeo en el proceso de ratificación.

¿Por qué la UE no ha ratificado aún este tratado? ¿Qué medidas ha adoptado el Consejo para firmar y ratificar lo antes posible este tratado de derechos de personas discapacitadas? ¿Cuáles son los pasos siguientes?

Respuesta del Sr. Barnier en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de febrero de 2014)

El Tratado de Marrakech de 2013 es un instrumento internacional muy importante para facilitar el acceso a los libros a las personas invidentes, con discapacidad visual o con otros problemas de lectura.

La Comisión desempeñó un papel fundamental a la hora de garantizar la conclusión con éxito de las negociaciones que dieron lugar a la adopción del Tratado. Ahora está trabajando con celeridad en su firma y ratificación y ya ha dado pasos importantes en este sentido.

El 20 de diciembre de 2013, la Comisión aprobó su propuesta al Consejo para que autorizara la firma del Tratado de Marrakech por parte de la Unión Europea. El Consejo ya ha empezado a debatir esta propuesta y se prevé que autorice la firma con rapidez.

Paralelamente, la Comisión está estudiando la cuestión de la ratificación, sobre todo en relación con las soluciones legislativas que garanticen el correcto funcionamiento del Tratado de Marrakech. Esto no solo es importante para las personas con deficiencias visuales en Europa, sino que también lo es, aún en mayor medida, para los beneficiarios potenciales que viven en países en desarrollo. A la Decisión del Consejo sobre la firma deberá seguir rápidamente el procedimiento de ratificación.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014344/13
to the Commission
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: EU ratification of Marrakesh Treaty

In June 2012, the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works by Visually Impaired Persons and Persons with Print Disabilities was concluded in Morocco.

This internationally binding UN/WIPO treaty aims at ending the 'book famine' that deprives 250 million people of access to culture and education. Visually impaired persons only have access to between 1 and 5% of books published. The agreement focuses on copyright exceptions to facilitate the creation of accessible and affordable versions of books and other copyrighted works. It sets a norm for countries ratifying the treaty to have a domestic copyright exception covering these activities, and allowing for the import and export of such material.

Over five months after agreeing to the treaty text, the EU has still not signed the treaty and has not even decided on the legal procedure to be used in the ratification process by Member States and the European Parliament.

Why has this treaty still not been ratified by the EU? What measures have been taken by the Commission to sign and ratify this disability rights treaty as soon as possible? What are the next steps?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

The 2013 Marrakesh Treaty is a very important international instrument to facilitate access to books for persons who are blind, visually impaired, or otherwise print disabled.

The Commission played a key role in ensuring the successful conclusion of the negotiations that lead to the adoption of the Treaty. It is now working rapidly towards its signature and ratification and has already made important steps to reach these objectives.

On 20 December 2013, the Commission adopted its proposal to the Council to authorise the signature of the Marrakesh Treaty by the European Union. The Council has already started the discussion of this proposal and is expected to authorise the signature rapidly.

In parallel, the Commission is looking into the question of ratification, in particular into legislative solutions to ensure the smooth functioning of the Marrakesh Treaty. This is not only important for visually impaired persons in Europe but even more to potential beneficiaries living in developing countries. The ratification process should rapidly follow the decision of the Council on the signature.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-014345/13
komissiolle
Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE)
(19. joulukuuta 2013)

Aihe: Tutkintojen vastavuoroinen tunnustaminen Euroopan unionissa

Ammattipätevyyden tunnustamisesta 7. syyskuuta 2005 annetussa direktiivissä 2005/36/EY säädetään ammattipätevyyden vastavuoroisesta tunnustamisesta Euroopan unionissa. Direktiivissä säädetään menettelystä, jolla jäsenvaltioiden toimivaltaisten viranomaisten on tunnustettava vastaanottaneensa ammattipätevyyden tunnustamista koskevan hakemuksen ”säännellyssä ammatissa” toimimista varten, ilmoitettava hakijalle puuttuvista asiakirjoista ja tehtävä päätös mahdollisimman nopeasti ja viimeistään kolmen kuukauden kuluessa.

Monet työpaikat Suomessa – erityisesti hallinnon alalla – edellyttävät tällaisen hakemuksen esittämistä ulkomaisen tutkinnon tunnustamiseksi ja rinnastamiseksi vastaavaan suomalaiseen tutkintoon. Vaikka unionin säänneltyjen ammattien tietokannassa on luettelo ammattipätevyyksistä, se ei sisällä ”diplomaatin” pätevyyttä Suomen tapauksessa. Siitä huolimatta niiden, jotka hakevat diplomaatin uralle Suomen ulkoasiainministeriöön on saatava tunnustus toisessa EU-maassa saadulle tutkinnolle. Tämä on omituista, sillä ulkoasianministeriön mukaan diplomaatin ura on periaatteessa avoin kaikille, joilla on korkeampi yliopistotutkinto (maisterin tutkinto) riippumatta sen luonteesta tai sisällöstä.

Suomen opetushallitus, siis ”toimivaltainen viranomainen”, veloittaa rekisteröintimaksuna 238 euroa (plus toimituskulut 10 euroa), joka on vastavalmistuneille korkea hinta yhdestä työhakemuksesta. Lisäksi niiden, jotka pääsevät diplomaatin uralle, on ohjelmaan hyväksymisen jälkeen läpäistävä ammatillinen koulutus. Siksi vaatimusta ulkomaisen tutkintotodistuksen vahvistamisesta voidaan pitää epätasa-arvoisena ja epäreiluna kohteluna.

1. Katsooko komissio, että tällaisilla keskinäistä tunnustamista koskevilla maksuilla rikotaan periaatetta, jonka mukaan esteet olisi poistettava henkilöiden ja palvelujen vapaalta liikkumiselta sisämarkkinoilla (ottaen huomioon direktiivin johdanto-osan 34 kappaleen)?

2. Onko valmisteilla lainsäädäntöehdotuksia korkea-asteen tutkintojen hyväksymistä koskevista hakemusmaksuista EU:ssa?

Michel Barnier’n komission puolesta antama vastaus
(21. helmikuuta 2014)

Direktiiviä 2005/36/EY ([1]) sovelletaan ainoastaan sellaisiin ammattihenkilöihin, joilla on pätevyys harjoittaa ammattiaan yhdessä jäsenvaltiossa ja jotka haluavat harjoittaa samaa ammattia toisessa jäsenvaltiossa, joka sääntelee kyseistä ammattia eli edellyttää erityistä ammattipätevyyttä kyseiseen ammattiin pääsemiseksi tai sen harjoittamiseksi. Arvoisan parlamentin jäsenen toimittamien tietojen perusteella tämä direktiivi ei näytä soveltuvan käsillä olevaan tapaukseen. Käsillä olevassa tapauksessahan on kyse ammatilliseen koulutukseen pääsystä diplomaatin ammatin harjoittamiseksi Suomessa eikä ammattiin pääsystä sinällään. Lisäksi kyseiseen koulutukseen pääsyn edellytyksenä on maisterintutkinto, tutkinnon sisällöstä riippumatta, eikä erityinen direktiivissä tarkoitettu ammattipätevyys.

Tutkintojen akateeminen tunnustaminen kuuluu Euroopan unionin toiminnasta tehdyn sopimuksen (SEUT-sopimuksen) 165 artiklan nojalla yksittäisten jäsenvaltioiden toimivaltaan. Tämä tehtävä voidaan uskoa valtionhallinnon elimille tai siirtää muille elimille kuten tutkintotodistusten akateemisen tunnustamisen kansallisille tiedotuskeskuksille tai yksittäisille korkea-asteen oppilaitoksille niiden institutionaalisen itsemääräämisoikeuden puitteissa. Tutkintojen tunnustamisesta akateemisiin tarkoituksiin vastaavilla toimivaltaisilla viranomaisilla on lisäksi kansallisesta lainsäädännöstä riippuen oikeus periä maksu palvelustaan. Ainoastaan, jos tällainen maksu on huomattavasti suurempi kuin tutkinnon tunnustamiseen liittyvät tosiasialliset hallinnolliset kulut – mistä ei ole viitteitä tässä tapauksessa –, saattaa olla kyse SEUT-sopimuksen 21 artiklan mukaisen vapaan liikkuvuuden esteestä. Koska akateemisten tutkintojen tunnustaminen jatko-opintoja silmällä pitäen kuuluu kansalliseen toimivaltaan, EU ei ole antanut lainsäädäntöä korkeakoulututkintojen akateemiseen tunnustamiseen liittyvistä hakemusmaksuista.

([1]) Euroopan parlamentin ja neuvoston direktiivi 2005/36/EY, annettu 7 päivänä syyskuuta 2005, ammattipätevyyden tunnustamisesta (EUVL L 255, 30.9.2005), sellaisena kuin se on muutettuna Euroopan parlamentin ja neuvoston direktiivillä 2013/55/EU, annettu 20 päivänä marraskuuta 2013 (EUVL L 354, 28.12.2013).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014345/13
to the Commission
Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Mutual recognition of degrees within the European Union

Directive 2005/36/EC of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications regulates the mutual recognition of professional qualifications within the EU. It lays down a procedure in which the competent authority of the Member State has to acknowledge receipt of the application to recognise professional qualifications for a 'regulated profession' and inform the applicant of missing files, after which the decision must be taken as soon as possible, within a maximum period of three months.

Many positions in Finland — particularly within the governmental sector — require such an application for the recognition and equation of a foreign degree with an equivalent degree in Finland. Whilst the Regulated Professions Database of the Union provides a list of qualifications, it does not list 'diplomat' in the case of Finland. Nonetheless, those applying for a diplomatic career with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) require the equation of a degree from an EU country. This is peculiar, as in principle, according to the MFA, a diplomatic career is open to anyone who has obtained a higher university degree (Masters) regardless of its nature or content.

The recognition fee of the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE), i.e. the 'competent authority', is EUR 238 (plus shipping costs of EUR 10), which is a high price for recent graduates and for a single job application. Moreover, as those embarking on a diplomatic career must go through professional training after being admitted to the programme, the requirement of the validation of foreign degrees could be considered unequal and unfair treatment.

1. Does the Commission take the view that such mutual recognition fees breach the principle of the abolition of obstacles to the free movement of persons and services in the internal market (taking into account recital 43 of the directive)?

2. Are there any efforts in the pipeline to propose legislation on the application fees for the recognition of higher degrees obtained within the EU?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

Directive 2005/36/EC ([1]) applies only to professionals who are fully qualified to practise in one Member State and who wish to practise the same profession in another Member State which regulates this profession, i.e. which requires specific/vocational qualifications to access to or pursue that profession. On the basis of the information provided by the Honourable Member, this directive does not seem to apply to the case submitted. Indeed, the case concerns access to professional training to become a diplomat in Finland, and not access to the profession as such. Moreover, access to this training is subject to the possession of a Master-level diploma, regardless of its content, and not specific professional qualifications within the meaning of the directive.

As far as the academic recognition of diplomas is concerned, this falls, pursuant to Article 165 TFEU, within the competence of individual Member States. This task can be attributed to government institutions or delegated to other bodies such as NARICs ([2]) or to individual higher education institutions under their institutional autonomy. Furthermore, the competent authorities for the recognition of diplomas for academic purposes are, depending on national legislation, entitled to charge a fee for their service. Only if such a charge is significantly higher than the actual administrative costs for the recognition of a diploma — for which there is no indication in the present case — may this amount to an impediment to the right of free movement under Art. 21 TFEU. Due to the recognition of academic degrees for the purpose of further studies being a national competence, there is no specific EU legislation foreseen on the application fees for the academic recognition of higher degrees.

([1]) Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications (OJ L 255, 30.9.2005), as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 (OJ L354, 28.12.2013).

([2]) National Academic Recognition Information Centres.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014346/13
προς την Επιτροπή (Αντιπρόεδρος / Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος)
Charles Tannock (ECR) και Eleni Theocharous (PPE)
(19 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: VP/HR — Σχέσεις της ΕΕ με την Αρμενία μετά το Βίλνιους

Ο επικεφαλής της Αντιπροσωπείας της ΕΕ στην Αρμενία ανήγγειλε πρόσφατα ότι οι δραστηριότητες της Συμβουλευτικής Ομάδας της ΕΕ στην Δημοκρατία της Αρμενίας (EUAG) θα περατωθεί τους επόμενους μήνες. Ο λόγος που δόθηκε είναι η απόφαση του Προέδρου της Αρμενίας, η οποία αναγγέλθηκε στις 3 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013, να μην προχωρήσει στην Συμφωνία Σύνδεσης και την DCFTA, ενώ εξακολουθούσε να αναζητεί άλλες μορφές συνεργασίας με την ΕΕ. Επειδή η Συμβουλευτική Ομάδα της ΕΕ δημιουργήθηκε για να βοηθήσει στην υλοποίηση του σχεδίου δράσης της Ευρωπαϊκής Πολιτικής Γειτονίας (ΕΠΓ) και τις μεταρρυθμίσεις στις οποίες προβαίνει η Αρμενία, οι οποίες επικεντρώνονται κυρίως στα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα, τη δημοκρατία, τη χρηστή διακυβέρνηση και σε έναν αριθμό συγκεκριμένων έργων συνεργασίας, η εξήγηση για τη διακοπή της απαραίτητης συνδρομής της Συμβουλευτικής Ομάδας της ΕΕ στους εν λόγω τομείς εμφανίζεται ως απογοητευτική και ανεξήγητη. Επιπλέον, το εν λόγω σχέδιο θα υπόκειται, μέχρι την περάτωσή του, στην άμεση διαχείριση της αντιπροσωπείας της ΕΕ, αντί να ακολουθηθεί το κατά το παρελθόν επιτυχές μοντέλο το οποίο χρησιμοποιούσε πεπειραμένο επικεφαλής ομάδας.

Γνωρίζει η Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος την προσέγγιση του Επικεφαλής της Αντιπροσωπείας της ΕΕ στο Ερεβάν. Η εν λόγω προσέγγιση συνάδει με τους στόχους της ΕΕ για την προώθηση της υλοποίησης του προγράμματος δράσης της ΕΠΓ στην Αρμενία;

Δεδομένου του πνεύματος και του γράμματος της κοινής δήλωσης που υπεγράφη από την ΕΕ και την Αρμενία στο Βίλνιους στις 29 Νοεμβρίου 2013, θεωρεί η Αντιπρόεδρος της Επιτροπής/Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος της Ένωσης ότι η περάτωση της Συμβουλευτικής Ομάδας της ΕΕ αποτελεί χρήσιμο μέτρο;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(21 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή θα ήθελε να ενημερώσει τον κ. βουλευτή ότι οι δραστηριότητες στο πλαίσιο του σχεδίου «Συμβουλευτική ομάδα της ΕΕ (EUAG) για τη Δημοκρατία της Αρμενίας Φάση III» προβλέπεται να ολοκληρωθούν τον Απρίλιο 2014. Η διάρκεια αυτή προβλεπόταν από τη σύμβαση, και, ως εκ τούτου, δεν αντικατοπτρίζει μια απόφαση που ακολούθησε τις τελευταίες εξελίξεις στην Αρμενία. Όντως, ο στόχος της EUAG συνίστατο στην εφαρμογή των διεθνών δεσμεύσεων της Αρμενίας, καθώς και στην υλοποίηση του οικείου προγράμματος μεταρρυθμίσεων, με ισχυρή επικέντρωση στις προετοιμασίες για τη συμφωνία σύνδεσης ΕΕ-Αρμενίας, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της σφαιρικής και σε βάθος ζώνης ελεύθερων συναλλαγών — θέμα που έχει διαγραφεί πλέον από την ημερήσια διάταξη. Οι συμβουλευτικές υπηρεσίες υψηλού επιπέδου της ΕΕ συνέβαλαν στη βελτίωση του στρατηγικού πλαισίου σε ορισμένους βασικούς τομείς, ενώ η ΕΕ διαθέτει και άλλα μέσα εφαρμογής για τη στήριξη της Αρμενίας στις περαιτέρω μεταρρυθμιστικές προσπάθειές της, όπως τεχνικές συμβουλές, αδελφοποίηση και στήριξη του προϋπολογισμού της.

Όσον αφορά την παρατήρησή σας για τη διαχείριση, θα πρέπει να διευκρινιστεί ότι τη διαχείριση της EUAG, όπως και όλων των άλλων έργων της ΕΕ στην Αρμενία, έχει αναλάβει η αντιπροσωπεία της ΕΕ. Ο εταίρος υλοποίησης στην περίπτωση αυτή είναι το Πρόγραμμα Ανάπτυξης των Ηνωμένων Εθνών (UNDP). Το έργο προέβλεπε έναν επικεφαλής ομάδας, του οποίου οι αρμοδιότητες διεκόπησαν, μετά από πλήρη συμφωνία με το UNDP και με τις αρχές της Αρμενίας.

Τέλος, θα ήθελα να διαβεβαιώσω τον αξιότιμο βουλευτή ότι η στήριξη των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων, της δημοκρατίας, της χρηστής διακυβέρνησης, της μεταρρύθμισης του δικαίου, της κινητικότητας και άλλων μεταρρυθμιστικών τομέων αμοιβαίου ενδιαφέροντος θα εξακολουθήσει να τυγχάνει, στο μέλλον, της στήριξης της ΕΕ μέσω άλλων μηχανισμών και έργων, και ότι η αντιπροσωπεία της στο Ερεβάν δραστηριοποιείται με πλήρη σεβασμό των διαχειριστικών αρχών και των κεντρικών κατευθυντήριων γραμμών.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014346/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Charles Tannock (ECR) and Eleni Theocharous (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU-Armenia relations post Vilnius

The EU Head of Delegation to Armenia recently announced that the activities of the European Union Advisory Group to the Republic of Armenia (EUAG) would terminate in the coming months. The reason given was the Armenian President's decision, announced on 3 September 2013, not to proceed with the Association Agreement and DCFTA, while still seeking all other forms of EU cooperation. As the EUAG was created to assist in the implementation of the ENP Action Plan and Armenia's own reforms agenda, which mainly focuses on human rights, democracy, good governance and a number of concrete cooperation projects, the explanation for stopping the necessary EUAG assistance in these fields seems disappointing and inexplicable. Furthermore, this project, up to the point of its termination, will be directly managed by the EU Delegation, rather than through the previously successful model which used an experienced team leader.

Is the High Representative aware of the EU Head of Delegation in Yerevan's approach? Is it in line with the goals of the EU of promoting the implementation of the ENP action plan in Armenia?

In view of the spirit and the letter of the joint Declaration signed by the EU and Armenia in Vilnius on 29 November 2013, does the VP/HR consider the termination of the EUAG to be a helpful step?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that the activities under the project 'EU Advisory Group (EUAG) to the Republic of Armenia Phase III' are planned to be completed in April 2014. This duration was foreseen in the contract and therefore does not reflect a decision following the latest developments in Armenia. Indeed, the objective of the EUAG has been the implementation of Armenia's international commitments and its own reform agenda, with a strong focus on preparations for the EU-Armenia Association Agreement, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area — now off the agenda. The EU high level advice has helped to improve the strategic framework in a number of key areas and the EU has other implementing tools to support Armenia in its further reform efforts, such as technical advice, twinning and budget support.

Regarding your remark on management, it should be clarified that the EUAG, like all other EU projects in Armenia, is managed by the EU Delegation. The implementing partner in this case is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The project included a team leader whose functions were discontinued in full agreement with the UNDP and the Armenian authorities.

Finally, I would like to reassure the Honourable Member that support to human rights, democracy, good governance, justice reforms, mobility and other reform areas of mutual interest will continue to benefit from EU assistance through other instruments and projects in the future, and that the Delegation in Yerevan acts in full respect for the management principles and HQ instructions.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014347/13
à la Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(19 décembre 2013)

Objet: Aide financière directe octroyée à l'Autorité palestinienne

Dans un rapport spécial (RS n° 14/2013) intitulé «L'aide financière directe (AFD) de l'Union européenne à l'Autorité palestinienne», la Cour des comptes européenne dresse un constat accablant pour la Commission et le SEAE.

Le rapport révèle qu'une «révision approfondie de l'aide financière directe accordée par l'Union à l'Autorité palestinienne s'avère indispensable». «À Gaza, en effet, de très nombreux fonctionnaires étaient payés alors qu'ils ne se rendaient pas au travail et qu'ils n'assuraient pas de service public. La Commission et le SEAE n'ont pas prêté une attention suffisante à ce problème.»

Depuis 1994, l'Union européenne a versé plus de 5,6 milliards d'euros d'aide au peuple palestinien. Entre 2008 et 2012, avec l'AFD de PEGASE, un financement d'environ 1 milliard d'euros a été octroyé. L'Union, qui est le principal bailleur de fonds de l'Autorité palestinienne, a versé depuis 2007 quelque 2,9 milliards d'euros pour des projets dans les territoires occupés, ce qui représente près de 20 % du total de l'aide européenne versée au titre de la politique de voisinage.

Quelles dispositions, en réponse aux recommandations de la Cour des comptes européenne, ont d'ores et déjà été prises par la Commission pour remédier à ce gaspillage?

Réponse donnée par M. Füle au nom de la Commission
(18 février 2014)

Les points soulevés par l'Honorable Parlementaire sont traités dans la réponse de la Commission et du SEAE au rapport (ECA SP 14/2013).

En ce qui concerne les recommandations individuelles de la Cour, la Commission et le SEAE ont convenu d'introduire des changements et de revoir le mécanisme Pegase.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014347/13
to the Commission
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Direct Financial Support to the Palestinian Authority

In a special report (RS No 14/2013) entitled 'European Union Direct Financial Support to the Palestinian Authority', the European Court of Auditors makes a damning finding for the Commission and the EEAS.

The report reveals that 'EU Direct Financial Support to the Palestinian Authority needs an overhaul'. 'In Gaza a considerable number of civil servants were being paid without going to work and providing a public service.' 'The Commission and the EEAS have not sufficiently addressed this problem.'

Since 1994, the European Union has paid over EUR 5.6 billion in aid to the Palestinian people. Between 2008 and 2012, Pegase DFS provided financing of approximately EUR 1 billion. Since 2007, the Union, which is the main provider of funds to the Palestinian Authority, has paid approximately EUR 2.9 billion for projects in the occupied territories; that represents nearly 20% of all European aid paid under the neighbourhood policy.

What provisions has the Commission already taken to stop this wastage?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The points raised by the Honourable Member are covered in the reply by the Commission and the EEAS to the report (ECA SP 14/2013).

Concerning individual recommendations by the Court, the Commission and the EEAS have agreed to introduce some changes and to review the PEGASE mechanism.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014348/13
à la Commission
Giancarlo Scottà (EFD) et Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(19 décembre 2013)

Objet: Recyclage des résidus de l'aluminium

L'Europe est le leader mondial dans le domaine du recyclage des résidus de l'aluminium.

Ce leadership est mis en danger par des exportations de plus en plus massives vers des pays tiers comme la Chine.

Dans la perspective de la révision de la directive «déchets», quelles seront les propositions de la Commission pour préserver cette industrie en Europe et éviter les exportations vers des États dont les usines ne respectent pas les normes environnementales et sociales de base?

Réponse donnée par M. Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(24 février 2014)

Dans le cadre du réexamen actuel des objectifs en matière de gestion des déchets ([1]), qui comprend la directive 2008/98/CE ([2]) relative aux déchets, la Commission envisage de proposer toute une série de mesures visant à encourager le recyclage en Europe. Ce réexamen sera présenté dans le cadre de l'initiative de la Commission relative à l'économie circulaire.

Pour prévenir les transferts illicites de déchets, le 11 juillet 2013, la Commission a proposé de renforcer les exigences ([3]) en matière d'inspection conformément au règlement (CE) nº 1013/2006 ([4]) relatif au transfert des déchets. Les colégislateurs se penchent actuellement sur cette proposition. Au niveau international, la Commission contribue aussi activement à la mise en œuvre du cadre de la convention de Bâle pour la gestion écologiquement rationnelle des déchets dangereux et d'autres déchets (adopté en mai 2013 ([5])).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/target_review.htm (en anglais).
([2]) JO L 312 du 22.11.2008.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/shipments/news.htm
([4]) JO L 190 du 12.7.2006.
([5]) http://www.basel.int/

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014348/13
alla Commissione
Giancarlo Scottà (EFD) e Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(19 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Riciclaggio dei rifiuti di alluminio

L'Europa è uno dei leader mondiali nel riciclaggio dei rifiuti di alluminio.

La leadership europea è tuttavia compromessa da esportazioni sempre più massicce verso paesi terzi, coma la Cina.

In vista del riesame della direttiva «rifiuti», quali sono le proposte della Commissione per mantenere questo settore in Europa e impedire esportazioni verso Stati i cui impianti non soddisfano gli standard ambientali e sociali di base?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(24 febbraio 2014)

Nell'ambito del riesame attualmente in corso degli obiettivi chiave della legislazione UE

in materia di rifiuti ([1]), che include la direttiva 2008/98/CE sui rifiuti ([2]), la Commissione sta vagliando una serie di misure a favore del riciclaggio in Europa. Tale riesame sarà presentato nel contesto dell'iniziativa della Commissione sull'economia circolare.

Per prevenire le spedizioni illegali di rifiuti, l'11 luglio 2013 la Commissione ha proposto di rendere più rigorosi i criteri di ispezione ([3]) di cui al regolamento (CE) n. 1013/2006 relativo alle spedizioni di rifiuti ([4]). La proposta è attualmente all'esame dei co-legislatori. A livello internazionale la Commissione ha inoltre contribuito attivamente all'attuazione del quadro della convenzione di Basilea per la gestione ecologicamente corretta dei rifiuti pericolosi e di altri rifiuti (adottata nel maggio 2013) ([5]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/target_review.htm
([2]) GU 312 del 22.11.2008.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/shipments/news.htm
([4]) GU L 190 del 12.7.2006.
([5]) http://www.basel.int/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014348/13
to the Commission
Giancarlo Scottà (EFD) and Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Recycling of aluminium waste

Europe is the world leader in the aluminium waste recycling industry.

That leadership is under threat from increasingly large exports to third countries such as China.

In light of the review of the Waste Directive, what proposals does the Commission intend to make in order to keep this industry in Europe and prevent exports to countries whose factories do not comply with basic environmental and social standards?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(24 February 2014)

Under the on-going Waste Target Review ([1]) which includes Directive 2008/98/EC ([2]) on waste, the Commission is considering a range of measures to encourage recycling in Europe. The Review will be presented in the context of the Commission's initiative on circular economy.

To prevent illegal shipments of waste, on 11 July 2013, the Commission proposed to strengthen the inspection requirements ([3]) under Regulation 1013/2006/EC ([4]) on shipments of waste. This proposal is now under consideration by the co-legislators. At international level the Commission also actively contributes to the implementation of the Basel Convention's framework for the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes and other wastes (adopted in May 2013 ([5])).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/target_review.htm
([2]) OJ 312 of 22.11.2008.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/shipments/news.htm
([4]) OJ L190 of 12.7.2006.
([5]) http://www.basel.int/

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014349/13
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (NI)
(19 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Intervento in difesa della biblioteca universitaria di Pisa

— Una delle più prestigiose biblioteche pubbliche italiane, la biblioteca universitaria di Pisa, ricca di un patrimonio librario di oltre 600mila volumi, 1 389 manoscritti, 7 022 cinquecentine, 161 incunaboli, 4 357 periodici di cui 1 030 correnti, si trova attualmente in una incredibile situazione di stallo, causa l'accertata pericolosità dell'immobile in cui ha sede e la difficoltà del trasferimento in locali alternativi; queste difficoltà sono accentuate da incredibili conflitti di competenze e farraginosità burocratiche e di ogni genere;

— tale situazione rischia di compromettere il lavoro di moltissimi studiosi e studenti italiani, europei e di altri paesi per un tempo imprevedibile, visto che non sono ad oggi noti né i costi, né le reali possibilità di soluzione del caso;

Può la Commissione far sapere se intende intervenire per sollecitare il governo italiano a impedire questo grave vulnus all'attività di ricerca e di studio che colpisce il lavoro di migliaia di studenti italiani ed europei?

Risposta di Androulla Vassiliou a nome della Commissione
(25 febbraio 2014)

La Commissione non ha competenza giurisdizionale per trattare la questione che è di competenza esclusiva delle autorità nazionali competenti.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014349/13
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (NI)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Action to protect the university library of Pisa

— One of the most prestigious public libraries in Italy, the university library of Pisa, containing over 600 000 volumes, 1 389 manuscripts, 7 022 books printed in the 16th century, 161 incunabula and 4 357 periodicals, 1 030 of them current, now finds itself in an incredible deadlock because of the dangerous condition of the building where it is housed and the difficulty of transporting all these works to alternative premises; difficulties which are compounded by incredible conflicts of jurisdiction and a multitude of bureaucratic obstacles;

— this situation risks jeopardising the work of many researchers and students from Italy, Europe and other countries for an unknown period of time, since neither the cost nor the actual potential for solving the problem are as yet known;

Can the Commission state whether it intends to take action to urge the Italian Government to put an end to the serious harm caused to research and studies which is affecting thousands of Italian and European students?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(25 February 2014)

The Commission has no jurisdiction to deal with the question asked, which a matter is solely for the national authorities concerned.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-014351/13
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(19 grudnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Problem programu Natura 2000 w Polsce na przykładzie gminy Stąporków

Istnienie obszarów Natura 2000 stanowi problem dla wielu gmin województwa świętokrzyskiego. W ostatnim czasie zwróciłem się do zarządzających samorządami w regionie świętokrzyskim wójtów, burmistrzów oraz prezydentów, o przekazanie informacji dotyczących ewentualnych problemów związanych z występowaniem obszarów Natura 2000 na terenie województwa świętokrzyskiego. Po analizie informacji przekazanych przez przedstawicieli 88 gmin wywnioskować można, że wiele samorządów w świętokrzyskim dotyka problem związany z występowaniem obszarów Natura 2000. Taką gminą jest Stąporków.

Przedstawiciele sołectwa Furmanów i Niekłania Wielkiego, oraz samorządowcy z nadmienionych terenów, zwrócili się do mnie z prośbą o zajęcie się kwestią występujących w Furmanowie, Błaszkowie i Niekłaniu Wielkim obszarów Natura 2000. W tym przypadku Natura 2000 jest problemem dla udrożnienia rzeki Czarna Konecka, nieuregulowanej w km 76+500 –83+900, w miejscowości Błaszków i Furmanów. Jak podnoszą przedstawiciele lokalnej społeczności, w przekazanych mi informacjach, aby udrożnić przepływ wód należy wykonać rów o długości około 35 metrów na poziomie działki ewidencyjnej 963 położonej w Furmanowie.

Czy Komisja widzi możliwość ingerencji w pewną część obszarów Natura 2000 w miejscowości Furmanów w gminie Stąporków, polegającą na wykonaniu powyższych robót, w sytuacji gdy pozostawienie problemu w takim stanie jak obecny stanowi dużą, a z czasem pogłębiającą się uciążliwość, dla mieszkańców Błaszkowa, Furmanowa i Niekłania Wielkiego?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Janeza Potočnika w imieniu Komisji
(19 lutego 2014 r.)

Zatwierdzanie przedsięwzięć dotyczących obszarów Natura 2000 nie leży w kompetencjach Komisji. Za zarządzanie siecią Natura 2000 w regionie świętokrzyskim odpowiedzialna jest Regionalna Dyrekcja Ochrony Środowiska w Kielcach i to ona może dostarczyć dalszych informacji na temat procedur związanych z zatwierdzaniem przedsięwzięć dotyczących obszarów Natura 2000.

W rzeczywistości, zgodnie z art. 6 ust. 3 dyrektywy siedliskowej ([1]) plany i przedsięwzięcia, w tym prace przeciwpowodziowe, mogą być realizowane na obszarach Natura 2000 jedynie pod warunkiem, że nie wpłyną one niekorzystnie na dany obszar. Procedura wykonania przepisów art. 6 ust. 3 została wyczerpująco opisana w wytycznych Komisji: „Zarządzanie obszarami Natura 2000. Postanowienia artykułu 6 dyrektywy »siedliskowej« 92/43/EWG" ([2]).

([1]) Dyrektywa Rady 92/43/EWG z dnia 21 maja 1992 r. w sprawie ochrony siedlisk przyrodniczych oraz dzikiej fauny i flory, Dz.U. L 206 z 22.7.1992.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/provision_of_art6_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014351/13
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Problems linked to the Natura 2000 programme in Poland, using the example of the Stąporków municipality

Natura 2000 areas are a source of problems for many municipalities in the Świętokrzyskie province. I recently asked the mayors who act as heads of local government in the Świętokrzyskie region whether they had experienced any problems in connection with the Natura 2000 areas in the Świętokrzyskie province. After analysing the information which was provided by the representatives of 88 municipalities, I can conclude that many local authorities in the Świętokrzyskie province are affected by problems linked to Natura 2000 areas. Stąporków is a good example.

Representatives of the villages of Furmanów and Niekłań Wielki and officials from the relevant local authorities have asked me to investigate the issues which have arisen in connection with the Natura 2000 areas in Furmanów, Błaszków and Niekłań Wielki following proposals to make the Czarna Konecka river passable and regulate it between km 76+500 and 83+900 at Błaszków and Furmanów. Local representatives have told me that a channel measuring approximately 35 metres in length needs to be dug at the level of cadastral plot 963, located in Furmanów, to allow the river to flow freely.

Would the Commission be able to intervene in order to allow the above works to be carried out in the Natura 2000 areas in Furmanów in the Stąporków municipality, given that the current situation is posing serious and increasing difficulties for the residents of Błaszków, Furmanów and Niekłań Wielki?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

It is not the Commission's competence to approve projects on Natura 2000 sites. The Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Kielce is responsible for managing the Natura 2000 network in the Świętokrzyskie region and could provide further information on the procedures related to approving projects on the Natura 2000 sites.

Indeed, pursuant to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive ([1]), plans and projects, including flood relief works, can be carried out on Natura 2000 sites on condition that they do not significantly affect the integrity of the sites. The procedure for implementation of Article 6(3) has been described in detail in the Commission guidance document 'Managing Natura 2000 sites; the provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC ([2])'.

([1]) 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.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/provision_of_art6_en.pdf

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-014355/13
komissiolle
Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE)
(19. joulukuuta 2013)

Aihe: Vastuullisuuden lisääminen EU:n suorassa tuessa Afganistanin hallitukselle

Transparency International -järjestö julkaisi 3. joulukuuta 2013 vuotuisen korruptioindeksin. Afganistan oli 175. sijalla 177 maasta. Yhdysvallat on perustanut viraston nimeltä "Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction" (SIGAR) ([1]), jonka tehtävänä on valvoa tehokkaasti ja riippumattomasti Yhdysvaltain jälleenrakennustoimia Afganistanissa. Viraston perustaminen oli tarpeen siksi, että kansainvälisen liittoutuman taistelujoukkojen vetäytymisen määräajaksi on asetettu 31. joulukuuta 2014 ja siksi, että vuonna 2010 kansainväliset avunantajat sopivat tarjoavansa enemmän talousarvioon perustuvaa suoraa tukea Afganistanin hallitukselle. Korruption kukoistaessa mekanismista on kuitenkin tullut yhä monimutkaisempi, ja veronmaksaja maksaa viulut. EU:n tuki Afganistanille on huomattavan laajaa ja siirtymäaikana se todennäköisesti kasvaa. Maailmanpankki arvioi, että seuraavien 10 vuoden aikana tukeen on käytettävä joka vuosi yli 7 miljardia Yhdysvaltain dollaria.

Yhdysvaltain hallituksen yksiköt arvostelivat äskettäin SIGAR:ia siitä, että se saa hallituksen huonoon valoon paljastaessaan, että Yhdysvaltain kattava strategia tai siihen liittyvät suuntaviivat eivät ohjaa hallituksen korruptionvastaisia toimia tai että miljardeja dollareita käytetään polttoaineen ja varaosien hankkimiseen Afganistanin armeijalle ilman, että kukaan on vastuussa hankinnoista ([2]). Samalla kansalaisjärjestöt ovat vaatineet SIGAR:in toiminnan vahvistamista entisestään ja käytännön laajentamista muihin kansainvälisiin organisaatioihin, jotka tarjoavat budjettiin perustuvaa rahoitusta Afganistanin hallitukselle. Ottaen huomioon 5. joulukuuta 2012 annetun EU:n erityisedustajan / EU:n Afganistanin edustuston lehdistötiedotteen ([3]) kysyn seuraavaa:

1. Aiotaanko luoda EU:n Afganistanin hallitukselle antamaa tukea koskeva kattava ja mitattavissa oleva korruption vastainen strategia, johon liittyy vertailukohtia ja aikatauluja?

2. Aiotaanko perustaa SIGAR:in kaltainen riippumaton elin seuraamaan EU:n Afganistanille antamaa kehitysapua ja humanitaarista apua, jota tarjotaan myös esimerkiksi Maailmanpankin, IMF:n ja Tokiossa hyväksytyn keskinäistä vastuuta koskevan kehyksen kautta?

Andris Piebalgsin komission puolesta antama vastaus
(20. helmikuuta 2014)

EU:n edustusto seuraa kaikkia raportteja, joissa arvioidaan korruption esiintymistä Afganistanissa, ja tuntee myös asianomaisen Transparency Internationalin kertomuksen.

Kansainvälinen yhteisö sitoutui vuonna 2010 ja vuonna 2012 Tokiossa hyväksytyn keskinäistä vastuuta koskevan kehyksen mukaisesti myöntämään ainakin 50 prosenttia avusta budjettitukena, minkä jälkeen EU:n apu on kanavoitu pääasiassa Maailmanpankin, YK:n kehitysohjelman ja Aasian kehityspankin hallinnoimien erityisrahastojen kautta. Avun käyttöä seurataan sekä edustustossa että päätoimipaikassa. Sitä, miten EU:n yhteistyökumppanit käyttävät EU:n varoja, tarkkaillaan tarkastuskäyntien avulla. EU pyrkii sitoutumisellaan ja poliittisella vuoropuhelulla myös tukemaan Afganistanin instituutioiden varainhoitovalmiuksien kehittämistä, jotta hallitus pystyisi paremmin hallinnoimaan käytettävissään olevia varoja. Elokuussa 2013 julkistettu julkisen varainhoidon arviointi ([4]) vahvisti, että Afganistanin hallitus on edistynyt hyvin julkista taloutta koskevan vastuuvelvollisuuden osalta.

Vastaukset esitettyihin kahteen kysymykseen:

1. Korruption torjunta on merkittävä monialainen asiakysymys sekä EU:n Afganistanin hallituksen kanssa käymässä poliittisessa ja kehitysyhteistyötä koskevassa vuoropuhelussa että Maailmanpankin, Aasian kehityspankin ja YK:n toteuttamassa korkeatasoisessa varainhoidon valvonnassa. EU rahoittaa suoraan korruption torjuntaan tähtääviä toimia ja tukee julkisen taloushallinnon parantamista. Lisäksi edustuston vuotuisessa tarkastussuunnitelmassa otetaan huomioon tämän toimintaympäristön suuret riskit.

([1]) http://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Sopko-Testimony-Final.pdf
([2]) http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/alerts/SIGAR-SP-13-9.pdf
([3]) http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/afghanistan/documents/news/20130512_.
([4]) Julkisia menoja ja taloudellista vastuuta koskeva ohjelma (Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability, PEFA), http://pefa.org/.

2. Vuonna 2012 perustettu SIGAR ([5]) vastaa tarkastuksista ja tutkimuksista, jotka koskevat Yhdysvaltojen Afganistaniin tekemiä investointeja. Niitä on viimeisten kymmenen vuoden aikana tehty lähes 100 miljardin dollarin arvosta sekä sotilaallisen toiminnan että kehitysyhteistyön alalla. EU:lla on käytössään omat valvonta- ja tutkintaelimensä ([6]), jotka tekevät tiivistä yhteistyötä edellä mainittujen kehityspankkien ja YK:n järjestöjen valvonta- ja tutkintayksiköiden kanssa. EU:n yksiköt seuraavat jatkossakin valppaasti näissä asioissa tapahtuvaa kehitystä.

([5]) Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (Afganistanin jälleenrakentamisen erityistarkastajan virasto).
([6]) Euroopan tilintarkastustuomioistuin ja Euroopan petostentorjuntavirasto.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014355/13
to the Commission
Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Increasing accountability in direct EU support to the Afghan government

Transparency International published its annual Corruption Perception Index on 3 December 2013. Afghanistan's ranking was 175 out of 177 countries. The United States established the 'Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction' (SIGAR) in order to provide effective and independent oversight of US reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan ([1]). This measure was necessary due to the 31 December 2014 deadline for the withdrawal of international coalition combat forces, and because international donors agreed in 2010 to provide more on-budget 'direct' assistance to the Afghan government. But as corruption thrives, the mechanism is further complicated, whilst the taxpayer pays the price. EU assistance to Afghanistan is significant, and is likely to grow during the 'transformation phase': the World Bank estimates that more than USD 7 billion will need to be spent every year for the next 10 years1.

SIGAR was criticised recently by US government agencies for making the government 'look bad', e.g. revealing that its 'anti-corruption activities are not guided by a comprehensive US strategy or related guidelines', or that there is a lack of accountability for billions of dollars in fuel purchases and spare parts for the Afghan army ([2]). At the same time, NGOs have demanded the further strengthening of SIGAR and spreading the practice to other international organisations providing on-budget funding to the Afghan government. Taking into account the press release of the EU Special Representative/EU Delegation in Afghanistan of 5 December 2012 ([3]), are there any plans to:

1. develop a comprehensive and measurable anti-corruption strategy for EU aid to the Afghan government, including benchmarks and timelines?

2. establish an independent body like SIGAR for the auditing of EU development aid and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan (also provided through the World Bank, the IMF, the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, etc.)?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

The EU Delegation follows all the reports assessing the level of corruption in Afghanistan, including the report by Transparency International.

Following the International Community's commitment in 2010 and 2012 through the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework to deliver at least 50% of aid 'on-budget'; EU aid is delivered principally through trust funds managed by World Bank (WB), UN Development Programme and Asian Development Bank (ADB) and followed up at both Delegation and HQ levels. Verification missions are organised in order to double-check the use of EU funds by all EU aid partners. EU engagement and policy dialogue also aim at building the Public Finance Management (PFM) capacity of Afghan institutions in order to ensure that Government improves the management of its resources. An August 2013 PFM assessment ([4]) has confirmed that Afghan government has made good progress on Public Financial Accountability.

On the 2 points:

1. The fight against corruption is a major cross cutting issue at the heart of EU political and development cooperation dialogue with the Government and the high standard fiduciary oversight implemented by the WB, ADB and the UN. The EU directly finances anti-corruption measures and supports the improvement of PFM. Furthermore, the Delegation annual audit plan takes into account this high risk environment.

2. SIGAR ([5]), created in 2012, audits and investigates US investment in Afghanistan, amounting to almost USD 100 billion for the last decade for both military and development windows. The EU relies on its oversight and investigation bodies ([6]) which work closely with their oversight and investigation counterparts at the development banks and UN agencies abovementioned. The EU services remain on alert on these issues.

([1]) http://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Sopko-Testimony-Final.pdf
([2]) http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/alerts/SIGAR-SP-13-9.pdf
([3]) http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/afghanistan/documents/news/20130512_
([4]) Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability, PEFA, http://pefa.org/
([5]) Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.
([6]) Respectively the European Court of Auditors and the European Anti-Fraud Office.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014356/13
à la Commission
Tokia Saïfi (PPE) et Philippe Boulland (PPE)
(19 décembre 2013)

Objet: Implantation d'éoliennes terrestres dans des zones transfrontalières

L'article 4 du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne (TFUE) définit le domaine de l'énergie comme une compétence partagée de l'Union européenne (UE) avec les États membres. L'article 194 du TFUE précise que la politique de l'Union européenne vise également, dans un esprit de solidarité entre les États membres, à promouvoir le développement des énergies nouvelles et renouvelables. L'article 175 du TFUE fait référence aux fonds structurels européens et à la cohésion économique, sociale et territoriale de l'UE.

L'implantation d'éoliennes terrestres dans des zones transfrontalières intra-européennes peut engendrer des conséquences négatives pour les citoyens et leur environnement immédiat. Par conséquent, des conflits transfrontaliers apparaissent et ne peuvent être résolus en raison d'un vide juridique à tous les niveaux: européen, national et territorial.

1. La Commission européenne peut-elle indiquer s'il existe des dispositions européennes communes concernant l'implantation de matériel de politique d'énergie renouvelable?

2. Concernant le caractère transfrontalier intra-européen de certaines éoliennes et leurs conséquences et en l'absence de telles orientations européennes, la Commission peut-elle indiquer si elle se base sur la Convention d'Espoo sur l'évaluation de l'impact sur l'environnement dans un contexte transfrontalier, ou sur toute autre convention de droit international?

3. La Commission peut-elle indiquer s'il serait possible, dans le cadre des programmes de coopération transfrontalière, de soutenir des actions visant à une meilleure coopération en matière d'énergies renouvelables? Si oui, peut-elle préciser comment?

4. La directive 2011/92/CE, en cours de révision, a fait l'objet de nombreuses propositions de la part du Parlement européen sur les projets ayant une incidence transfrontalière. Une des propositions principales consiste en la création d'un guichet unique dans chaque État membre. La Commission estime-t-elle cette proposition envisageable et la considère-t-elle comme optimale pour la résolution de conflits transfrontaliers?

Réponse donnée par M. Oettinger au nom de la Commission
(27 février 2014)

1. La directive 2009/28/CE ([1]) constitue le cadre de la politique de l'UE en faveur des énergies renouvelables. La directive contient, entre autres, un certain nombre de dispositions sur les procédures administratives relatives à l'autorisation, à la certification et à l'octroi de licences pour les installations utilisant des sources d'énergie renouvelables. Les États membres sont tenus de définir clairement les spécifications techniques éventuelles que les équipements et systèmes d'énergie renouvelable doivent respecter pour bénéficier de régimes d'aide (article 13, paragraphe 2).

2. Conformément à l'article 7 de la directive EIE ([2]) et à la convention d'Espoo, lorsqu'un projet est susceptible d'avoir des incidences notables sur l'environnement, une procédure EIE transfrontalière doit être suivie.

3. Ce type de projets pourrait bénéficier d'une aide de l'UE, au titre d'un programme de coopération transfrontalière, à certaines conditions: l'objectif de production d'énergie renouvelable a été retenu pour le programme en question; le projet a été soumis en réponse à un appel de propositions lancé au titre du programme de coopération transfrontalière; chaque projet doit répondre aux critères d'éligibilité du programme ([3]).

4. L'approche consistant à créer un organisme commun a déjà été suivie pour plusieurs projets transfrontaliers et elle s'est avérée être une bonne pratique ([4]). Aussi les colégislateurs ont-ils désormais convenu d'une disposition donnant la possibilité aux États membres de créer un organisme commun chargé de procéder aux consultations en cas de projet transfrontalier. À cette étape de la procédure EIE transfrontalière, les États membres doivent veiller à ce que le public comme les autorités nationales compétentes soient dûment associés aux consultations.

([1]) Directive nº 2009/28/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 23 avril 2009 relative à la promotion de l'utilisation de l'énergie produite à partir de sources renouvelables et modifiant puis abrogeant les directives nº 2001/77/CE et nº 2003/30/CE (JO L 140 du 5.6.2009).

([2]) Directive 2011/92/UE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 13 décembre 2011 concernant l'évaluation des incidences de certains projets publics et privés sur l'environnement (JO L 26 du 28.1.2012).

([3]) Réunir notamment des bénéficiaires d'au moins deux pays participants dont au moins un État membre.

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/pdf/Transboundry%20EIA%20Guide.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014356/13
to the Commission
Tokia Saïfi (PPE) and Philippe Boulland (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Erection of onshore wind turbines in transboundary areas

Article 4 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) defines energy as an area in which competence is shared between the European Union (EU) and the Member States. Article 194 TFEU states that Union policy shall also aim, in a spirit of solidarity between Member States, to promote the development of new and renewable forms of energy. Article 175 TFEU refers to the European structural funds and economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU.

The erection of onshore wind turbines in intra-European transboundary areas may have a negative impact on citizens and their immediate environment. Consequently, transboundary conflicts are arising and cannot be resolved due to the legal vacuum at all levels: European, national and territorial.

1. Can the European Commission indicate if there are any common European provisions on the erection of equipment which comes under renewable energy policy?

2. Concerning the intra-European transboundary nature of certain wind turbines and their impact and in the absence of any European guidelines, can the Commission indicate if it is relying on the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context or on any other convention under international law?

3. Can the Commission indicate if it would be possible, within the context of cross-border cooperation programmes, to support actions to foster better cooperation on renewable energy? If so, how?

4. Directive 2011/92/EC, which is currently being revised, has been the subject of numerous proposals by the European Parliament concerning projects with a transboundary impact. One of the main proposals is to create a single point of contact in each Member State. Does the Commission consider that proposal to be feasible and does it consider that this is the best way of resolving cross-border conflicts?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2014)

1. Directive 2009/28/EC ([1]) constitutes the framework for EU policy towards renewable energy. Amongst other things, the directive contains a number of provisions on administrative procedures related to the authorisation, certification and licensing of renewable energy installations. Member States are required to clearly define any technical specifications which must be met by renewable energy equipment and systems in order to benefit from support schemes (Article 13(2)).

2. Pursuant to Article 7 of the EIA Directive ([2]) and the Espoo Convention where a project is likely to have significant effects on the environment, a transboundary EIA procedure should be followed.

3. This type of projects could get EU support under a cross-border cooperation programme under a number of conditions: the objective of renewable energy has been selected for the programme concerned; the project has been submitted in answer to a call for proposals launched by the cross-border cooperation programme; each project has to comply with the programme's eligibility criteria ([3]).

4. The approach of setting up of a joint body has already been followed for a number of transboundary projects and has proved to be good practice ([4]). Taking this into account, co-legislators have now agreed on a provision giving the possibility to Member States to set up a joint body to conduct consultations on transboundary projects. For this step of the transboundary EIA procedure, Member States should ensure proper involvement of both the public and the relevant national competent authorities.

([1]) Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources and amending and subsequently repealing Directives 2001/77/EC and 2003/30/EC, OJ L 140, 5.6.2009.
([2]) Directive 2011/02/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.
([3]) Notably it has to involve beneficiaries from at least two participating countries including at least one Member State.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/pdf/Transboundry%20EIA%20Guide.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014357/13
à la Commission
Brice Hortefeux (PPE) et Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE)
(19 décembre 2013)

Objet: Impact sur la filière porc du renforcement des critères de dénomination «produit de montagne»

En 2012, l'Union européenne a adopté un règlement relatif aux systèmes de qualité applicables aux produits agricoles et aux denrées alimentaires ((UE) nº 1151/2012), qui introduit la mention «produit de montagne».

Ce même règlement autorise la Commission européenne (article 31, alinéa 3) à adopter un acte délégué établissant les conditions selon lesquelles les matières premières et les aliments pour animaux peuvent provenir de l'extérieur des zones de montagne.

Lors d'un déplacement en France le 25 novembre 2013, le Commissaire Cioloş a annoncé qu'il souhaitait que 30 % au minimum de l'alimentation des porcs proviennent des zones de montagne.

La Commission peut-elle nous indiquer à partir de quels critères elle a fixé le seuil à 30 %?

Ce seuil tient-il compte des réalités du terrain, à savoir qu'il est difficile de nourrir des porcs avec des céréales cultivées en altitude, cette pratique étant limitée pour des raisons géographiques et climatiques?

La Commission a-t-elle consulté les producteurs de porc de montagne avant de fixer ce critère?

La Commission a-t-elle évalué l'impact économique et social de cette décision?

Réponse donnée par M. Cioloş au nom de la Commission
(14 février 2014)

La version actuelle du projet de règlement délégué de la Commission complétant le règlement (UE) nº 1151/2012 ([1]) en ce qui concerne les conditions d'utilisation de la mention de qualité facultative «produit de montagne» comporte une disposition concernant les porcins selon laquelle, la proportion d'aliments pour animaux qui ne peuvent pas être produits dans des zones de montagne, exprimée en pourcentage de la matière sèche, ne doit pas dépasser les 75 % du régime alimentaire annuel de l'animal.

Cette disposition déroge à la disposition de l'article 31, paragraphe 1 dudit règlement qui exige que les aliments pour animaux d'élevage proviennent essentiellement de zones de montagne. Afin de mettre l'expertise au service d'un projet d'acte délégué, de larges consultations ont été menées dont celles d'experts et de parties prenantes des 28 États membres conformément aux engagements de la Commission ([2]) et à la pratique établie de longue date.

Il ressort de ces consultations que seule une petite proportion des aliments pour porcins provient à ce jour de zones de montagne, ce qui a été corroboré par une étude ([3]) du Centre commun de recherche de la Commission. Pour trouver un équilibre entre les deux objectifs de la mention «produit de montagne», offrir aux producteurs de montagne un instrument efficace leur permettant de mieux commercialiser leurs produits et réduire les risques de confusion du consommateur en ce qui concerne la provenance des produits de montagne, la Commission a prévu une dérogation à l'obligation selon laquelle les aliments pour animaux doivent provenir essentiellement de zones de montagne et a fixé le seuil de référence à 25 % ([4]).

Étant donné que la Commission n'a pas inclus dans sa proposition en vue dudit règlement les dispositions visant à la création de la mention de qualité facultative «produit de montagne», ces dispositions ont été ajoutées par le législateur pendant la procédure d'adoption et aucune analyse d'impact concernant cette mention n'a été réalisée.

([1]) Règlement (UE) n° 1151/2012 relatif aux systèmes de qualité applicables aux produits agricoles et aux denrées alimentaires, JO L 343 du 14.12.2012.
([2]) Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen et au Conseil, COM(2009) 673 final. Mise en œuvre de l'article 290 du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne, Bruxelles, 9.12.2009.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/external-studies/2013/mountain-farming/fulltext_en.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tbt/tbt_repository/EU172_EN_1_1.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014357/13
to the Commission
Brice Hortefeux (PPE) and Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Impact on pork sector from stricter 'mountain product' criteria.

In 2012, the European Union adopted a regulation on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs (Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012), which introduces the term 'mountain product'.

Article 31(3) of that regulation authorises the European Commission to adopt a delegated act laying down the conditions under which raw materials or feedstuffs are permitted to come from outside mountain areas.

During a trip to France on 25 November 2013, Commissioner Cioloş announced that he wanted a minimum of 30% of pig food to come from mountain areas.

Can the Commission tell us the criteria on the basis of which it set the threshold at 30%?

Does that threshold take account of the situation on the ground, namely that it is difficult to feed pigs using cereals cultivated at high altitude, and the fact that that practice is limited for geographical and climate-related reasons?

Did the Commission consult mountain pork producers before setting that criterion?

Has the Commission evaluated the economic and social impact of that decision?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

The current version of the draft Commission Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 ([1]) with regard to conditions of use of the optional quality term 'mountain product' includes a provision that as regards pigs, the proportion of feedstuffs that cannot be produced in mountain areas, expressed as a percentage of dry matter, shall not exceed 75% of the annual animal diet.

This provision derogates from the provision of Article 31 (1) of the said Regulation which requires that feedstuffs for farm animals come essentially from mountain areas. In order to harness the expertise to prepare a draft delegated act, extensive consultation has been carried out including consultation of 28 Member States' experts and stakeholders in accordance with the Commission's commitments ([2]) and long-standing practice.

This consultation has shown that only a small proportion of feedstuffs for pigs are currently sourced in mountain areas, which was confirmed by a study ([3]) by the Commission's Joint Research Centre. To strike the balance between the dual objectives of the term 'mountain product' of providing mountain producers with an effective tool to better market their product and reducing the risks of consumer confusion as to the mountain provenance of products, the Commission provided for a derogation from the requirement that feedstuffs must come essentially from mountain areas and set the threshold at 25% ([4]).

Taking into account that the Commission did not include in its proposal for the said Regulation the provisions creating an optional quality term 'mountain product' these were added by the legislator during the adoption procedure, an impact assessment with regard to this term was not carried out.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs, OJ L 343 of 14.12.2012.
([2]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, COM(2009) 673 final, Implementation of Article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Brussels, 9.12.2009.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/external-studies/2013/mountain-farming/fulltext_en.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tbt/tbt_repository/EU172_EN_1_1.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014358/13
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(19 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Agea e anticipi dei pagamenti della PAC per il 2013

In Italia, l'Agenzia per le erogazioni in agricoltura (Agea), ente statale che riveste funzioni di organismo di coordinamento e di organismo pagatore nell'ambito dell'erogazione dei fondi dell'Unione europea ai produttori agricoli, è stata autorizzata a concedere l'anticipo del 50 % dei pagamenti diretti dal 16 ottobre 2013. La regolamentazione comunitaria permette infatti la liquidazione degli anticipi della PAC (e in particolare dei pagamenti diretti) attraverso le domande uniche 2013 per i pagamenti PAC. Considerati i tempi dell'Agenzia nella gestione delle pratiche passate, gli agricoltori che usufruiranno di tale acconto avrebbero dovuto ricevere il bonifico dei premi PAC ai primi di novembre 2013.

L'Agea ha regolarmente provveduto all'erogazione dell'anticipo mettendo a pagamento n. 5 decreti. Tali decreti però non sono risultati esaustivi di tutte le posizioni richieste ed un buon numero di agricoltori sono rimasti esclusi dai decreti di acconto. È opportuno precisare che la stessa regolamentazione comunitaria permette l'erogazione degli anticipi solo fino al 30 novembre 2013, altrimenti si possono solo pagare decreti di saldo. È successo, però, che nel mese di dicembre l'Agea non abbia emanato alcun decreto di pagamento relativo alla PAC — pagamenti diretti — dirottando tutte le risorse finanziarie ai pagamenti dello sviluppo rurale.

Questa situazione suona come un'ingiustizia per quegli agricoltori che erano stati esclusi dai decreti di acconto e che allo stato attuale sono ulteriormente penalizzati e non potranno ricevere le somme spettanti prima di gennaio 2014 nella migliore delle ipotesi.

Alla luce dei fatti sopraesposti, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. Se è a conoscenza dei fatti, e se situazioni analoghe si sono prodotte in altri Stati membri;

2. Se intende verificare le ragioni per cui Agea sta procedendo in modo difforme e non esaustivo a coprire i pagamenti PAC anticipati così come richiesto dagli agricoltori;

3. Quali provvedimenti intende prendere per far sì che gli agricoltori ricevano le erogazioni il prima possibile, ed in particolare come si può provvedere affinché tutti gli agricoltori siano messi in condizioni simili per non sfavorire nessuno, compresi quelli che non hanno ottenuto l'anticipo?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(27 febbraio 2014)

Alla luce delle difficoltà che gli agricoltori europei hanno dovuto affrontare a causa di condizioni meteorologiche estreme in gran parte del territorio dell'Unione europea, il 2 ottobre la Commissione ha adottato il regolamento di esecuzione (UE) n. 946/2013 ([1]).

Il regolamento prevede che, a decorrere dal 16 ottobre 2013, gli Stati membri possono versare agli agricoltori anticipi fino ad un massimo del 50 % dei pagamenti diretti elencati nell'allegato I del regolamento (CE) n. 73/2009 ([2]) per le domande presentate nel 2013. I pagamenti esigono il previo completamento di tutti i controlli amministrativi e in loco relativi ai regimi di sostegno dei pagamenti diretti per l'esercizio interessato.

A norma dell'articolo 3 del regolamento (CE) n. 1290/2005 ([3]) le spese del FEAGA sono finanziate in regime di gestione concorrente tra gli Stati membri e l'UE. Di conseguenza, come stabilito all'articolo 9 del medesimo regolamento intitolato «Tutela degli interessi finanziari della Comunità e garanzie relative alla gestione dei Fondi comunitari», lo Stato membro è tenuto, tra l'altro, ad accertare se le operazioni finanziate dal FEAGA siano reali e regolari e a istituire un sistema di gestione e di controllo efficace.

Alla luce di quanto precede:

— diversi Stati membri hanno versato anticipi di aiuti diretti nel 2013;

— nel quadro della gestione concorrente, le autorità italiane possono decidere di versare anticipi per uno o tutti i regimi di sostegno diretto elencati nell'allegato I del regolamento (CE) n. 73/2009 per le domande presentate nel 2013. In tale contesto, le procedure relative alle domande e ai pagamenti, inclusa la verifica delle condizioni di ammissibilità al pagamento degli anticipi, restano di competenza delle autorità italiane.

([1]) GU L 261 del 3.10.2013.
([2]) GU L 30 del 31.1.2009.
([3]) GU L 209 dell'11.8.2005.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014358/13
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Agea and advance CAP payments for 2013

In Italy, the Agenzia per le erogazioni in agricoltura (Agency for Agricultural Disbursements) (Agea), a state body which coordinates and makes payments to farmers from funds disbursed by the European Union, was authorised to advance 50% of direct payments from 16 October 2013. EU legislation actually provides for CAP payments (in particular direct payments) to be made in advance through the 2013 single applications for CAP payments. Considering the time taken by the Agency to handle previous cases, farmers who made use of these advance payments should have received their CAP payments in the first few days of November 2013.

Agea duly made provision for these advance payments, issuing 5 payment orders. However, these orders did not cover all the applications and a large number of farmers were excluded from the advance payment orders. It should be stressed that the same EU legislation only allows advance payments to be made until 30 November 2013; after which only balancing payments can be made. However, in December Agea did not issue any payment orders for the CAP direct payments, allocating all its financial resources to rural development payments.

This situation is unfair to farmers excluded from the advance payment orders. They have now been further penalised and will be unable to receive the expected sums before January 2014 at the earliest.

In light of this, could the Commission tell us:

1. Whether it is aware of these circumstances, and whether similar situations have occurred in other Member States;

2. Whether it intends to check the reasons why the advance CAP payments made by Agea to farmers who request them are unequal and incomplete;

3. Which measures it intends to take to ensure that the farmers receive their payments as soon as possible, and in particular what can be done so that all the farmers face similar conditions and no one is disadvantaged, including those who did not obtain their advance payment?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2014)

Due to the difficulties European farmers were facing as a consequence of extreme weather conditions affecting a large part of the European Union territory the Commission adopted on 2 October Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 946/2013 ([1]).

This regulation foresees that Member States may pay, from 16 October 2013 on, advances to farmers of up to 50% of the direct payments listed in Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 73/2009 ([2]) in respect of applications made in 2013. The payments require the finalisation of all administrative and on-the-spot checks in respect of the direct payment support measure/s of the claim year concerned.

According to Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005 ([3]) the EAGF expenditure is financed in a context of shared management between a Member State and the EU. As a consequence, as detailed in Article 9 of the same Regulation, concerning the 'Protection of financial interests of the Community and assurances regarding the management of Community funds', the Member State shall i.e. check the genuineness and compliance of operations financed by the EAGF and shall set up an efficient management and control system.

In the light of the above:

— Several Member States paid advances of the direct aids in 2013.

— In the context of the shared management the Italian authorities may decide to pay advances for one or all direct payment support schemes listed in Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 73/2009 in respect of applications made in 2013. In this context, the application and payments procedures, including the verification of the eligibility conditions for advance payments remain under the responsibility of the Italian authorities.

([1]) OJ L 261, 3.10.2013.
([2]) OJ L 30, 31.1.2009.
([3]) OJ L 209, 11.8.2005.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-014359/13
adresată Comisiei
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(19 decembrie 2013)

Subiect: Pregătiri pentru 2014-2020 /Acordul de Parteneriat

Având în vedere faptul că suntem foarte aproape de startul viitoarei perioade de programare, vă rog să precizați care este stadiul actual al pregătirilor la nivel național. Câte state membre au depus deja Acordurile de Parteneriat în varianta finală sau draft? Care este stadiul negocierilor privind adoptarea Acordului de Parteneriat al României și cum se poziționează România față de celelalte state membre în această privință? De asemenea, care este situația depunerii programelor operaționale la nivel european, cât și în ceea ce privește programele operaționale ale României?

Răspuns dat de dl Hahn în numele Comisiei
(20 februarie 2014)

Toate statele membre au transmis Comisiei proiectele de acorduri de parteneriat, iar Comisia a comentat pe marginea acestora. La data de 29 ianuarie, trei state membre își prezentaseră acordurile de parteneriat în mod oficial. Comisia le analizează cu grijă pentru a se asigura că acestea prezintă un nivel ridicat de calitate și, dacă este cazul, va transmite observații statelor membre.

În ceea ce privește progresele generale, România a transmis proiectul de acord de parteneriat și a primit feedback din partea Comisiei. În conformitate cu regulamentul, data de 22 aprilie 2014 este data-limită până la care România poate trimite acordul de parteneriat în mod oficial. Comisia îl va analiza și va face eventualele observații. Planurile actuale prevăd o transmitere la începutul lunii februarie, care să țină cont de observațiile formulate de Comisie prin intermediul reacțiilor informale.

Până în acest moment, niciun stat membru nu a prezentat programe operaționale în mod oficial.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014359/13
to the Commission
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Preparations for 2014-2020/Partnership Agreement

Given that we are very close to starting the next programming period, I would like you to clarify what stage national preparations are currently at. How many Member States have already submitted a final or draft version of the Partnership Agreements? At what stage are the negotiations on adopting the Partnership Agreement with Romania and how does Romania fare in relation to the other Member States in this regard? Furthermore, what is the situation regarding the submission of operational programmes at European level, as well as Romania's operational programmes?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

All Member States have shared with the Commission early drafts of their Partnership Agreements and the Commission has given feedback on those. As of 29 January, three Member States have submitted their Partnership Agreements formally and the Commission is analysing those carefully to ensure a sufficient level of quality and will make observations to Member States as needed.

In relation to overall progress, Romania has shared its draft Partnership Agreement and received the Commission's feedback on it. According to the regulation, Romania has until 22 April 2014 to submit the Partnership Agreement formally, after which Commission will analyse it and make any necessary observations. The current plans foresee a submission in early February, taking up the comments by the Commission from the informal feedback.

No operational programmes have been formally submitted so far for any Member State.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-014360/13
adresată Comisiei
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(19 decembrie 2013)

Subiect: Lupta împotriva corupției în România/MCV

Având în vedere controversatul proiect de lege care prevede amnistia și grațierea, și care este în prezent în dezbatere în Parlamentul României, vă rog să precizați:

1. Cum apreciază Comisia impactul proiectului de lege asupra progreselor făcute până acum de România în lupta împotriva corupției?

2. Ce impact va avea proiectul de lege asupra Mecanismului de Cooperare și Verificare (MCV)?

Răspuns dat de Barroso în numele Comisiei
(21 februarie 2014)

Problemele semnalate de distinsul membru cu privire la evoluțiile în cadrul Parlamentului României referitoare la un proiect de lege privind amnistierea și grațierea reprezintă chestiuni importante care intră în domeniul de aplicare al mecanismului de cooperare și de verificare (MCV). Aceste evoluții au fost analizate în raportul MCV adoptat de Comisie la 22 ianuarie 2014. Raportul și documentul de lucru al serviciilor Comisiei care îl însoțește conțin o serie de concluzii și de recomandări referitoare la problemele ridicate de dumneavoastră.

Raportul este disponibil la adresa http://ec.europa.eu/cvm/progress_reports_en.htm.

Pe parcursul anului 2014, Comisia va continua să monitorizeze îndeaproape evoluțiile legate de acest proiect de lege privind amnistierea și grațierea. De asemenea, Comisia ar dori să facă trimitere la poziția instituțională 29254/1154/2013 ([1]) adoptată de Consiliul Superior al Magistraturii.

([1]) http://www.csm1909.ro/csm/linkuri/10_12_2013__64287_ro.doc

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014360/13
to the Commission
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Fight against corruption in Romania/CVM

Given the controversial amnesty and pardon bill which is currently being debated in the Romanian Parliament, I would like you to clarify:

1. How does the Commission assess the impact of the bill on the progress made so far by Romania in the fight against corruption?

2. What impact will the bill have on the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM)?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

The issues raised by the Honourable Member regarding developments in the Romanian Parliament on a draft law for amnesty and pardon are relevant questions within the scope of the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM). These developments were part of the reflections leading to CVM report adopted on 22 January 2014 by the Commission. The report and the accompanying staff working document contain a number of conclusions and recommendations linked to the points raised.

The report is available at http://ec.europa.eu/cvm/progress_reports_en.htm

Throughout 2014, the Commission will continue to monitor closely the developments related to this draft law for amnesty and pardon. The Commission would also like to refer to the Institutional Position adopted by the Superior Council of Magistracy 29254/1154/2013 ([1]).

(1) http://www.csm1909.ro/csm/linkuri/10_12_2013__64287_ro.doc

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-014361/13
adresată Comisiei
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(19 decembrie 2013)

Subiect: Discriminarea românilor în Marea Britanie

Cu puțin înainte de ridicarea restricțiilor de pe piața muncii pentru românii din Marea Britanie, presa și politicienii britanici au pornit o campanie agresivă împotriva românilor. Lucrători și studenți deopotrivă, românii sunt discriminați și marginalizați prin declarații politice alarmiste privind o presupusă invazie în scopul obținerii de ajutoare sociale.

Vă rog să precizați ce măsuri va lua Comisia pentru a pune capăt discriminării românilor din Marea Britanie, cât și pentru a stopa efectele pe termen lung ale discriminării împotriva românilor?

Răspuns dat de dna Reding în numele Comisiei
(18 februarie 2014)

Cu peste 14 milioane de cetățeni europeni care își au reședința stabilă într-un alt stat membru, libera circulație — posibilitatea de a trăi, de a lucra și de a studia oriunde în Uniune — reprezintă dreptul UE cel mai prețuit de cetățenii europeni.

Comisia este hotărâtă să susțină acest drept fundamental, inclusiv să combată percepțiile publice care nu se bazează pe fapte sau realități economice. Aceasta a adoptat recent o comunicare privind libera circulație a cetățenilor UE ([1]) care clarifică fapte și cifre privind libera circulație și explică posibilitățile oferite de normele UE.

Statelor membre și UE le revine responsabilitatea comună de a asigura aplicarea normelor privind libera circulație și de a le promova, spre beneficiul cetățenilor, al creșterii economice și al ocupării forței de muncă. Aceasta include combaterea percepțiilor greșite ale opiniei publice.

Comisia va evalua compatibilitatea cu dreptul UE a oricărei măsuri legislative noi luate de Regatul Unit. Comisia este cea căreia îi revine rolul de a se asigura că aceste măsuri sunt în deplină conformitate cu dreptul UE.

([1]) COM(2013) 837 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014361/13
to the Commission
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Discrimination against Romanians in the UK

With labour market restrictions on Romanians about to be lifted shortly in the UK, the British press and politicians have launched an aggressive campaign against Romanians. Both Romanian workers and students alike are being discriminated against and marginalised by scaremongering political statements about an alleged invasion aimed at obtaining social welfare.

Can the Commission clarify what measures it is going to take to halt this discrimination against Romanians in the UK, as well as to stop the long-term impact of anti-Romanian discrimination?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

With over 14 million EU citizens residing in another Member State on a stable basis, free movement — the ability to live, work and study anywhere in the Union — is the EU right most cherished by EU citizens.

The Commission is committed to uphold this fundamental right, including countering public perceptions which are not based on facts or economic realities. It recently adopted a communication on free movement of EU citizens ([1]) which clarifies facts and figures on free movement and explains the possibilities offered by EU rules.

Member States and the EU share the responsibility of making free movement rules work and upholding them to the benefit of citizens, growth and employment. This includes countering public misperceptions.

The Commission will assess the compatibility with EC law of any new UK legal measures .It is the Commission's role to ensure that these measures are fully compliant with EC law.

([1]) COM(2013) 837 final.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-014362/13
adresată Comisiei
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(19 decembrie 2013)

Subiect: Implementarea fondurilor europene în România

Având în vedere modificările Codului Penal din România, prin care primarii nu mai fac obiectul conflictului de interese, și faptul că primăriile sunt unii dintre cei mai mari beneficiari de fonduri europene din România, vă rog să precizați ce va face Comisia pentru a se asigura că banii europeni vor fi cheltuiți eficient și că nu se vor duce către clientela politică locală.

Răspuns dat de dl Hahn în numele Comisiei
(18 februarie 2014)

Se așteaptă ca intrarea în vigoare în România, la 1 februarie 2014, a noului Cod Penal să furnizeze clarificări cu privire la definirea conflictului de interese. Atât în cadrul legislației existente, cât și al celei viitoare, nu există astfel de excluderi pentru primari, iar pericolele reprezentate de modificarea legislației în acest sens par să fi fost soluționate prin hotărârea Curții Constituționale, potrivit căreia modificările propuse în această privință de Parlament sunt neconstituționale.

În conformitate cu principiul gestiunii partajate aplicat pentru fondurile europene structurale și de investiții, statele membre au responsabilitatea primară de a lua toate măsurile necesare pentru a asigura legalitatea și regularitatea cheltuielilor, precum și buna funcționare a propriilor sisteme de gestionare și control. Acestea sunt responsabile pentru prevenirea, detectarea și corectarea neregulilor (inclusiv a cazurilor de fraudă și a conflictelor de interese nedezvăluite).

În același timp, reglementările care guvernează perioadele 2007-2013 și 2014-2020 precizează cazurile în care serviciile Comisiei pot lua măsuri în cazul utilizării necorespunzătoare a fondurilor UE. De exemplu, plățile fondurilor UE pot fi întrerupte sau suspendate atunci când dovezile indică sau când există o deficiență semnificativă în funcționarea sistemului de gestionare și control al fondurilor sau în cazul unor cheltuieli legate de o neregulă gravă care nu a fost corectată.

În trecut, Comisia a întrerupt unele plăți către România atunci când au fost detectate nereguli care au arătat că funcționarea sistemului de gestionare și control al fondurilor era deficitară, aplicând și corecții financiare.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014362/13
to the Commission
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Implementation of European funds in Romania

In view of the amendments made to Romania's Criminal Code whereby mayors are no longer subject to investigation for conflicts of interest and of the fact that mayors are among the biggest beneficiaries of Romania's European funds, can you explain what the Commission is going to do to ensure that European money will be spent efficiently and will not end up in the pockets of local political supporters?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The entry into force of the new Criminal Code in Romania on 1 February 2014 is expected to provide clarification on the definition of conflict of interests. Under both the existing and future law there are no such exclusions for mayors and the threat of any such changes to the legislation appears to have been addressed by the Constitutional Court's ruling that the amendments proposed in this regard by the Parliament are unconstitutional.

Under the shared management principle used for the European Structural and Investment Funds, the Member States have the primary responsibility to take all measures necessary to ensure that expenditure is legal and regular and that their management and control systems function properly. They are responsible for preventing, detecting and correcting irregularities (including fraud cases and undisclosed conflict of interest).

At the same time, the regulations governing the 2007-13 and the 2014-20 periods specify the cases when the Commission services may take action in case of inappropriate use of EU funds. For example, payments of EU funds may be interrupted or suspended when there is evidence to suggest or there is a significant deficiency in the functioning of the management and control system of the funds or in the case of expenditure linked to a serious irregularity which has not been corrected.

The Commission has interrupted payments to Romania in the past when irregularities were detected which showed that the functioning of the management and control system for the funds was deficient and has also applied financial corrections.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-014363/13
adresată Comisiei
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(19 decembrie 2013)

Subiect: Campanii de informare a cetățenilor

În multe regiuni ale Uniunii Europene, mai ales în localitățile izolate sau de mici dimensiuni, încălzirea locuințelor pe perioada iernii este realizată cu ajutorul unor instalații electrice.

Din cauza suprasolicitării rețelelor electrice, dar și a folosirii de instalații improvizate, apar o serie de incidente nedorite, inclusiv incendii, soldate cu victime și răniți grav.

În ce măsură are Comisia în vedere sprijinirea autorităților locale pentru realizarea de campanii de informare și conștientizare cu privire la pericolele cauzate de folosirea de instalații improvizate pentru încălzirea locuințelor, în vederea prevenirii unor accidente grave?

Răspuns dat de dl Mimica în numele Comisiei
(20 februarie 2014)

Aspectele legate de protecția populației împotriva incendiilor, inclusiv campaniile de sensibilizare cu privire la pericolele reprezentate de instalațiile improvizate folosite la încălzirea locuințelor, țin de competența statelor membre. Comisia susține pe deplin demersurile autorităților locale care au ca obiectiv informarea cetățenilor cu privire la aceste pericole dar, în momentul de față, nu intenționează să organizeze campanii de informare sau să ofere sprijin specific autorităților locale în acest sens.

În plus, cu privire la multe aspecte importante, în special cele specifice anumitor regiuni din Uniunea Europeană, așa cum este cazul problemei de siguranță menționate de distinsul membru al Parlamentului, campaniile de informare se bucură de un succes mai mare atunci când sunt organizate la nivelul cel mai apropiat de cetățean, și anume de către autoritățile regionale sau locale din statele membre.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014363/13
to the Commission
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Public information campaigns

In many regions of the European Union, especially those in isolated or small areas, electrical installations are used to heat homes during winter.

Both the overload on the electricity grid and the use of makeshift installations result in a number of undesirable incidents, including fires, causing deaths and serious injuries.

To what extent does the Commission intend to support local authorities in running information campaigns and raising awareness about the hazards posed by using makeshift installations to heat homes, in order to prevent the occurrence of serious accidents?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

Domestic fire safety issues, including awareness campaigns about the hazards posed by using makeshift installations to heat homes remain the competence of Member States. The Commission fully supports the objective of those local authorities who inform citizens about these hazards, but currently has no plans to conduct information campaigns or to provide specific support to local authorities in this regard.

Furthermore, on many important issues, in particular those that are specific to some regions of the European Union, as is the case with the safety issue referred to by the Honourable Member, information campaigns are best done closest to the citizens, i.e. by regional or local authorities in Member States.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-014364/13
an die Kommission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(19. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: REACH: öffentliche Konsultation über die Zulassung chemischer Stoffe ohne die einschlägigen Informationen über Verwendung und Risiken

Die öffentlichen Konsultationen über die Zulassung von Diethylhexylphthalat (DEHP) und Dibutylphthalat (DBP) zur Verwendung laufen bis 8. Januar 2014. Interessenträger sind aufgefordert, sachdienliche Informationen über Alternativen einzureichen.

1. Kann die Kommission bestätigen, dass allen Anträgen der Antragsteller auf vertrauliche Behandlung automatisch stattgegeben wurde?

2. Wie viele Seiten umfassen die Zulassungsanträge, und wie viele Seiten enthalten als vertraulich eingestufte Informationen?

3. Wie können Interessenträger Alternativen zu DEHP und DBP vorschlagen, ohne Zugang zu den einschlägigen Informationen über die Verwendung dieser chemischen Stoffe und über die mit ihnen in Zusammenhang stehenden Risiken zu haben?

Antwort von Herrn Tajani im Namen der Kommission
(10. Februar 2014)

Nach Artikel 339 AEUV ([1]) sind alle Organe der EU sowie deren Beamte an das Berufsgeheimnis gebunden. Dies gilt insbesondere für Auskünfte über Unternehmen sowie deren Geschäftsbeziehungen oder Kostenelemente.

In Anbetracht von Artikel 339 AEUV und Artikel 118 Absatz 2 der REACH-Verordnung ([2]), der die REACH-Vorschriften für den Zugang zu Informationen enthält, ist die Europäische Chemikalienagentur (ECHA) der Auffassung, dass sie ohne vorherige Zustimmung des Antragstellers, der eine Zulassung beantragt hat, zur Offenlegung für vertraulich erklärter Informationen nicht befugt ist.

Nach Einreichung von Zulassungsanträgen werden öffentliche Konsultationen veröffentlicht, die allgemeine Informationen über die Verwendung(en) des betreffenden Stoffs enthalten. Die Antragsteller werden darüber hinaus aufgefordert, weitere Angaben in den öffentlichen Fassungen der „Expositionsszenarios“ und der „Analyse von Alternativen“ zu machen. Die Interessenträger können auf die öffentliche Konsultation eingehen, indem sie ausgehend von der Darstellung der Verwendung und Funktion des Stoffs durch den Antragsteller Informationen über Alternativen vorlegen.

Bisher sind bei ECHA acht Zulassungsanträge für 17 Verwendungen von zwei Stoffen eingegangen, die in der Regel jeweils fünf Einzelberichte umfassen. Die acht Analysen von Alternativen, die vorgelegt wurden, enthalten auf über 2 000 Seiten sowohl vertrauliche als auch öffentliche Informationen. Etwa zwei Drittel der Informationen sind im Schnitt öffentlich. Manchmal sind sogar 90 % der in einem Antrag enthaltenen Informationen für die Öffentlichkeit zugänglich.

([1]) Konsolidierte Fassung des Vertrags über die Arbeitsweise der Europäischen Union, veröffentlicht am 26. Oktober 2012.
([2]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1907/2206 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 18. Dezember 2006 zur Registrierung, Bewertung, Zulassung und Beschränkung chemischer Stoffe (REACH).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014364/13
to the Commission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: REACH: public consultation for authorisation of chemicals without relevant information on use and risks

Public consultations on the authorisation for use of bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) and dibutyl phthalate (DBP) will run until 8 January 2014. Interested parties are being asked to submit relevant information on alternatives.

1. Can the Commission confirm that all applicants' confidentiality claims have been accepted by default?

2. How many pages are included in the applications dossiers and how many pages contain information classified as confidential?

3. How can interested parties provide alternatives to DEHP and DBP without being able to access relevant information regarding the uses of and risks involving these chemicals?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

All EU institutions and the officials thereof are subject to an obligation of professional secrecy as set out by Article 339 of the TFEU ([1]). This concerns in particular information about undertakings, their business relations or their cost components.

Given the provisions of Article 339 TFEU as well as those of Article 118(2) of REACH setting out the rules governing the access to information of REACH ([2]), the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) considers that it is not in a position to make public, information claimed to be confidential without a prior consent of the applicant for authorisation.

The public consultations, published following the submission of applications for authorisation, contain general information as regards the use(s) of the substance. Additionally applicants are encouraged to provide further details in the public versions of the 'Exposure scenarios' and the 'Analysis of alternatives'. Interested parties may respond to the public consultation by providing information on alternatives based on the applicant's demonstration of how the substance is used and what function it fulfils.

Overall, ECHA has so far received eight applications for authorisation covering 17 uses of two substances, each containing usually five specific reports. The eight analyses of alternatives received, amounting to over 2000 pages, contain both confidential and public information. On average, two thirds of the information is public. In some cases up to 90% of the information in a application is available to the public.

([1]) Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union published on 26 October 2012.
([2]) Regulation (EC) No 1907/2206 of the European parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor P-014365/13
upućeno Komisiji
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(19. prosinca 2013.)

Predmet: Nemogućnost sudjelovanja građana BiH u programu Erasmus+

Zastupnici u Europskom parlamentu na plenarnom su zasjedanju u studenome ove godine uvjerljivom većinom glasova podržali novi program Erasmus+. Novi program omogućit će uključivanje više od 4 milijuna Europljana putem ideje povezivanja, razmjene iskustava, socijalne kohezije i mobilnosti, što predstavlja temeljne vrijednosti Europske unije.

Kao i ostalim zemljama, i službenim institucijama Bosne i Hercegovine (BiH) prije mjesec dana upućen je poziv za sudjelovanje u najvećem europskom programu za obrazovanje, vrijednom čak 14,7 milijardi eura. Nažalost, političkom odlukom Vijeća ministara Bosne i Hercegovine učenicima, studentima i profesorima iz BiH uskraćena je mogućnost da se besplatno školuju ili volontiraju u nekoj od europskih zemalja.

Na ovaj način, nesudjelovanjem u Erasmus+ programu, izgledno je kako će BiH biti jedina zemlja u Europi koja neće sudjelovati u tom izuzetno značajnom programu. Ova činjenica posebno zabrinjava s obzirom da je jedna od odredbi novog programa dodatno intenziviranje veza EU-a s trećim zemljama putem obrazovanja.

Poznato je koliko mobilnost i razmjena iskustava doprinose izvrsnosti u istraživačkom radu, ali i cjeloživotnom obrazovanju općenito. Uzimajući u obzir posljedice koje ovakva odluka ima na građane BiH i budući prosperitet te zemlje, planira li Europska komisija poduzeti mjere kojima bi se građanima BiH, unatoč odbijanju poziva od strane političkih institucija, omogućilo ravnopravno sudjelovanje u programu Erasmus+?

Odgovor g. Fülea u ime Komisije
(10. veljače 2014.)

Komisija osigurava da sve države kandidatkinje i potencijalne države kandidatkinje mogu surađivati u određenim djelovanjima u okviru novog programa Erasmus+ kroz horizontalna bespovratna sredstva financirana iz pretpristupnog instrumenta (IPA II). To uključuje stipendije za akademsku mobilnost na razini diplomskih studija, djelovanje za potporu mobilnosti mladih i projekte jačanja kapaciteta za potporu institucijskim reformama u sektoru visokog obrazovanja. Taj instrument uključuje sve zemlje zapadnog Balkana kao korisnice i nije potreban potpisani sporazum s tijelima BiH.

Sporazum između Komisije i tijela BiH, nakon čega slijedi plaćanje male pristupne naknade, potreban je za djelomično sudjelovanje u programu Erasmus+ i suradnju u okviru drugih inicijativa ravnopravno s državama članicama EU-a i ostalim zemljama koje sudjeluju u programu. Tim bi se novim mogućnostima po prvi put otvorila suradnja među nastavnicima, osnovnim i srednjim školama u BiH i njihovim partnerima u EU-u te sudjelovanje u nizu obrazovnih mreža EU-a. Do sada je BiH jedina zemlja zapadnog Balkana koja nije izrazila interes za pristupanje tim inicijativama. Međutim, nakon različitih intervencija Komisije, postoje naznake da bi u bliskoj budućnosti tijela BiH mogla poslati pozitivan odgovor.

Krajnji je cilj puno sudjelovanje u programu, ravnopravno s državama članicama EU-a. Za to je potrebno osnovati nacionalnu agenciju, što u BiH trenutačno nije predviđeno. Od svih država kandidatkinja i potencijalnih država kandidatkinja sa zapadnog Balkana samo je bivša jugoslavenska republika Makedonija osnovala takvu agenciju te ove godine po prvi put u potpunosti sudjeluje u programu Erasmus+.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014365/13
to the Commission
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina unable to participate in Erasmus+ programme

At the November 2013 plenary session, an overwhelming majority of MEPs voted in favour of the new Erasmus+ programme. The new programme will use the concepts of connection, exchanging experiences, social cohesion and mobility — basic values of the European Union — to enable over four million Europeans to participate.

As in other countries, official institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina were last month invited to take part in Europe's largest education programme, which has a budget amounting to EUR 14.7 billion. Regrettably, a political decision taken by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina means that pupils, students and professors from Bosnia and Herzegovina will be denied the chance to receive free education or to volunteer in a European country.

Bosnia and Herzegovina will thus be the only country in Europe that will not be participating in this incredibly important programme. This is particularly worrying given that one of the new programme's provisions aims to further step up the EU's links with third countries through education.

It is acknowledged that mobility and the exchange of experiences contribute to excellence in research and in lifelong learning generally. Given this decision's impact on the people and future prosperity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, does the Commission plan to take steps to allow the citizens of that country to take part in the Erasmus+ programme on an equal footing, despite the political institutions' rejection of the invitation?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

The Commission ensures that all candidate and potential candidate countries can cooperate in certain actions of the new Erasmus+ programme through a horizontal grant funded from the pre-accession instrument (IPA II). This covers scholarships for degree mobility at Masters level, action in support of youth mobility and capacity-building projects supporting institutional reforms in the higher education sector. This instrument includes all countries in the Western Balkan as beneficiaries and does not require any signed agreement by the BiH authorities.

An agreement between the Commission and BiH authorities, followed by the payment of a small entry fee, is needed for partial participation in Erasmus+, and cooperation under other initiatives, on equal footing with EU Member States and other programme countries. These new opportunities would, for the first time, open up cooperation between teachers, primary schools and secondary schools in BiH, and their counterparts in the EU; and the participation in a range of EU education networks. So far, BiH is the only country in the western Balkans which has not expressed interest in joining these initiatives. However, following various interventions by the Commission, there are indications that the BiH authorities might send a positive reply in the near future.

The ultimate goal is full participation in the programme, on equal footing with EU Member States. This requires the establishment of a national agency, which is currently not envisaged by BiH. Out of all the Western Balkan candidate and potential candidate countries, only the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has set up such an agency, and, for the first time this year, participates fully in Erasmus+.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-014366/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(19 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Aflatossine

In base ad alcune segnalazioni sul tema delle aflatossine contenute nei mangimi destinati agli animali da allevamento, provenienti da associazioni di rappresentanza del mondo agricolo, l'interrogante ha appreso che ci sono dibattiti in corso sui livelli massimi consentiti.

L'aflatossina è una micotossina prodotta da funghi microscopici del genere aspergillus che si sviluppano su numerosi substrati vegetali come cereali (con particolare riferimento al mais), semi oleaginosi (come le arachidi), spezie, granaglie, frutta secca ed essiccata, sia durante la coltivazione che nella fase di raccolta e di immagazzinamento. L'aflatossina B1 (AFB1) è particolarmente tossica, motivo per cui l'UE, a scopo cautelativo, ha stabilito dei limiti massimi di tolleranza.

Tali limiti sono fissati sia per gli alimenti destinati all'uomo che per le diverse materie prime destinate alla produzione dei mangimi. In particolare, per il mais il limite è stato fissato a 20 µg/kg (direttiva 2003/100/CE della Commissione).

Considerando che negli Stati Uniti non sono stati fissati livelli massimi per l'aflatossina B1 ma soltanto per l'aflatossina totale che, nel mais destinato all'alimentazione degli animali, oscillano da 20 µg/kg a 300 µg/kg a seconda delle specie animali cui esso è destinato;

considerando che recenti studi hanno ammesso, analogamente a quanto previsto dalla legislazione statunitense, di modulare il valore della presenza di aflatossine sulla base della specie allevata e senza alcun rischio per il consumatore;

ritiene la Commissione, sulla base di quanto premesso, di avviare un dibattito sulla possibilità di autorizzare mais con la presenza di aflatossine in limiti superiori a 20 µg/kg quale mangime per le specie animali per le quali venga dimostrata l'assenza di rischi (bovini da carne, avicoli, suini)?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(31 gennaio 2014)

La direttiva 2002/32/CE ([1]) stabilisce livelli massimi (LM) di aflatossina B1 (AFB1) nell'alimentazione degli animali.

Differenti LM sono stati stabiliti per gli alimenti composti, sulla base del rischio per la salute pubblica e per la salute degli animali posto dall'AFB1 per le varie specie animali.

I livello massimo di AFB1 nei mangimi composti per bovini da latte e vitelli, ovini da latte e agnelli, caprini da latte e capretti, suinetti e pollame giovane è pari a 5 µg/kg. Il livello massimo nei mangimi composti per altri bovini, altri ovini, altri caprini, altri suini e altro pollame è di 20 µg/kg. Per altre specie animali, come i cavalli, il livello massimo è di 10 µg/kg. La differenziazione dei livelli massimi per i mangimi composti è possibile dal momento che il regolamento (CE) n. 767/2009 ([2]) stabilisce requisiti obbligatori di etichettatura per i mangimi composti allo scopo di indicare le specie o categorie di animali ai quali il mangime composto è destinato.

Il livello massimo di AFB1 nelle materie prime per mangimi, compreso il mais, è di 20 µg/kg. Un requisito obbligatorio di etichettatura relativo alle materie prime per mangimi al fine di includere le specie o categorie di animali ai quali la materia prima per mangimi è destinata è previsto solo per le materie prime nelle quali sono stati integrati additivi e per le quali gli additivi non sono stati utilizzati per tutte le specie animali o sono state utilizzate con livelli massimi relativi ad alcune specie. Dal momento che in rapporto alle materie prime per mangimi in cui non sono stati integrati additivi non sono pervisti requisiti obbligatori di etichettatura, non è possibile stabilire diversi LM di AFB1 nel mais per diverse specie animali.

L'articolo 22 del regolamento (CE) 767/2009 stabilisce tuttavia la base per un regime volontario di etichettatura che si aggiunge ai requisiti obbligatori. L'etichettatura delle materie prime per mangimi e dei mangimi composti può pertanto comprendere anche elementi di etichettatura volontaria, purché siano rispettati i principi generali posti dal regolamento.

([1]) Direttiva 2002/32/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 7 maggio 2002, relativa alle sostanze indesiderabili nell'alimentazione degli animali (GU L 140 del 30.5.2002, pag. 10).

([2]) Regolamento (CE) n. 767/2009 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 13 luglio 2009, sull'immissione sul mercato e sull'uso dei mangimi, che modifica il regolamento (CE) n. 1831/2003 e che abroga le direttive 79/373/CEE del Consiglio, 80/511/CEE della Commissione, 82/471/CEE del Consiglio, 83/228/CEE del Consiglio, 93/74/CEE del Consiglio, 93/113/CE del Consiglio, 96/25/CE del Consiglio e la decisione 2004/217/CE della Commissione (GU L 229 dell'1.9.2008, pag. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014366/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Aflatoxins

Following reports from farmers associations on the aflatoxins contained in animal feedstuffs, maximum permissible levels of aflatoxins has become a topic of discussion.

Aflatoxin is a mycotoxin produced by microscopic fungi of the genus *Aspergillus* which grow on a large number of vegetable substrates such as cereal crops (particularly maize) and semi-oleaginous crops (such a peanuts), spices, grain, nuts and dried fruit, both during growing and at harvesting and on storage. Aflatoxin B1 (AFB1) is especially toxic, which is why the EU has set maximum permissible limits for it as a precautionary measure.

Those limits have been set both for foodstuffs intended for humans and for the the various raw materials used in the production of animal feeds. The limit for maize has been set at 20µg/kg (Commission Directive 2003/100/EC).

In the United States, there are no maximum limit values for Aflatoxin B1, but only for overall levels of aflatoxin which, in the case of maize intended for use as an animal feedstuff, varies between 20µg/kg and 300 µg/kg, depending on the animal species for which it is intended.

Recent studies have found that, as provided for in US legislation, the permissible level of aflatoxin present can be adjusted according to the species being reared, without this engendering any risk to the consumer.

In the light of the above, does the Commission not feel that a debate should be launched on whether to authorise maize containing levels of aflatoxin above 20 µg/kg for use in feeds for animal species (beef cattle, poultry and pigs) for which it has been shown to pose no risk?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2014)

Directive 2002/32/EC ([1]) establishes maximum levels (MLs) for aflatoxin B1 (AFB1) in feed.

Different MLs have been established for compound feed, based on the risk for animal and public health that AFB1 poses for the different animal species.

The ML for AFB1 in compound feed for dairy cattle and calves, dairy sheep and lambs, dairy goats and kids, piglets and young poultry animals is 5 µg/kg. The ML for compound feed for other cattle, other sheep, other goats, other pigs and other poultry is 20 µg/kg. For other animal species, such as horses, the ML is 10 µg/kg. This differentiation of MLs for compound feed is possible as Regulation (EC) 767/2009 ([2]) provides for a mandatory labelling requirement for compound feed to include the species or categories of animals for which the compound feed is intended.

The ML for AFB1 in feed materials, including maize, is 20 µg/kg. A mandatory labelling requirement for feed materials to include the species or categories of animals for which the feed material is intended for, is only foreseen for feed materials where additives have been incorporated and where the additives have not been authorised for all animal species or have been authorised with MLs for some species. As no such mandatory labelling requirement is provided for feed materials, where no additive has been incorporated, it is not possible to establish different MLs for AFB1 in maize for different animal species.

However, Article 22 of Regulation (EC) 767/2009 establishes the basis for a voluntary labelling scheme in addition to the mandatory labelling requirements. Therefore, the labelling of feed materials and compound feed may also include voluntary labelling particulars, provided that the general principles laid down in the regulation are complied with.

([1]) Directive 2002/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 May 2002 on undesirable substances in feed (OJ L 140, 30.5.2002, p. 10).
([2]) Regulation (EC) No 767/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 on the placing on the market and use of feed, amending European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) No 1831/2003 and repealing Council Directive 79/373/EEC, Commission Directive 80/511/EEC, Council Directives 82/471/EEC, 83/228/EEC, 93/74/EEC, 93/113/EC and 96/25/EC and Commission Decision 2004/217/EC (OJ L 229, 1.9.2008, p. 1).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-014367/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Gianni Pittella (S&D)
(19 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Tentato colpo di Stato in Sud Sudan

Il tentato golpe effettuato in questi giorni da un gruppo di ribelli in Sud Sudan rischia di portare il giovanissimo paese africano sull'orlo di una guerra civile.

La situazione appare molto preoccupante visto l'impatto che tali disordini stanno avendo sulla popolazione già duramente provata da anni di guerre.

Considerato l'impegno di questi anni dell'UE in Sudan e Sud Sudan nell'ambito del quadro strategico per il Corno d'Africa e considerato l'obiettivo condiviso con la comunità internazionale di mantenere la stabilità politica nell'area;

può l'Alto Rappresentante per gli Affari Esteri dell'Unione riferire come intende seguire questo delicato passaggio al fine di contribuire, insieme alla comunità internazionale, a stabilizzare la situazione nel paese, scongiurare nuove violenze e aiutare la popolazione in fuga dall'ennesima minaccia di guerra?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(7 febbraio 2014)

L'Unione nutre profonda apprensione per il protrarsi delle ostilità, per il deteriorarsi della situazione umanitaria e per le violazioni dei diritti umani nel Sud Sudan.

Insieme alla comunità internazionale l'UE è attivamente impegna a impedire che la crisi si trasformi in una guerra civile per motivi etnici. Il suo rappresentante speciale Alex Rondos è attualmente a Addis Abeba per prendere parte ai colloqui. L'azione dell'Unione mira a costruire il consenso intorno agli sforzi dell'IGAD volti a tenere in piedi il processo politico. L'UE dà pieno appoggio agli sforzi di mediazione dell'IGAD e si compiace per l'impegno della sua squadra di negoziatori che ha ottenuto il cessate il fuoco, riuscendo a monitorare efficacemente la situazione e a spianare la strada per un dialogo politico inclusivo in grado di individuare una soluzione sostenibile e negoziata, compresa la liberazione di tutti i leader politici attualmente detenuti. L'UE prevede di sostenere finanziariamente l'IGAD per assicurare lo svolgimento dei negoziati e il loro esito finale, e per un eventuale meccanismo di controllo del cessate il fuoco. L'Unione europea esprime profonda preoccupazione per gli abusi dei diritti umani riportati. Tutte le parti devono essere ben consce che i perpetratori dovranno rendere conto del loro operato. A questo proposito l'Unione europea si compiace per la decisione presa dal Consiglio per la pace e la sicurezza dell'UA di istituire una commissione incaricata di indagare le violazioni dei diritti umani commesse dal 15 dicembre 2013 e incoraggia la commissione ad avviare quanto prima i lavori. L'UE sostiene inoltre il rafforzamento in corso dell'UNMISS affinché possa svolgere il proprio mandato e proteggere la popolazione civile.

L'UE è inoltre seriamente preoccupata per le conseguenze umanitarie di questa nuova crisi che ha esacerbato una già fragile situazione. Fino a oggi nel 2014 la Commissione europea ha mobilitato 50 milioni di euro in aiuti umanitari al Sud Sudan.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014367/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Gianni Pittella (S&D)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Attempted coup in South Sudan

The attempted coup carried out recently by a group of rebels in South Sudan is likely to lead the young African country to the brink of civil war.

The situation is very worrying given the impact that this unrest is having on the people, who have already been harshly tested by years of war.

Given the EU's commitment, in recent years, to Sudan and South Sudan as part of its strategic framework for the Horn of Africa, and considering the goal, shared with the international community, of maintaining political stability in the area, can the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs say how she intends to monitor this delicate transition in order — together with the international community — to help stabilise the situation in the country, to avert further violence and help the people who are fleeing from yet another possible war?

Answer given by High-Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(7 February 2014)

The EU is deeply concerned by the continued hostilities in South Sudan and is alarmed by the deteriorating humanitarian situation and reports of human rights violations.

Together with the international community, the EU has been active in trying to prevent the crisis descending into an ethnic-based civil war. EU Special Representative Alex Rondos is currently in Addis Ababa to attend the talks. EU actions have concentrated on building consensus around IGAD efforts to get a political process going. The EU stands firmly behind IGAD mediation efforts and commends the work of the IGAD negotiation team to achieve a ceasefire, effective monitoring, and to open the way for an inclusive political dialogue to reach a negotiated, sustainable solution including the release of all political leaders currently in detention. The EU is planning to provide financial support to IGAD for the negotiations and their eventual outcome, including support to a possible ceasefire monitoring mechanism.

The EU expresses its deep concern about reports of human rights abuses. All parties need to be aware that perpetrators of abuses of human rights will be held accountable for their actions. In this connection, the EU welcomes the AU PSC decision to establish a Commission to investigate the human rights violations committed since 15 December 2013. We encourage this Commission to begin its work as quickly as possible. The EU also supports the ongoing strengthening of UNMISS so that it can fulfil its mandate of protection of civilians.

The EU is also seriously concerned by the humanitarian consequences of this new crisis which has made an already fragile situation much worse. So far, the European Commission has mobilised EUR 50 million of humanitarian funding for South Sudan in 2014.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-014369/13
aan de Commissie
Emine Bozkurt (S&D)
(19 december 2013)

Betreft: Situatie van Turkse burgers in het kader van de overnameovereenkomst EU-Turkije

De overnameovereenkomst tussen de EU en Turkije, die op 16 december 2013 in Ankara werd ondertekend, werd met veel enthousiasme onthaald, aangezien deze dag ook de officiële start vormt voor de dialoog over de visumliberalisering wegens de ondertekening van het protocol bij de overeenkomst dat binnen drie en een half jaar zal leiden tot de opheffing van visabeperkingen. Toch bestaat er bezorgdheid bij sommige Turkse burgers die in één van de EU-lidstaten wonen, over hoe de overnameovereenkomst invloed zal hebben op hun situatie. Hoewel in de overeenkomst expliciet wordt vermeld dat „personen die niet of niet meer voldoen aan de voorwaarden voor toegang tot, aanwezigheid of verblijf in het grondgebied van Turkije of één van de lidstaten van de Unie" in het toepassingsgebied van de overeenkomst vallen, bestaat er onzekerheid over het lot van de Turkse burgers die zich tussen twee verblijfsvergunningen in bevinden.

1. Hoe zal de Commissie het verblijf garanderen van Turkse burgers en hun families van wie de verblijfsvergunning is afgelopen, maar de procedure voor het verkrijgen van een nieuwe verblijfsvergunning loopt?

2. Hoe zal de Commissie ervoor zorgen dat Turkse burgers die legaal in een EU-lidstaat verblijven en werden veroordeeld voor kleine criminaliteit, niet naar Turkije worden teruggestuurd op basis van de overnameovereenkomst met de bewering dat zij niet langer voldoen aan de criteria voor legaal verblijf?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(24 januari 2014)

Als dusdanig heeft de Overeenkomst geen invloed op de mogelijkheid van een Turkse burger om een terugkeerbesluit te krijgen of om een aanzegging te krijgen om te vertrekken in beide scenario's die worden aangehaald in de vragen van het geachte parlementslid.

Besluiten die betrekking hebben op het woon- en verblijfsrecht, en terugzending in geval van illegaal verblijf, worden genomen door de bevoegde overheid van een lidstaat op basis van het nationaal recht, zoals omschreven door de desbetreffende secundaire EU-wetgeving.

De overnameovereenkomst heeft geen invloed op dit proces. Het vergemakkelijkt enkel de terugzending van personen die zich in een positie van illegaal verblijf bevinden en voor wie een individueel terugkeerbesluit is genomen.

Om ieder misverstand te voorkomen in dit verband, wordt er in deze overnameovereenkomst expliciet bevestigd (in de Preambule en in artikel 18) dat deze „geen afbreuk doet" aan, onder andere,

— de rechten en verplichtingen van personen die legaal verblijven en werken of legaal hebben verbleven of gewerkt hebben op het grondgebied van één van de partijen, in overeenstemming met de associatieovereenkomst tussen de EU en Turkije van 1963;

— de rechten en procedurele waarborgen van personen jegens wie een terugkeerprocedure loopt, zoals vastgelegd in de richtlijn over gemeenschappelijke normen en procedures in de lidstaten voor de terugkeer van onderdanen van derde landen die illegaal op hun grondgebied verblijven;

— de rechten en procedurele waarborgen van personen met een verblijfsvergunning voor langdurig ingezetenen die is verleend op grond van de richtlijn betreffende de status van onderdanen van derde landen;

— de rechten en procedurele waarborgen van personen die een verblijfsrecht hebben verkregen op grond van de richtlijn inzake het recht op gezinshereniging.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014369/13
to the Commission
Emine Bozkurt (S&D)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Situation of Turkish citizens under the EU-Turkey readmission agreement

The EU-Turkey readmission agreement which was signed on 16 December 2013 in Ankara has been greeted with great enthusiasm, as this date also marks the official start of the visa liberalisation dialogue with the signature of the agreement protocol which will lead to the lifting of visa restrictions within 3 and a half years. Yet there is unrest among some Turkish nationals living in EU Member States caused by lack of information as to how the readmission agreement will affect their situation. While the agreement explicitly states that those who fall under the scope of the agreement are 'persons who do not or who no longer, fulfil the conditions for entry to, presence in, or residence on the territories of Turkey or one of the Member States of the Union' there is uncertainty as to the fate of those Turkish citizens who are in between residence permits.

1. How will the Commission safeguard the residence of Turkish citizens and their families whose residence permits have expired but who are in the process of obtaining new residence permits?

2. How will the Commission make sure that Turkish citizens legally resident in an EU Member State and who have been sentenced for a petty crime are not returned to Turkey based on the readmission agreement with the claim that they no longer fulfil the criteria of being legally resident?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(24 January 2014)

As such, the Agreement does not affect the chances of a Turkish citizen to be issued a return decision or an order to leave in either of the two scenarios mentioned by the questions of the honourable Member of the Parliament.

Decisions relating to the right of stay or residence, and return in case of irregular stay, are taken by the relevant administration of a Member State on the basis of its national law, as circumscribed by relevant EU secondary legislation.

The Readmission Agreement does not influence this process. It only facilitates the return of those found in a position of irregular stay and for whom an individual return decision has been taken.

To avoid any misunderstanding in this respect, this particular Readmission Agreement explicitly confirms (in its Preamble and in its Article 18) that it is 'without prejudice' to, inter alia,

— the rights and obligations of those who are or have been legally residing and working on the territory of one of the Parties, in line with the 1963 EU-Turkey Association Agreement;

— the rights and procedural guarantees of persons being subject of return procedures as laid down in the directive on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals

— the rights and procedural guarantees for persons holding a long term resident permit granted under the terms of the directive concerning the status of third-country nationals

— the rights and procedural guarantees for persons granted residence under the terms of the directive on the right to family reunification.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris P-014370/13
adresată Comisiei
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(19 decembrie 2013)

Subiect: Instrumentul European de Vecinătate 2014-2020

În data de 11 decembrie, Parlamentul European a aprobat Raportul referitor la Regulamentul de instituire a Instrumentului European de Vecinătate pentru perioada 2014-2020.

Conform textului aprobat, articolul 4 stabilește o serie de criterii pe baza cărora vor fi stabilite alocările naționale în perioada 2014-2020 pentru țările vizate de acest instrument.

Ar putea Comisia să informeze când intenționează să propună aceste alocări financiare?

De asemenea, ar putea informa Comisia dacă, la stabilirea alocărilor financiare naționale, va lua în calcul acordarea de finanțare cu prioritate acelor state care sunt pe deplin angajate în aprofundarea relațiilor cu Uniunea? Mai concret, dată fiind diferența de ambiție a unor state în ceea ce privește aprofundarea relațiilor cu Uniunea, mai ales în contextul deciziilor recente ale unor țări din vecinătatea estică de a întrerupe procesele de apropiere de Uniunea Europeană, are în vedere Comisia acordarea unui sprijin financiar mai însemnat, pe baza principiului „mai mult pentru mai mult", acelor state care manifestă voință politică, și nu numai, de aprofundare a relațiilor cu UE?

Răspuns dat de dl Füle în numele Comisiei
(13 februarie 2014)

Comisia va prezenta Parlamentului European propunerea sa de alocări financiare în cadrul dialogului strategic, programat provizoriu pentru luna martie 2014, precum și statelor membre în cadrul procedurii de comitologie.

Articolul 4 din Regulamentul de instituire a Instrumentului european de vecinătate și parteneriat (IEVP) prevede o serie de criterii pentru stabilirea alocărilor financiare, printre care angajamentul și progresele înregistrate în ceea ce privește reformele convenite și construirea democrației, precum și nivelul de ambiție în relațiile cu UE. Evaluarea partenerilor în conformitate cu aceste criterii, pe care o vom efectua în special pe baza rapoartelor privind progresele înregistrate în cadrul PEV, va fi luată în considerare la programarea multianuală a asistenței financiare în temeiul Regulamentului IEVP, precum și la punerea sa în aplicare în viitor, inclusiv stabilirea alocărilor în cadrul programelor multinaționale de coordonare. Programarea multianuală și punerea sa în aplicare vor fi ghidate de principiul flexibilității bazate pe stimulente.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014370/13
to the Commission
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: European Neighbourhood Instrument 2014-2020

On 11 December 2013, Parliament adopted the report on the regulation establishing the European Neighbourhood Instrument for the period 2014-2020.

Article 4 of the text adopted lays down a series of criteria on the basis of which the national financial allocations for the period 2014-2020 will be decided for the countries covered by the instrument.

Can the Commission say when it intends to propose these financial allocations?

Can the Commission also say whether, when setting these national financial allocations, it will consider giving priority to those countries which are fully committed to deepening their relations with the European Union? More specifically, given the differing level of ambition among some countries in relation to deepening their relations with the EU, particularly in the context of the recent decisions taken by some countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood to suspend the process of building closer ties with the EU, is the Commission considering granting more significant financial support, on the basis of the 'more for more' principle, to those countries which are, among other things, demonstrating the political will to build deeper relations with the EU?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(13 February 2014)

The Commission will present to the European Parliament its proposal for financial allocations as part of the Strategic Dialogue, tentatively scheduled for March 2014, and to the Member States in the Comitology Procedure.

Article 4 of the ENI Regulation lays down a series of criteria for the financial allocations, including commitment to and progress in agreed reforms and in building democracy, and the ambition in relations with the EU. Our assesment of the partners according to these criteria, based in particular on the annual ENP Progress Reports, will be reflected in the multi-annual programming of financial assistance under the ENI Regulation and in its future implementation, including the allocations under the multi-country umbrella programmes, both guided by the principle of incentive-based flexibility.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-014371/13
til Kommissionen
Jens Rohde (ALDE)
(19. december 2013)

Om: EU-Domstolens afgørelse i sag C-18/11, Philips Electronics, og den danske selskabsskattelov § 31, stk. 2

Den danske selskabsskattelov § 31, stk. 2, siger, at »For sambeskattede selskaber opgøres en sambeskatningsindkomst, der består af summen af den skattepligtige indkomst for hvert enkelt selskab omfattet af sambeskatningen opgjort efter skattelovgivningens almindelige regler med de undtagelser, der gælder for sambeskattede selskaber. Underskud i et fast driftssted kan kun modregnes i andre selskabers indkomst, hvis reglerne i den fremmede stat, på Færøerne eller i Grønland, hvor selskabet er hjemmehørende, medfører, at underskud ikke kan medregnes ved beregningen af selskabets indkomstopgørelse i den fremmede stat, på Færøerne eller i Grønland, hvor selskabet er hjemmehørende, eller hvis der er valgt international sambeskatning efter § 31 A« ([1]).

Er det Kommissionens opfattelse, at den danske selskabsskattelov § 31, stk. 2, er i overensstemmelse med artikel 49 TEUF, når det tages i betragtning, at EU-Domstolen sin afgørelse i sag C-18/11, Philips Electronics, bl.a. skriver, at »Artikel 43 EF skal fortolkes således, at det udgør en begrænsning af et ikke-hjemmehørende selskabs ret til frit at etablere sig i en anden medlemsstat, hvis muligheden for til et hjemmehørende selskab gennem koncernlempelse at overføre tab, som er lidt af det ikke-hjemmehørende selskabs faste driftssted i denne medlemsstat, i henhold til en national lovgivning underlægges en betingelse om, at disse tab ikke kan anvendes ved beregningen af en udenlandsk skat, hvorimod overførslen af tab, som et hjemmehørende selskab har lidt i denne medlemsstat, ikke er underlagt nogen tilsvarende betingelse« ([2])?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Algirdas Šemeta
(11. februar 2014)

Det ærede medlem rejser med sit spørgsmål rejser tvivl om, hvorvidt dansk lovgivning er i overensstemmelse med EU-retten som Domstolen har fortolket den i sin afgørelse i sag C-18/11 *Philips Electronics*. Der kræves yderligere oplysninger fra de danske myndigheder, før Kommissionen kan tage endelig stilling, og derfor vil Kommissionen kontakte Danmark om sagen og om nødvendigt træffe de nødvendige foranstaltninger.

([1]) https://www.retsinformation.dk/forms/R0710.aspx?id=143677.
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:62011CJ0018:DA:HTML.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014371/13
to the Commission
Jens Rohde (ALDE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union in Case C-18/11, Philips Electronics, and Section 31(2) of the Danish Corporation Tax Act

Section 31(2) of the Danish Corporation Tax Act states that 'For jointly taxed companies, a joint taxation income is determined, comprising the sum of the taxable income of each company included in the joint taxation, calculated in accordance with the general tax rules, with the exceptions that apply to jointly taxed companies. Losses in a permanent establishment can only be offset against another company's income if, according to the rules of the foreign state, the Faeroes or Greenland where the company is resident, losses cannot be included when calculating the company's income in the foreign country, the Faeroes or Greenland where the company is resident, or if international joint taxation is elected in accordance with Section 31 A.' ([1])

Does the Commission consider Section 31(2) of the Danish Corporation Tax Act to be in accordance with Article 49 TFEU, given that, in its judgment in Case C-18/11, Philips Electronics, the Court of Justice of the European Union states, *inter alia*, that 'Article 43 EC must be interpreted as meaning that where, under the national legislation of a Member State, the possibility of transferring, by means of group relief and to a resident company, losses sustained by the permanent establishment in that Member State of a non-resident company is subject to a condition that those losses cannot be used for the purposes of foreign taxation, and where the transfer of losses sustained in that Member State by a resident company is not subject to any equivalent condition, those provisions constitute a restriction on the freedom of a non-resident company to establish itself in another Member State.' ([2])?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

The Honourable Member's question raises concerns as to the compatibility of the Danish legislation with EC law as interpreted by the Court of Justice in its judgment in Case C-18/11 *Philips Electronics*. As further information is required from the Danish authorities before the Commission can reach a final position, the Commission will contact Denmark on the matter and take the appropriate measures, if needed.

([1]) https://www.retsinformation.dk/forms/R0710.aspx?id=143677
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:62011CJ0018:EN:HTML

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014372/13
an die Kommission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(19. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: REACH: Vertraulichkeit in öffentlichen Konsultationen über die Zulassung chemischer Stoffe

Die Frage der Vertraulichkeit in öffentlichen Konsultationen über die Zulassung chemischer Stoffe ist wichtig für die Umsetzung der REACH-Verordnung. In den Zulassungsanträgen bezüglich der Verwendung von DEHP und DBP sind beispielsweise viele relevante Seiten als vertraulich eingestuft.

1. Kann die Kommission eine Erklärung und Begründung dafür liefern, dass den Anträgen auf vertrauliche Behandlung beispielsweise im Zulassungsverfahren für DEHP stattgegeben wurde?

2. Wie stellt die Kommission sicher, dass für die öffentlichen Konsultationen hinreichende Informationen veröffentlicht werden?

3. Wie wird die Kommission geeignete Verfahren für die Überprüfung der Zulassungen entwickeln, wenn gemäß Artikel 61 Absatz 2 der REACH-Verordnung Informationen über neue Alternativen vorliegen?

4. Kann die Kommission garantieren, dass Beobachter der zivilgesellschaftlichen Organisationen an den Diskussionen um die REACH-Anträge in den Ausschüssen der ECHA teilnehmen können?

Antwort von Herrn Tajani im Namen der Kommission
(5. März 2014)

1. Unternehmen haben das Recht, vertrauliche Informationen einzureichen, und alle EU-Organe und ihre Bediensteten sind verpflichtet, Informationen, die nach Artikel 339 AEUV ([1]) unter das Berufsgeheimnis fallen und die unter Artikel 118 Absatz 2 der REACH-Verordnung ([2]) fallen, nicht offenzulegen.

2. Die Europäische Chemikalienagentur (ECHA) muss sicherstellen, dass Informationen in ausreichendem Maße veröffentlicht werden, damit während der öffentlichen Konsultation fundiert Stellung bezogen werden kann. Dies liegt auch im Interesse der Kommission, da sie sich bei ihrer Entscheidungsfindung auf die Stellungnahme der ECHA stützt. Da es sich bei den Zulassungen um relativ neue Verfahren handelt, steht die Kommission in regelmäßigem Kontakt mit der ECHA, um das Verfahren soweit wie möglich zu straffen.

3. Nach der REACH-Verordnung können Zulassungen jederzeit überprüft werden, wenn neue Informationen über mögliche Ersatzstoffe vorliegen. Die Überprüfung erfolgt nach dem Verfahren für Zulassungsentscheidungen ([3]). Dies umfasst die Aufforderung Dritter, nach der Veröffentlichung allgemeiner Informationen über die Verwendungen auf der Website der ECHA innerhalb einer bestimmten Frist zusätzliche Informationen zu übermitteln. Bei der Überprüfung werden auch die praktischen Erfahrungen berücksichtigt, die bei der Durchführung der Zulassung im Rahmen der ersten 2014 zu bearbeitenden Anträge gewonnen werden.

4. Wie in der Geschäftsordnung der ECHA angegeben, stehen die Ausschusssitzungen Beobachtern, eingeladenen Sachverständigen und Beratern offen. Beobachter, die die Organisationen der Zivilgesellschaft vertreten, nehmen an den nicht vertraulichen Sitzungsteilen der ECHA-Ausschüsse für Zulassungsanträge teil.

([1]) Konsolidierte Fassung des Vertrags über die Arbeitsweise der Europäischen Union, veröffentlicht am 26. Oktober 2012.
([2]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1907/2006 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 18. Dezember 2006 zur Registrierung, Bewertung, Zulassung und Beschränkung chemischer Stoffe (REACH).
([3]) Artikel 64 der REACH-Verordnung.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014372/13
to the Commission
Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: REACH: confidentiality in public consultations on the authorisation of chemicals

The question of confidentiality in public consultations for the authorisation of chemicals is important for the implementation of REACH. For example, in the applications for authorisation relating to uses of DEHP and DBP, many relevant pages are classified as confidential.

1. Can the Commission provide an explanation of and justifications for the confidentiality claims that have been granted, e.g. in the authorisations procedure for DEHP?

2. How does the Commission ensure that sufficient information is published for the public consultations?

3. How will the Commission develop adequate procedures for reviewing the authorisations when information on new alternatives becomes available as provided for in Article 61(2) of the REACH Directive?

4. Can the Commission guarantee the participation of civil society organisations' observers during discussions on REACH applications at ECHA Committees?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(5 March 2014)

1. Companies are entitled to file confidential information and all EU institutions and its agents are required not to disclose information covered by the obligation of professional secrecy further to Article 339 of TFEU ([1]) as well as Article 118(2) of REACH ([2]).

2. It is the responsibility of the European Chemical Agency (ECHA) to ensure that sufficient information is published to allow for an informed opinion to be put forward during the public consultation process. This is also in the interest of the Commission as it relies on the opinions of ECHA when it takes its decisions. As authorisations are relatively new procedures, the Commision has regular contacts with ECHA to streamline the process as much as possible.

3. Under REACH, authorisations may be reviewed at any time if new information on possible substitutes becomes available. The review process follows *mutatis mutandis* the procedure for authorisation decisions ([3]). It includes an invitation for third parties to submit further information within a specified time period following the publication of general information on uses on ECHA's website. This review process will also take into account practical experience gained in the implementation of the authorisation process of the first applications to be handled in 2014.

4. As specified in the Rules of Procedure, ECHA Committees meetings are open to observers, invited experts and advisors. Observers representing civil society organisations participate in the non-confidential parts of the ECHA Committees on applications for authorisation.

([1]) Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union published on 26 October 2012.
([2]) Regulation (EC) No 1907/2206 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals.
([3]) Article 64 of REACH.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014373/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(19 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: «Ανωτέρα βία» & άρθρο 2.1.2 παρ. 4 της ανακοίνωσης της Επιτροπής 2000/C121/02

Σύμφωνα με την σύμβαση παραχώρησης που υπογράφτηκε το 2007, για το έργο παραχώρησης της Ολυμπίας Οδού, ορίζεται ως «παρατεταμένο γεγονός ανωτέρας βίας» (άρθρο 22 Ν. 3621/2007), «όλα εκείνα τα γεγονότα ή περιστατικά ή οι συνέπειες αυτών που ευρίσκονται εκτός της σφαίρας ελέγχου ή επιρροής των Μερών … έχει απαλλαγεί από την υποχρέωση ασφάλισης». Επίσης ορίζει ότι «σε περίπτωση κατά την οποία είτε ο παραχωρησιούχος είτε το δημόσιο ισχυρίζονται ότι έχουν εμποδιστεί ή καθυστερήσει στην εκπλήρωση οποιασδήποτε συμβατικής τους υποχρέωσης λόγω γεγονότος ανωτέρας βίας, υποχρεούνται να ειδοποιήσουν εγγράφως ("Γνωστοποίηση γεγονότος ανωτέρας βίας") τον αντισυμβαλλόμενο τους και τον Ανεξάρτητο Μηχανικό (κατά την περίοδο Μελετών — Κατασκευών), μόλις αυτό καταστεί πρακτικώς δυνατό, σε κάθε περίπτωση όμως όχι αργότερα από πέντε μέρες αφότου υπέπεσε στην αντίληψή τους η επέλευση του γεγονότος ανωτέρας βίας».

Με δεδομένο ότι: α) η συμφωνία για αναθεώρηση των υφιστάμενων συμβάσεων πραγματοποιείται εξαιτίας της αναγνώρισης και από τα δύο μέρη «παρατεταμένου γεγονότος ανωτέρας βίας» (άρθρο 4.3, παράρτημα Δ, σχέδιο νόμου με ημερομηνία κατάθεσης 29.11.2013), β) η διετής απότομη διακοπή των έργων καθόρισε τα ποσά αποζημιώσεων του παραχωρησιούχου από το Ελληνικό Δημόσιο (το αντίθετο δεν υφίσταται στην αναθεωρημένη σύμβαση), γ) δεν είναι σαφές και δεν προκύπτει από το αναθεωρημένο χρηματοοικονομικό μοντέλο, για ποιο χρονικό διάστημα το ελληνικό δημόσιο πληρώνει αποζημιώσεις στον παραχωρησιούχο,

ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Αναγνωρίζει την «οικονομική κρίση» ως γεγονός ανωτέρας βίας κατά τα ανωτέρω οριζόμενα;

2. Εάν ναι, υπάρχει αποδεικτικό κατάθεσης από τον παραχωρησιούχο για το αίτημα αναγνώρισης γεγονότος ανωτέρας βίας, κατά τα ανωτέρω οριζόμενα;

3. Πώς αποτιμάται το γεγονός αυτό σε συνδυασμό με τις επιταγές του άρθρου 2.1.2 παρ. 4 της «ερμηνευτικής ανακοίνωσης της Επιτροπής σχετικά με τις συμβάσεις παραχώρησης στο κοινοτικό δίκαιο» (2000/C 121/02) που ορίζει σαφώς ότι «εάν ο ανάδοχος δέχεται με έμμεσο ή άμεσο τρόπο, κατά τη διάρκεια της σύμβασης ή και κατά τη λήξη της, αμοιβή υπό το μανδύα αποπληρωμής, κάλυψης ζημιών κ.λπ. άλλη από εκείνη που συνδέεται με την διαχείριση, η σύμβαση δεν θα μπορούσε πλέον να χαρακτηρισθεί ως σύμβαση παραχώρησης»;

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014375/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(19 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ποινικές ρήτρες και «ανωτέρα βία»

Ο νόμος «Κύρωση των συμφωνιών τροποποίησης των συμβάσεων παραχώρησης των μεγάλων οδικών έργων και ρύθμιση συναφών θεμάτων», αναγνωρίζεται ότι υπήρξε γεγονός ανωτέρας βίας, και μάλιστα παρατεταμένης, που είχε ως αποτέλεσμα, όπως ρητά ομολογείται, το σταμάτημα των έργων από το 2010. Κατά το ίδιο διάστημα ωστόσο, υπήρξαν διαρκείς πληρωμές (διόδια) και ταυτόχρονα απαιτήσεις πολλών εκατοντάδων εκατομμυρίων ευρώ των παραχωρησιούχων και οι οποίες, αν σωστά αντιλαμβανόμαστε, εγκρίθηκαν και από την Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή.

Ερωτάται η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή:

Πώς είναι δυνατόν, όταν συνομολογείται μεταξύ ελληνικής κυβέρνησης και παραχωρησιούχων διακοπή των εργασιών λόγω ανωτέρας βίας να εγείρονται και, κυρίως, να ικανοποιούνται απαιτήσεις των παραχωρησιούχων για ενεργοποίηση ποινικών ρητρών για δήθεν απαλλοτριώσεις, ανασκαφές, κ.λπ., που δεν έγιναν, κατά την περίοδο που τα έργα ήταν σταματημένα λόγω «ανωτέρας βίας»; Πώς εξηγεί η Επιτροπή αυτό το «παράδοξο»; Έχει διερευνήσει το ενδεχόμενο οι «αποζημιώσεις» που έλαβαν και εξακολουθούν να λαμβάνουν οι παραχωρησιούχοι από την ενεργοποίηση των ρητρών αυτών να αποτελούν κρατικές ενισχύσεις;

Κοινή απάντηση του κ. Barnier εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(25 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή υπενθυμίζει ότι, στις 13 Δεκεμβρίου 2013, δεν έλαβε αποφάσεις να εγείρει αντιρρήσεις σχετικά με την επανεκκίνηση των τεσσάρων ελληνικών αυτοκινητοδρόμων ([1]), σύμφωνα με την οποία η ρύθμιση των εν λόγω συμβατικών υποχρεώσεων βασίστηκε σε συμβατικές υποχρεώσεις του Δημοσίου στο πλαίσιο της αρχικής συμφωνίας παραχώρησης. Οι ελληνικές αρχές προσκόμισαν αποδεικτικά στοιχεία για το ότι, στο πλαίσιο της αρχικής συμφωνίας παραχώρησης, το Δημόσιο ήταν υπεύθυνο για την αποζημίωση του αναδόχου σε περίπτωση καθυστερήσεων και κάθε άλλης οικονομικής επίπτωσης στις επιχειρήσεις του, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της απώλειας εσόδων, καταλογιζόμενης στο Δημόσιο.

Επιπλέον, οι ελληνικές αρχές εξήγησαν ότι οι εν λόγω ισχυρισμοί εξετάστηκαν από ανεξάρτητους μηχανικούς, ελεγκτές και την ελληνική διοίκηση ανάλογα με την περίπτωση, και τα τελικά ποσά έγιναν αποδεκτά βάσει των ισχυουσών συμβατικών διατάξεων.

Συνεπώς, στις αποφάσεις της η Επιτροπή κατέληξε στο συμπέρασμα ότι ο διακανονισμός των εν λόγω υποχρεώσεων δεν συνεπάγεται κρατική ενίσχυση. Οι λεπτομέρειες εκτέλεσης της σύμβασης, αυτές καθαυτές, δεν εμπίπτουν στο πεδίο εφαρμογής των κανόνων της ΕΕ για τις δημόσιες συμβάσεις και διέπονται από το εθνικό δίκαιο των συμβάσεων.

Όσον αφορά την έννοια της «οικονομικής κρίσης», υπό ορισμένες προϋποθέσεις, θα μπορούσε να εννοηθεί ως περίπτωση ανωτέρας βίας. Ο ορισμός της έννοιας της ανωτέρας βίας είναι καταρχήν θέμα της εθνικής νομοθεσίας.

Ως προς τον ορισμό των συμβάσεων παραχώρησης, παραπέμπουμε στον ορισμό της νέας οδηγίας περί συμβάσεων παραχώρησης ([2]). Η εν λόγω οδηγία ορίζει ότι οι παραχωρήσεις αποτελούν συμβάσεις βάσει των οποίων ο ανάδοχος αναλαμβάνει έναν κίνδυνο εκμετάλλευσης μιας σύμβασης και δεν υπάρχει εγγύηση για την απόσβεση της επένδυσης και την ανάκτηση των δαπανών που πραγματοποιούνται. Βάσει των πληροφοριών που διαθέτει επί του παρόντος, η Επιτροπή είναι της άποψης ότι η συμφωνία για την Ολυμπία οδό εξακολουθεί να ορίζεται ως σύμβαση παραχώρησης.

([1]) Ολυμπία οδός, Αυτοκινητόδρομος Αιγαίου, Ιόνια Οδός, Αυτοκινητόδρομος Κεντρικής Ελλάδας.
([2]) COM(2011)897 τελικό.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014373/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: '*Force majeure*' and Article 2.1.2 paragraph 4 of Commission Communication 2000/C121/02

According to the concession agreement signed in 2007 for the Olympia Road concession project, a 'prolonged force majeure event' (Article 22 N. 3621/2007) defined as 'all those events or circumstances, or the consequences thereof, that are outside the sphere of control or influence of the Parties … are exempted from compulsory insurance'. It also states that 'in the event that either the concessionaire or the state claim to have been prevented or delayed in the performance of any contractual obligation due to a force majeure event, they shall notify in writing ("Notification of a force majeure event") the Contractor and the Independent Engineer (during the Design — Construction period), as soon as is practicable, but in any case not later than five days after becoming aware of the occurrence of the force majeure event'.

Given that: a) an agreement on the revision of existing contracts is implemented through the recognition by both parties of a 'prolonged force majeure event' (Article 4.3, Annex D, draft legislation filing date 29 November 2013), b) the sudden two-year cessation of works determined the amounts of compensation for the concessionaire from the Greek Government (the opposite does not apply in the revised contract), and c) the length of time for which the Greek Government pays compensation to the concessionaire is not clear and does not follow from the revised financial model:

1. Does the Commission recognise the 'economic crisis' as a force majeure event as defined above?

2. If so, is there proof of a submission by the concessionaire of a request for recognition of a *force majeure* event, as defined above?

3. How can this fact be harmonised with the requirements of Article 2.1.2 paragraph 4 of the Draft Commission interpretative communication on concessions under Community law on public contracts (2000/C 121/02), which clearly states that 'if the concessionaire receives whether directly or indirectly during the course of the contract or even when the contract comes to an end, payment by way of reimbursement, covering losses etc. other than connected with exploitation, the contract could no longer be regarded as a concession'?

Question for written answer E-014375/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Penalties and '*force majeure*'

The law on 'Ratification of the amendment of agreements on concessions for major road project contracts and regulation related issues' recognises the existence of force majeure events, even over a prolonged period, in relation to projects suspended since 2010, as is explicitly acknowledged. At the same time, however, ongoing payments (tolls) have been made and, at the same time, demands from concessionaires for many hundreds of millions of euro have, if we understand correctly, been approved by the European Commission.

In view of the above, will the European Commission say:

How is it possible, when a suspension of work due to *force majeure* is agreed between the Greek Government and concessionaires, for the demands of concessionaires to be satisfied in respect of penalties for alleged compulsory purchases, excavations etc. that never took place, during the period when works were suspended due to '*force majeure*'? How does the Commission explain this 'paradox'? Has it considered the possibility that the damages which the concessionaires have received and continue to receive from the activation of these clauses might constitute state subsidies?

Joint answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(25 February 2014)

The Commission recalls that on 13 December 2013 it took no objection decisions regarding the Reset of the four Greek Motorways ([1]), according to which the settlement of contractual obligations in question was based on contractual obligations of the State in the context of the original concession agreement. The Greek authorities provided evidence that under the original Concession Agreement, the State was responsible to compensate the Concessionaire for delays and any other financial impact on its operations, including lost revenue, imputable to the State.

In addition, the Greek authorities explained that those claims have been reviewed by independent engineers, auditors and the Greek administration where applicable, and the final amounts were accepted on the basis of the applicable contractual provisions.

Thus, the Commission concluded in its decisions that the settlement of these obligations did not involve state aid. Contract execution modalities do not as such fall within the scope of the EU public procurement rules and are governed by the national contract law.

Regarding the notion of the 'economic crisis', under specific conditions, it could be understood as force majeure. Defining the notion of *force majeure* is in principle a matter of national law.

As to the definition of concession, we would refer to the definition of the new Directive on concessions contracts ([2]). This directive defines concessions are contracts whereby the concessionaire takes a risk of operating a contract and is not guaranteed to recoup the investments made or the costs incurred. Based on the information at its disposal at this point in time, the Commission is of the view that the Olympia Road agreement continues to be defined as a concession contract.

([1]) Olympia Odos, Aegean Motorway, Ionia Odos, Central Motorway.
([2]) COM(2011) 897 final.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014374/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(19 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Η κρίση ως «γενεσιουργός αιτία γεγονότων “ανωτέρας βίας”»

Στην αιτιολογική έκθεση του νόμου «Κύρωση των συμφωνιών τροποποίησης των συμβάσεων παραχώρησης των μεγάλων οδικών έργων και ρύθμιση συναφών θεμάτων» που εγκρίθηκε από το Ελληνικό Κοινοβούλιο, αναφέρεται ότι «η χρηματοοικονομική κρίση κατά την εκτίμηση όλων των συμβαλλόμενων μερών … συνιστά παρατεταμένο γεγονός ανωτέρας βίας» (Αιτιολογική έκθεση σημείο Ε, παράρτημα Δ, άρθρο 4, παράγραφος 4.3). Κατά τη διάρκεια της συζήτησης, η κυβέρνηση διαβεβαίωνε ότι οι ανωτέρω Συμβάσεις έχουν ήδη εξετασθεί από τις αρμόδιες διευθύνσεις της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής και έχουν εγκριθεί. Δεδομένου λοιπόν ότι, α) υπάρχει ρητή παραδοχή από την ελληνική κυβέρνηση, αλλά και την Επιτροπή, ότι η οικονομική κρίση συνιστά «γενεσιουργό αιτία δημιουργίας παρατεταμένου γεγονότος ανωτέρας βίας» και, εξ αιτίας αυτής, τράπεζες και εργολάβοι απαλλάχθηκαν από τις συμβατικές τους υποχρεώσεις προς το ελληνικό δημόσιο και, κυρίως, της υποχρέωσής τους για εξεύρεση και εξασφάλιση των αναγκαίων κεφαλαίων, και ότι β) η οικονομική κρίση δεν μπορεί να αποτελεί «γενεσιουργό αιτία δημιουργίας παρατεταμένου γεγονότος ανωτέρας βίας» μόνο για τις τράπεζες και τους εργολάβους, αλλά ασφαλώς μπορεί να αποτελεί «γενεσιουργό αιτία», τόσο για εκατοντάδες χιλιάδες νοικοκυριά και μικρομεσαίες επιχειρήσεις που αδυνατούν να αντεπεξέλθουν στην αποπληρωμή δανείων ή οφειλών προς το δημόσιο, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Έχει πράγματι αναγνωρίσει την οικονομική κρίση ως «γενεσιουργό αιτία παρατεταμένων γεγονότων ανωτέρας βίας»;

1. Εάν ναι, θα μπορεί η ίδια αιτιολογία να χρησιμοποιείται από τα ελληνικά, και όχι μόνο, δικαστήρια; Θα μπορεί π.χ., κάποιος δανειολήπτης ή οφειλέτης του δημοσίου να επικαλεστεί την πραγματική οικονομική κρίση ως «ανωτέρα βία» ώστε να μην αποπληρώσει τις οφειλές του προς τις τράπεζες ή το δημόσιο; Επιπλέον, ο νέος νόμος που συζητείται με την τρόικα για τους πλειστηριασμούς των ακινήτων θα περιλαμβάνει ρήτρα περί «ανωτέρας βίας», όπως στην πράξη ερμηνεύθηκε και χρησιμοποιήθηκε υπέρ των παραχωρησιούχων των μεγάλων οδικών αξόνων, παρ’ ότι αυτοί δεσμεύονταν νομικά απέναντι στο ελληνικό δημόσιο;

2. Εάν όχι, γιατί αναγνωρίσθηκε το γεγονός αυτό στους παραχωρησιούχους και στις τράπεζες και όχι σε άλλες περιπτώσεις, όπως, επιχειρήσεις που αδυνατούν να αντεπεξέλθουν στις υποχρεώσεις τους ή οικογένειες οι οποίες, χωρίς να έχουν φτάσει ακόμη στο επίπεδο της απόλυτης ένδειας, χάνουν τα περιουσιακά τους στοιχεία;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(12 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η γενική αρχή περί αμοιβαίου σεβασμού των συμβατικών υποχρεώσεων δεν αποκλείει κατ’ ανάγκην αλλαγές μέσω τροποποιήσεων που αποφασίζουν τα συμβαλλόμενα μέρη.

Η τροποποίηση στην οποία αναφέρεται ο κ. βουλευτής θα επιτρέψει την επανέναρξη σημαντικών έργων υποδομής, τα οποία αναμένεται να δημιουργήσουν σημαντικό αριθμό θέσεων εργασίας, και θα βελτιώσει τις υφιστάμενες υποδομές της Ελλάδας, ενισχύοντας κατ’ αυτόν τον τρόπο την ανταγωνιστικότητά της. Ωστόσο, η συμφωνία μεταξύ των συμβαλλόμενων μερών, η οποία ενδέχεται να αποδειχθεί ιδιαίτερα ευεργετική για τους Έλληνες πολίτες, ουδεμία σχέση έχει με το θέμα του χρέους των νοικοκυριών.

Όσον αφορά δε το χρέος των νοικοκυριών, η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή αναγνωρίζει τις σημαντικές επιπτώσεις που έχει η οικονομική κρίση στην ικανότητα εξυπηρέτησης χρέους των Ελλήνων δανειοληπτών και λαμβάνει σοβαρά υπόψη το ζήτημα στο πλαίσιο του δεύτερου προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής της Ελλάδας ([1]). Προκειμένου να βρεθεί ισορροπημένη προσέγγιση με στόχο τόσο τη διαχείριση των υποχρεώσεων των οφειλετών που αντιμετωπίζουν δυσκολίες όσο και τη διαφύλαξη της νοοτροπίας καταβολής των πληρωμών στη χώρα, τον Δεκέμβριο το Ελληνικό Κοινοβούλιο ενέκρινε τον Νόμο 4224/2013 (ΦΕΚ 288/31.12.2013). Το άρθρο 2 του εν λόγω νόμου προβλέπει προσωρινή προστασία των υπερχρεωμένων και ευάλωτων νοικοκυριών από πλειστηριασμούς πρώτης κατοικίας, έως ότου επιτευχθεί διακανονισμός με τους πιστωτές τους.

([1]) Στην παράγραφο 3.7 του μνημονίου συμφωνίας (ΜΣ) (σελίδα 168), περιγράφονται τα μέτρα που συμφωνήθηκαν μετά την τρίτη αποστολή ελέγχου για την παρακολούθηση της διαδικασίας επίλυσης ανεξόφλητων χρεών δανειοληπτών:
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp159_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014374/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: The crisis as a 'cause giving rise to "*force majeure*" events'

In the explanatory report of the law on 'Ratification of the amendment of agreements on concessions for major road project contracts and regulation related issues', which has been approved by the Greek parliament, it is reported that 'the financial crisis, in the view of all parties … constitutes a prolonged force majeure event' (Explanatory memorandum, point E, Annex D, Article 4, paragraph 4.3). During the discussion, the Government confirmed that the contracts in question have already been checked and approved by the competent directorate of the European Commission, and given that: a) there is an explicit admission by the Greek Government and by the Commission that the economic crisis is 'a cause giving rise to prolonged force majeure events' and, because of this, banks and contractors have been freed from their contractual obligations towards the Greek state and, in particular, their obligation to find and secure the necessary funds, and given that b) the economic crisis cannot be 'a cause giving rise to a prolonged force majeure event' only for banks and contractors, but can also surely be a 'cause' for hundreds of thousands of households and small to medium-sized enterprises that are unable to cope with paying off loans or debts to the state, will the Commission say:

Has it indeed recognised the economic crisis as a 'cause giving rise to prolonged force majeure events'?

1. If so, can the same reasoning be applied by Greek courts and other courts? Can, for example, a person borrowing money from or owing money to the state invoke the actual economic crisis as '*force majeure*' so as to avoid repaying debts to banks or the state? Additionally, will the new law under discussion with the troika on auctioning properties contain a '*force majeure*' clause, as it has been interpreted and applied in practice in favour of contractors working on major roads, even though they were under legal obligations to the Greek state?

2. If not, why has such an event been acknowledged for contractors and banks and not in other cases such as businesses that are unable to meet their obligations, or families which, despite having reached the level of absolute poverty, still lose all of their assets?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

The general principle of the reciprocal respect of contractual obligations does not necessarily preclude changes through amendments agreed by the contracting parties.

The amendment mentioned by the Honourable Member will allow the restart of important infrastructure projects which will create a substantial number of jobs and will improve Greece's infrastructure endowment, thereby enhancing its competitiveness. The contracting parties' agreement, which has important potential benefits for the Greek population, is unrelated to the issue of household debt.

On the latter subject, the European Commission has recognised that the impact of the economic crisis on the debt servicing capability of Greek borrowers has been substantial, and therefore special attention has been paid to this issue in the context of the Second Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece. ([1]) In order to find a balanced approach in dealing with liabilities of debtors facing difficulties, while safeguarding the payment culture in the country, the Greek Parliament approved in December Law 4224/2013 (FEK 288/31.12.2013). Article 2 of this Law addresses the situation of distressed and vulnerable households by temporarily protecting them from auctions of primary residences, until a settlement with creditors is achieved.

([1]) Paragraph 3.7 of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) (page 168) describes the steps that were agreed following the 3rd review mission to monitor the resolution of distressed debts of borrowers: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp159_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014376/13
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: E-cigarettes

On 28 November 2013, the British newspaper *The Daily Telegraph* reported that 'a confidential negotiating document drafted by the European Commission seeks to overturn a vote by MEPs that rejected outlawing [e-cigarettes] in their present form. Brussels officials fear that there is a "risk that electronic cigarettes can develop into a gateway to normal cigarettes", according to the paper, and want to include the smoke-free alternative under a new EU "tobacco products directive" — despite the fact that they contain no tobacco'.

Could the Commission confirm or deny the existence of such a document?

The author of the article further stated that the Commission's position was based on the fact that '[e- cigarettes] involve "inhaling nicotine into lungs" and "are the same as smoking"'.

If this is indeed the position, could the Commission explain what medical evidence it is based on?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(7 February 2014)

According to the Commission proposal for a revised Tobacco Products Directive ([1]) issued in December 2012, electronic cigarettes would fall under the legal framework for medicinal products if they contain levels of nicotine above certain thresholds. On the reasoning and the policy options considered by the Commission in the impact assessment, the Honourable Member is referred to the answer to the Written Question E-009903/2013 ([2]).

On the basis of the Commission proposal, the European Parliament and the Council reached an agreement on a harmonised regulation of electronic cigarettes on 16 December 2013. The compromise agreement, which reflects the European Parliament's position adopted at the plenary of 8 October 2013, subjects electronic cigarettes to consumer products legislation, unless they fall under the definition of a medicinal product. It further establishes new rules for the safety, quality, ingredients and presentation of consumer electronic cigarettes.

The Commission has facilitated this compromise agreement and supports it. The agreement on the revised Directive still requires formal adoption by the European Parliament and the Council of Minister, which is due to be achieved during spring 2014.

([1]) SWD(2012) 452 final.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014377/13
to the Commission
Alyn Smith (Verts/ALE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Angora wool from China

I have been contacted by animal welfare campaigners in my constituency regarding the horrific abuse recently uncovered by PETA concerning the supply of angora wool, specifically from China.

It is reported that rabbits are tied up, their bodies stretched out to prevent escape then they are plucked alive for their fur. This causes extreme pain, injury and distress. Once their fur is removed, they are thrown back into dirty and cramped cages until their fur grows back and the process is repeated until they are no longer viable.

High demand for cheap fibre coupled with a lack of legislation governing how such fibre can be produced has appalling consequences for angora rabbits industrially farmed across China. As a result, a number of retailers have recently suspended production of angora products.

Could the Commission clarify if it is aware of this situation and what assessment it has made on how much angora wool from China enters the European market? What action, if any, does the Commission intend to take to tackle this issue?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-13393/2013 ([1]).

Concerning the import of angora wool CN code 5102 19 10 for fine animal hair of angora rabbit shows that 666 tonnes of this commodity entered the European market (EU 28) from China in 2013.

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

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-014378/13
upućeno Komisiji
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(19. prosinca 2013.)

Predmet: Prilagodba Europskog fonda za pomorstvo i ribarstvo Hrvatskom ribarskom sektoru

Neposredno nakon glasovanja o Europskom fondu za pomorstvo i ribarstvo (EMFF) u listopadu uputio sam pitanje (P-012231/2013) o konkretnim mjerama i programima koje Komisija planira provesti kako bi financijski potpomogla ribarima da se prilagode novim odredbama. Neke od novih odredbi uključuju uspostavljanje uravnoteženijeg odnosa između ribarske flote i raspoloživih ribljih resursa, kao i smanjenje ribarske flote, uz istovremeno osiguravanje radnih mjesta u priobalnim zajednicama.

U svom odgovoru povjerenica za ribarstvo i pomorska pitanja, gospođa Damanaki, istaknula je između ostalog kako će EMFF najvjerojatnije nastaviti s podupiranjem Lokalnih akcijskih skupina u ribarstvu (Fisheries Local Action Groups — FLAGs) na temelju lokalnog razvoja u ribarstvenim područjima kojim upravlja lokalna zajednica. EMFF će po mogućnosti tim skupinama omogućiti odabir projekata kojima će se ojačati položaj sektora ribarstva u lancu opskrbe i lokalnom gospodarstvu ili koji će pridonijeti gospodarskoj diverzifikaciji i otvaranju radnih mjesta pomoću inicijativa kao što je turizam povezan s ribarstvom.

Hrvatska je, kao najnovija članica Unije, još uvijek u procesu kreiranja planova uspostave Lokalnih akcijskih skupina u ribarstvu. Uzimajući u obzir takvu situaciju, koje konkretne mjere prilagođene Hrvatskoj Komisija planira provesti kako bi hrvatski ribari i ribarski sektor mogli ravnopravno sudjelovati u novom programu i prije formalne uspostave Lokalnih akcijskih skupina u ribarstvu?

Odgovor gđe Damanaki u ime Komisije
(24. veljače 2014.)

Nakon što je 29. siječnja prošle godine postignut politički dogovor između suzakonodavaca, Europski fond za pomorstvo i ribarstvo (EMFF) odlučio je nastaviti davati potporu lokalnom razvoju kojim upravlja lokalna zajednica (CLLD) u području ribarstva.

U neslužbenom nacrtu Sporazuma o partnerstvu Hrvatska je predvidjela provedbu te područne inicijative putem programa LEADER (Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale) u okviru Europskog poljoprivrednog fonda za ruralni razvoj i preko lokalnih akcijskih skupina za ribarstvo (FLAG) u okviru EMFF-a. Hrvatska želi povezati lokalne inicijative za razvoj ribarstva i ruralnih područja koristeći se iskustvom stečenim u okviru programa LEADER.

S obzirom na novosti u pristupu ribarstvu za Hrvatsku, Komisija će pokrenuti prve rasprave s hrvatskim tijelima na marginama pregovora za operativni program EMFF-a. U suradnji s odjelom za potporu mreže za područja ribarstva (FARNET). One bi mogle obuhvatiti pripremnu potporu izgradnji kapaciteta i osposobljavanju za pripremu i provedbu strategija lokalnog razvoja, umrežavanje s ostalim državama članicama te razmjenu znanja i dobre prakse s LEADER-om.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014378/13
to the Commission
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Adapting the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund to the Croatian fisheries sector

Immediately after the vote on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) in October 2013, I submitted a question (P-012231/2013) asking what specific measures and programmes the Commission planned to implement in order to support fisherman financially so as to enable them to adapt to the new provisions. Some of the new provisions call for the establishment of a more balanced relationship between fishing fleets and available fishery resources, for the reduction of fishing fleets, and — at the same time — for jobs in coastal communities to be assured.

In her response, the Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Maria Damanaki stated, among other things, that the EMFF will most likely continue to support Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) through community-led local development in fisheries areas. It would be preferable for the EMFF to allow those groups to select projects that will strengthen the position of the fisheries sector in the supply chain and the local economy, or which will help to promote economic diversification and job creation through initiatives such as linking tourism and fishing.

As the newest EU Member State, Croatia is still in the process of drawing up plans to set up Fisheries Local Action Groups. In view of this situation, what specific measures adapted to Croatia does the Commission plan to implement with a view to enabling Croatian fishermen and the Croatian fisheries sector to participate on an equal footing in the new programme prior to the setting up of Fisheries Local Action Groups?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(24 February 2014)

Following the political agreement by the co-legislators on 29 January last, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) is set to continue to support community-led local development (CLLD) in fisheries areas.

In the informal draft Partnership Agreement, Croatia envisages implementing this territorial initiative through Leader (Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale) under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and through fisheries local action groups (FLAGs) under the EMFF. Croatia seeks synergies between local development initiatives in fisheries and rural areas, thus using the experience gained with Leader.

In view of the novelty of the approach in fisheries for Croatia, the Commission will have early discussions with the Croatian authorities in the margins of negotiations for the EMFF Operational programme. Targeted actions will be considered with the collaboration of the Support Unit of the Fisheries Areas Network (FARNET). This may include preparatory support for capacity-building and trainings to prepare and implement the local development strategies, networking with other MS, as well as exchange of knowledge and good practices with Leader.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014379/13
à la Commission
Michèle Rivasi (Verts/ALE)
(19 décembre 2013)

Objet: Transparence concernant le protocole d'accord entre la Commission et la fondation Bill Gates

Le 10 juin 2013, la commissaire chargée de la recherche, de l'innovation et de la science a signé un accord avec la fondation Bill Gates à Paris. C'est la première fois que la Commission entreprend ce genre de collaboration avec une fondation privée. Un protocole d'accord a été élaboré en vue d'une coopération stratégique entre la Commission et la fondation Bill & Melinda Gates. Selon ce document, cette collaboration a pour principal objectif d'accélérer la recherche, le développement, la distribution, voire la commercialisation de technologies innovantes liées à la santé mondiale qui puissent améliorer la santé dans les pays en développement. Toutefois, le protocole d'accord ne comporte que très peu d'informations au sujet des règles régissant cette coopération et de la manière de la mettre en œuvre. Si le protocole d'accord mentionne des ententes mutuelles et les principes directeurs sur lesquels se fonde cette coopération stratégique, il n'est pas juridiquement contraignant et, en outre, aucun engagement, ni aucune obligation réels n'ont été publiés. Dans ce contexte, la Commission pourrait-elle répondre aux questions suivantes:

1. Quand ce partenariat sera-t-il opérationnel? Quelle forme revêtiront sa ou ses premières actions?

2. Comment les objectifs poursuivis en commun vont-ils être établis et par qui? Comment cette coopération s'articulera-t-elle par rapport aux autres forums stratégiques et de coopération établis dans le cadre du programme Horizon 2020?

3. Comment les objectifs communs seront-ils alignés sur les objectifs de santé mondiale? En particulier, quel contrôle la communauté scientifique et les organisations de la société civile seront-elles en mesure d'exercer?

4. Quels accords existent concernant les règles qui seront appliquées afin de permettre la diffusion large et rapide et l'accessibilité des connaissances et informations obtenues grâce à la recherche et au développement, compte tenu notamment des règles en matière de propriété intellectuelle?

5. Est-il prévu de mettre en place un processus décisionnel afin de décider quels projets seront financés? Quelles sont les règles de cofinancement qui s'appliqueront dans le cas des projets financés en commun?

6. Comment le Parlement européen sera-t-il tenu informé des activités menées et des décisions prises dans ce contexte?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Geoghegan-Quinn au nom de la Commission
(10 février 2014)

1. La Commission et la Fondation Bill & Melinda Gates (BMGF) collaborent déjà depuis 2005: la Fondation a cofinancé des activités lancées par l'Union européenne et les États membres, comme le programme EDCTP ([1]), tandis que la Commission soutenait les partenariats de développement de produits (PDP) mis en œuvre par la BMGF, comme projets financés au titre des programmes-cadre ([2]) et choisis sur la base d'une évaluation par les pairs. Des initiatives conjointes, comme le partenariat mondial en faveur des vaccins anti-tuberculeux, sont en cours d'élaboration avec d'autres institutions européennes (notamment la BEI) ([3]) et des bailleurs de fonds nationaux.

2. Dans la mise au point d'initiatives communes, la Commission veille à ce que leurs objectifs soient conformes à ceux du programme-cadre «Horizon 2020» et à ses principes généraux, notamment quant à l'ouverture générale vers les pays tiers et à l'attribution des subventions basée sur une évaluation par les pairs.

3. Comme l'a demandé l'Assemblée mondiale de la santé, ces initiatives conjointes visent à contribuer à une meilleure coordination et à un financement à un coût avantageux de la recherche médicale mondiale, y compris par l'intermédiaire de leurs comités scientifiques et d'autres initiatives publiques ou privées.

4. Les règles de participation au programme «Horizon 2020» s'appliquent, y compris quant aux droits de propriété intellectuelle et à la diffusion des résultats. Des dispositions complémentaires peuvent être fixées mais elles supposent l'approbation par les comités «comitologie».

([1]) Partenariat Europe-Pays en développement pour les essais cliniques, http://www.edctp.org/
([2]) Sixième et septième programmes-cadres pour des activités de recherche, de développement technologique et de démonstration (6^e^ PC, 2002-2006 — 7^e^ PC, 2007-2013).
([3]) Banque européenne d'investissement.

5. Toute initiative conjointe doit faire partie des programmes de travail bisannuels d'«Horizon 2020», en particulier concernant le défi sociétal «santé, évolution démographique et bien-être», mis en œuvre conformément aux règles de participation, et elle suppose l'approbation par les comités «comitologie».

6. Le Parlement européen sera pleinement informé dans le cadre des obligations en matière de rapports, au titre du programme-cadre «Horizon 2020» et de ses initiatives connexes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014379/13
to the Commission
Michèle Rivasi (Verts/ALE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Transparency on the memorandum of understanding between the Commission and the Bill Gates Foundation

On 10 June 2013, the Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science signed an agreement with the Bill Gates Foundation in Paris. It was the first time that the Commission had engaged in such collaboration with a private foundation. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was drawn up for strategic cooperation between the Commission and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. According to this document the main goal for the collaboration is to accelerate the discovery, development, delivery and possibly commercialisation of innovative global health technologies that can improve health in developing countries. However, very limited information is provided in this MoU about the rules that govern this cooperation or how it will be implemented. While MoU refers to mutual understandings and guiding principles for this strategic cooperation, it is not legally binding and no real obligations or commitments have been made public. This is why I would like to know:

1. When is the partnership going to become operational? What form will its first action(s) take?

2. How are the common objectives pursued going to be established and by whom? How will this be coordinated with the other strategic and cooperation fora established in Horizon 2020?

3. How will the common objectives be aligned with global health objectives? In particular what oversight will the scientific community and other civil society organisations have?

4. What are the agreements with regard to the rules that will apply in order to allow the broad and prompt dissemination and accessibility of knowledge and information gained from R&D, in particular in terms of intellectual property rules?

5. Is a decision-making process planned to be put in place in order to decide which projects are financed? What co-financing rules are going to apply in the case of commonly funded projects?

6. How will the European Parliament be kept informed of the activities and decisions taken in this context?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

1. The Commission and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) already collaborate since 2005: BMGF provided co-funding to activities initiated by the EU and Member States, such as the EDCTP ([1]), while the Commission supported BMGF-initiated Product Development Partnerships (PDPs) as participants in FP ([2])-funded projects, selected on the basis of peer review. Joint initiatives, such as a Global Tuberculosis Vaccines Partnership, are under development with other European institutions (in particular EIB) ([3]) and national funders.

2. In the development of joint initiatives, the Commission ensures that their objectives are in line with those of Horizon 2020 and its general principles, in particular the general openness towards third countries and the allocation of grants based on peer review.

3. As called for by the World Health Assembly, these joint initiatives aim to contribute to a better coordination and cost-effective financing of global health research, including through their scientific committees and with other public or private initiatives.

4. The Rules for Participation for Horizon 2020 (RfP) will apply, including intellectual property rights and the dissemination of results. Additional rules may be set but involve approval by comitology committees.

5. Any joint initiative will be part of the bi-annual work programmes of Horizon 2020, in particular of the societal challenge 'health, demographic change and wellbeing', implemented in compliance with the RfP, and involve approval by comitology committees.

6. The European Parliament will be fully kept informed within the reporting requirements under Horizon 2020 and related initiatives.

([1]) European and Developing Countries Clinical Trial Partnership, http://www.edctp.org/
([2]) Sixth and Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP6, 2002-2006 — FP7, 2007-2013).
([3]) European Investment Bank.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014380/13
aan de Commissie
Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(19 december 2013)

Betreft: REFIT mededeling Commissie (2.10.2013)

Alhoewel ik het belang erken van slimme regelgeving om de administratieve lasten o.a. voor KMO's te beperken, maakt de mededeling van de EC van 2 oktober 2013 over REFIT me ongerust. Meer bepaald vrees ik de impact ervan op de regelgeving inzake veiligheid en gezondheid op het werk.

In het kader van REFIT weigert de Europese Commissie het tussen de Europese sectorale organisaties van werkgevers en werknemers onderhandelde akkoord over veiligheid en gezondheid van kappers te bekrachtigen. Nochtans bevat het akkoord een aantal bijzonder redelijke preventiemaatregelen voor deze beroepsgroep die aan ernstige beroepsziekten worden blootgesteld zoals kankers en huidaandoeningen door contact met producten die schadelijk zijn voor de gezondheid.

Erkent de Commissie de negatieve impact van haar REFIT mededeling op de regelgeving inzake veiligheid en gezondheid op het werk?

Hoe verenigt de Commissie het niet-bekrachtigen van dit akkoord met de artikelen 153-155 van het Europees Verdrag?

Hoe gaat de Commissie de veiligheid en gezondheid op het werk waarborgen en de verbetering ervan stimuleren indien er geen sectorale akkoorden rond dit thema meer worden bekrachtigd?

Gaat de Commissie hiervoor bijvoorbeeld nieuwe instrumenten ontwikkelen?

Antwoord van de heer Andor namens de Commissie
(20 februari 2014)

1. De bestaande EU-wetgeving inzake gezondheid en veiligheid blijft volledig van toepassing. De mededeling over gezonde EU-regelgeving (REFIT) stelt slechts dat de Commissie voor bepaalde gebieden tijdens deze ambtstermijn geen nieuwe wetsvoorstellen zal doen. De beoordeling van de wetgeving inzake gezondheid en veiligheid is nog bezig, en de resultaten zullen in 2015 beschikbaar zijn.

2. Vooralsnog heeft de Commissie geen beslissing genomen inzake het verzoek van haar sociale partners om wetgevende tenuitvoerlegging van de overeenkomst in de kapperssector, maar zij zal de beoordeling ervan voortzetten tijdens deze ambtstermijn.

De beoordeling heeft betrekking op de representativiteit van de partijen, hun mandaat, de wettigheid van de bepalingen van de overeenkomst en (indien de overeenkomst voortkomt uit een initiatief van een sociale partner) de wenselijkheid van EU-maatregelen. Overeenkomstig de agenda voor slimme regelgeving kijkt de Commissie ook naar de kosten en baten van de overeenkomst. De beoordeling loopt nog.

Verzoeken om wetgevende tenuitvoerlegging van overeenkomsten tussen sociale partners worden per geval beoordeeld. De Commissie eerbiedigt de autonomie van de sociale partners en hun recht om overeenkomsten te sluiten onder het Verdrag.

3 en 4. De mededeling over gezonde EU-regelgeving stelt niet dat gezondheids- en veiligheidsovereenkomsten in de sector niet meer tenuitvoer zullen worden gelegd. De overeenkomst inzake scherpe letsels in de ziekenhuis- en gezondheidszorgbranche heeft geleid tot Richtlijn 2010/32/EU ([1]).

Twee andere overeenkomsten zullen in 2014 worden beoordeeld: de overeenkomsten tussen sociale partners in de binnenvaartsector en de zeevisserij.

([1]) Richtlijn 2010/32/EU van de Raad van 10 mei 2010 tot uitvoering van de door HOSPEEM en EPSU gesloten kaderovereenkomst inzake de preventie van scherpe letsels in de ziekenhuis- en gezondheidszorgbranche, PB L 134 van 1.6.2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014380/13
to the Commission
Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Commission communication on REFIT (2 October 2013)

Much as I recognise the importance of smart legislation and limiting the administrative burden on SMEs, above all, the Commission communication of 2 October 2013 on REFIT makes me uneasy. More specifically, I fear its impact on legislation governing health and safety at work.

In connection with REFIT, the Commission is refusing to ratify the agreement negotiated between Europe's sectoral organisations for workers and employers concerning the health and safety of hairdressers. This agreement, however, contains a number of particularly reasonable preventive measures for workers in this sector, who are exposed to serious occupational illnesses such as cancers and dermatological conditions as a result of contact with products that are harmful to health.

Does the Commission recognise the negative impact of its REFIT communication on workplace health and safety legislation?

How does the Commission reconcile the failure to ratify this agreement with Articles 153-155 TFEU?

How will the Commission guarantee workplace health and safety and stimulate its improvement if sectoral agreements on this area are no longer to be ratified?

Does the Commission intend, for example, to develop new instruments for this purpose?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

1. The existing EU legislation on health and safety remains fully applicable. The REFIT communication simply states that the Commission will not propose any new legislation in certain areas in this term of office. The assessment of the health and safety legislation is on-going and the results will be available in 2015.

2. The Commission has so far taken no decision on the social partners' request for legislative implementation of the Agreement in the hairdressing sector, but will continue to assess it during this term of office.

Such assessment covers the representativeness of the parties, their mandate, the legality of the agreement's clauses, and (if the agreement stems from a social partner initiative) the appropriateness of EU action. In compliance with the Smart Regulation Agenda, the Commission also looks at the agreement's cost and benefit. The assessment is on-going.

Requests for legislative implementation of social partner agreements are assessed on a case-by-case basis. The Commission respects the social partners' autonomy and their right to conclude agreements under the Treaty.

3 and 4. The REFIT communication does not state that sectoral health and safety agreements will no longer be implemented. The Agreement on sharp injuries in the hospitals and healthcare sector led to Directive 2010/32/EU ([1]).

Two other agreements will be assessed in 2014: the social partner agreements in the inland waterways transport sector and the sea fisheries sector.

([1]) Council Directive 2010/32/EU of 10 May 2010 implementing the framework Agreement on prevention from sharp injuries in the hospital and healthcare sector concluded by HOSPEEM and EPSU, OJ L 134, 1.6.2010.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-014382/13
alla Commissione
Susy De Martini (ECR)
(19 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Sanità — tagli al numero di borse di studio per medici specializzandi

Premesso che:

— i medici specializzandi sono il futuro dei sistemi sanitari nazionali degli Stati membri;

— il Commissario per la Salute Tonio Borg ha per compito la tutela della salute dei cittadini europei;

— il 23 ottobre 2007 è stato istituito con decisione n. 1350/2007/CE il programma intitolato «Salute per la crescita — II programma pluriennale d'azione dell'UE in materia di salute per il periodo 2008-2013», che indica al punto 16 «Il programma dovrebbe contribuire a identificare le cause delle disuguaglianze in materia sanitaria»;

— l'UE, con la direttiva 93/16/CEE, poi modificata delle direttive 98/63/CE e 1999/46/CE, stabilisce e regola che la formazione medica specialistica venga retribuita;

— l'Italia ha recepito la direttiva in ritardo, attuando il Dlgs 389/99 ma bloccando gli articoli dal 37 al 42 per l'adozione del contratto fino allo stanziamento di fondi; solo con la legge 266/2005 (Finanziaria 2006) i fondi sono stati sbloccati, applicando il contratto nell'A.A. 2006-2007; questo ritardo ha comportato numerosi ricorsi effettuati da medici specializzandi costringendo l'Italia a effettuare un elevato numero di risarcimenti;

— l'UE con il trattato di Lisbona assicura la parità di trattamento a tutti i cittadini dell'Unione;

— solo al termine del percorso formativo i giovani specializzandi possono partecipare ai concorsi pubblici per accedere alla professione medica presso le strutture ospedaliere nazionali;

— già nell'anno accademico 2012-2013 il quadro generale si è aggravato con il finanziamento di soli 4.500 contratti ministeriali a livello nazionale a fronte dei 10 mila neolaureati che normalmente vi accedevano, il che corrisponde a meno della metà del fabbisogno di professionalità mediche delle Regioni;

— per l'A.A. 2013/2014 la legge di stabilità approvata dal Parlamento italiano prevede tagli, portando a 2.000 i contratti di formazione, una cifra insufficiente alle richieste di personale delle strutture ospedaliere;

si chiede:

1. se la Commissione ritiene opportuno intervenire per evitare che il sistema sanitario nazionale si ritrovi in futuro senza l'organico medico necessario per far fronte ai bisogni della popolazione;

2. in caso affermativo, quali azioni sono in corso di attuazione o la Commissione prevede di intraprendere per aiutare lo Stato italiano a invertire questa tendenza;

3. se essa intende investire nel cofinanziamento dei sistemi sanitari nazionali degli Stati membri per evitare che si creino tali eccessivi divari, per esempio attraverso il Fondo sociale europeo o la programmazione 2014-2020 per sostenere l'educazione secondaria o terziaria.

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(4 febbraio 2014)

1. La Commissione europea è affatto consapevole della situazione difficile che si trovano ad affrontare gli operatori sanitari in diverse parti dell'UE, situazione aggravata dalla crisi economica o dalle crescenti carenze.

2. Il Piano d'azione della Commissione europea per il personale sanitario dell'UE ([1]) aiuta la cooperazione europea ad affrontare le sfide legate alle crescenti carenze di personale sanitario in un periodo in cui la domanda di assistenza sanitaria aumenta. L'Azione comune per una previsione e una programmazione efficace del personale sanitario ([2]) sviluppata in questo contesto riunisce 27 paesi europei, tra cui l'Italia, e le organizzazioni degli stakeholder per mettere in comune le pratiche ottimali al fine di migliorare la pianificazione del fabbisogno di personale in modo da soddisfare le esigenze future.

3. I programmi operativi sostenuti dal Fondo sociale europeo nel periodo 2014-2020 sono ancora in via di negoziazione tra la Commissione europea e i singoli Stati membri. Tali programmi devono rispondere alle sfide identificate dagli Stati membri nei loro programmi di riforma nazionali e nelle raccomandazioni specifiche per paese, al fine di contribuire al raggiungimento degli obiettivi di Europa 2020, tra cui quello in tema di istruzione superiore.

([1]) Documento di lavoro dei servizi della Commissione SWD (2012) 93 final del 18 aprile 2012.
([2]) Decisione di esecuzione della Commissione dell'1 dicembre 2011, C 358 dell'8 dicembre 2011, pag. 8.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014382/13
to the Commission
Susy De Martini (ECR)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Health — cuts to the number of grants for doctors training to be specialists

Given that:

— doctors training to be specialists are the future of the national health systems of the Member States;

— Commissioner for Health, Tonio Borg, is responsible for protecting the health of European citizens;

— on 23 October 2007, under Decision No 1350/2007/EC, the Health for Growth programme was established — the multi-annual programme of EU action in the field of health for the period 2008-2013; paragraph 16 of that decision states that 'the Programme should help to identify the causes of health inequalities';

— EU Directive 93/16/EEC, subsequently amended by Directives 98/63/EC and 1999/46/EC, lays down rules governing specialist medical training, stipulating that such training should be remunerated;

— Italy transposed the directive belatedly, implementing Law 389/99 but suspending Articles 37-42 concerning the adoption of a contract, until the necessary funds were made available; it was only with Law 266/2005 (the 2006 budget) that the funds were released and the contract for the academic year 2006-2007 was applied; this delay resulted in many doctors undergoing specialist training having to appeal to the courts, forcing Italy to award compensation in numerous cases;

— under the Lisbon Treaty the EU guarantees that all EU citizens will be treated equally;

— only at the end of their specialist training can young doctors apply to sit public competitive exams in order to be able to work as doctors in national hospitals;

— in the 2012-2013 academic year the general situation became even worse due to financial provision being made for only 4500 ministerial contracts nationally, as opposed to the 10 000 graduates that used to be granted such contracts; this meets less than half of all medical requirements in the various regions;

— for the academic year 2013-2014, the so-called Stability Law adopted by the Italian Parliament provides for cuts to reduce the number of training contracts to 2000 — insufficient to meet hospitals' staffing needs;

1. Does the Commission not consider it advisable to take action to prevent the national health service, in future, from being short of the necessary medical staff to meet the needs of the people?

2. If so, what measures are being taken, or does the Commission intend to take, to help the Italian Government reverse this trend?

3. Will the Commission invest in the co-financing of the national health services of the Member States to prevent such excessive gaps from being created, for instance through the European Social Fund or the 2014-2020 programmes in support of secondary or higher education?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(4 February 2014)

1. The European Commission is fully aware of the difficult situation facing the health workforce in many parts of the EU, aggravated by the economic crisis or growing shortages.

2. The European Commission's Action Plan for the EU health workforce ([1]) provides support for European cooperation to address the challenge of growing shortages of health workforces at a time of increased healthcare demands. The Joint Action on health workforce forecasting and planning ([2]) developed in this context brings together 27 European countries, including Italy, and stakeholder organisations to share best practice to improve workforce planning to meet future needs.

([1]) Commission Staff Working Document SWD (2012) 93 final of 18 April 2012.
([2]) Commission Implementing Decision of 2December 2011, C 353/3 of 3 December 2012.

3. Operational programmes supported by the European Social Fund in 2014-2020 are still under negotiation between the European Commission and the individual Member States. These programmes are to respond to Member States' challenges as identified in their national reform programmes and in the country-specific recommendations in order to contribute to the delivery of the Europe 2020 headline targets, including the target on higher education.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014383/13
an die Kommission
Elisabeth Jeggle (PPE)
(19. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Einfluss Wasserdampf auf Klima

Erderwärmung und Klimawandel bestimmen heute eine Vielzahl politischer Aktivitäten. Der Schwerpunkt wird dabei auf die CO_2-Minderung gelegt. In meinem Wahlkreis wurde ich kürzlich angefragt, ob neben CO_2 auch Wasserdampf, der aus der Verbrennung wasserstoffhaltiger fossiler Brennstoffe entsteht, einen Einfluss auf unser Klima haben könnte.

In dem Beitrag „Zwischen Dichtung und Wahrheit", erschienen in der Wirtschaftswoche Nr. 42 vom 14.10.2013, wird darauf hingewiesen, dass die Erderwärmung seit 15 Jahren pausiere, obwohl die CO_2-Konzentration zunehme und so der zentrale Mechanismus für die Erderwärmung zumindest derzeit nicht so funktioniere, wie es die Forscher erwartet haben.

Sofern neben der derzeit fast ausschließlichen Fokussierung auf CO_2 auch andere klimarelevante Emissionen, wie z. B. Wasserdampf, einen nicht vernachlässigbaren Einfluss auf Erderwärmung und Klimawandel haben könnten, wären ich ebenso wie die Bürgerinnen und Bürger hinsichtlich dieser Fixierung verunsichert.

Könnten Wasserdampf,

— der bei der Verbrennung fossiler (und erneuerbarer) wasserstoffhaltiger Brennstoffe gebildet wird und/oder die bei dessen Kondensation in der Atmosphäre freigesetzte Energie und

— der über die Kühltürme für den Betrieb von Wärmekraftwerken und Kernkraftwerken abgegeben wird und/oder die bei dessen Kondensation in der Atmosphäre freigesetzte Energie (die bei der Frischwasserkühlung abgegebene Wärme in die Gewässer und die vermehrte Verdunstung durch deren Erwärmung sollen mitberücksichtigt werden) sowie zusätzlich die Nutzenergie bei deren Verwendung (Strom, Fernwärme)

einen nicht vernachlässigbaren Einfluss auf Erderwärmung und Klima haben?

Antwort von Frau Geoghegan-Quinn im Namen der Kommission
(12. Februar 2014)

Wasserdampf, der bei der Verbrennung fossiler Brennstoffe oder von Kühltürmen freigesetzt wird, hat keinen nennenswerten Einfluss auf das Erdklima, da diese Emissionen zu keiner Nettoakkumulation von Wasserdampf in der Atmosphäre führen.

Die Menge des Wasserdampfes, der bei den von der Frau Abgeordneten genannten Prozessen freigesetzt wird, ist gemessen an der Freisetzung von Wasserdampf in die Atmosphäre durch natürliche Prozesse äußerst gering. Außerdem gelangt der Wasserdampf durch die Niederschläge schnell wieder auf die Erdoberfläche zurück und kumuliert daher nicht in der Atmosphäre. Darin unterscheidet er sich von anderen Treibhausgasen wie CO_2, die sich jahrzehntelang in der Atmosphäre anreichern können.

Verdunstung auf Land- und Wasserflächen, Wolkenbildung und Niederschläge sind die wichtigsten Prozesse, die den Wasserkreislauf in der Atmosphäre steuern. Diese Prozesse und ihre Wechselwirkung mit der durch Treibhausgase verursachten Erderwärmung werden im Rahmen von Projekten wie EURCLIPSE ([1]), COMBINE ([2]) und BACCHUS ([3]), die von der EU gefördert werden, intensiv untersucht. So wurde in das erste Arbeitsprogramm von „Horizont 2020" ([4]) das Thema „Wasserzyklus unter künftigen Klimabedingungen" aufgenommen.

Mit der Erwärmung der Atmosphäre steigt auch die Gesamtmenge an Wasserdampf, die in die Atmosphäre gelangt. Dies ist allerdings nicht auf erhöhte anthropogene Emissionen von Wasserdampf zurückzuführen, sondern vielmehr auf die Akkumulation von Treibhausgasen in der Atmosphäre.

Der jüngst veröffentlichte Bericht der zwischenstaatlichen Sachverständigengruppe für Klimafragen (IPCC) enthält eine umfassende Aktualisierung der physikalischen Grundlagen des Klimawandels ([5]).

([1]) „European Union Cloud Intercomparison, Process Study & Evaluation Project", gefördert über das RP7-Umweltprogramm: http://www.euclipse.eu/
([2]) „Comprehensive Modelling of the Earth System for Better Climate Prediction and Projection", gefördert über das RP7-Umweltprogramm: http://www.combine-project.eu
([3]) „Impact of Biogenic versus Anthropogenic emissions on Clouds and Climate: towards a Holistic Understanding", gefördert über das RP7-Umweltprogramm: http://www.aerosols-climate.org/
([4]) WATER-2a-2014, Aufforderung für den Teilbereich: H2020-WATER-2014-2015 veröffentlicht am 11.12.2013.
([5]) Summary for Policymakers „Climate Change 2013, the Physical Science Basis" (IPCC, 2013): www.climatechange2013.org/spm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014383/13
to the Commission
Elisabeth Jeggle (PPE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Effect of water vapour on climate

Global warming and climate change currently determine a number of political activities. The focus of these activities is the reduction of CO_2. In my constituency, I was recently asked whether, in addition to CO_2, water vapour arising from the combustion of fossil fuels containing hydrogen could affect our climate.

The contribution *'Zwischen Dichtung und Wahrheit'* [Between Fact and Fiction], which appeared in Wirtschaftswoche No 42 on 14 October 2013, indicated that there has been a pause in global warming for 15 years, even though the CO_2 concentration is increasing, and therefore the central mechanism for global warming is, for the moment at least, not working in the way researchers expected it to.

If, alongside the current almost exclusive focus on CO_2, other climate-related emissions, such as water vapour, could also have a significant effect on global warming and climate change then, like the general public, I too would be confused about this fixation.

Could water vapour

— formed during the combustion of fossil (and renewable) fuels containing hydrogen and/or the energy released as it condenses in the atmosphere, and

— discharged via the cooling towers for the operation of thermal power plants and nuclear power plants and/or the energy released as it condenses in the atmosphere (the heat released into the cooling water and the increased evaporation as a result of heating this water should also be taken into account), as well as the useful energy when used (electricity, district heating)

have a significant effect on global warming and the climate?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

Water vapour released by combustion from fossil fuel or cooling towers do not have a significant effect on the Earth's climate as there is no net accumulation of water vapour in the atmosphere resulting from these emissions.

The amounts of water vapour released by the processes referred to by the Honourable Member are extremely small compared to the release of water vapour into the atmosphere by natural processes. Furthermore, water vapour is quickly discharged back to the surface by precipitation and therefore does not accumulate in the atmosphere, unlike other greenhouse gases (GHG) like CO_2 which can stay in the atmosphere for many decades.

Evaporation from land and sea surfaces, cloud formation, and precipitation are the main processes controlling the atmospheric water cycle. These processes and their feedbacks with GHG-induced global warming are extensively studied by EU funded projects like EUCLIPSE ([1]), COMBINE ([2]) and BACCHUS ([3]). A topic on the 'Water cycle under future climate' has been included in the first work programme of Horizon 2020 ([4]).

A warming of the atmosphere's temperature would increase the overall amount of water vapour contained in the atmosphere. This would however be the consequence of the greenhouse gas accumulation in the atmosphere and not caused by increased anthropogenic emissions of water vapour.

The recently released report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), provides an extensive update of the physical science basis on climate change ([5]).

([1]) European Union Cloud Intercomparison, Process Study & Evaluation Project, funded by FP7-Environment Programme, http://www.euclipse.eu/
([2]) Comprehensive Modelling of the Earth System for Better Climate Prediction and Projection, funded by FP7-Environment Programme; http://www.combine-project.eu
([3]) Impact of Biogenic versus Anthropogenic emissions on Clouds and Climate: towards a Holistic UnderStanding, funded by FP7-Environment Programme, http://www.aerosols-climate.org/
([4]) WATER-2a-2014, sub call of: H2020-WATER-2014-2015 published on 11.12.2013.
([5]) Summary for Policymakers 'Climate Change 2013, the Physical Science Basis' (IPCC, 2013), www.climatechange2013.org/spm

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-014384/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(19 de dezembro de 2013)

Assunto: Despedimento coletivo na Efacec, Portugal

Constituída em 1948, a Efacec é o maior grupo eléctrico de capitais portugueses. Tem mais de 4 600 trabalhadores e está presente em mais de 65 países, nos cinco continentes.

Uma recente informação dá conta de que a empresa está a preparar um processo de despedimento coletivo ou um processo de reestruturação com vista a esse despedimento.

Face a esta informação, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento desta situação? Em caso afirmativo, que avaliação faz da mesma?

2. Dispõe de informação sobre se a Efacec recebeu alguns apoios da UE para se instalar em Portugal ou nalgum outro país da UE?

3. Face aos milhões de despedimentos ocorridos na UE em resultado da crise, nomeadamente nos países sob intervenção da troika, está a equacionar medidas excecionais para fazer face a este flagelo para além daquelas definidas nos diversos programas para o próximo QFP?

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(10 de fevereiro de 2014)

1. A Comissão tem conhecimento das circunstâncias a que se refere o Senhor Deputado e está preocupada com as consequências económicas e sociais dos despedimentos na Efacec.

2. As informações sobre o financiamento da UE, direto ou indireto, que foi concedido à referida multinacional, está disponível no sítio web da Comissão ([1]).

3. A Comissão não tem competência para intervir em decisões específicas das empresas. No entanto, está firmemente empenhada em garantir que a Europa é o local mais atraente a nível mundial para os investimentos em investigação e inovação, assim como para a indústria transformadora. Esta posição constitui o essencial da estratégia Europa 2020 e das iniciativas emblemáticas sobre a política industrial e a União da Inovação.

Relativamente ao impacto social, o direito da UE estabelece que os empregadores têm de informar e consultar os representantes dos trabalhadores, antes de decidirem efetuar despedimentos coletivos.

Desde que os despedimentos dos trabalhadores possam ser associados à globalização do comércio ou à crise económica e financeira mundial, Portugal tem a possibilidade de solicitar apoio do Fundo Europeu de Ajustamento à Globalização (FEG). A Comissão remete o Senhor Deputado para o Regulamento FEG (2014-2020) ([2]), para mais informações sobre as novas regras deste fundo a partir de 2014.

O Senhor Deputado pode tentar comunicar com a pessoa de contacto do FEG em Portugal, caso pretenda saber se está prevista uma candidatura em apoio dos trabalhadores despedidos pela Efacec. Os dados de contacto pertinentes podem ser consultados no sítio Web do FEG ([3]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/budget/fts/index_en.htm
([2]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 1309/2013, JO L 347 de 20.12.2013.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=581&langId=pt

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014384/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Mass redundancies at EFACEC in Portugal

EFACEC was founded in 1948 and is the largest Portuguese-owned electronics group. It employs over 4 600 people and operates in over 65 countries, on five continents.

According to recent reports, the company is preparing to make mass redundancies or to restructure with a view to making redundancies.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation? If so, what does it think of it?

2. Does it have any information as to whether EFACEC has received any EU aid for setting up in Portugal or in any other EU country?

3. In view of the thousands of redundancies made in the EU as a result of the crisis, including in countries bailed out by the Troika, is the Commission considering exceptional measures to deal with this scourge in addition to those laid down in the various programmes for the next multiannual financial framework?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

1. The Commission is aware of the circumstances to which the Honourable Member refers and is concerned about the economic and social consequences of the redundancies in EFACEC.

2. Information about direct or indirect EU funding which has been granted to this multinational, is available at the Commission's website ([1]).

3. The Commission has no powers to interfere in any specific company decisions. However, it is strongly committed to ensure that Europe is the most attractive location globally for investments in research and innovation as well as for manufacturing production. This is at the core of the Europe 2020 strategy and of the flagship initiatives on Industrial Policy and Innovation Union.

Concerning social impact, EC law provides that employers are to inform and consult employees' representatives before they decide to carry out collective redundancies.

Provided that the workers' redundancies can be linked to trade related globalisation or to the global financial and economic crisis, Portugal has the possibility to apply for support from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the EGF Regulation (2014-2020) ([2]) for more details on the new rules of this Fund as from 2014.

The Honourable Member may wish to communicate with the EGF Contact Person in Portugal, should he wish to know whether an application is being planned in support of workers made redundant by EFACEC. The relevant contact details can be found on the EGF website ([3]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/budget/fts/index_en.htm
([2]) Regulation (EC) No 1309/2013, OJ L 347 of 20.12.2013.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=581&langId=pt

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014385/13
aan de Commissie
Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE)
(19 december 2013)

Betreft: EU-ETS: kwaliteit van de emissiecompensatie

Tot 2,3 miljard compensatiecredits (1,6 miljard in de ETS-sectoren en 700 miljoen in niet-ETS-sectoren — de aantallen stellen toegestane plafonds voor emissiecompensaties voor) of bijna de helft van de tegen 2020 vereiste emissiereducties in de EU kan door het gebruik van internationale compensatiecredits worden gehaald. Uit onderzoek ([1]) blijkt dat het mechanisme voor schone ontwikkeling (CDM) minder dan 40 % van de emissiereducties die het heeft verkocht, heeft opgeleverd. Dit betekent dat door het gebruik van emissiecompensaties de emissiereductiedoelstellingen van de EU met meer dan een miljard ton kunnen worden verzwakt. Ondanks deze ernstige zorgen is men er tijdens de onderhandelingen over het Klimaatverdrag in Warschau nogmaals niet in geslaagd om de kwaliteit van emissiecompensatie aan te pakken.

Hoe is de Commissie van plan de kwaliteit van emissiecompensatie in de periode tot 2020 aan te pakken?

Antwoord van mevr. Hedegaard namens de Commissie
(19 februari 2014)

De Commissie zal zich blijven inzetten voor verdere hervormingen van het Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) in de internationale klimaatonderhandelingen in de context van de UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

De Commissie herinnert eraan dat wettelijke bepalingen van de EU al het gebruik van credits van na 2012 geregistreerde CDM-projecten verbieden, tenzij die uit minst ontwikkelde landen (LDC's) komen. Dat betekent de facto dat er in de EU geen vraag is naar credits van nieuwe projecten buiten LDC's. Een op 8 november 2013 aangenomen verordening van de Commissie beperkt voorts creditrechten in de EU-regeling voor de handel in emissierechten (Emissions Trading System, ETS) tot het in de richtlijn bepaalde minimum.

De uitvoeringsbepalingen van de richtlijn betreffende de handel in emissierechten voorzien in de mogelijkheid om aanvullende kwaliteitsvereisten in te voeren voor het gebruik van internationale credits. De Commissie is niet van plan verdere kwaliteitsvereisten in het kader van het ETS voor te stellen ter aanvulling van de in 2011 vastgestelde vereisten. Nieuwe vereisten zouden in dit stadium weinig effect hebben, omdat meer dan twee derde van de kwantiteitslimieten voor internationale credits al bereikt zijn, en voor zover dat nog niet het geval is, hebben marktdeelnemers al vooruitlopende koopovereenkomsten (forward purchasing agreements) ondertekend.

De Commissie herinnert er verder aan dat zij al voorstellen heeft gedaan voor een bindend streefdoel voor de reductie van broeikasgasemissies van 40 % onder de niveaus van 1990, dat uitsluitend door binnenlandse maatregelen bereikt zou moeten worden (d.w.z. zonder het gebruik van internationale credits).

([1]) Assessing the Impact of the CDM Report Commissioned By The High-Level Panel On The CDM Policy Dialogue, juli 2012, http://www.cdmpolicydialogue.org/research/1030_impact.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014385/13
to the Commission
Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: EU-ETS: offset quality

Up to 2.3 billion offset credits (1.6 billion in the ETS sectors and 700 million in non-ETS sectors — the numbers represent allowed caps on offsets), or almost half of the EU emission reductions required by 2020, can be met by using international offset credits. Research ([1]) has shown that the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) may have delivered less than 40% of the emission reductions it sold. This means that the use of offsets could weaken the EU's emission reduction targets by well over a billion tonnes. Despite these serious concerns, the UNFCCC negotiations in Warsaw have again failed to address the issue of offset quality.

How is the Commission planning to tackle offset quality in the period up to 2020?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

The Commission will continue to advocate further reforms of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) in the international climate negotiations through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The Commission would recall that EU legislative provisions already prohibit the use of credits from CDM projects registered after 2012 unless they come from Least Developed Countries (LDCs). This de facto removes EU demand for credits from new projects outside of LDCs. A Commission Regulation adopted on 8 November 2013 also limits credit entitlements in the Emissions Trading System (ETS) to the minimum foreseen by the directive.

As part of the implementing provisions, the Emissions Trading Directive provides for the possibility to introduce additional quality requirements for the use of international credits. The Commission is not considering proposing further quality requirements under the ETS adding to those adopted in 2011. At this point in time new requirements would have limited impact because more than two thirds of the quantity limits for international credits have already been used and for much of the remaining limit operators have already signed forward purchasing agreements.

The Commission would also recall that it has put forward proposals for a binding greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of 40% below 1990 levels to be achieved through domestic measures alone (i.e. without the use of international credits).

([1]) Assessing the Impact of the CDM Report Commissioned By The High-Level Panel On The CDM Policy Dialogue, July 2012, http://www.cdmpolicydialogue.org/research/1030_impact.pdf

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-014386/13
do Komisji
Tadeusz Cymański (EFD), Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD) oraz Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(19 grudnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Zwolnienia grupowe i restrukturyzacja Kampanii Węglowej

Kampania Węglowa (KW) jest największą firmą górniczą w Europie. Wydobywa 60 proc. węgla kamiennego w Polsce i 30 proc. w Unii Europejskiej. W latach 2003-2012 z KW wpłynęło do polskiego budżetu państwa niemal 17 mld zł. Będąc najważniejszym pracodawcą na Śląsku, KW daje miejsce pracy ok. 57 tys. osób.

Niestety, na skutek dramatycznego spadku cen węgla w 2013 r. (w trzecim kwartale 50 zł na tonie) i utrzymującym się wysokim poziomie kosztów, przychody sektora węglowego w trzecim kwartale 2013 r. zmniejszyły się o około 1,5 mld zł, natomiast sama KW odnotowała blisko 300 mln zł strat.

Wyżej opisana sytuacja zmusiła zarząd KW do wdrażania radykalnych ograniczeń kosztowych i stworzenia programu restrukturyzacji KW do 2020 r. Program ten zakłada m.in. łączenie ze sobą kopalń (ma pozostać 7 z 15) i sprzedaż jednej z nich (Knurów-Szczygłowice), zawieszenie niektórych świadczeń finansowych dla załogi, zamrożenie płac oraz redukcję zatrudnienia – w tym zwolnienie ponad tysiąca osób w administracji lub obniżkę ich wynagrodzeń.

Wdrożenie przedstawionego powyżej projektu restrukturyzacji może mieć dramatyczne skutki dla całego regionu. Działający w Kampanii związkowcy rozpoczęli dnia 2 grudnia 2013 r. procedurę sporu zbiorowego z pracodawcą, pozostając od miesiąca w stanie pogotowia strajkowego. Na dzień dzisiejszy nic nie zapowiada, by zarząd odstąpił od założeń zawartych w planie restrukturyzacji. Sytuacja w KW jest wyjątkowo trudna, o czym miałem okazję się przekonać podczas wizyty w Kampanii i rozmów ze związkowcami.

Biorąc pod uwagę strategiczne znaczenie KW w Polsce, czy Komisja dopuszcza dofinansowanie tego przedsiębiorstwa w ramach pomocy publicznej w celu uniknięcia masowych zwolnień pracowników w procesie restrukturyzacji? Jakie instrumenty finansowe mogłyby znaleźć zastosowanie?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Joaquina Almunię w imieniu Komisji
(19 lutego 2014 r.)

Komisja jest świadoma niedawnego pogorszenia sytuacji w sektorze górnictwa węgla kamiennego w Europie i próbuje stawić czoła temu wyzwaniu, korzystając z wielu różnych instrumentów. Obecnie obowiązującą podstawą prawną do oceny zgodności pomocy państwa dla sektora górnictwa węgla kamiennego jest decyzja Rady 2010/787/UE z dnia 10 grudnia 2010 r. w sprawie pomocy państwa ułatwiającej zamykanie niekonkurencyjnych kopalń węgla ([1]) („decyzja w sprawie pomocy dla kopalń węgla"). Decyzja ta w zasadzie zezwala na udzielenie pomocy na pokrycie strat produkcyjnych poniesionych przez jednostki produkcyjne węgla, które zostaną zamknięte najpóźniej do 2018 r. W tym celu państwa członkowskie muszą przedstawić plany zamknięcia.

Komisja wyraziła już zgodę na pomoc dla sektora górnictwa w Polsce, w tym w szczególności dla Kompanii Węglowej w 2011 r. Zatwierdziła plan pomocy dla sektora górnictwa węgla kamiennego na lata 2011-2015 (Pomoc państwa dla sektora górnictwa węgla kamiennego w latach 2011-2015), który przyznaje Kompanii Węglowej i Katowickiej Grupie Kapitałowej kwotę około 2 453 mln PLN ([2]). Plan ten obejmuje naprawę szkód górniczych, renty wyrównawcze oraz prawo pracowników, którzy byli zatrudnieni w kopalniach zamkniętych przed dniem 1 stycznia 2007 r., do otrzymywania bezpłatnego węgla.

Jeśli Polska chce przyznać Kompanii Węglowej dodatkową pomoc, poza kwotami zatwierdzonymi w 2011 r. przez Komisję, wypłacane dotacje nie mogą być sprzeczne z już zatwierdzonymi celem, kwotami i kategoriami kosztów. Ponadto należy przestrzegać stosownych warunków decyzji w sprawie pomocy dla kopalń węgla.

([1]) Dz.U. L 336 z 21.12.2010, s. 24.
([2]) Decyzja Komisji z 23.11.2011 w sprawie SA.33013 (2011/N), Dz.U. C 122 z 27.4.2013, s. 6.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014386/13
to the Commission
Tadeusz Cymański (EFD), Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD) and Jacek Włosowicz (EFD)
(19 December 2013)

Subject: Collective redundancies and restructuring at Kampania Węglowa

Kampania Węglowa (KW) is Europe's largest mining company. It extracts 60% of all coal in Poland and 30% of all coal in the EU. KW's payments to the state budget amounted to almost PLN 17 billion between 2003 and 2012, and the company employs around 57 000 people, making it the largest employer in Silesia.

Unfortunately, plummeting coal prices in 2013 (down to PLN 50 per tonne by the third quarter of the year) and continuing high costs meant that third-quarter coal sector profits dropped by around PLN 1.5 billion, with KW recording losses of almost PLN 300 million.

These circumstances have forced the KW management board to implement radical cost-cutting measures and draw up plans to restructure the company between now and 2020. This restructuring programme involves merging mines (taking the total from 15 to 7), selling one mine (Knurów Szczygłowice), suspending certain employee financial benefits and implementing a pay freeze and job cuts, including redundancy or pay cuts for over 1 000 people in administrative positions.

The consequences for the region as a whole could be dramatic if this restructuring project is put into practice. Trade unionists at KW raised a collective dispute against their employer on 2 December 2013, and have been on strike alert for the past month. There is currently no indication that the management board will withdraw their restructuring proposals. The situation at KW is extremely fraught, as I could see for myself when I visited the company and talked to the trade unionists.

In view of the strategic importance of KW within Poland, will the Commission allow Poland to grant state aid to the company in order to avoid collective redundancies during the restructuring process? Which financial instruments could be used?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

The recent decline of the coal mining sector across Europe is a fact the Commission has recognised and tried to tackle with various instruments. The current legal basis to assess the compatibility of state aid to the coal sector is Council Decision 2010/787/EU of 10 December 2010 on state aid to facilitate the closure of uncompetitive coal mines ([1]) ('the Coal Decision'). In principle, this decision allows for aid to cover production losses of coal production units provided those units are closed by 2018 at the latest. To this end, the Member State has to provide closure plans.

The Commission has already authorised aid to the mining sector in Poland and in particular to Kampania Węglowa in 2011. It has approved a Coal plan for the period 2011 — 2015 (Pomoc państwa dla sektora górnictwa węgla kamiennego w latach 2011 — 2015) which grants an amount of approximately PLN 2.453 million to Kompania Węglowa and Katowicka Grupa Kapitałowa ([2]). This plan covers rehabilitation of mining damage, compensatory benefits and the right to free coal for employees who formerly worked in mining units which were closed before 1 January 2007.

Should Poland wish to grant aid to Kampania Węglowa in addition to the amounts authorised in 2011 by the Commission, the subsidies paid should not conflict with the purpose, the amounts and cost categories already approved. Besides, the applicable conditions of the Coal Decision would have to be respected.

([1]) OJ L336, 21.12.2010, p. 24.
([2]) Commission decision of 23.11.2011 in case SA.33013 (2011/N), OJ C 122, 27.4.2013, p. 6.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014387/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(20 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Daños medioambientales en el río Cinca a su paso por el municipio de Fraga

El Ayuntamiento de Fraga, perteneciente a la Comunidad Autónoma de Aragón, en el Reino de España, ha promovido este 2013, conjuntamente con la entidad pública estatal Confederación Hidrográfica del Ebro, la limpieza de vegetación y extracción de gravas en un tramo urbano del río Cinca a su paso por la citada localidad.

Para la otorgación de la autorización se solicitaron los preceptivos permisos al órgano competente de la Comunidad Autónoma de Aragón, el cual, en un primer informe, impuso una serie de condicionantes, entre ellos la eliminación únicamente de la masa arbórea o vegetación muerta o en mal estado y la no autorización de extracción de gravas por necesitar de un procedimiento ambiental específico, es decir, la declaración impacto ambiental positiva, y todo ello porque el río Cinca está catalogado como lugar de interés comunitario (LIC ES-2410073 Ríos Cinca y Alcanadre). Posteriormente y habida cuenta de que el informe del órgano ambiental no daba satisfacción a los promotores, la Confederación Hidrográfica aportó nueva documentación al órgano ambiental para obtener permisos conforme a sus aspiraciones. Estos permisos se obtuvieron de forma un tanto ambigua, al aportarse el compromiso de actuar conforme a una declaración de impacto ambiental positiva de un proyecto deportivo del año 2009, «Acondicionamiento de cauce como canal de aguas bravas, en el río Cinca, termino municipal de Fraga, Huesca», que obviamente nada tenía que ver ni con lo realizado, ni con la legislación en materia de protección de espacios de la Red Natura 2000.

¿Qué datos tiene la Comisión en relación con las actuaciones de limpieza en el río Cinca dentro del término municipal de Fraga que han supuesto la extracción de gravas y la supresión de todo tipo de vegetación en el ámbito de actuación realizada, sin la obtención de la preceptiva declaración de impacto ambiental y en contra de lo prescrito en un primer informe del órgano ambiental competente?

¿Considera la Comisión que las labores realizadas y autorizaciones recibidas respecto este LIC se ajustan a los parámetros legales que se imponen a este tipo de actuaciones dentro de espacios protegidos de la Red Natura 2000?

¿Va a adoptar la Comisión algún tipo de medidas al objeto de sancionar esta actuación y reparar el daño en la medida de lo posible?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(20 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión no dispone de información detallada sobre los trabajos realizados en 2013 para limpiar la vegetación y extraer la grava en un tramo urbano del río Cinca.

De conformidad con el artículo 6, apartado 3, de la Directiva de hábitats ([1]), cualquier plan o proyecto que pueda afectar de forma apreciable a un lugar Natura 2000 debe someterse a una evaluación adecuada de sus repercusiones en dicho lugar, teniendo en cuenta los objetivos de conservación del mismo.

A la luz de la información facilitada por Su Señoría, parece que las autoridades pertinentes han evaluado las repercusiones del proyecto en el lugar Natura 2000 y que se han adoptado medidas de mitigación al respecto. El hecho de que esas medidas de mitigación coincidan con unas medidas establecidas previamente respecto a otro proyecto («Acondicionamiento de cauce como canal de aguas bravas, en el río Cinca, término municipal de Fraga») no implica necesariamente que las medidas en cuestión y la evaluación realizada no sean adecuadas.

Por tanto, y en ausencia de información que demuestre claramente la aplicación incorrecta de la legislación pertinente de la UE, la Comisión no tiene previstas más actuaciones en relación con esos trabajos.

([1]) Directiva 92/43/CEE del Consejo, de 21 de mayo de 1992, relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y flora silvestres (DO L 206 de 22.7.1992).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014387/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Environmental damage to the River Cinca passing through the town of Fraga

In 2013, the Town Council of Fraga, in the Autonomous Community of Aragon, Spain, together with the state-run Ebro Hydrographic Federation, promoted a plan to clear vegetation and remove gravel from an urban stretch of the River Cinca that passes through the town.

In order to receive authorisation, applications were made for the compulsory permits to the competent body of the Autonomous Community of Aragon, which, in an initial report, imposed a series of conditions, including that only trees and vegetation that were dead or in poor condition be removed. It also did not authorise the removal of gravel as a specific environmental procedure needed to be followed — a positive environmental impact assessment was required — because the River Cinca was classified as a site of Community interest (SCI ES-2410073 Ríos Cinca y Alcanadre). Given that the environmental body's report was unsatisfactory for those behind the project, the Hydrographic Confederation submitted further documentation to the environmental body to obtain the permits to carry out the work. The permits were granted but were somewhat vague, requiring that the work be done in accordance with a positive environmental impact assessment for a sporting project from 2009, 'Conditioning a stretch of the River Cinca, in the municipality of Fraga, Huesca, as a white water course', which clearly had nothing to do with the work carried out, or with legislation on the protection of Natura 2000 network sites.

What information does the Commission have on the work to clean up the River Cinca in the municipality of Fraga, which involved the removal of gravel and vegetation of all kinds, without the compulsory environmental impact assessment being obtained, and contrary to the findings of an initial report by the competent environmental body?

Does the Commission think that the work carried out and the permits received in respect of this SCI were in line the legal provisions applicable to this kind of action in protected Natura 2000 network sites?

Will the Commission take any steps to penalise this action and to repair the damage as much as possible?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

The Commission does not possess detailed information on the works undertaken in 2013 to clear the vegetation and remove the gravel from an urban stretch of the River Cinca.

In accordance with Article 6.3 of the Habitats Directive ([1]), any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site must be subject to an appropriate assessment in view of the sites conservation objectives.

In light of the information provided by the Honourable Member, it appears that the effects of the project to the Natura 2000 site were assessed by the relevant authorities and mitigation measures have been established for the project. The fact that these mitigation measures coincide with measures previously established for another project (for 'conditioning a stretch of the River Cinca in the municipality of Fraga as a white-water course') does not necessarily imply the that these measures and the assessment undertaken are not appropriate.

As such, and in absence of information clearly demonstrating incorrect application of relevant EU legislation, the Commission does not intend to undertake further steps in relation to these works.

([1]) 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).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014388/13
an die Kommission
Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE)
(20. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Gefahrguttransporte auf der Schiene

Gefahrgüter werden aufgrund der höheren Sicherheit oftmals auf der Schiene transportiert. Als Berichterstatter des Parlaments zur Richtlinie über die Eisenbahnsicherheit erlaube ich mir, die Kommission mit der Bitte um einzelne Beantwortung zu fragen:

1. Welche Maßnahmen hat die Kommission ergriffen, um bei Gefahrguttransporten auf der Schiene in der EU eine ausreichende Sicherheit des Personals und der Anwohner von Bahnstrecken sicherzustellen?

2. Welche zusätzlichen entsprechenden Maßnahmen plant die Kommission?

3. Sind Entgleisungsdetektoren nach Auffassung der Europäischen Kommission eine geeignete Option zur Erhöhung der Sicherheit im Schienengüterverkehr? Wenn ja, warum? Wenn nein, warum nicht?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(11. Februar 2014)

1. Neben den allgemeinen Eisenbahnsicherheitsvorschriften der Richtlinie 2004/49/EG ([1]) gelten für die Eisenbahnbeförderung gefährlicher Güter die Bestimmungen der Richtlinie 2008/68/EG über die Beförderung gefährlicher Güter im Binnenland ([2]), die detaillierte Vorschriften zur Gewährleistung der Sicherheit dieser Güterverkehrsart enthält.

2. Die technischen und administrativen Vorschriften der Richtlinie 2008/68/EG werden alle zwei Jahre überprüft, um sie an den wissenschaftlichen und technischen Fortschritt anzupassen. Bei jeder Überarbeitung werden verschiedene Maßnahmen beschlossen, die die Sicherheit bei der Eisenbahnbeförderung gefährlicher Güter aufrechterhalten und verbessern.

3. Die Europäische Eisenbahnagentur (ERA) hat eine Folgenabschätzung zum Einsatz von Entgleisungsdetektoren bei Güterzügen durchgeführt ([3]). In ihrer Analyse kommt sie zu dem Schluss, dass Entgleisungsdetektoren keine kostengünstige Lösung für das Eisenbahnsystem darstellen und dass es andere, effizientere Lösungen gibt. Die Kommission stimmt dieser technischen Analyse der ERA zu und möchte die Verwendung solcher Geräte nicht zwingend vorschreiben. Es sei jedoch daran erinnert, dass seit der Überarbeitung der Vorschriften im Jahr 2013 ein freiwilliger Einsatz solcher Geräte ausdrücklich erlaubt ist. Der freiwillige Einsatz steht auch besser im Einklang mit den allgemeinen Grundsätzen der Richtlinie 2004/49/EG, wonach die Hauptverantwortung für die Risikobewertung und das Risikomanagement bei den Eisenbahnbetreibern selbst liegt.

([1]) ABl. L 164 vom 30.4.2004.
([2]) ABl. L 260 vom 30.9.2008.
([3]) Folgenabschätzung zur Verwendung von Entgleisungsdetektoren im Eisenbahnsystem der EU, ERA/REP/03 2009/SAF.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014388/13
to the Commission
Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Transport of dangerous goods by rail

Dangerous goods are often transported by rail on account of the greater level of safety. As Parliament's rapporteur for the Railway Safety Directive, I would ask the Commission to answer each of the following questions separately:

1. What steps has the Commission taken to ensure an adequate level of safety for staff and people living along the railway line in connection with the transport of dangerous goods by rail?

2. What additional measures is it planning to take in this regard?

3. Does it consider derailment detectors to be a suitable option for increasing safety in the rail freight sector? If so, why? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

1. In addition to the general railway safety provisions set up by Directive 2004/49/EC ([1]), the transport of dangerous goods by rail in the EU is regulated by Directive 2008/68/EC on the inland transport of dangerous goods ([2]) which specifies highly detailed provisions to ensure the safety of this type of freight transport.

2. The technical and administrative provisions of Directive 2008/68/EC are revised every two years to keep them up-to-date with scientific and technical progress. In every revision a number of measures maintaining and improving the safety of transport of dangerous goods by rail are adopted.

3. The European Railway Agency (ERA) has carried out an impact assessment on derailment detectors on freight trains ([3]). ERA concludes in its analysis that derailment detectors are not a cost-efficient solution for the railway system and other more efficient solutions exist. The Commission agrees with the technical analysis of ERA and does not wish to propose compulsory use of these devices. However, it is reminded that since the 2013 revision of the rules voluntary use of these devices is explicitly allowed. Voluntary use is also more coherent with the general principles of Directive 2004/49/EC, which allocated the main responsibilities in assessing and managing risks to the railway operators themselves.

([1]) OJ l 164 of 30.4.2004.
([2]) OJ L 260 of 30.9.2008.
([3]) Impact assessment on the use of derailment detection devices in the EU railway system, reference ERA/REP/03 2009/SAF.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014389/13
an die Kommission
Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE)
(20. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Reduzierung des Schienenverkehrslärms in der EU

In der im November 2013 vom Europäischen Parlament angenommenen Haushaltslinie „Connecting Europe Facility" sind auch EU-Mittel zur Reduzierung des Schienenverkehrslärms vorgesehen. Dazu erlaube ich mir, die Kommission zu fragen:

1. Bis zu welcher Höhe werden EU-Mittel im Zeitraum 2014-2020 für diesen Zweck zur Verfügung stehen?

2. In welcher Höhe sind entsprechende Mittel für das Haushaltsjahr 2014 eingeplant?

3. Welche Arten von Maßnahmen — sowohl zur Reduzierung an der Quelle, als auch im passiven Lärmschutz — können durch die EU kofinanziert werden?

4. Welche Maßnahmen plant die Kommission zur Reduzierung des Schienenverkehrslärms außerdem in den nächsten Jahren?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(10. Februar 2014)

Die in der CEF-Verordnung ([1]) vorgesehenen Maßnahmen zur Verringerung des Schienengüterverkehrslärms sind auf 1 % der für den Verkehr bereitgestellten CEF-Mittel begrenzt. Der Höchstbetrag beläuft sich daher auf 260 Mio. EUR.

Über die Ausgaben im Jahr 2014 ist noch nicht entschieden worden.

Im Rahmen der CEF können zwei Arten von Maßnahmen zur Verringerung des Schienenverkehrslärms finanziert werden:

— Maßnahmen zur Verringerung des Schienengüterverkehrslärms durch Nachrüstung vorhandenen Rollmaterials;

— Bau von Lärmschutzwänden und anderen Infrastrukturelementen im Rahmen allgemeiner Eisenbahninfrastrukturvorhaben (soweit möglich).

In Bezug auf den Schienenverkehrslärm plant die Kommission für 2014 Folgendes:

— Überarbeitung der TSI „Lärm" ([2])

— Abschluss der Durchführungsmaßnahmen gemäß der Richtlinie 2012/34/EU ([3]) zur Festlegung einheitlicher Modalitäten für gestaffelte lärmabhängige Trassenpreise;

— Abschluss des Folgenabschätzungsprozesses zur wirksamen Minderung des von Güterwagen verursachten Lärms sowie, anschließend, geeignete ergebnisabhängige Maßnahmen.

([1]) Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1316/2013 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 11. Dezember 2013 zur Schaffung der Fazilität „Connecting Europe", zur Änderung der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 913/2010 und zur Aufhebung der Verordnungen (EG) Nr. 680/2007 und (EG) Nr. 67/2010 (ABl. L 348 vom 20.12.2013).
([2]) Beschluss 2011/229/EU der Kommission.
([3]) Richtlinie 2012/34/EU des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 21. November 2012 zur Schaffung eines einheitlichen europäischen Eisenbahnraums (ABl. L 343 vom 14.12.2012).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014389/13
to the Commission
Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Reduction of railway noise in the EU

The budget heading 'Connecting Europe Facility', adopted by Parliament in November 2013, also provides for EU funds for reducing railway noise.

1. What is the maximum level of EU funding that will be available for this purpose in the period 2014-2020?

2. How much of this funding is envisaged for the 2014 financial year?

3. What types of measures — both for reduction at source and also for passive noise abatement — can be co-financed by the EU?

4. What additional measures is the Commission planning to take in the next few years to reduce railway noise?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

In the CEF regulation ([1]) actions to reduce rail freight noise are capped at 1% of the CEF transport envelope. The maximum amount is therefore EUR 260 million.

There is yet no decision regarding spending in 2014.

Under CEF, two types of actions to reduce level of rail noise can be funded:

— actions to reduce rail freight noise by retrofitting of existing rolling stock ;

— construction of anti-noise walls and other infrastructure-related elements in the framework of general railway infrastructure projects (if appropriate).

The Commission is planning the following in 2014 with regard to rail noise:

— the revision of TSI Noise ([2]);

— finalisation of implementing measures under Directive 2012/34/EU ([3]) setting harmonised modalities of noise differentiated track access charges;

— finalisation of its impact assessment process on effective reduction of noise from freight wagons, followed by appropriate action, depending on the result.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010, OJ L 348, 20.12.2013.
([2]) COMDecision 2011/229/EU.
([3]) 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.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014392/13
to the Commission
Marian Harkin (ALDE)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Directive 2010/32/EU

What is the current status of the ratification and implementation of Directive 2010/32/EU on the prevention from sharp injuries in all Members States? Is the Commission going to take action in Member States where the directive has not been implemented? If so, what action is planned?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

The deadline for the transposition of Directive 2010/32/EU ([1]) implementing the framework Agreement on prevention from sharp injuries in the hospital and healthcare sector concluded by HOSPEEM and EPSU into national law by the Member States expired on 11 May 2013.

Infringement procedures are currently still in progress against four Member States for their failure to communicate any or all of their national measures transposing the directive.

The Commission is currently assessing the conformity with the directive of the national transposing measures communicated by 24 Member States.

In connection with that scrutiny, should any doubt arise as to whether the directive has been correctly transposed, the Commission may consider contacting the authorities of the Member States concerned in order to obtain further information on the points at issue.

Accordingly, the Commission will, where appropriate, initiate further infringement procedures for non-conformity of the national implementing measures transposing the directive.

([1]) Council Directive 2010/32/EU of 10 May 2010 implementing the framework Agreement on prevention from sharp injuries in the hospital and healthcare sector concluded by HOSPEEM and EPSU, OJ L 134, 1.6.2010.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014393/13
an die Kommission
Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL)
(20. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Status und Bedingungen des Euratom-Kredits für ein sicherheitstechnisches Nachrüstungsprogramm für Atomanlagen in der Ukraine

1. In einer Antwort auf einen Offenen Brief eines MdEP von April 2013 gab die Kommission an, dass eine Reihe konkreter Bedingungen in das Euratom-Kreditabkommen für das sicherheitstechnisches Nachrüstungsprogramm für Atomanlagen in der Ukraine aufgenommen würden. Kann die Kommission mit Blick darauf eine umfassende Liste dieser Bedingungen vorlegen?

2. In demselben Schreiben wird auch erwähnt, dass die Kreditbedingungen unter anderem die Erstellung eines ökologischen und sozialen Aktionsplans beinhalteten, sowie die Verpflichtung der Regierung der Ukraine, die internationalen Umweltübereinkommen wie Espoo und Aarhus einzuhalten. Auf der 27. Tagung des Durchführungsausschusses im Rahmen des Espoo-Übereinkommens im März 2013 wurde offiziell bekannt, dass die Ukraine dieses Übereinkommen in Bezug auf den geplante Ausbau zweier Reaktoren des Kraftwerks von Rivine nicht eingehalten hat und nun eine offizieller Ausschussinitiative zur Prüfung dieses Falles eingeleitet wurde. Im November 2013 haben die ukrainischen Behörden mit ihrem Beschluss betreffend die Lebensdauerverlängerung einer nuklearen Anlage (AKW in der Süd Ukraine) kürzlich erneut gegen das Espoo-Übereinkommen verstoßen. Modernisierungen aller dieser Anlagen sollen aus dem Euratom-Kredit der Ukraine für das sicherheitstechnische Nachrüstungsprogramm für Atomanlagen finanziert werden ([1]). In Anbetracht dessen wird die Kommission um Beantwortung folgender Fragen ersucht:

a. Wie ist der aktuelle Stand der Dinge in Bezug auf den Euratom-Kredit für die Ukraine? Hat die Kommission bereits eine endgültige Entscheidung getroffen, und wenn ja, welche?

b. Falls das weitere Kreditvergabeverfahren derzeit auf Eis liegt, welche Bedingungen muss die Ukraine dann erfüllen, damit die Kommission die Vorbereitungen für die Kreditvergabe wieder aufnimmt?

c. Wie wird die Kommission sicherstellen, dass die Ukraine die internationalen Umweltschutzübereinkommen wie Aaarhus und Espoo auch wirklich einhält, bevor sie finanzielle Unterstützung über die Euratom-Kreditfazilität vergibt?

Antwort von Herrn Rehn im Namen der Kommission
(19. Februar 2014)

Die Garantievereinbarung zwischen der Ukraine und Euratom im Zusammenhang mit der Darlehensfazilität in Höhe von 300 000 Mio. EUR für die Durchführung des sicherheitstechnischen Nachrüstungsprogramms für Atomanlagen in der Ukraine wurde am 7.8.2013 unterzeichnet (Kommissionsbeschluss vom 24.6.2013).

Die Garantievereinbarung enthält über 40 Zusicherungen seitens der Ukraine, unter anderem zur Einhaltung internationaler Umweltübereinkommen wie des Aarhus- und des Espoo-Übereinkommens. Von der Ukraine wird verlangt, dass sie allen Umwelt- und Sozialvorschriften nachkommt, auf die in den einschlägigen Übereinkommen als anwendbare Rechts- und Verwaltungsvorschriften Bezug genommen wird (einschließlich der Europäischen Umweltschutzprinzipien) und die folgende Aspekte betreffen:

1) Umweltverschmutzung bzw. Umweltschutz, einschließlich internationaler Verträge im Umweltbereich, denen die Ukraine beigetreten ist (darunter das Espoo- und das Aarhus-Übereinkommen)

2) Arbeits- und Beschäftigungsbedingungen

3) Gesundheit und Sicherheit am Arbeitsplatz

4) Öffentliche Gesundheit und Sicherheit

5) Indigene Völker

6) Kulturerbe

7) Umsiedlung oder Verlust der wirtschaftlichen Existenzgrundlage.

([1]) http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2013/eia/ic/ece.mp.eia.ic.2013.2e.pdf

Zu Punkt 1 ist festzustellen, dass im Jahr 2011 auf der Grundlage beider Übereinkommen Verwarnungen an die Ukraine wegen Nichteinhaltung der Bestimmungen der Übereinkommen ausgesprochen wurden. Die Kommission hat ein Projekt zur Unterstützung der Ukraine bei der Umsetzung der Folgemaßnahmen zum Espoo- und zum Aarhus-Übereinkommen finanziert. Ein Gesetzentwurf zur Umweltverträglichkeitsprüfung wurde bereits ausgearbeitet, aber vom ukrainischen Parlament noch nicht verabschiedet.

Bevor eine Auszahlung vorgenommen wird, was erst nach der noch ausstehenden Ratifizierung der Garantievereinbarung durch das ukrainische Parlament möglich ist, wird die Kommission sorgfältig prüfen, inwieweit die genannten und andere einschlägige Bedingungen, wie beispielsweise Auflagen in Bezug auf nukleare Sicherheit, abgebrannte Brennelemente und Abfallbewirtschaftung, eingehalten werden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014393/13
to the Commission
Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Status and conditions of Euratom loan for the Ukraine nuclear power plant safety upgrade programme

1. The Commission stated in its reply to an MEP's open letter of April 2013 that a number of explicit conditions would be included in the Euratom loan guarantee agreement for Ukraine's nuclear power plant safety upgrade programme. With regard to this, can the Commission provide a full list of these conditions?

2. The same letter also mentions that loan conditions will guarantee, among other things, 'the establishment of the environmental and social action plan, including the undertaking by the government of Ukraine to comply with international environmental conventions such as Espoo and Aarhus conventions'. At the 27th session of the Implementation Committee under the Espoo Convention in March 2013 it was officially acknowledged that Ukraine had not complied with the Convention in relation to the planned extension of two nuclear reactors at the Rivne NPP, and an official Committee Initiative has begun to investigate the case. In November 2013 the Ukrainian authorities disregarded the Espoo Convention once again with their decision on nuclear unit lifetime extension (at South Ukrainian NPP). Upgrades to all these units are to be financed from a Euratom loan funding the Ukraine nuclear power plant safety upgrade programme ([1]). In the light of this, the Commission is asked to respond to the following:

(a) What is the current status of the Euratom loan to Ukraine? Has a final decision been made by the Commission? If so, when was this decision taken?

(b) If further loan proceedings have been put on hold, what are the conditions that have to be met by Ukraine in order for the Commission to continue with loan preparations?

(c) How will the Commission ensure that Ukraine is fully in compliance with international environmental conventions such as Aarhus and Espoo before receiving financial assistance through the Euratom loan facility?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

The Guarantee Agreement (GA) between Ukraine and Euratom in relation to EUR 300 million Loan Facility Agreement for the implementation of the Safety Upgrade Program of Nuclear Power Plants in Ukraine was signed on 7.8.2013 (Commission decision adopted on 24.6.2013).

The GA stipulates more than 40 undertakings on the part of Ukraine including compliance with international environmental conventions such as Aarhus and Espoo through a requirement to comply with all Environmental and Social Laws which in the agreements are defined as any applicable law, legislation or regulation (including the European Principles for the Environment), which relates to:

1. pollution or protection of the Environment, including international treaties in the field of Environment to which Ukraine is a party (including the Espoo and the Aarhus Conventions);

2. labour and employment conditions;

3. occupational health and safety;

4. public health, safety and security;

5. indigenous peoples;

6. cultural heritage; or

7. resettlement or economic displacement of persons.

([1]) http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2013/eia/ic/ece.mp.eia.ic.2013.2e.pdf

Regarding point 1, Ukraine was issued cautions in 2011 under the two Conventions for failure to comply with the provisions of both Conventions. The Commission financed a project on Support to Ukraine to implement the Espoo and Aarhus Conventions — follow-up activities. A draft law on Environmental Impact Assessment was prepared but has not been approved yet by the Ukrainian Parliament.

The compliance with these and other applicable conditions, such as those related to nuclear safety and spent fuel and waste management, will be carefully assessed by the Commission prior to any disbursements which are only possible once the GA is ratified by the Ukrainian Parliament which is still pending.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014395/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(20 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Tren de alta velocidad entre Barcelona y París

El pasado domingo 15 de diciembre se inauguraba el trayecto de alta velocidad Barcelona-París ([1]). Queda lejos la fecha del 4 de diciembre de 1986, cuando el Consell Executiu (Gobierno) de la Generalitat de Cataluña aprobó, a propuesta del entonces Conseller de Política Territorial i Obres Públiques (Consejero de Política Territorial y Obras Públicas), Xavier Bigatà, una declaración que dio carta de naturaleza a un informe que constataba la viabilidad económica de una futura línea de ancho internacional entre Barcelona y la frontera francesa. Aquella declaración fue el punto de partida de la actual línea ([2]).

Las cifras de inversión han sido todas ellas mayúsculas e incluyen fondos procedentes de Europa, tanto de las ayudas a la Redes Transeuropeas de Transportes, como de créditos del Banco Europeo de Inversiones.

En la página web de la compañía que opera el servicio ([3]) se puede observar la escasa frecuencia de los trenes: uno o dos viajes al día según el destino.

¿No cree la Comisión que se tendría que aumentar la frecuencia de los trenes para facilitar las relaciones comerciales entre las diferentes regiones por donde pasa esta infraestructura?

¿Cree la Comisión que con esa escasa frecuencia se alcanzará el número de pasajeros necesario para hacer rentable esta inversión?

¿No cree la Comisión que una mayor frecuencia de trenes haría disminuir el número de vehículos en las carreteras y por lo tanto bajarían las emisiones de CO_2, tal y como recomienda el Parlamento Europeo ([4])?

Respuesta del Sr. Kallas en nombre de la Comisión
(14 de febrero de 2014)

En el Libro Blanco del Transporte publicado en 2011, la Comisión establece un doble objetivo, a saber, que para el año 2030 se haya triplicado la red ferroviaria de alta velocidad y que antes de que finalice 2050 la mayor parte del transporte de viajeros de media distancia tenga lugar por ferrocarril. Este doble objetivo se inscribe entre los que deben alcanzarse para lograr la descarbonización del transporte, aumentar su eficacia, reducir la congestión y mejorar la conexión entre los Estados miembros.

No es función de la Comisión hacer comentarios sobre el nivel de frecuencia de una línea concreta. La Comisión, no obstante, observa que la competencia efectiva registrada por los servicios ferroviarios de transporte de viajeros de larga distancia de Italia, Austria y la República Checa ha incrementado el tráfico y la frecuencia de los ferrocarriles y, consiguientemente, tanto la cuota modal de estos como la utilización de su infraestructura, lo que a su vez, y en último término, ha impulsado el comercio entre las ciudades y regiones conectadas por ellos.

Tras abrirse a la competencia en 2010 los servicios de ferrocarril internacionales en virtud del tercer paquete ferroviario, se está completando ahora la conexión de nuevas infraestructuras. En muchos casos, sin embargo, los nuevos operadores se enfrentan a dificultades para obtener la autorización de vehículos. Las propuestas presentadas por la Comisión en el marco del cuarto paquete ferroviario tienen por objeto precisamente facilitar la autorización de los vehículos de transporte ferroviario que se utilizan en varios Estados miembros y la certificación de las empresas ferroviarias que también operan en varios de ellos. Estos principios serán confirmados en breve por el Parlamento Europeo en primera lectura, y ello favorecerá la emergencia de nuevos servicios ferroviarios internacionales.

La Comisión considera que, al igual que el nivel de frecuencia de los servicios comerciales debe ser ajustado por las empresas ferroviarias para poder atender a las necesidades de la demanda y obtener el rendimiento deseado de las inversiones, el nivel de frecuencia de las obligaciones de servicio público debe ser determinado por las autoridades responsables del transporte de viajeros en función de las necesidades de transporte.

([1]) http://www.rtve.es/noticias/20131215/parte-primer-ave-directo-desde-barcelona-hacia-paris/821780.shtml
([2]) http://www.lavanguardia.com/local/barcelona/20130108/54358883092/inauguracion-ave-barcelona-girona-figueres.html
([3]) http://www.renfe.com/EN/viajeros/larga_distancia/productos/avefrancia.html
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131217STO31107/html/Railway-package-putting-Europe%E2 %80 %99s-rail-sector-on-the-right-track

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014395/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: High-speed rail train between Barcelona and Paris

On Sunday 15 December 2013, the high-speed line between Barcelona and Paris was opened ([1]), many years on from 4 December 1986, the date on which the Autonomous Government of Catalonia, on the proposal of the then Minister for Territorial Policy and Public Works, Xavier Bigatà, adopted a declaration backing a report that established the economic viability of a future international-gauge line between Barcelona and the French border. That declaration marked the inception of the current line ([2]).

The sums invested, including EU funds, such as Trans-European Transport Networks aid and European Investment Bank loans, have all been huge.

The web page of the company operating the service ([3]) shows how low the frequency of the service is: one or two trains per day, depending on the destination.

Does the Commission not believe that the service frequency should be increased to foster trade relations between the different regions through which this line passes?

Does the Commission believe that the passenger numbers required to give a return on the investment will be achieved with this low frequency?

Does the Commission not think that more trains would reduce the number of vehicles on the roads, thereby reducing CO_2 emissions, as recommended by Parliament ([4])?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

In the White Paper on Transport 2011, the Commission sets as a goal to triple high speed rail network by 2030 and that by 2050, the majority of medium-distance passenger transport should go by rail as one of the objectives to be met to achieve a de-carbonisation of transport, enhance its efficiency, reduce congestion and better connect Member States.

It is not the Commission's role to comment on the level of frequencies of a particular line. However, the Commission notes that effective competition in the long-distance passenger rail services in Italy, Austria and the Czech Republic has increased rail traffic and frequencies, and therefore both the modal share of rail and infrastructure utilisation, ultimately forstering trade between linked cities and regions.

In 2010, international rail services were opened to competition by the 3rd railway package and new infrastructure links are being completed. However, in many instances, new entrants experience difficulties with vehicle authorisations. The Commission's proposals on the 4th railway package aim precisely at to facilitate the authorisation of rail vehicles used in several Member States and the certification of railway undertakings active in several Member States. These principles will be soon confirmed by the European Parliament in its first reading and it will facilitate the emergence of new international rail services.

The Commission believes that frequencies of commercial services must be adjusted by railway undertakings to meet demand needs and desired returns on investment, and that frequencies of public service obligations must be determined by passenger transport authorities to meet transport needs.

([1]) http://www.rtve.es/noticias/20131215/parte-primer-ave-directo-desde-barcelona-hacia-paris/821780.shtml
([2]) http://www.lavanguardia.com/local/barcelona/20130108/54358883092/inauguracion-ave-barcelona-girona-figueres.html
([3]) http://www.renfe.com/EN/viajeros/larga_distancia/productos/avefrancia.html
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131217STO31107/html/Railway-package-putting-Europe%E2%80%99s-rail-sector-on-the-right-track

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014397/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Working toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDG)

In 2000, the European Union joined other world leaders in pledging to eradicate poverty across the world through eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG). These include halving extreme poverty rates, halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and promoting universal primary education by 2015.

In this context, can the Commission provide an update on the progress made towards realising these goals and outline what efforts have been taken at an EU level to contribute to, consolidate and continue this progress?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-010902/2013. ([1])

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014399/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Arrest of online activists in Saudi Arabia

A recent report published by Human Rights Watch has found that authorities in Saudi Arabia have initiated a campaign of intimidation and arrests against online activists speaking out against the regime. In many cases, this has also involved attempts to prevent awareness of fundamental rights from increasing through social media.

In this context, can the Commission respond to the following questions:

1. What steps are being taken at EU level to promote the preservation of fundamental rights in Saudi Arabia in light of these developments?

2. What specific action has — and will — be taken at EU level to encourage an end to the levels of discrimination and violence against women seen in Saudi Arabia, as well as to promote individual freedoms relating to privacy and online access?

Answer given by High-Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

Saudi Arabia's human rights record remains a matter of deep concern for the European Union. The situation is particularly worrying with regard to freedom of expression and women's rights.

Freedom of expression remains significantly restricted and, although the Internet has allowed Saudis to express themselves more easily, the authorities have reinforced scrutiny on web publications and debates including through licencing requirements.

Serious discrimination against women remain a reality. The EU keeps raising this question in its contacts with the Saudi authorities and asking, in particular, that Saudi Arabia ratifies and implements the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women without reservations. At the same time, the EU has noted the gradual, positive steps which have been taken with the appointment of one third of women to the Shura Council in 2013, the possibility for them to vote and stand for office at the 2015 Municipal elections, the decision to grant women lawyers licenses to practice in courtrooms and the adoption of a law against violence in 2013. The EU will follow with interest the concrete implementation of these first encouraging steps.

The Universal Periodic Review that the country is undergoing at the UN Human Rights Council has been a good opportunity for the EU Member States to discuss the overal situation of human rights in Saudi Arabia. The EU will continue to raise human rights with its Saudi interlocutors at every opportunity and will keep proposing the setting up of an EU-Saudi Arabia group of human rights experts.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014401/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Tackling online piracy

According to recent research published by Ofcom (the regulator and competition authority of the UK communications industries), the number of pirated music tracks in the UK fell from 301 million in March 2012 to 199 million in March 2013. It also found, however, that one in six UK Internet users have illegally downloaded or streamed files in the past year.

In this context, can the Commission detail what action has — and will — be taken at EU level to tackle online piracy in all its forms throughout the Member States?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(25 February 2014)

The EU has already taken action ([1]) in the copyright field to harmonise existing laws or create new tools to tackle online piracy, for example through actions for damages, or injunctions against infringers or certain intermediaries.

The Commission is currently reviewing the EU copyright framework and has been consulting in the past year on the efficiency of proceedings and accessibility of measures for the civil enforcement of intellectual property rights ([2]). Another public consultation focusing more precisely on copyright and including questions on enforcement of copyright and piracy is underway ([3]).

In parallel, the Commission is exploring the possibility to further develop stakeholders' dialogues, for example through the extension of the existing Memorandum of understanding on the sale of counterfeit goods on the Internet ([4]) to involve new intermediaries with the aim to cut off the sources of income of infringing sites ('follow-the money' approach).

([1]) In particular Directive 2004/48/EC on the enforcement of IPR and Article 8 of Directive 2001/29/EC on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2012/intellectual-property-rights_en.htm
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/copyright/initiatives/index_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/iprenforcement/stakeholders/index_en.htm#maincontentSec2

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014402/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: EU unemployment figures

According to recent figures published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the unemployment rate in the United Kingdom has fallen to 7.4%, its lowest level since 2009. However, in my constituency, Northern Ireland, a region of the UK, the rate lies above the national average at 7.5%.

Against this backdrop, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. What steps are being taken at EU level to tackle unemployment throughout the Member States, especially given the recent economic crisis and the increasing numbers of young people becoming isolated from education, training and the labour market?

2. Can the Commission detail any information it has on the unemployment rates recorded in each EU Member State over the past twenty-four months?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

In its Annual Growth Survey 2014 the Commission identified three main priorities to tackle unemployment ([1]):

1. Stepping up active labour market measures, notably active support and training for the unemployed, improving the performance of public employment services and implementing a Youth Guarantee;

2. Further reform efforts to ensure that wage developments are in line with productivity and thus support both competitiveness and aggregate demand, to remedy labour market segmentation, notably by modernising employment protection legislation, to support job creation in fast-growing sectors and to facilitate labour mobility;

3. Pursuing the modernisation of education and training systems, including life-long learning, vocational training and dual learning schemes.

The information you request on the unemployment rates recorded in each EU Member State and region over the past twenty-four months is readily available from Eurostat, in particular from its database on employment and unemployment (Labour Force Survey) ([2]).

([1]) COM(2013) 800 final.
([2]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_unemployment_lfs/data/database

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014405/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Public executions in North Korea

Recently, it was widely reported that the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un, had ordered the first public executions since the death of his father in 2011. Among the estimated 80 victims were those allegedly guilty of minor crimes, including possession of a bible.

In light of these developments, can the Commission say what steps have and will be taken at EU level to promote effective judicial procedures and fundamental freedoms in North Korea, including freedom of religion, association and speech?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2014)

The Commission is aware of the media reports concerning a string of public executions in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). They are not in a position to confirm or deny such reports.

The EU remains very concerned by the continuing and systematic violations of human rights in the DPRK, including those relating to freedom of religion, association and speech. These concerns are expressed at every occasion by EU representatives meeting with DPRK authorities. The EU also consistently raises the issue bilaterally with its partners in the region and beyond as well as multilaterally, including in the United Nations.

The EU supported the establishment in March 2013 of the UN Commission of inquiry on human rights in the DPRK, the final report of which is expected by March 2014. It has supported its work throughout and has called on the authorities of the DPRK to fully cooperate with said Commission, including by granting access to its territory. The EU has similarly supported the UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK.

The EU has a comprehensive approach aimed at facilitating reform and change in the DPRK in the field of human rights as well as other areas such as denuclearisation or economic development. It will keep monitoring the situation and exploring ways to make an effective contribution to the improvement of human rights in the DPRK.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014408/13
to the Commission
Kay Swinburne (ECR)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Duplicate use of European Regional Development Fund funding

The investment opportunities provided by structural funds are one of the key tools we have at our disposal for improving regional prosperity, developing key regional infrastructure and driving growth and job creation. Therefore, it is essential that financing from funds such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) are invested fairly, and as widely as possible, throughout our regions.

In light of this, is the Commission currently monitoring the issue of possible duplicate investment of ERDF funding within our regions and Member States?

Would the Commission be able to outline what rules or guidelines are currently in place at EU level to govern the matter of possible duplicate use of ERDF funding?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(13 February 2014)

Additionality is a core principle of cohesion policy aiming to ensure its added value. It means that cohesion investments complement but do not replace equivalent public expenditure of a Member State. This ensures that cohesion policy has a genuine impact by complementing national with European investments. Additionality is a key element for cohesion policy for the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 periods as it supports the preservation of growth-enhancing investments.

In both the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 periods, the Commission verifies the additionality of investments. With regard to the 2014-2020 period, in the negotiation of the Partnership Agreements, the Commission will agree with certain Member States ([1]) on a level of national public investment to be maintained in 2014-2020. The respect of this level will be verified by the Commission (mid-term and *ex-post*). The Commission may apply a financial correction after the *ex-post* verification (in 2023) if a Member State fails to meet the agreed reference level.

In addition, in order to maximise the impact of EU funding on the level of projects, the Member States have the primary responsibility for ensuring that no double financing takes place when combining for example Horizon 2020 and European Structural and Investment Funds in the field of research and development.

([1]) Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Croatia.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014409/13
à la Commission
Eric Andrieu (S&D) et Henri Weber (S&D)
(20 décembre 2013)

Objet: Porc de montagne

Dans son règlement (UE) nº 1151/2012, l'Union européenne a reconnu la mention facultative «produit de montagne» permettant de mieux commercialiser les produits issus de zones montagneuses et de mieux informer les consommateurs quant à l'origine de ces produits.

La Commission européenne serait actuellement en train de préparer, par acte délégué, un projet de texte d'application de ce règlement. Selon nos informations, cet acte délégué prévoirait une obligation de fournir 50 % d'alimentation en provenance des zones de montagne pour des non-ruminants comme les porcs.

En l'état, cette disposition condamnerait fortement la production de porcs de montagne. En effet, les conditions naturelles des zones de montagne ne permettent pas toujours de mettre en culture des productions comme les céréales ou les oléoprotagineux qui entrent dans la composition de la ration de ces monogastriques.

Dans ces conditions, nombre de producteurs de ces régions défavorisées ne pourraient donc pas utiliser la mention «porc de montagne», alors que des filières se sont déjà structurées depuis plusieurs années autour de la mention «montagne», grâce à des réglementations nationales antérieures au règlement (UE) nº 1151/2012 qui comportent des clauses d'application plus souples.

Une partie de la production et de la valeur ajoutée de ces territoires fragiles, ainsi que les abattoirs et petites entreprises de transformation qui leur sont associés, pourraient tout simplement être menacés.

Le règlement (UE) nº 1151/2012 prévoit des dispositions particulières, qui, dans des cas dûment justifiés, permettent de tenir compte des contraintes naturelles qui ont des incidences sur la production agricole en zones de montagne. Il existe des zones montagneuses d'altitude particulièrement élevée où aucune céréale et aucun oléagineux ne peuvent être cultivés et où sont élevés des porcs de plein air, qui ont besoin de compléments alimentaires tirés de ces matières premières. La législation de base admet que les matières premières entrant dans l'alimentation des porcs soient issues de l'extérieur des zones de montagne.

Pourquoi, à travers son projet d'application, la Commission propose-t-elle un taux si élevé de 50 % et ne tient-elle pas compte de certaines zones d'élevage de porcs de haute montagne ne pouvant fournir de complément alimentaire sur place? Pourquoi la Commission s'opposerait-elle au règlement communautaire et à l'esprit du législateur?

Réponse donnée par M. Cioloş au nom de la Commission
(14 février 2014)

La mention de qualité facultative «produit de montagne» a été introduite par le règlement (UE) nº 1151/2012 relatif aux systèmes de qualité applicables aux produits agricoles et aux denrées alimentaires ([1]) afin d'offrir aux producteurs de montagne un instrument efficace leur permettant de mieux commercialiser leurs produits et de réduire les risques de confusion dans l'esprit des consommateurs quant à la provenance réelle des produits de montagne. Ce système d'application volontaire est destiné aux produits qui remplissent certaines conditions de qualité.

L'une des conditions établies par le législateur dans ledit règlement prévoit que «*à la fois les matières premières et les aliments pour animaux d'élevage proviennent essentiellement de zones de montagne*». *Lors de la réalisation d'un projet d'acte délégué comprenant des dérogations concernant l'origine des aliments pour animaux, les services de la Commission ont poursuivi le double objectif susmentionné. La version actuelle de ce projet d'acte délégué* ([2]) comporte une disposition selon laquelle la proportion des aliments pour porcins qui ne peuvent pas être produits dans des zones de montagne ne doit pas dépasser les 75 % du régime alimentaire annuel de l'animal.

La Commission propose par conséquent que 25 % des aliments pour porcins proviennent des zones de montagne. Cette dérogation à l'obligation selon laquelle les aliments pour animaux doivent provenir essentiellement de zones de montagne constitue une tentative pour trouver un équilibre entre les deux objectifs du législateur et est conforme à son esprit.

([1]) JO L 343 du 14.12.2012.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tbt/tbt_repository/EU172_EN_1_1.pdf

Comme ce système est volontaire et se conçoit comme un instrument censé informer les consommateurs sur les produits qui présentent effectivement les caractéristiques propres à la zone de production, c'est-à-dire des matières premières et des aliments pour animaux provenant de zones de montagne, il n'exclut pas de la chaîne de production les producteurs qui ne remplissent pas ces conditions spécifiques. Au contraire, ce système offre un outil de communication aux producteurs qui fournissent des efforts supplémentaires afin d'assurer à leurs produits un certain niveau de qualité.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014409/13
to the Commission
Eric Andrieu (S&D) and Henri Weber (S&D)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Mountain pork

In Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, the European Union recognised the optional indication 'mountain product', making it possible to better market products from mountain areas and better inform consumers as to the origin of such products.

The Commission is currently preparing, by delegated act, a draft text to implement that regulation. According to our information, this delegated act introduces an obligation whereby 50% of feed for non-ruminants such as pigs must come from mountain areas.

As things stand, this provision would heavily penalise the production of mountain pigs. The natural conditions of mountain areas do not always allow crops such as cereals or oilseed crops, which are used in feed for these monogastric animals, to be grown.

Under these circumstances, a number of producers in these disadvantaged regions could not therefore use the indication 'mountain pork', while production chains have already been built around the 'mountain' indication for several years, under more flexible national legislation in force prior to Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

Some production and the added value of these vulnerable regions, as well as associated abattoirs and small processing businesses, could quite simply be at risk.

Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 lays down specific provisions that, in duly justified cases, allow for natural constraints affecting agricultural production in mountain areas to be taken into account. There are some mountain regions that are at a particularly high altitude where no cereal or oilseed crops can be grown and where free-range pigs are reared, which need feed supplements produced from such raw materials. The basic legislation allows for raw materials used in pig feed to come from outside mountain areas.

Why, in its implementing draft, does the Commission propose such a high level of 50% and why does it not account for certain high-altitude mountain areas where pigs are reared, where it is not possible to use feed supplements produced there? Why is the Commission going against EU legislation and the spirit of the legislator?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

The optional quality term 'mountain product' was established by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs ([1]) in order to provide mountain producers with an effective tool to better market their product and to reduce the risks of consumer confusion as to the mountain provenance of products. It is a voluntary scheme meant for those products that fulfil certain quality conditions.

One of the conditions, established by the legislator in the said Regulation, is that 'both the raw materials and the feedstuffs for farm animals come essentially from mountain areas'. In preparing a draft delegated act, including the derogations with regard to the origin of feedstuffs, the Commission services have pursued the abovementioned double objective. The current version of the draft delegated act ([2]) includes a provision that the proportion of feedstuffs for pigs that cannot be produced in mountain areas shall not exceed 75% of the annual animal diet.

The Commission is thus proposing that 25% of feedstuffs for pigs must come from mountain areas. This derogation from the provision requiring that feedstuffs come essentially from mountain areas tries to strike a balance between the two legislator's objectives and conforms to its spirit.

As the scheme is voluntary and is meant to be a tool for communicating to consumers about those products that indeed have the characteristics specific to the production area — i.e. raw materials and feedstuffs from the mountain area — the scheme is not eliminating from the chain those producers who do not fulfil these specific criteria. On the contrary, the scheme is providing a communication instrument to those producers who make additional efforts to ensure a certain quality of their products.

([1]) OJ L 343 of 14.12.2012.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tbt/tbt_repository/EU172_EN_1_1.pdf

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-014410/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 ta' Diċembru 2013)

Suġġett: Tfal awtistiċi

Persuni b'disturbi ġeneralizzati tal-awtiżmu (ASD) jaffaċċjaw problemi partikolari mhux biss fil-ħajja soċjali tagħhom iżda wkoll fis-suq tax-xogħol. L-implikazzjonijiet soċjali ta' disturbi ġeneralizzati tal-awtiżmu ilhom inklużi fil-pjanijiet ta' ħidma għas-saħħa pubblika tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea sa mill-2005 u kienu inkorporati fil-pjan ta' ħidma għall-2007. L-enfasi ewlieni kien fuq l-għoti ta' informazzjoni dwar l-awtiżmu/id-disturb ta' Asperger, in-nuqqas konjittiv u t-tfixkil tal-funzjonijiet tal-moviment fiżiku, tal-perċezzjoni u dawk soċjoemozzjonali, u fuq id-definizzjoni ta' indikaturi għal dawn il-kundizzjonijiet.

1. Il-Kummissjoni tista' tipprovdi statistika aġġornata dwar in-numru ta' tfal fl-UE li jbatu minn disturbi ġeneralizzati tal-awtiżmu?

2. Il-Kummissjoni kif biħsiebha tgħin tipprepara tfal awtistiċi sabiex fil-ħajja adulta dawn ikunu integrati aħjar fis-suq tax-xogħol?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Borg f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(19 ta' Frar 2014)

Il-Kummissjoni hija konxja mill-importanza u mill-impatt tad-Disturb Ġeneralizzat tal-Awtiżmu (ASD) u qiegħda tieħu azzjonijiet biex dan il-grupp ta' disturbi jiġi identifikat aħjar, jiġi rilevat minn kmieni, u biex tingħadda informazzjoni dwaru lill-pubbliku u lill-professjonisti.

Skont id-dejta miġbura mis-Sistema Ewropea tal-Informazzjoni tal-Awtiżmu ([1]), proġett appoġġjat mill-Programm tal-Unjoni Ewropea dwar is-Saħħa sal-2008, mill-ftit dejta li nġabret ġew stabbiliti xi konklużjonijiet preliminari dwar il-prevalenza tal-awtiżmu fl-UE. Bosta sħarriġiet eżistenti f'diversi livelli jvarjaw ħafna fil-mod li bih jiddefinixxu u jidentifikaw il-każijiet, u allura l-istimi tagħhom ta' prevalenza jvarjaw wisq biex issir analiżi sinifikattiva ta' xejriet kronoloġiċi. L-UE ma għandhiex dejta tajba biżejjed biex tittestja għal ipoteżijiet dwar kif l-inċidenza tal-awtiżmu tinbidel fuq żmien twil. Minkejja dan, it-tagħrif eżistenti jissuġġerixxi li r-rati ta' prevalenza abbażi tal-età għall-"awtiżmu klassiku" fl-UE jistgħu jvarjaw bejn 3.3 u 16.0 għal kull 10 000. Dawn ir-rati jistgħu jiżdiedu għal bejn 30 u 63 għal kull 10 000 ladarba jiġu nkluži l-forom kollha tal-ASD. Il-validità u l-utilità ta' tifsira wiesgħa tal-awtiżmu għadhom qed jiġu diskussi.

Skont il-programm tal-UE dwar l-impjiegi u s-solidarjetà soċjali, PROGRESS ([2]), il-Kummissjoni għandha ftehim ta' sħubija ma' Autism Europe li permezz tiegħu din l-organizzazzjoni tibbenefika minn għotja annwali għall-operat tagħha. Barra dan, fuq talba tal-Parlament Ewropew, minn April 2011 sa Ġunju 2013, il-Kummissjoni implimentat erba' proġetti pilota bil-għan li tiżviluppa politiki għall-impjieg u l-integrazzjoni soċjali ta' nies bl-ASD. Il-Kummissjoni qed tħejji rapport dwar ir-riżultati u għandha l-pjan li tippubblikahom fis-sit Europa Justice ([3]):

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/major_chronic_diseases/diseases/autistic/index_en.htm#fragment3
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=327
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/index_en.htm (EN/FR/DE).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014410/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Autistic children

People with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) face particular problems not only in social life, but also in the labour market. The social implications of ASD have been included in the European Commission's public-health work plans since 2005 and were incorporated into the work plan for 2007. The main focus was on providing information on autism/Asperger's syndrome, cognitive retardation and disruption of motor, perceptual, language and socio-emotional functions, and on defining indicators for these conditions.

1. Can the Commission provide updated statistics on the number of children suffering from autism spectrum disorders in the EU?

2. How does the Commission plan to help prepare autistic children so that in adulthood they will be better integrated into the labour market?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

The Commission is aware of the importance and impact of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and has been undertaking actions for better identification, early detection and information to public and professionals about this group of disorders.

According to the data collected by the European Autism Information System ([1]), a project supported by the European Union Health Programme up to 2008, some preliminary conclusions about the prevalence of autism in the EU, based on the scarce data available, have been established. Existing cross-sectional surveys differ widely in how they define and identify cases, and so their estimates of prevalence vary too much to allow any meaningful analysis of time trends. The EU lacks good data for testing hypotheses on how the incidence of autism changes over long periods. Nevertheless, existing information suggests that age-specific prevalence rates for 'classical autism' in the EU could vary between 3.3 and 16.0 per 10 000. These rates could increase to between 30 and 63 per 10 000 once all forms of ASD are included. The validity and usefulness of a broad definition of autism is still being debated.

Under the EU's employment and social solidarity programme PROGRESS ([2]), the Commission has a partnership agreement with Autism Europe under which this organisation benefits from an annual operational grant. Moreover, on request of the European Parliament, from April 2011 to June 2013, the Commission implemented four pilot projects aiming to develop policies for employment and social integration of people with ASD. The Commission is preparing a report on the results and plans to publish it under Europa Justice Website ([3]):

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/major_chronic_diseases/diseases/autistic/index_en.htm#fragment3
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=327
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/index_en.htm

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-014411/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 ta' Diċembru 2013)

Suġġett: Il-Jum Ewropew tal-Lingwi

Il-Jum Ewropew tal-Lingwi jiġi ċċelebrat fis-26 ta' Settembru. L-objettiv ewlieni ta' dan il-jum hu li ċ-ċittadini Ewropej jitħeġġew jitgħallmu xi lingwa jew jkunu kburin, b'mod speċjali, bil-ħiliet lingwistiċi tagħhom. F'dan il-jum partikolari dawk responsabbli biex jipprovdu aċċess għat-tagħlim tal-lingwi se jitħeġġew ukoll isostnu inizjattivi tal-politika u jippromwovu l-lingwi.

Id-diversità tal-lingwi hija karatteristika li tiddistingwixxi lill-Ewropa, u l-multilingwiżmu fost it-tfal ta prova li hu ta' benefiċċju għall-edukazzjoni u l-iżvilupp tat-tfal.

Fid-dawl ta' dan;

1. Il-Kummissjoni tista' tipprovdi statistika dwar liema lingwi Ewropej, minbarra l-Ingliż, jintgħallmu l-aktar miċ-ċittadini Ewropej?

2. Matul is-summit li sar f'Barċellona fl-2002, l-Unjoni fasslet mira biex it-tfal Ewropej jitgħallmu tal-anqas żewġ lingwi barranin minn età żgħira. Il-Kummissjoni tista' tipprovdi informazzjoni dwar il-punt safejn din il-mira ntlaħqet fl-Istati Membri kollha?

3. Minbarra l-Jum Ewropej tal-Lingwi, il-Kummissjoni qiegħda tippjana li tinvesti f'xi attivitajiet, avvenimenti jew programmi edukattivi oħra biex tippromwovi l-lingwi Ewropej u d-diversità kulturali?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Vassiliou f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(4 ta' Marzu 2014)

1. Skont ir-rapport tal-2012 tal-Eurydice/Eurostat, fil-parti l-kbira tal-pajjiżi fl-UE, l-Ingliż huwa l-lingwa barranija l-iktar mgħallma: 83% tal-istudenti jitgħallmu l-Ingliż bħala lingwa barranija fil-livell 3 tal-Klassifikazzjoni tal-Istandards Internazzjonali tal-Edukazzjoni, waqt li 23% jitgħallmu l-Ġermaniż u 21% jitgħallmu l-Franċiż. L-Ispanjol jokkupa t-tielet u r-raba' pożizzjoni f'numru sinifikanti ta' pajjiżi. Ir-Russu huwa t-tieni lingwa barranija l-iktar mgħallma fi tliet pajjiżi. Fl-2009/2010, fil-parti l-kbira tal-pajjiżi, il-persentaġġ ta' studenti li kienu qed jitgħallmu lingwi oħra apparti l-Ingliż, il-Franċiż, l-Ispanjol, il-Ġermaniż jew ir-Russu kien inqas minn 5%. ([1])

2. Ir-riżultati tal-Istħarriġ Ewropew dwar il-Kompetenzi Lingwistiċi, imwettaq f'14-il Stat Membru tal-UE u ppubblikat fl-2012, wera li l-livell tal-profiċjenza tal-lingwi fl-Ewropa mhuwiex għoli biżżejjed ([2]) Sabiex issaħħaħ il-kompetenzi tal-lingwi u tilħaq l-objettiv tal-Kunsill Ewropew ta' Barċellona, il-Kummissjoni pproponiet punt ta' riferiment għall-kompetenza fil-lingwi fil-Komunikazzjoni tagħha tal-2012 "Reviżjoni tal-Edukazzjoni". ([3]) Dan il-punt ta' riferiment jistimula progress lejn l-objettiv li sas-sena 2020 ikun hemm ta' mill-inqas 75% ta' studenti fil-livell sekondarju li jkunu qed jistudjaw ta' mill-inqas żewġ lingwi barranin. Bħalissa l-proposta qed tiġi diskussa mal-Istati Membri.

3. It-tagħlim tal-lingwi u d-diversità lingwistika huma wkoll objettivi speċifiċi tal-programm il-ġdid, Erasmus+. ([4]) Il-Kummissjoni ser tappoġġja t-tagħlim tal-lingwi u l-azzjonijiet ta' mobilità għal-lingwi kollha użati għall-istruzzjoni u għax-xogħol. Barra minn hekk, proġetti li jħeġġu t-tagħlim ta' lingwi barranin u d-diversità lingwistika jistgħu jkunu appoġġjati permezz ta' attivitajiet immirati lejn il-kooperazzjoni fejn tidħol l-innovazzjoni u l-iskambju ta' prassi tajba, bħal shubiji strateġiċi.

([1]) Data ewlenija dwar it-tagħlim tal-lingwi fl-iskejjel fl-Ewropa fl-2012, Eurydice/Eurostat: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/143EN.pdf
([2]) http://www.surveylang.org
([3]) COM(2012)669 final.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_mt.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014411/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: European Day of Languages

The European Day of Languages is celebrated on 26 September. The main objective of this day is to encourage European citizens to take up a language or to take special pride in their existing language skills. It also encourages those responsible for providing access to language learning to support policy initiatives to promote languages.

(Language) diversity is one of Europe's distinguishing features, and multilingualism among children is proven to be beneficial for their education and development.

In light of this;

1. Can the Commission provide statistics on which European languages, besides English, are most commonly learned by European citizens?

2. At the EU Summit held in Barcelona in 2002, the Union set a target for European children to learn at least two foreign languages from an early age. Can the Commission provide information on the extent to which this target has been reached in all EU Member States?

3. Apart from the European Day of Languages, is the Commission planning to invest in any other activities, events or educational programs to promote European languages and cultural diversity?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2014)

1. According to the Eurydice/Eurostat report of 2012, in most EU countries the most widely taught foreign language is English: 83% of students learn English as a foreign language at level 3 of the International Standard Classification of Education, while 23% learn German, and 21% learn French. Spanish occupies the third or fourth position in a significant number of countries. Russian is the second most widely taught foreign language in three countries. In 2009/2010, the percentage of pupils learning languages other than English, French, Spanish, German or Russian was below 5% in most countries. ([1])

2. The results of the European Survey on Language Competences, carried out in 14 EU Member States and published in 2012, showed that the level of language proficiency in Europe is insufficient. ([2]) To reinforce language competences and reach the objective of the 2002 Barcelona European Council, the Commission proposed a European benchmark for language competence in its 'Rethinking Education' Communication of 2012. ([3]) This benchmark would stimulate progress towards the objective of having, by 2020, at least 75% of pupils in lower secondary education studying at least two foreign languages. The proposal is currently being discussed with Member States.

3. Language learning and linguistic diversity are also specific objectives of the new Erasmus+ programme. ([4]) The Commission will support language learning in mobility actions for all languages used for instruction and work. Moreover, projects fostering language learning and linguistic diversity can be supported through activities aimed at cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices, such as strategic partnerships.

([1]) Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe in 2012, Eurydice/Eurostat: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/143EN.pdf
([2]) http://www.surveylang.org
([3]) COM(2012) 669 final.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-014412/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 ta' Diċembru 2013)

Suġġett: Strateġija Ewropea tad-Diżabilità

L-Istrateġija Ewropea tad-Diżabilità 2010-2020 ġiet adottata fil-15 ta' Novembru 2010. Din toffri qafas komprensiv li jimpenja lill-Kummissjoni fl-għoti ta' setgħa lil persuni b'diżabilitajiet sabiex igawdu mid-drittijiet kollha tagħhom, u sabiex jitneħħew l-ostakli ta' kuljum f'ħajjithom.

Il-persuni b'diżabilitajiet għandhom id-dritt li jipparteċipaw bis-sħiħ u b'mod ugwali fis-soċjetà u fl-ekonomija. Iċ-ċaħda ta' opportunitajiet ugwali hija ksur tad-drittijiet umani. L-UE u l-Istati Membri kollha tagħha impenjaw ruħhom biex joħolqu Ewropa mingħajr ostakli billi ffirmaw il-Konvenzjoni tan-Nazzjonitajiet Uniti dwar id-Drittijiet ta' Persuni b'Diżabilità. L-azzjoni tal-UE hija meħtieġa sabiex tikkumplimenta l-isforzi nazzjonali, anke jekk l-Istati Membri jġorru r-responsabbiltajiet ewlenin.

F'dan ir-rigward:

1. Il-Kummissjoni tista' tipprovdi l-aħħar statistika dwar ir-rata ta' parteċipazzjoni ta' persuni b'diżabilitajiet fl-edukazzjoni inklużiva u fit-tagħlim tul il-ħajja?

2. Il-Kummissjoni tista' tipprovdi l-aħħar statistika dwar ir-rata ta' parteċipazzjoni ta' ċittadini Ewropej b'diżabilitajiet fis-suq tax-xogħol?

3. X'azzjonijiet speċifiċi oħra qed tieħu l-Kummissjoni fil-ġlieda kontra l-esklużjoni soċjali fost il-persuni b'diżabilitajiet fl-UE?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Reding f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(28 ta' Frar 2014)

1. Skont l-aħħar dejta fuq livell tal-UE ([1]), madwar 25 % taż-żgħażagħ b'diżabbiltà (ta' bejn it-18 u l-24 sena) jieqfu kmieni mill-iskola meta mqabbla mat-12.4 % taż-żgħażagħ li ma għandhomx diżabilità. Ir-rati għolja ta' tluq bikri mill-iskola fost żgħażagħ b'diżabbiltà jistgħu jindikaw problemi marbuta mal-aċċessibilità u n-nuqqas ta' programmi adattati. Barra minn hekk, fost in-nies kollha b'diżabbiltà ta' bejn it-30 u l-34 sena, madwar 24 % lestew b'suċċess l-università jew edukazzjoni ta' livell simili (fil-livell terzjarju) meta mqabbla mas-36 % tal-persuni mhux b'diżabbiltà. Aktar dejta dwar il-parteċipazzjoni ta' persuni b'diżabbiltà fl-edukazzjoni u t-taħriġ se tixxerred mill-Eurostat fir-Rebbiegħa tal-2014. L-Aġenzija Ewropea għall-Bżonnijiet Speċjali u l-Edukazzjoni Inklussiva ([2]), appoġġata mill-Kummissjoni, tagħmel disponibbli dejta marbuta mal-għadd ta' tfal bi bżonnijiet speċjali fl-etajiet tal-iskola obbligatorja u t-tqegħid tagħhom ([3]).

2. L-aħħar dejta fuq livell tal-UE ([4]) turi li 54 % tal-persuni b'diżabbiltà jipparteċipaw fis-suq tax-xogħol (impjegati jew qiegħda) meta mqabbla mal-74 % tal-persuni mingħajr diżabbiltà. Ir-rata tal-impjiegi tal-UE ta' persuni b'diżabbiltà hija ta' madwar 47 %, meta mqabbla mas-67 % għal persuni mingħajr diżabbiltà. Barra minn hekk, jista' jiġi nnutat li r-rati nazzjonali tal-impjieg ta' persuni b'diżabbiltà jvarjaw minn 24 % (l-Ungerija) għal 66 % (l-Isvezja).

3. Il-Kummissjoni hija impenjata sabiex tuża l-potenzjal tal-istrumenti rilevanti kollha tal-UE, b'mod partikolari l-Fondi Strutturali u tal-Investiment tal-UE, biex tippromwovi l-inklużjoni soċjali u l-opportunitajiet indaqs għal persuni b'diżabbiltà, il-parteċipazzjoni attiva fis-soċjetà u l-ekonomija, it-tranżizzjoni lejn servizzi bbażati fuq il-komunità, u l-aċċessibbiltà tal-ambjent fiżiku, it-trasport u t-teknoloġiji l-ġodda.

([1]) Dejta pprovduta mill-modulu ad hoc tal-Istħarriġ dwar il-Forza tax-Xogħol dwar l-impjieg ta' persuni b'diżabbiltà li twettaq fl-2011.
([2]) http://www.european-agency.org/
([3]) L-aħħar dejta tinsab fuq: http://www.european-agency.org/publications/ereports/sne-country-data-2012/sne-country-data-2012. Dan is-sett tad-dejta jagħti wkoll id-definizzjonijiet legali ta' Bżonnijiet Edukattivi Speċjali f'kull pajjiż u dan juri d-diversità tal-approċċi madwar l-Ewropa.
([4]) Dejta pprovduta mill-modulu ad hoc tal-Istħarriġ dwar il-Forza tax-Xogħol dwar l-impjieg ta' persuni b'diżabbiltà li twettaq fl-2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014412/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: European Disability Strategy

The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 was adopted on 15 November 2010. It offers a comprehensive framework committing the Commission to empowerment of people with disabilities to enjoy their full rights, and removing everyday obstacles in their lives.

People with disabilities have the right to participate fully and equally in society and the economy. Denial of equal opportunities is a breach of human rights. By signing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the EU and all its Member States have committed themselves to creating a barrier-free Europe. Even though Member States bear the main responsibilities, EU action is needed to complement national efforts.

In light of this:

1. Can the Commission provide the latest statistical data on the rate of participation of persons with disabilities in inclusive education and life-long learning?

2. Can the Commission provide the latest statistical data on the rate of participation of European citizens with disabilities in the labour market?

3. What other specific actions are being taken by the Commission to combat social exclusion amongst persons with disabilities in the EU?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

1. According to the latest EU level data ([1]), around 25% of young disabled (aged 18-24) are early school leavers compared to 12.4% of non-disabled young persons. The high rates of early school leavers among young disabled might indicate problems related to accessibility and absence of adapted programmes. Also, within the population with disabilities aged 30-34, around 24% have successfully completed university or university-like (tertiary-level) education compared to 36% for not disabled people. More data on the participation in education and training of disabled people will be disseminated by Eurostat in spring 2014. The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education ([2]), supported by the Commission, makes available data related to the numbers of compulsory school-age children with special needs and their placement ([3]).

2. The latest EU level data ([4]) show that 54% of persons with disabilities participate in the labour market (employed or unemployed) compared to 74% of persons without disabilities. The EU employment rate of persons with disabilities is about 47% compared to 67% for persons without disabilities. In addition it can be noticed that the national employment rates of people with disabilities range from 24% (Hungary) to 66% (Sweden).

3. The Commission is committed to harness the potential of all relevant EU instruments, in particular the EU Structural and Investment Funds, to promote social inclusion and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, active participation in society and the economy, the transition to community-based services, and accessibility of the physical environment, transport and new technologies.

([1]) Data provided by the Labour Force Survey ad hoc module on employment of disabled people conducted in 2011.
([2]) http://www.european-agency.org/
([3]) The latest data is available at: http://www.european-agency.org/publications/ereports/sne-country-data-2012/sne-country-data-2012. This dataset also gives the legal definitions of Special Educational Needs in each country and this shows the diversity of approaches across Europe.
([4]) Data provided by the Labour Force Survey ad hoc module on employment of disabled people conducted in 2011.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-014414/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 ta' Diċembru 2013)

Suġġett: Politiki għat-trattament tal-fertilità

Ħafna pajjiżi fl-UE għandhom regoli stretti dwar min jitħalla jirċievi trattament tal-fertilità. Huwa biss f'xi Stati Membri li t-trattamenti tal-fertilità huma disponibbli għan-nisa single kollha. Koppji eterosesswali, nisa single, koppji omosesswali jew transesswali u persuni ta' etajiet differenti lkoll jiġu ttrattati b'mod differenti fl-UE.

Kull sena, politiki għat-trattament tal-fertilità fl-UE jġieħlu lil bosta Ewropej jivvjaġġaw lejn pajjiżi oħra fejn dawn it-trattamenti jkunu disponibbli għalihom.

1. Tista' l-Kummissjoni tipprovdi statistika dwar l-għadd ta' nies li jivvjaġġaw lejn pajjiżi oħra għal trattament tal-fertilità?

2. X'inhuma l-fehmiet tal-Kummissjoni fir-rigward ta' politiki diskriminatorji dwar it-trattament tal-fertilità abbażi tal-età u l-orjentazzjoni sesswali?

3. X'miżuri qed tikkunsidra l-Kummissjoni biex tindirizza l-kwistjoni tal-politiki diskriminatorji dwar it-trattament tal-fertilità abbażi tal-età u l-orjentazzjoni sesswali?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Borg f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(4 ta' Marzu 2014)

Il-Kummissjoni Ewropea tikkundanna kull forma u manifestazzjoni ta' diskriminazzjoni, peress li mhumiex kumpatibbli mal-valuri u l-prinċipji li fuqhom hija mwaqqfa l-Unjoni Ewropea. Id-Direttiva tal-UE 2000/78/KE tipprojbixxi d-diskriminazzjoni bbażata fuq l-età u l-orjentazzjoni sesswali fost raġunijiet oħra, imma tapplika biss għall-impjiegi u x-xogħol. ([1])

Skont l-Artikolu 168(7) tat-Trattat dwar il-Funzjonament tal-Unjoni Ewropea ([2]), l-Istati Membri huma responsabbli għad-definizzjoni tal-politika tagħhom dwar is-servizzi tas-saħħa u għall-organizzazzjoni u l-għoti ta' servizzi tas-saħħa u kura medika. Dan ifisser li kull Stat Membru għandu r-responsabbiltà li jiddeċiedi l-"pakkett ta' benefiċċji": it-trattamenti u s-servizzi tal-kura tas-saħħa li kull Stat Membru joffri lill-popolazzjoni tiegħu. Għalhekk, id-deċiżjoni dwar jekk għandhomx jiġu offruti trattamenti ta' fertilità — u lil liema gruppi tal-popolazzjoni għandhom jiġu offruti — hija f'idejn kull Stat Membru.

Il-Kummissjoni m'għandha l-ebda statistika dwar l-għadd ta' nies li qed imorru f'pajjiżi oħra għal trattament tal-fertilità.

([1]) Id-Direttiva tal-Kunsill 2000/78/KE tas-27 ta' Novembru 2000 li tistabbilixxi qafas ġenerali għall-ugwaljanza fit-trattament fl-impjieg u fix-xogħol, ĠU L 303, 02/12/2000, p. 16.
([2]) ĠU L 83, 30.03.2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014414/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Fertility treatment policies

Many countries in the EU have strict rules on who is allowed to receive fertility treatment. Only in some Member States are fertility treatments available to all single women. Heterosexual couples, single women, gay and transgender couples, and people of different ages, are all treated in different ways across the Member States.

Each year divergent fertility treatment policies in the EU cause many Europeans to travel to other countries where these treatments are available to them.

1. Can the Commission provide statistics on the number of people travelling to other countries for fertility treatment?

2. What are the Commission's views with respect to discriminatory fertility treatment policies on the basis of age and sexual orientation?

3. What measures is the Commission considering, within its competences, to combat discriminatory fertility treatment policies in relation to age and sexual orientation?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2014)

The European Commission condemns all forms and manifestations of discrimination, as they are incompatible with the values and principles upon which the European Union is founded. EU Directive 2000/78/EC prohibits discrimination based on age and sexual orientation amongst other grounds, but applies to employment and occupation only. ([1])

In the meaning of Article 168(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union ([2]), Member States are responsible for the definition of their health services policy and for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care. This means that each Member State has responsibility for deciding on the 'basket of benefits': the healthcare treatments and services which it provides to its population. Therefore, the decision as to whether or not to offer fertility treatments — and to which groups of population — is for each Member State to decide.

The Commission has no statistics on the number of people travelling to other countries for fertility treatment.

([1]) 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.
([2]) OJ L 83, 30.3.2010.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-014415/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 ta' Diċembru 2013)

Suġġett: Fibromjalġija

Fit-tweġiba tagħha għall-mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-004898/2008 ta' Ottubru 2008, il-Kummissjoni qalet li l-fibromjalġija u l-chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) kienu ilhom snin jikkostitwixxu mard kontroversjali. F'pajjiżi b'infrastruttura tas-saħħa żviluppata, il-mard jista' jiġi djanjostikat u trattat, filwaqt li fl-Istati Membri l-ġodda dan mhux dejjem kien il-każ. L-istess mistoqsija għal twepiba bil-miktub kienet tipproponi wkoll li jinbeda l-ġbir u r-riċeviment ta' statistiċi, li għandu jiġi megħjun b'koordinazzjoni tal-esperti nazzjonali, sabiex jiġi żgurat li t-trattament għall-fibromjalġija jkun disponibbli fl-Istati Membri. Barra minn hekk, il-fibromjalġija ddaħħlet fl-Għaxar Reviżjoni tal-Klassifikazzjoni Internazzjonali tal-Mard (ICD-10), ippubblikata mill-Organizzazzjoni Dinjija tas-Saħħa fl-1992.

1. Il-Kummissjoni issa tista' tipprovdi statistiċi dwar l-għadd ta' persuni affettwati mill-fibromjalġija fl-Istati Membri?

2. Il-Kummissjoni għandha stima tal-ispiża tat-trattament tal-fibromjalġija madwar l-Istati Membri tal-UE?

3. Il-Kummissjoni x'miżuri qed tippjana biex tgħix lill-Istati Membri jiddjanjostikaw u jittrattaw il-fibromjalġija?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Borg f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(21 ta' Frar 2014)

Il-Kummissjoni m'għandhiex statistika dwar l-għadd ta' persuni affettwati mill-fibromyalgia. Madankollu, il-proġett EUMUSC.NET (Driving musculoskeletal health in Europe ([1])), iffinanzjat mill-UE, joffri skedi informattivi dwar l-istatistika ewlenija dwar is-saħħa muskoloskeletali fl-Istati Membri.

Barra minn hekk, l-ewwel Stħarriġ b'Intervista dwar is-Saħħa Ewropea jinkludi mistoqsija dwar uġigħ fiżiku jew skumdità fiżika rrappurtati mill-persuna stess. Hemm dejta disponibbli għal xi Stati Membri skont is-sess, l-età u l-livell ta' edukazzjoni ([2]). It-tieni mewġa ta' dan l-istħarriġ se tinkludi wkoll mistoqsija dwar uġigħ rrappurtat mill-persuna stess ([3]).

Il-Kummissjoni m'għandhiex stima tal-ispejjeż għat-trattament tal-fibromyalgia fl-Unjoni Ewropea u mhix tippjana li tieħu miżuri speċifiċi addizzjonali biex tgħin lill-Istati Membri sabiex jagħmlu dijanjożi tal-fibromyalgia u jittrattawha.

([1]) http://www.eumusc.net/index.cfm
([2]) http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth_ehis_st4&lang=en
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:047:0020:0048:EN:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014415/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Fibromyalgia

In its answer to Written Question E-004898/2008 of October 2008 the Commission said that fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) have been controversial disorders for years. In countries with a developed health infrastructure the diseases can be diagnosed and treated, whereas in the new Member States this has not always been the case. The same written question also proposed that collection and reception of statistics should be started and help provided with coordination of national experts, in order to ensure that treatment for fibromyalgia is available in the Member States. Moreover, fibromyalgia had been included in the Tenth Revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10) published by WHO in 1992.

1. Can the Commission now provide statistics on the number of people affected by fibromyalgia in the Member States?

2. Does the Commission have an estimate of the cost of fibromyalgia treatment across the EU Member States?

3. What measures is the Commission planning to help Member States diagnose and treat fibromyalgia?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

The Commission does not have statistics on the number of people affected by fibromyalgia. However, the EU-funded project EUMUSC.NET (Driving musculoskeletal health in Europe ([1])) has provided factsheets on musculoskeletal health key statistics in Member States.

In addition, the first European Health Interview Survey includes a question on self-reported physical pain or physical discomfort. Data are available for some Member States by gender, age and educational level ([2]). The second wave of the survey will also contain a question on self-reported pain ([3]).

The Commission does not have an estimate of costs for the treatment of fibromyalgia in the European Union and does not plan to take additional specific measures to help Member States to diagnose and treat fibromyalgia.

([1]) http://www.eumusc.net/index.cfm
([2]) http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth_ehis_st4&lang=en
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:047:0020:0048:EN:PDF

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-014416/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 ta' Diċembru 2013)

Suġġett: Il-politiki għall-ugwaljanza bejn is-sessi u l-kriżi ekonomika

Fir-rapport ta' sinteżi tagħha ta' Diċembru 2012 bl-isem "The impact of the economic crisis on the situation of women and men and on gender equality policies" (L-impatt tal-kriżi ekonomika fuq is-sitwazzjoni tan-nisa u l-irġiel u fuq il-politiki għall-ugwaljanza bejn is-sessi), il-Kummissjoni ddikjarat li l-litteriżmu finanzjarju huwa importanti fi ħdan is-soċjetà. Waħda mir-rakkomandazzjonijiet tagħha kienet li jiġu mnedija u appoġġati inizjattivi mmirati lejn iż-żieda tal-livell ta' litteriżmu finanzjarju fost in-nisa (u l-popolazzjoni b'mod ġenerali) u li tiġi żgurata "massa kritika" ta' rappreżentazzjoni femminili fil-korpi finanzjarji ewlenin tal-makkinarju Ewropew.

Sejba importanti kienet li l-kriżi wriet li deċiżjonijiet ta' politika assoċjati tradizzjonalment man-nisa, bħall-protezzjoni soċjali, l-edukazzjoni u r-rikonċiljazzjoni, bdew jiddependu fuq deċiżjonijiet makroekonomiċi u finanzjarji li n-nisa tradizzjonalment ġew esklużi minnhom, u li huma ftit jafu dwarhom.

Fid-dawl ta' dawn il-konklużjonijiet importanti,

1. x'inizjattivi ħadet il-Kummissjoni minn meta ġie ppubblikat ir-rapport imsemmi qabel biex jitjieb il-litteriżmu finanzjarju fost in-nisa fl-UE?

2. il-Kummissjoni kif tippjana li tippromwovi proċessi ta' teħid ta' deċiżjonijiet li jkunu bbilanċjati fir-rigward tas-sessi fl-istituzzjonijiet tal-UE?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Reding f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(28 ta' Frar 2014)

1. Il-politiki tal-edukazzjoni jibqgħu fir-responsabbiltà tal-Istati Membri. Madankollu, il-Kummissjoni tħeġġiġhom ineħħu d-differenzi bejn is-sessi fl-edukazzjoni u t-taħriġ. Pereżempju, il-Fond Soċjali Ewropew jikkontribwixxi għat-titjib tal-kwalifiki tan-nisa u l-irġiel.

2. Il-promozzjoni tal-ugwaljanza fit-teħid tad-deċiżjonijiet hija waħda mill-ħames prijoritajiet tal-Istrateġija tal-Kummissjoni għall-Ugwaljanza bejn in-Nisa u l-Irġiel (2010-2015) ([1]). Sabiex jiġi mmonitorjat il-progress, il-Kummissjoni stabbilixxiet bażi tad-dejta dwar in-nisa u l-irġiel fit-teħid tad-deċiżjonijiet f'pożizzjonijiet għoljin f'diversi setturi inklużi l-istituzzjonijiet tal-UE, u tirrapporta regolarment dwar is-sitwazzjoni. Il-bażi tad-dejta ilha disponibbli bla ħlas għal konsultazzjoni onlajn mill-2004 ([2]).

Il-Kummissjoni tħeġġeġ kull Stat Membru biex jinnomina kandidat maskili u kandidata femminili għall-Kulleġġ tal-Kummissarji u għall-aħjar impjiegi kollha fl-istituzzjonijiet tal-UE. Tħeġġeġ ukoll lill-partiti politiċi biex jagħmlu l-listi elettorali tagħhom b'tali mod li jiżguraw riżultat ibbilanċjat bejn is-sessi fl-elezzjonijiet Ewropej tal-2014.

Barra minn hekk, waħda mill-prijoritajiet tal-Programm L-Ewropa għaċ-Ċittadini 2007-2013 kienet "opportunitajiet indaqs fir-rigward tal-parteċipazzjoni fil-ħajja politika" u dan iffinanzja proġetti li jħeġġu lin-nisa biex ikollhom sehem sħiħ fil-ħajja demokratika tal-UE inkluż fl-elezzjonijiet tal-PE.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/document/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014416/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Gender equality policies and the economic crisis

In its synthesis report of December 2012 entitled 'The impact of the economic crisis on the situation of women and men and on gender equality policies', the Commission stated that financial literacy is important within a society. One of its recommendations was to launch and support initiatives geared towards raising the level of financial literacy among women (and the population at large) and ensuring 'critical mass' female representation in key financial bodies of the European machinery.

One important finding was that the crisis had shown that policy decisions traditionally associated with women, such as welfare, schooling and reconciliation, have come to depend on macroeconomic and financial decisions from which women have traditionally been excluded, and which they know little about.

In view of these important conclusions,

1. what initiatives has the Commission taken since the publication of the aforementioned report to improve financial literacy among women in the EU?

2. how does the Commission plan to promote gender-balanced decision-making processes in the EU institutions?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

1. Education policies remain under the responsibility of Member States. However, the Commission encourages them to close gender gaps in education and training. For example, the European Social Fund contributes to improve the qualifications of women and men.

2. The Commission's Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010-2015) ([1]) has amongst its five priorities the promotion of equality in decision-making. In order to monitor progress the Commission established a database on women and men in decision-making in high level positions in several sectors including the EU institutions, and reports regularly on the situation. The database has been freely available for online consultation since 2004 ([2]).

The Commission encourages each Member State to nominate one female and one male candidate to the College of Commissioners and for all top jobs in the EU institutions. It also encourages political parties to compose their electoral lists in such a way as to ensure a gender balanced outcome at the 2014 European elections.

Moreover, the Europe for Citizens programme 2007-2013 had 'equal opportunities as regards participation in political life' as one of its priorities and has funded projects encouraging women to play a full part in the democratic life of the EU including in EP elections.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/document/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-014418/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 ta' Diċembru 2013)

Suġġett: Il-prezzijiet tad-djar għax-xerrejja tal-ewwel residenza

Iċ-ċifri li ħareġ il-Eurostat f'Ottubru 2013 urew li fit-tieni kwart tal-2013 l-indiċi tal-prezzijiet tad-djar waqa' bi 2.2 % fiż-żona tal-euro, u b'1.3 % fl-UE, meta mqabbel mal-istess kwart tas-sena ta' qabel. Madankollu, meta mqabbel mal-ewwel kwart tal-2013, il-prezzijiet tad-djar għolew b'0.3 % fiż-żona tal-euro u b'0.4 % fl-UE, fit-tieni kwart tal-2013.

Qabel l-2008, ix-xerrejja tal-ewwel residenza kienu diġà qed isibuhua diffiċli jixtru proprjetà ġdida minħabba ż-żieda persistenti fil-prezzijiet tad-djar, li eventwalment wasslet biex il-bużżieqa tal-prezzijiet tad-djar infaqgħet. Il-miżuri ta' awsterità u r-restrizzjonijiet tal-kreditu min-naħa tal-banek għamluha jerġa' aktar problematika għax-xerrejja tal-ewwel residenza li jixtru proprjetà ġdida.

1. Tista' l-Kummissjoni tagħti dejta dwar kemm il-prezzijiet tad-djar huma aċċessibbli għax-xerrejja tal-ewwel residenza fl-UE kollha f'dawn l-aħħar ftit snin?

2. Il-Kummissjoni xi programmi għandha fis-seħħ, jew għandha l-ħsieb li tibda, biex tgħin lix-xerrejja tal-ewwel residenza?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Šemeta f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(26 ta' Frar 2014)

1. Il-Eurostat ilu mill-2005 jippubblika dejta, kull tliet xhur, dwar l-indiċi tal-prezzijiet tad-djar għax-xerrejja kollha fl-UE u fl-Istati Membri rispettivi. ([1])

Fil-każ ta' xi Stati Membri, l-indiċijiet tal-prezzijiet, b'distinzjoni bejn proprjetajiet ġodda u proprjetajiet eżistenti, se jiġu ppubblikati matul l-2014.

Mhix disponibbli dejta marbuta biss ma' dawk li jixtru għall-ewwel darba.

2. Bħala parti mill-Politika Reġjonali Ewropea, il-Kummissjoni Ewropea tipprovdi appoġġ għal investimenti strateġiċi fl-Istati Membri u r-reġjuni li jikkontribwixxu għall-objettivi tal-UE 2020 u li għandhom fil-mira t-tkabbir u l-impjiegi. Fost il-prijoritajiet ta' investiment 2014-2020, bi qbil ma' dawn l-għanijiet politiċi, hemm il-possibbiltà ta' appoġġ għal:

a) l-effiċjenza fl-enerġija u l-użu ta' enerġija rinnovabbli f'bini pubbliku u fis-settur tad-djar,

b) ir-riġenerazzjoni fiżika, ekonomika u soċjali ta' komunitajiet foqra.

L-Istati Membri għandhom kompetenza ewlenija fil-qasam tad-djar. Il-Kummissjoni għalhekk ma tipprovdix appoġġ lil min jixtri l-ewwel dar tiegħu.

Id-Direttiva dwar il-ftehimiet ta' kreditu għall-konsumaturi fir-rigward tal-proprjetà immobbli reżidenzjali ([2]) ġiet iffirmata fl-4 ta' Frar 2013. Skont din id-Direttiva, il-konsumaturi (inkluż dawk li se jixtru l-ewwel dar tagħhom) se jirċievu informazzjoni ċara fl-istadju prekuntrattwali dwar l-offerti ta' self eżistenti, u hekk se jkunu jistgħu jduru u jiksbu l-aħjar offerta possibbli għaċ-ċirkostanzi personali tagħhom. Barra minn hekk, it-test tad-Direttiva jirrikonoxxi s-sitwazzjoni partikolari ta' dawk li se jixtru l-ewwel dar tagħhom, u jistieden lill-Istati Membri jippromwovu miżuri li jappoġġjaw l-edukazzjoni tal-konsumaturi fir-rigward tas-self u l-ġestjoni responsabbli tad-dejn.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/product?code=prc_hpi&mode=view
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0541+0+DOC+XML+V0//MT

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014418/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: House prices for first-time buyers

Figures released by Eurostat in October 2013 showed that in the second quarter of 2013 the house price index fell by 2.2% in the euro area, and by 1.3% in the EU, compared with the same quarter of the previous year. However, compared with the first quarter of 2013, house prices rose by 0.3% in the euro area, and by 0.4% in the EU, in the second quarter of 2013.

Before 2008, first-time buyers were already finding it difficult to purchase a new property owing to the persistent increase in house prices, which eventually led to a burst in the house price bubble. Austerity measures and credit restrictions by banks made it even more problematic for first-time buyers to purchase a new property.

1. Can the Commission provide data on the affordability of houses for first-time buyers across the EU in the past few years?

2. What programmes does the Commission have in place, or intend to initiate, to help first-time buyers?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(26 February 2014)

1. Eurostat publishes quarterly data on house price indices for all buyers in the EU and in the respective Member States since 2005. ([1])

For some Member States, price indices, distinguishing between new properties and existing properties, will be published in the course of 2014.

Data related only to first-buyers are not available.

2. As part of European Regional Policy, the European Commission provides support for strategic investments in the Member States and regions contributing to EU2020 objectives and targeting growth and jobs. Investment priorities 2014-2020 in line with these political objectives include the possibility to support:

a) energy efficiency and renewable energy use in public buildings and in the housing sector,

b) physical, economic and social regeneration of deprived communities.

Member States have the main competence in the field of housing. The Commission does therefore not provide support to first-time buyers.

The directive on credit agreements for consumers relating to residential immovable property ([2]) was signed on 4 February 2013. Under this directive consumers (including first-time buyers) will receive clear information at the pre-contractual stage about loans on offer, enabling them to shop around and get the best possible deal for their personal circumstances. In addition the text acknowledges the particular situation of first-time buyers, inviting Member States to promote measures that support the education of consumers in relation to responsible borrowing and debt management.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/product?code=prc_hpi&mode=view
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0541+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-014419/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 ta' Diċembru 2013)

Suġġett: Riskju ta' faqar wara l-edukazzjoni sekondarja

Skont l-istatistika dwar ir-riskju tal-faqar u l-esklużjoni soċjali fl-UE, ippubblikata minn Eurostat fis-26 ta' Frar 2013, 31.7 % tat-tfal fl-UE jinsabu f'riskju ta' faqar monetarju. Ir-rapport jipprovdi li kważi nofs it-tfal kollha li l-ġenituri tagħhom kellhom livell baxx ta' edukazzjoni kienu f'riskju ta' faqar fl-Istati Membri tal-UE fl-2011, meta mqabbla ma' 22 % ta' tfal li jgħixu ma' ġenituri li kellhom livell medju ta' edukazzjoni u 7 % tat-tfal li jgħixu ma' ġenituri b'livell terzjarju ta' edukazzjoni.

Għalkemm permezz ta' edukazzjoni post sekondarja studenti li ġejjin minn familji bi dħul baxx jistgħu jkollhom futur ekonomiku aqwa, dan mhux bilfors ifisser li l-edukazzjoni post sekondarja tippermetti lil dawn l-istudenti joħorġu mis-sitwazzjoni ta' faqar immedjatament. L-esperjenza wriet li dawn l-istudenti għad qed jaffaċċjaw aktar riskji akkademiċi u finanzjarji mill-pari tagħhom li huma aktar benestanti meta jkunu qed jippruvaw jikkompletaw kors universitarju.

1. Il-Kummissjoni tista' tipprovdi statistika tal-mobilità soċjali fost l-istudenti fl-UE wara li jkunu kkompletaw b'suċċess l-edukazzjoni post sekondarja tagħhom u jkun qed jipparteċipaw fis-suq tax-xogħol?

2. B'liema mod qed taħdem il-Kummissjoni sabiex tiżgura aċċess akbar għas-suq tax-xogħol għal dawk li kkompletaw edukazzjoni post sekondarja u tiżgura suċċess akbar fost l-istudenti bi dħul baxx fl-UE?

3. X'tip ta' appoġġ qed tagħti l-UE lil dawn l-istudenti sabiex tinkoraġġixxihom ikomplu l-istudji tagħhom fil-livell universitarju?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Vassiliou f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(18 ta' Frar 2014)

Fl-2013, l-analiżi tal-Eurostat dwar l-istatistika tal-Unjoni Ewropea rigward id-dħul u l-kundizzjonijiet tal-għajxien uriet xejriet pożittivi fil-mobilità soċjali. Din indikat li l-livell ġenerali ta' edukazzjoni jiżdied bejn ġenerazzjoni u oħra, speċjalment fil-każ ta' min ikollu ġenituri b'livell baxx ta' edukazzjoni; madankollu, il-probabbiltà li wieħed jikseb biss edukazzjoni ta' livell baxx tibqa' ferm ogħla għal persuni li l-ġenituri tagħhom kellhom "livell baxx ta' edukazzjoni" (34.2%) milli għal persuni li l-ġenituri tagħhom kellhom "livell għoli ta' edukazzjoni" (3.4%). ([1])

It-tnaqqis tal-inugwaljanzi soċjali u t-tnaqqis tat-trażmissjoni interġenerazzjonali ta' sitwazzjonijiet ta' żvantaġġ huma ta' importanza kardinali għat-twettiq tal-miri dwar il-faqar u l-edukazzjoni bħala parti mill-istrateġija Ewropa 2020. Il-Kummissjoni tappoġġja lill-Istati Membri permezz ta' gwida ta' politika bbażata fuq l-evidenza, bħall-Pakkett ta' Investiment Soċjali, li jippromwovi l-investiment fit-tfal sa minn kmieni sabiex il-prospettivi futuri tagħhom fil-ħajja jiġu mtejba. Dan jiffaċilita wkoll l-iskambju ta' politiki sabiex jiġu indirizzati sfidi komuni, u jipprovdi appoġġ finanzjarju lill-Istati Membri, pereżempju permezz tal-programm il-ġdid Erasmus+. Il-konklużjonijiet tal-Kunsill dwar id-dimensjoni soċjali tal-edukazzjoni ogħla ta' Mejju 2013 jipproponu li l-UE u l-Istati Membri għandhom jiżviluppaw politiki li jgħaqqdu flimkien l-iskejjel u l-edukazzjoni ogħla, li jappoġġjaw lil studenti żvantaġġati, li jiżguraw li l-edukazzjoni ogħla tkun rilevanti għas-suq tax-xogħol sabiex tittejjeb l-impjegabilità ta' persuni b'lawrja, u sabiex ikunu jistgħu jiġu segwiti r-riżultati tal-impjiegi.

Erasmus+ se jżid l-aċċess għal programmi ta' mobilità, jappoġġja l-preparazzjoni lingwistika tal-istudenti, u jipprovdi appoġġ addizzjonali għal persuni b'diżabilità, u għal studenti minn sfond soċjoekonomiku baxx u mir-reġjuni l-iktar imbiegħda. Il-garanzija l-ġdida ta' self għall-istudenti se tippermetti wkoll li l-istudenti jagħmlu lawrja tal-Masters f'pajjiż ieħor, irrispettivament mill-isfond soċjali tagħhom.

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Intergenerational_transmission_of_disadvantage_statistics
Ara http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-11122013-AP/EN/3-11122013-AP-EN.PDF
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Income_distribution_statistics

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014419/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Risk of poverty after secondary education

According to statistical data on the risk of poverty and social exclusion in the EU, published by Eurostat on 26 February 2013, 31.7% of children in the EU are at risk of monetary poverty. The report states that almost half of all children whose parents had a low education level were at risk of poverty in EU Member States in 2011, compared with 22% of children residing with parents who had a medium education level and 7% of children residing with parents with a tertiary level of education.

Although post-secondary education can secure a better economic future for students coming from low-income families, this does not necessarily mean that post-secondary education enables these students to get out of poverty immediately. Experience has shown that these students still have to face greater academic and financial risks than their more well-off peers when attempting to complete college.

1. Can the Commission provide statistics of social mobility among students in the EU once they have successfully completed their post-secondary education and are fully participant on the labour market?

2. In what ways is the Commission working to ensure greater post-secondary education access to the labour market and success amongst low-income students in the EU?

3. What kind of support is the EU giving these students to encourage them to further their studies at university level?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(18 February 2014)

In 2013, Eurostat analysis of European Union statistics on income and living conditions showed positive trends in social mobility. It indicated that the general education level increases between generations, especially for those whose parents have low levels of education; nevertheless, the likelihood of attaining only low levels of education remains much higher for people whose parents had 'low education' (34.2%) rather than 'high education' (3.4%). ([1])

Reducing social inequality and intergenerational transmission of disadvantage is vital to delivering on the poverty and education targets in the Europe 2020 strategy. The Commission supports Member States through evidence-based policy guidance, such as the Social Investment Package, which promotes investing in children early to improve their outcomes later in life. It also facilitates policy exchange to address common challenges, and provides financial support to Member States, such as through the new Erasmus+ programme. The Council conclusions on the social dimension of higher education of May 2013 propose that the EU and Member States should advance policies that connect schools and higher education, support disadvantaged students, ensure that higher education is relevant to the labour market to improve the employability of graduates, and track employment outcomes.

Erasmus+ will increase access to mobility programmes, supports linguistic preparation of students, and provide additional support for people with disabilities, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and outermost regions. The new student loan guarantee will also enable students, regardless of their social background, to take their Master's degree in another country.

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Intergenerational_transmission_of_disadvantage_statistics
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-11122013-AP/EN/3-11122013-AP-EN.PDF
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Income_distribution_statistics

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-014420/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 ta' Diċembru 2013)

Suġġett: Il-bullying fl-iskejjel

F'Jannar 2012, ġie varat il-proġett multilaterali ARBAX, iffinanzjat mill-UE, biex jikkontribwixxi għall-Programm ta' Tagħlim Tul il-Ħajja tal-UE. Peress li l-għan ewlieni huwa li t-tfal jiġu mgħallma dwar il-problemi relatati mal-bullying razzjali u li bullying bħal dan fl-iskejjel jiġi pprevenut, il-grupp primarju fil-mira kien l-ambjenti ta' skejjel multi etniċi.

1. Tista' l-Kummissjoni tagħti statistika rigward il-vittmi tal-bullying fl-iskejjel fl-UE kollha?

2. Tista' l-Kummissjoni tirrapporta dwar il-bullying fl-iskejjel u tidentifika l-gruppi li l-aktar huma milquta fi ħdan soċjetà?

3. Xi proġetti qiegħda tippjana l-Kummissjoni bil-ħsieb li teduka lit-tfal u tiġġieled il-problema tal-bullying fl-iskejjel?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Vassiliou f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(19 ta' Frar 2014)

Il-Kummissjoni m'għandhiex statistika minn madwar l-Ewropa kollha dwar l-ibbullijar fl-iskejjel. Madankollu, id-dejta tal-UNICEF ([1]) tagħtina x'nifhmu li b'mod globali, bejn 15% u 40% tal-istudenti rrappurtaw li ġew ibbullijati. Ir-riċerka ([2]) turi li studenti li jappartjenu għal ċerti gruppi, bħalma huma l-leżbjani u l-gay, jiġu bbullijati aktar minn oħrajn, u li hemm differenzi sinifikanti bejn is-sessi.

Il-Kummissjoni mhijiex tippjana li tħejji rapport dwar l-ibbullijar fl-iskejjel. Madankollu, l-Onorevoli Membru huwa mistieden jikkonsulta r-rapport dwar it-Tmien Forum Ewropew dwar id-drittijiet tat-tfal tas-16 u s-17 ta' Diċembru 2013 ([3]), li kien jinkludi sessjoni speċifika dwar l-ibbullijar ([4]).

Fil-Komunikazzjoni tagħha "Improving competences for the 21st Century: An Agenda for European Cooperation on Schools" tal-2008, il-Kummissjoni stqarret li "l-persunal jeħtieġ il-ħiliet biex jagħti l-opportunitajiet xierqa lil kull student biex jakkwista l-kompetenzi meħtieġa f'ambjent ta' skola sikur u attraenti…fejn m'hemmx post għall-ibbullijar u għall-vjolenza."

L-ibbullijar fl-iskejjel kien wieħed mill-oqsma prijoritarji tas-sejħa għall-applikazzjonijiet għal għotjiet Daphne III tal-2013, u l-proposti ppreżentati bħalissa qegħdin jiġu evalwati. Għal tagħrif dwar programmi ta' għajnuna għall-iskejjel u t-tfal biex jiġġieldu l-ibbullijar fuq l-internet (cyber-bullying), ara t-tweġiba tal-Kummissjoni għall-Mistoqsija bil-Miktub P-007853/13.

Għadd ta' inizjattivi tal-UE f'diversi oqsma, fosthom l-edukazzjoni, id-drittijiet fundamentali u d-drittijiet tat-tfal b'mod (in)direct jikkontribwixxu għat-tnaqqis tal-vjolenza fl-iskejjel Il-Kummissjoni se tkompli tiffinanzja l-proġetti li jedukaw lit-tfal, lill-ġenituri u lill-għalliema dwar il-problema tal-ibbullijar fl-iskejjel, fil-qafas tal-programm Erasmus+.

([1]) Unicef Innocenti Report Card 7 dwar il-benessri tat-tfal.
([2]) "Good Policy and Practice: Addressing Homophobic Bullying in Educational Institutions" fir-"Review of Homophobic Bullying in Educational Institutions", tal-Unesco, Imħejjija għall-Konsultazzjoni Internazzjonali dwar l-Ibbullijar Omofobiku fl-Istituzzjonijiet Edukattivi (International Consultation on Homophobic Bullying in Educational Institutions), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2012, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002157/215708e.pdf
([3]) Dan se jkun disponibbli minn hawn u ftit iehor fis-Sit tal-Internet tad-DĠ Ġustizzja.
([4]) Tista' tara d-dokument ta' sfond imħejji għas-sessjoni dwar l-ibbullijar fuq: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/child-forum-2013/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014420/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: School bullying

In January 2012, the EU-funded ARBAX multilateral project was launched to contribute to the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme. The main aim being to teach children about problems related to racial bullying and to prevent such bullying in schools, multi-ethnic school environments were the primary target group.

1. Can the Commission provide statistics regarding victims of school bullying across the EU?

2. Can the Commission report on school bullying and identify the groups most affected within a society?

3. What projects is the Commission planning with a view to educating children and combating the problem of school bullying?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

The Commission does not have EU-wide statistics regarding bullying at school. However, Unicef data ([1]) suggest that, globally, 15% to 40% of pupils report being bullied. Research ([2]) shows that pupils from certain groups, such as lesbians and gays, experience more bullying than others, and that there are significant differences between genders.

The Commission has no plans to prepare a report on bullying at school. However, the Honourable Member is invited to consult the report of the 8th European Forum on the rights of the child of 16 and 17 December 2013 ([3]), which featured a specific session on bullying ([4]).

The Commission indicated in its communication 'Improving competences for the 21st Century: An Agenda for European Cooperation on Schools' of 2008 that 'staff need the skills to give every pupil adequate opportunities to acquire necessary competences in a safe and attractive school environment…where bullying and violence have no place.'

Bullying at school was one of the priority areas of the 2013 Daphne III call for action grants and submitted proposals are currently under evaluation. For information on programmes to help schools and children fight cyber-bullying, please consult the Commission's reply to Written Question P-007853/13.

Numerous EU initiatives in a variety of domains — including education, fundamental rights and rights of the child — (in)directly contribute to the reduction of violence at school. The Commission will continue to fund under the Erasmus+ programme projects that educate children, parents, and teachers about the problem of bullying at school.

([1]) Unicef Innocenti Report Card 7 on the well-being of children.
([2]) 'Good Policy and Practice: Addressing Homophobic Bullying in Educational Institutions' in Unesco 'Review of Homophobic Bullying in Educational Institutions', Prepared for the International Consultation on Homophobic Bullying in Educational Institutions, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2012, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002157/215708e.pdf
([3]) Will be available on the DG Justice Website shortly.
([4]) For the background paper prepared for the session on bullying please see: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/child-forum-2013/index_en.htm

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-014421/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 ta' Diċembru 2013)

Suġġett: Skema għat-Tqassim tal-Frott fl-Iskejjel

Fis-26 ta' Marzu 2013, il-Kummissjoni adottat l-allokazzjoni finali tal-fondi tal-UE għad-distribuzzjoni tal-frott u l-ħxejjex fl-iskejjel — taħt "l-Iskema għat-Tqassim tal-Frott fl-Iskejjel" — għas-sena skolastika 2013/2014. Madwar 24 Stat Membru qegħdin jipparteċipaw fl-iskema.

Dan huwa l-ħames sena minn mindu l-iskema ġiet applikata fl-2009 u n-numru ta' tfal li bbenefikaw minnha kompla jiżdied sena wara sena. L-għan ewelieni ta' din l-inizjattiva hu li jitħeġġew tendenzi, fil-konsum tal-ikel, aktar tajbin għas-saħħa fost it-tfal tal-iskola, peress li hemm possibbiltá akbar li dawn it-tendenzi jkomplu jissoktaw tul il-ħajja jekk jiġu adottati minn etá żgħira.

1. Tista' l-Kummissjoni tiddikkjara jekk din l-iskema kkontribwixxiet lejn xi riżultati pożittivi għat-tnaqqis tar-rata ta' obesitá fost it-tfal fil-pajjiżi parteċipanti?

2. Tista' l-Kummissjoni tipprovdi dejta dwar it-tnaqqis tal-obesitá fost it-tfal fl-Istati Membri?

3. Il-Kummissjoni qiegħda tippjana li tintroduċi inizjattivi ulterjuri biex tippromwovi stil ta' ħajja aktar tajjeb għas-saħħa minn etá żgħira?

4. Il-Kummissjoni qiegħda tippjana li tifformola strateġija olistika fl-UE kollha biex tippromwovi stili ta' ħajja għat-tfal, aktar tajbin għas-saħħa?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Cioloş f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(14 ta' Frar 2014)

L-ewwel evalwazzjoni tal-Iskema tal-Frott għall-Iskejjel, li saret fl-2012, diġà wriet impatt pożittiv tal-Iskema fuq il-konsum mit-tfal ta' frott u ħaxix, wara biss sentejn mill-implimentazzjoni tagħha ([1]).

It-titjib tad-drawwiet tal-ikel u l-impatt fuq l-obeżità jistgħu jiġu evalwati biss wara perjodu itwal ta' implimentazzjoni.

Fl-2010, bħala medja, 1 minn kull 3 itfal fl-UE ta' bejn 6 u 9 snin, kien maħsub li għandu problemi ta' piż żejjed jew ta' obeżità ([2]), żieda inkwetanti mill-2008 meta l-proporzjon kien ta' 1 minn kull 4 ([3]).

Dan l-aħħar, il-Kummissjoni adottat proposta dwar skema ġdida għall-iskejjel tal-Unjoni li tintegra l-iskemi attwali tal-PAK (l-Iskemi tal-Frott u l-Ħalib għall-Iskejjel) u ssaħħaħ id-dimensjoni edukattiva tagħhom. Din għandha tkompli tikkontribwixxi fil-ġlieda kontra l-obeżità billi tħeġġeġ il-konsum ta' prodotti agrikoli friski u minimament ipproċessati, u b'hekk ittejjeb id-drawwiet tal-ikel tat-tfal ([4]).

Il-Kummissjoni nediet 2 proġetti pilota kofinanzjati mill-Parlament Ewropew li għandhom l-għan li jżidu l-konsum ta' frott u ħaxix frisk f'komunitajiet fejn id-dħul tal-familji huwa inqas minn 50 % tal-medja tal-UE.

L-Istrateġija għall-Ewropa tal-2007 dwar Kwistjonijiet ta' Saħħa marbuta man-Nutriment, il-Piż Żejjed u l-Obeżità ([5]) tippromwovi dieta bilanċjata u stili ta' ħajja attivi u identifikat it-tfal bħala grupp ta' prijorità. L-Istrateġija tħeġġeġ sħubiji orjentati lejn l-azzjoni li jinvolvu t-28 Stat Membru (il-Grupp ta' Livell Għoli dwar in-Nutrizzjoni u l-Attività Fiżika ([6])) u s-soċjetà ċivili (il-Pjattaforma tal-UE għal Azzjoni dwar id-Dieta, l-Attività Fiżika u s-Saħħa ([7])).

Il-Grupp ta' Livell Għoli qed ifassal Pjan ta' Azzjoni biex jindirizza l-obeżità fit-tfal (2014-2020).

([1]) Rapport tat-8 ta' Ottubru 2012 mill-AFC Consulting Group AG u Co Concept, http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/evaluation/market-and-income-reports/school-fruit-scheme-2012_en.htm

([2]) WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative, COSI, 2010. http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/nutrition/activities/monitoring-and-surveillance/who-european-childhood-obesity-surveillance-initiative-cosi

([3]) WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative, COSI, 2008. http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/nutrition/activities/monitoring-and-surveillance/who-european-childhood-obesity-surveillance-initiative-cosi. Ir-rapport tal-Kummissjoni konġunta/OECD "Health at a Glance — Europe 2012" u l-proġett COSI appoġġat mill-Kummissjoni jipprovdu statistika dwar l-obeżità u l-piż żejjed fost it-tfal fl-Ewropa "Health at a Glance, Europe 2012" http://www.oecd.org/els/healthpoliciesanddata/HealthAtAGlanceEurope2012.pdf

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/school-scheme/legislative-proposal/index_en.htm

([5]) COM(2007) 279.

([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/platform/index_mt.htm

([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/platform/index_mt.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014421/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: School Fruit Scheme

On 26 March 2013, the Commission adopted the final allocation of EU funds for the distribution of fruit and vegetables in schools — under the 'School Fruit Scheme' — for the 2013/2014 school year. Some 24 EU Member States are participating in the scheme.

This is the fifth year of this scheme's application since its launch in 2009 and the number of children benefiting from it has risen steadily year after year. The main aim of this initiative is to encourage healthier eating habits amongst school children, since they are more likely to become lifelong habits if developed at an early age.

1. Can the Commission state whether this scheme has contributed towards any positive results in reducing the rate of child obesity in the participating countries?

2. Can the Commission provide data regarding the reduction of child obesity in Member States?

3. Is the Commission planning to introduce further initiatives to promote a healthy lifestyle at an early age?

4. Is the Commission planning to formulate a holistic EU-wide strategy to promote healthy lifestyles for children?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

The first evaluation of the School Fruit Scheme in 2012 showed a positive impact of the Scheme on children's fruit and vegetables consumption already after two years of implementation ([1]).

The improvement in eating habits and the impact on obesity can be evaluated only after a longer implementation period.

In 2010, on average, 1 in 3 children in the EU aged 6-9 years old were thought to be overweight or obese ([2]), which is a concerning increase from 2008, when the ratio was 1 in 4 ([3]).

The Commission has recently adopted a proposal on a new Union school scheme integrating the current CAP schemes (School Fruit and Milk Schemes) and enhancing their educational dimension. This should further contribute in combating obesity by encouraging the consumption of fresh and minimally processed agricultural products and improving children's eating habits ([4]).

The Commission has launched 2 pilot projects co-financed by the European Parliament that aim to increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables in communities where the household income is below 50% of the EU average.

The 2007 Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity-related Health Issues ([5]) promotes a balanced diet and active lifestyles and has identified children as a priority group. The strategy encourages action-oriented partnerships involving the 28 EU Member States (High Level Group for Nutrition and Physical Activity ([6])) and civil society (EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health ([7])).

The High Level Group is drafting an Action Plan to tackle childhood obesity (2014-2020).

([1]) AFC Consulting Group AG and Co Concept report of 8 October 2012, http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/evaluation/market-and-income-reports/school-fruit-scheme-2012_en.htm

([2]) WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative, COSI, 2010. http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/nutrition/activities/monitoring-and-surveillance/who-european-childhood-obesity-surveillance-initiative-cosi

([3]) WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative, COSI, 2008. http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/nutrition/activities/monitoring-and-surveillance/who-european-childhood-obesity-surveillance-initiative-cosi
More from the joint Commission/OECD report 'Health at a Glance — Europe 2012' and the Commission supported COSI project provide statistical data on obesity and overweight among children in Europe 'Health at a Glance, Europe 2012' http://www.oecd.org/els/healthpoliciesanddata/HealthAtAGlanceEurope2012.pdf

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/school-scheme/legislative-proposal/index_en.htm

([5]) COM(2007) 279.

([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/high_level_group/index_en.htm

([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/platform/index_en.htm

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-014422/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 ta' Diċembru 2013)

Suġġett: Ċifri relatati mal-qgħad

Ċifri ta' Eurostat ricenti juru li r-rati tal-qgħad fiż-żona tal-euro u l-UE-28 żdiedu b'0.1 % meta mqabbla ma' ta' Ottubru 2013, meta 26 654 miljun raġel u mara kienu qiegħda fl-UE-28, inklużi 19 298 miljun fiż-żona euro. Apparagun ma' Ottubru 2012, in-numru ta' persuni qiegħda żdied b'512 000 fl-UE-28 u b'615 000 fiż-żona tal-euro. Iċ-ċifri ta' Eurostat jissuġġerixxu li l-qgħad taż-żgħażagħ huwa ferma ogħla mir-rati ta' qgħad għall-gruppi ta' età l-oħra.

1. X'inhuma l-fehmiet tal-Kummissjoni dwar iż-żieda fir-rati ta' qgħad meta mqabbla maċ-ċifri tal-2012?

2. Il-Kummissjoni tista' tinformana dwar il-pjanijiet tagħha sabiex tgħin lill-pajjiżi b'rati ta' qgħad għoljin?

3. Hemm xi programmi fis-seħħ intiżi sabiex jgħinu liż-żgħażagħ li qed ifittxu impjieg?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Andor f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(4 ta' Marzu 2014)

Skont l-abbozz tar-Rapport Konġunt dwar l-Impjiegi ([1]) li jakkumpanja l-Komunikazzjoni tal-Kummissjoni dwar l-Istħarriġ Annwali dwar it-Tkabbir għall-2014, mill-2008 sat-tieni kwart tal-2013, ir-rata ta' qgħad fl-UE (aġġustata skont l-istaġun) żdiedet minn 7.1% għal 10.8%. L-iżviluppi matul iż-żmien kienu ftit jew wisq simili għal gruppi differenti bi ftit eċċezzjonijiet (bħaż-żgħażagħ). Il-qgħad kien l-ogħla fl-ewwel kwart tal-2013 meta kien 11%, u minn dak iż-żmien naqas bi ftit, u wasal sa 10.8% fl-aħħar kwart tas-sena ta' qabel. Sabiex jiġu identifikati "fi stadju bikri l-iktar problemi u żviluppi serji u qabel ma l-pajjiż jiżvija wisq mill-prestazzjoni tiegħu tal-passat jew mill-bqija tal-UE" ([2]), il-Kummissjoni pproponiet tabella ta' valutazzjoni ta' impjiegi u indikaturi soċjali ewlenin, li l-Kunsill approva għall-użu sa mis-Semestru Ewropew tal-2014 ([3]).

Il-Fondi Ewropej Strutturali u ta' Investiment ser jikkontribwixxu biex jintlaħqu l-miri tal-Ewropa 2020 fis-snin 2014-20. Il-Fond Soċjali Ewropew (FSE) ser jinvesti iktar minn € 74 biljun biex jappoġġja sforzi li jilħqu dawk il-miri permezz ta' azzjonijiet għall-ġlieda kontra l-qgħad billi joffri taħriġ u apprendistati u biex jittejbu l-ħiliet.

Wara l-adozzjoni tal-Kunsill tar-Rakkomandazzjoni dwar it-twaqqif tal-Garanzija għaż-Żgħażagħ ([4]), l-Istati Membri għandhom jiżguraw li fi żmien erba' xhur minn meta jitilqu mill-iskola jew jitilfu x-xogħol, dawk taħt il-25 sena għandhom jirċievu offerta tajba għal impjieg, ikomplu bl-edukazzjoni tagħhom, inkella jattendu apprendistat jew taħriġ; L-UE ser iżżid l-infiq nazzjonali fuq dawn l-iskemi permezz tal-FSE u l-Inizjattiva favur l-Impjiegi għaż-Żgħażagħ li tiswa € 6 biljun. It-tweġibiet tal-Kummissjoni għall-mistoqsijiet E-10829/2013, E-13597/2013 u E-13867/2013 jagħtu iktar informazzjoni dwar il-programmi tal-UE biex jgħinu liż-żgħażagħ isibu impjieg.

([1]) COM(2013) 801 final tat-13 ta' Novembru 2013, fis-sit elettroniku: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2014/jer2014_mt.pdf
([2]) Il-Komunikazzjoni "Insaħħu d-dimensjoni soċjali tal-Unjoni Ekonomika u Monetarja" (COM(2013) 690 final tat-2 ta' Ottubru 2013), fis-sit elettroniku: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/news/archives/2013/10/pdf/20131002_1-emu_en.pdf
([3]) "Tabella ta' valutazzjoni ta' impjiegi u indikaturi soċjali — Kapitlu 3 tal-JER" (16844/13), fis-sit elettroniku: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&t=PDF&gc=true&sc=false&f=ST%2016844%202013%20INIT.
([4]) Rakkomandazzjoni tal-Kunsill tat-22 ta' April 2013 dwar it-twaqqif ta' Garanzija għaż-Żgħażagħ 2013/C 120/01; http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2013:120:0001:0006:MT:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014422/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Unemployment figures

Recent Eurostat figures show that the unemployment rates in the eurozone and the EU-28 have increased in comparison with October 2013, when 26 654 million men and women were unemployed in the EU-28, including 19 298 million in the eurozone. Compared with October 2012, the number of unemployed people has risen by 512 000 in the EU-28 and by 615 000 in the eurozone. The Eurostat figures suggest that youth unemployment is much higher than unemployment rates for all other age groups.

1. What are the Commission's views on the increase in unemployment rates compared with 2012 figures?

2. Can the Commission say what it plans to do to help countries with soaring unemployment rates?

3. Are there any programmes in place to help young people looking for employment?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2014)

According to the draft Joint Employment Report ([1]) accompanying the Commission Communication on the 2014 Annual Growth Survey, from 2008 to the second quarter of 2013, the (seasonally adjusted) unemployment rate in the EU increased from 7.1% to 10.8%. Developments over time have been more or less similar for different groups with a few exceptions (such as young people). Unemployment topped in the first quarter of 2013, when it stood at 11%, and has since then slightly decreased, reaching 10.8% in the last quarter of the past year. To identify 'the most serious problems and developments at an early stage and before the country diverges too strongly from its past performance or from the rest of the EU' ([2]), the Commission proposed a scoreboard of key employment and social indicators, which the Council has approved for use as from the 2014 European Semester ([3]).

The European Structural and Investment Funds will contribute to meeting the Europe 2020 targets in 2014-20. The European Social Fund (ESF) will invest more than EUR 74 billion to support efforts to meet those targets through action to combat unemployment by offering traineeships and apprenticeships and for improving skills.

Following the Council's adoption of the recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee ([4]), the Member States are to ensure that within four months of leaving school or losing a job, people under 25 would receive a good-quality offer of employment, further education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship. The EU will top-up national spending on these schemes through the ESF and the EUR 6 billion Youth Employment Initiative. The Commission's answers to questions E-10829/2013, E-13597/2013 and E-13867/2013 give further information on EU programmes to help young people looking for employment.

([1]) COM(2013) 801 final of 13 November 2013, at: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2014/jer2014_en.pdf
([2]) Communication 'Strengthening the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union' (COM(2013) 690 final of 2 October 2013), at: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/news/archives/2013/10/pdf/20131002_1-emu_en.pdf
([3]) 'Scoreboard of employment and social indicators — Chapter 3 of the JER' (16844/13), at: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&t=PDF&gc=true&sc=false&f=ST%2016844%202013%20INIT
([4]) Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee;2013/C 120/01; http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2013:120:0001:0006:EN:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014423/13
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(20 December 2013)

Subject: Price fixing and monopolies in the telecommunications market

I have been contacted by a constituent who tells me that she has been having technical problems with her mobile broadband and that she would like to switch to an alternative provider.

She is concerned that there is a lack of choice of mobile broadband providers in the UK and she is also dissatisfied with the customer service of the providers with which she has had contracts in the past.

Could the Commission confirm whether it plans to investigate the telecommunications market for evidence of price fixing or monopolies?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

The Commission closely monitors developments in the telecommunications sector both as part of its competition enforcement role and to ensure that the sector regulation and consumer protection laws are respected.

In the UK, there is no monopoly in the provision of mobile broadband, as consumers have access to a variety of providers, including network and virtual operators. These operators compete on the services offered, price or customer service.

The Commission has no indications of price fixing among mobile providers in the UK.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-014428/13
à la Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(23 décembre 2013)

Objet: Non-approbation du plan directeur du Plan solaire méditerranéen

Le partenariat euro-méditerranéen de l'énergie est un axe stratégique fondamental pour rapprocher les deux rives de la Méditerranée et pour conforter la compétitivité de nos économies.

Longuement discuté, le plan directeur du Plan solaire méditerranéen (PSM) devait servir de document stratégique de référence pour promouvoir les énergies renouvelables et l'efficacité énergétique, renforcer les interconnexions électriques entre les deux rives de la Méditerranée et développer des marchés régionaux intégrés.

Or, l'adoption tant attendue de ce plan directeur n'a finalement pas eu lieu à l'issue de la réunion des ministres de l'énergie de la Méditerranée, qui s'est tenue du 11 au 13 décembre 2013 à Bruxelles, en raison notamment du veto de l'Espagne.

1. La Commission pourrait-elle donner son analyse de la non-approbation du plan directeur du PSM lors de la réunion des ministres de l'énergie?

2. Considère-t-elle que le marché européen de l'énergie doit être parfaitement intégré avant l'adoption du plan directeur du PSM?

3. Quand ce plan directeur sera-t-il à nouveau proposé pour adoption?

4. La Commission compte-t-elle soutenir les interconnexions électriques en Méditerranée par la construction de liaisons par câbles sous-marins?

Réponse donnée par M. Oettinger au nom de la Commission
(27 janvier 2014)

Le plan directeur du Plan solaire méditerranéen (PSM) est un document d'orientation politique juridiquement non contraignant. Il présente des lignes directrices pour le développement de politiques cohérentes et efficaces en matière d'énergie renouvelable et d'efficacité énergétique dans la région de la Méditerranée; il ne mentionne pas de projets concrets et ne prévoit aucun type de financement.

La Commission regrette qu'il n'ait pas été possible de trouver un consensus concernant ce plan directeur. Elle considère, toutefois, que l'absence d'approbation officielle lors de la réunion ministérielle de l'Union pour la Méditerranée (UPM) n'empêche pas les membres de l'UPM de poursuivre et d'intensifier leurs efforts en faveur de la promotion des énergies renouvelables et de l'efficacité énergétique, et de manière plus générale, de la coopération énergétique dans la région méditerranéenne.

La Commission cherche à faciliter l'intégration des marchés de l'électricité dans toute cette région et sur son pourtour. Pour ce faire il faut, entre autres choses, construire des interconnexions électriques entre les rives sud et nord de la Méditerranée. La Commission soutient et travaille à cette fin avec toutes les parties prenantes, publiques et privées, engagées dans le développement de ces interconnexions électriques transméditerranéennes.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014428/13
to the Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Failure to adopt the Master Plan for the implementation of the Mediterranean Solar Plan

The Euro-Mediterranean Energy Partnership is a strategic relationship, fundamental to bringing the two shores of the Mediterranean closer and boosting the competitiveness of our economies.

The Master Plan for the implementation of the Mediterranean Solar Plan (MSP) was intended to be a strategic reference document to promote renewable energies and energy efficiency, strengthen electricity interconnections between the two shores of the Mediterranean and develop integrated regional markets.

In the end the long-awaited adoption of this Master Plan following the meeting of the Energy Ministers of the Union for the Mediterranean, held on 11-13 December 2013 in Brussels, did not take place, owing to Spain's veto in particular.

1. Could the Commission provide its analysis of the failure to adopt the MSP Master Plan at the meeting of the Energy Ministers?

2. Does it believe that the European energy market needs to be perfectly integrated prior to adopting the MSP Master Plan?

3. When will this Master Plan be tabled for adoption again?

4. Does the Commission intend to support electricity interconnections in the Mediterranean by building underwater cable links?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(27 January 2014)

The Mediterranean Solar Master Plan is a non-legally binding, policy orientation document. It suggests guidelines for the development of consistent and effective renewable energy and energy efficiency policies in the Mediterranean; it does not identify concrete projects nor provide for any type of financing.

The Commission regrets that consensus could not be reached on the Master Plan. It considers, however, that lack of formal endorsement by the Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial (UfM) meeting does not prevent UfM Members from continuing and intensifying efforts for promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency, and more generally energy cooperation, in the Mediterranean.

The Commission seeks to facilitate the integration of electricity markets around and across the Mediterranean. This requires, *inter alia*, the construction of electricity interconnectors between the south and the north rims of the Mediterranean. In this sense, the Commission supports and works with all relevant public and private stakeholders committed to the development of trans-Mediterranean electricity interconnections.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-014429/13
alla Commissione
Giancarlo Scottà (EFD)
(23 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Abuso di anticorpi negli allevamenti intensivi di suini da ingrasso

L'Autorità europea per la sicurezza alimentare (EFSA) ha recentemente chiesto al BIOHAZ (gruppo di esperti sui rischi biologici) di fornire un parere scientifico sulla resistenza al Carbapenem negli ecosistemi di animali da produzione. Il Carbapenem è un antibiotico che normalmente viene utilizzato quando altri antibiotici dimostrano di non essere più efficaci, ed è quindi considerato una sorta di extrema ratio nella lotta ai microrganismi nocivi.

Stando al regolamento (CE) n. 1831/2003, che ha sancito il divieto di utilizzare antimicrobici come promotori di crescita, l'utilizzo del Carbapenem dovrebbe essere consentito soltanto a fini terapeutici. Tuttavia, è comprovato che in numerosi allevamenti intensivi di suini da ingrasso si fa un uso massiccio di Carbapenem e di altri antibiotici a fini non terapeutici. Secondo le ultime stime dell'ufficio federale tedesco per la protezione dei consumatori e la sicurezza alimentare, ad esempio, i veterinari tedeschi somministrano agli animali, attraverso iniezioni o con il mangime, 1 734 tonnellate di antibiotici all'anno, ovvero più del doppio di quelli prescritti ai cittadini tedeschi. Nella maggior parte dei casi le somministrazioni sono effettuate a puro scopo profilattico.

Uno dei problemi che scaturiscono dall'abuso di anticorpi descritto, è la nascita di ceppi di batteri resistenti. In particolare l'EFSA riconosce negli allevamenti intensivi di suini da ingrasso, tipici del Nord Europa, le condizioni ideali per fungere da laboratorio naturale nella selezione di nuovi batteri antibiotico-resistenti tra cui quelli dei generi Campylobacter, Salmonella e alcuni Escherichia, che possono provocare gravi intossicazioni alimentari.

La Commissione stima che, ogni anno, circa 25 000 pazienti muoiano a causa di infezioni causate da microrganismi resistenti, con costi sanitari che ammontano a più di 1,5 miliardi di EUR all'anno.

Alla luce delle considerazioni sopraesposte si pongono alla Commissione i quesiti di seguito elencati.

1. Dispone di dati precisi sulle tendenze del consumo complessivo di antibiotici nella zootecnia europea?

2. Non intende disporre una verifica dei controlli al fine di fermare, o per lo meno rallentare, l'ingiustificato uso di antibiotici negli allevamenti intensivi di suini da ingrasso appena descritto?

3. È a conoscenza di metodi alternativi, più sani e altrettanto efficaci, potenzialmente in grado di sostituire l'utilizzo degli antibiotici negli allevamenti intensivi di suini da ingrasso?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(31 gennaio 2014)

La Commissione riconosce che un uso non appropriato di antimicrobici, sia nella medicina umana che in quella veterinaria, accelera il processo di emergenza e diffusione di microbi resistenti a questi medicinali d'importanza fondamentale. A tale proposito, la Commissione fa riferimento alle sue risposte alla precedente interrogazione scritta E-011036/2013 relative al suo Piano d'azione quinquennale di lotta ai crescenti rischi di resistenza antimicrobica pubblicato il 15 novembre 2011 ([1]).

Per quanto riguarda i dati sul consumo totale di antibiotici nell'allevamento in Europa, la Commissione fa riferimento alla terza relazione del progetto ESVAC pubblicato dall'Agenzia europea per i medicinali il 15 ottobre 2013 ([2]).

Le azioni collegate alla promozione dell'utilizzazione adeguata degli antimicrobici nella medicina umana e veterinaria sono integrate nel Piano d'azione della Commissione. La pubblicazione di un documento di orientamento della Commissione sull'utilizzazione prudente degli antimicrobici nella medicina veterinaria è prevista per il 2014.

Uno dei settori coperti dal Piano d'azione è inoltre la promozione attiva della ricerca e dell'innovazione volte a ridurre il bisogno di utilizzare antibiotici. A tale riguardo, sia l'attuale programma quadro di ricerca e innovazione (Horizon 2020), sia il Partenariato europeo per l'innovazione (PEI) sulla produttività e sostenibilità dell'agricoltura ([3]) hanno integrato le attività di ricerca e d'innovazione sulla resistenza antimicrobica, nonché le prassi efficienti di coltivazione, nei loro programmi di lavoro.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0748:FIN:EN:PDF
([2]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Report/2013/10/WC500152311.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eip/index_en.htm

La Commissione dichiara inoltre la propria disponibilità ad esplorare le possibilità di sostenere sistemi alternativi di allevamento nell'ambito del Fondo di sviluppo rurale, al fine di ridurre l'uso di antibiotici.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014429/13
to the Commission
Giancarlo Scottà (EFD)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Abuse of antibiotics in intensive rearing of fattening pigs

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) recently asked its Panel on Biological Hazards (BIOHAZ) to issue a scientific opinion on carbapenem resistance in food-producing animal ecosystems. Carbapenem is an antibiotic that is normally used when other antibiotics are no longer effective, and it is therefore considered a last resort in the fight against harmful microorganisms.

According to Regulation (EC) No 1831/2003, which prohibited the use of antibiotics as growth promoters, the use of carbapenem should be permitted only for therapeutic purposes. However, there is proof that carbapenem, and other antibiotics, are routinely used for non-therapeutic purposes in many facilities used for the intensive rearing of fattening pigs. According to the latest estimates from the German Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety, each year German vets administer 1 734 tonnes of antibiotics to animals, through injections or in their feed, which is more than double the amount prescribed to the German public. In most cases, antibiotics are administered for purely prophylactic reasons.

One of the problems caused by abuse of antibiotics is that resistant strains of bacteria develop. In particular, EFSA has found that facilities used for the intensive rearing of fattening pigs, which are typical of northern Europe, provide the ideal conditions serving as a natural laboratory for the selection of new antibiotic-resistant bacteria, such as *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella* and some strains of *Escherichia*, which can cause serious food poisoning.

According to the Commission's estimates, each year around 25 000 patients die from infections caused by resistant microorganisms, at a cost to healthcare of over EUR 1.5 billion per year.

1. Does the Commission have any accurate figures on total antibiotic consumption in animal husbandry in Europe?

2. Will it verify checks to stop, or at least to curb, the unjustified use of antibiotics in the intensive rearing of fattening pigs, as described above?

3. Is it aware of any alternative, healthier and equally effective, methods that could potentially replace the use of antibiotics in the intensive rearing of fattening pigs?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2014)

The Commission acknowledges that an inappropriate use of antimicrobials, in both human and veterinary medicine, accelerates the process of emergence and spread of microbes that are resistant to these key medicines. On this issue, the Commission refers to its answers to previous Written Question E-011036/2013 related to its 5 year Action plan against the rising threats from antimicrobial resistance issued on 15 November 2011 ([1]).

As regards data on total antibiotic consumption in animal husbandry in Europe, the Commission refers to the third report of the ESVAC project published by the European Medicines Agency on 15 October 2013 ([2]).

Actions related to the strengthening and the promotion of the appropriate use of antimicrobials both in human and veterinary medicine are included in the Action plan of the Commission. The publication of a Commission guidance document on the prudent use of antibiotics in veterinary medicine is scheduled for 2014.

One of the areas covered by the Action plan is also the active promotion of research and innovation aiming to reduce the need to use antibiotics. In this respect, both the current Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020) and the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability' ([3]) have included research and innovation activities on antimicrobial resistance, as well as efficient farming practices as parts of their working programmes.

The Commission is also available to explore support for alternative husbandry systems within the rural development fund, aiming at a reduction of antibiotics use.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0748:FIN:EN:PDF
([2]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Report/2013/10/WC500152311.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eip/index_en.htm

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej P-014430/13
do Komisji
Róża Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein (PPE)
(23 grudnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Konsultacje społeczne dotyczące reformy prawa autorskiego

Komisja Europejska ogłosiła na początku grudnia bardzo ważne konsultacje społeczne dotyczący reformy prawa autorskiego. Są one dostępne na stronach DG MARKT. Skoro już w grudniu 2012 r. w swoim komunikacie „w sprawie treści na jednolitym rynku cyfrowym" Komisja zapowiedziała, że w 2014 r. podejmie decyzję czy przedstawić propozycje legislacyjne dotyczące reformy:

1. Dlaczego Komisja przystąpiła do konsultacji społecznych dopiero rok później?

Kwestie dotyczące reformy prawa autorskiego budzą wiele emocji. Dotyczą praw użytkowników w sieci, ochrony praw twórców, cyfryzowania dzieł, dozwolonego użytku, szerokiego dostępu do dóbr kultury i wielu, wielu innych. Są one szeroko dyskutowane w całej Unii Europejskiej, nie tylko w Wielkiej Brytanii. W Polsce prawie 2 lata temu powstał ruch sprzeciwu wobec podpisywania i ratyfikowania przez Polskę i UE umowy ACTA (Anti-Counterfeit Trade Agreement), który był motywowany głównie kwestiami prawno-autorskimi i dotyczącymi praw użytkowników w sieci. Ten ruch, organizując liczne manifestacje w wielu miastach, nie tylko w Polsce, pokazał jak wielu ludzi interesuje się tymi tematami. W związku z tym:

2. Dlaczego tak ważne konsultacje są publikowane tylko w języku angielskim, ograniczając w ten sposób krąg obywateli i interesariuszy, którzy mogliby się na ten temat wypowiedzieć?

Ponadto, Komisja w rażący sposób nie zastosowała się do rezolucji Parlamentu Europejskiego z 14 czerwca 2012 r., w której PE zwrócił się do Komisji " o dopilnowanie, aby wszystkie konsultacje były zrozumiałe dla zwykłych obywateli i były prowadzone przez odpowiednio długi czas, w celu umożliwienia zwiększenia w nich udziału". Komisja dała jedynie dwa miesiące (w dodatku w okresie świątecznym) na udzielenie odpowiedzi na aż 80 skomplikowanych pytań. W związku z tym:

3. Jakie konkretne działania Komisja podejmie, aby w przyszłości konsultacje były prowadzone tak, by zaangażować społeczeństwo obywatelskie w tworzenie prawa?

4. Czy Komisja przedłuży czas trwania konsultacji, dotyczących reformy prawa autorskiego, przynajmniej do 5 kwietnia 2014 i przetłumaczy kwestionariusz na wszystkie języki UE, aby pozwolić większej liczbie obywateli i organizacji wziąć w nich udział?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Michela Barniera w imieniu Komisji
(19 lutego 2014 r.)

1. W swym komunikacie ([1]) Komisja zapowiadała utrzymanie dwutorowego podejścia w sferze praw autorskich do końca obecnej kadencji. Z jednej strony kontynuuje dialog z zainteresowanymi stronami („Licencje dla Europy"), z drugiej – przegląd unijnych ram prawnych w dziedzinie prawa autorskiego. Dialog „Licencje dla Europy" został zakończony w listopadzie 2013 r. ([2]) Prowadzone obecnie konsultacje są kolejnym etapem trwającego przeglądu prawodawstwa. Komisja rozpoczęła konsultacje po zakończeniu dialogu „Licencje dla Europy", aby uwzględnić wyniki tego dialogu. Odpowiedzi uzyskane w toku konsultacji publicznej i owoce dialogu „Licencje dla Europy" stanowią uzupełnienie prowadzonego obecnie przeglądu unijnych ram prawnych w zakresie prawa autorskiego.

2. Komisja nie ma wątpliwości co do zasadniczego znaczenia opinii obywateli i zainteresowanych stron. W związku z tym Komisja nie szczędzi starań, aby uwzględnić potrzeby wszystkich grup docelowych. W ramach konsultacji akceptowane są odpowiedzi we wszystkich językach urzędowych Unii Europejskiej. Komisja potwierdza, że otrzymuje wypowiedzi we wszystkich językach urzędowych UE i dokonuje obecnie ich analizy.

3. Komisja nieustannie dokłada starań, aby jej konsultacje miały jak najbardziej integracyjny charakter, i czyni wszystko, co w jej mocy, aby przebiegały zgodnie z minimalnymi standardami. Jakkolwiek istotna jest konieczność ustalenia priorytetów wśród tak wielu konkurujących ze sobą zadań, jakie stoją przed jej służbami tłumaczeniowymi, Komisja zamierza zbadać, na ile dokumenty konsultacyjne i podsumowania mogą być szerzej tłumaczone w ramach istniejących ograniczeń budżetowych.

4. Komisja podjęła decyzję o przedłużeniu terminu udzielania odpowiedzi do dnia 5 marca 2014 r.

([1]) Komunikat Komisji z dnia 18 grudnia 2012 r. w sprawie treści na jednolitym rynku cyfrowym.
([2]) Zob. dokument „Licencje dla Europy" – dziesięć postanowień na rzecz upowszechniania treści online: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/copyright/docs/licences-for-europe/131113_ten-pledges_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer P-014430/13
to the Commission
Róża Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein (PPE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Public consultation on copyright reform

In early December the Commission launched a public consultation on the key issue of copyright reform via the DG MARKT website. The Commission had announced back in December 2012, in its communication on 'Content in the Digital Single Market', that it would decide whether to table legislative reform proposals in 2014.

1. Why has the Commission waited a full year to launch a public consultation?

Copyright reform is a very emotive subject since it covers issues such as the rights of Internet users, the protection of creators' rights, the digitisation of works, permitted usage, broad access to cultural heritage and many other points which are the subject of much debate not just in the United Kingdom but throughout the European Union. A movement was launched in Poland almost two years ago in protest at the signature and ratification by Poland and the EU of ACTA (Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement), mainly due to concerns about copyright issues and the rights of Internet users. The movement has organised a large number of demonstrations both in Poland and elsewhere, testifying to the level of interest in such issues. I should therefore like to ask the Commission:

2. Why are the documents for a consultation of such key importance available only in English, thus limiting the number of citizens and stakeholders able to comment on the issue?

The Commission has also blatantly failed to comply with Parliament's resolution of 14 June 2012, in which Parliament asked the Commission to 'ensure that all consultations are understandable to ordinary citizens and are carried out over a sufficiently long period of time to allow for increased participation.' The Commission has set a deadline of only two months (which includes the Christmas period) to respond to as many as 80 complicated questions. I should therefore like to ask the Commission the following questions:

3. What concrete steps will the Commission take to ensure that future consultations are carried out in such a way as to involve civil society in lawmaking?

4. Will the Commission extend the copyright reform consultation period until at least 5 April 2014 and translate the questionnaire into all of the EU's languages in order to allow more citizens and organisations to take part in it?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

1. In its communication ([1]), the Commission announced a double track approach on copyright until the end of its mandate: the stakeholder Dialogue 'Licences for Europe', and the review of the EU copyright framework. Licences for Europe was finalised in November 2013 ([2]). The consultation held now is one further step in the context of the ongoing legislative review. The Commission has launched the consultation after the end of 'Licences for Europe' to be able to take into account the results of this dialogue in this exercise. The replies to the public consultation and the results of 'Licenses for Europe' will be used to complete the ongoing review of the EU copyright legislative framework.

2. The Commission believes that citizens and stakeholders' input is crucial. Therefore the Commission makes an effort to meet the need of all target audiences. Replies to the consultation are accepted in all the EU official languages. The Commission can confirm that it receives contributions in all official EU languages and is analysing them.

3. The Commission is constantly striving to ensure that its consultations are as inclusive as possible, in line with the minimum standards, and is making its utmost efforts to do so. It must therefore prioritise the many competing demands on its translation services but will examine if consultation documents and summaries could be more widely translated within existing budgetary limits.

4. The Commission has decided to extend the deadline to reply to 5 March 2014.

([1]) 18 December 2012 on content in the digital single market.
([2]) See the document 'Licences for Europe — tem pledges to bring more content online': http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/copyright/docs/licences-for-europe/131113_ten-pledges_en.pdf

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-014431/13
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(23. december 2013)

Om: Sikring af vores digitale arv

Borgerne har i stigende grad taget digitaliseringen til sig. Det er positivt, men det giver også udfordringer. Borgerne gemmer i stigende grad fotos, personlige papirer og dukumenter digitalt.

Ofte er det udelukkende borgeren selv, der ved, hvad de har liggende digitalt og online, og hvordan man får adgang til det. Det kan resultere i, at fotos, breve og dagbøger går tabt, når mennesker dør uden at have givet placeringer og adgangskoder videre.

På den måde forsvinder dokumenter, der senere kunne være blevet vigtige historiske dokumenter. Samtidig mangler de pårørende vigtige papirer, dokumenter og fotos, der tilhører familien.

Vi er i disse år i gang med at opbygge en kæmpe digital arv, som vi ikke kan få adgang til, fordi vi ikke har en lovgivning på området.

Er det noget, Kommissionen er bevidst om, og er der lovgivningsinitiativer på vej for at sikre vores digitale arv?

Er det noget Kommissionen mener, at den kommende databeskyttelsesforordning tager hånd om?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Viviane Reding
(28. februar 2014)

Kommissionen henviser det ærede medlem til sit svar på forespørgsel E-007232/2012.

Kommissionens forslag til EU-databeskyttelsesreform fra 2012 opdaterer og moderniserer principperne i databeskyttelsesdirektivet fra 1995 for at sikre den grundlæggende ret til beskyttelse af personoplysninger. Det handler om at styrke den enkeltes rettigheder, f.eks. til adgang og sletning, styrke EU's indre marked og sikre et højt niveau af databeskyttelse inden for alle områder af EU's politikker (herunder politisamarbejde og strafferetligt samarbejde), sikre hensigtsmæssig håndhævelse af reglerne, lette internationale overførsler af personoplysninger og fastsætte globale standarder for databeskyttelse. De foreslåede ændringer vil give folk mere kontrol med deres persondata, og de skal sikre, at persondata beskyttes — uanset hvor de sendes til, bearbejdes eller lagres — også uden for EU, hvad der ofte er tilfældet på internettet.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014431/13
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Securing our digital inheritance

Our citizens have increasingly embraced digitisation. This is a positive thing but also presents challenges. They are increasingly storing photos, personal papers and documents digitally.

It is often only the citizens themselves who know what they have stored digitally and online and how to access it. Photos, letters and diaries can therefore be lost when people die without having passed on locations and access codes.

As a result of this, documents disappear which could subsequently have become important historical documents. Important papers, documents and photos are also lost to the family to whom they belong.

We are currently amassing a huge digital inheritance to which we cannot gain access because we have no legislation in this area.

Is the Commission aware of this and are there legislative initiatives in the pipeline to secure our digital inheritance?

Is this something the Commission believes will be dealt with by the forthcoming data protection regulation?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Members to its reply to EP Question E-007232/2012.

The 2012 Commission's EU data protection reform proposals update and modernise the principles enshrined in the 1995 Data Protection Directive to guarantee the fundamental right to the protection of personal data. They focus on: reinforcing individuals' rights, such as on access and deletion, strengthening the EU internal market, ensuring a high level of data protection in all areas of Union policies (including police and criminal justice cooperation) ensuring proper enforcement of the rules, facilitating international transfers of personal data and setting global data protection standards. The proposed changes will give people more control over their personal data and are designed to make sure that people's personal data is protected — no matter where it is sent, processed or stored — even outside the EU, as may often be the case on the Internet.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014432/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(23 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Πρόοδος στον τομέα της ηλεκτρονικής διακυβέρνησης

Είναι σε θέση να με ενημερώσει η Επιτροπή κατά πόσον έχει παρατηρηθεί πρόοδος στην Ελλάδα αναφορικά με το βαθμό ηλεκτρονικής πρόσβασης των πολιτών σε υπηρεσίες δημόσιας διοίκησης; Αξιοποίησε η Ελλάδα στο ακέραιο τους πόρους που προορίζονταν γι' αυτόν τον σκοπό από το τρέχον ΕΣΠΑ και τα σχετικά επιχειρησιακά προγράμματα; Ποια η συγκριτική κατάσταση στα υπόλοιπα κράτη μέλη;

Απάντηση της κ. Kroes εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(21 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Παρότι η Ελλάδα βελτίωσε τις ψηφιακές επιδόσεις της, πρέπει να επιτευχθεί πρόοδος για να φθάσει στο επίπεδο των λοιπών κρατών μελών της ΕΕ σε πολλούς δείκτες σχετικά με το ψηφιακό θεματολόγιο για την Ευρώπη και ιδίως την ηλεκτρονική διακυβέρνηση. Το 2012, το 34% του πληθυσμού της χώρας χρησιμοποίησε τις υπηρεσίες ηλεκτρονικής διακυβέρνησης, πράγμα που αντιπροσωπεύει ετήσια αύξηση 7% και 18% αποσταλέντα συμπληρωμένα ηλεκτρονικά έντυπα (η αύξηση επιτεύχθηκε με την εισαγωγή, για παράδειγμα, ηλεκτρονικού συστήματος συνταγογράφησης). Ωστόσο, τα ποσοστά αυτά είναι κάτω του μέσου όρου της ΕΕ (44% και 22% αντίστοιχα). Από την άλλη πλευρά, το 88% των ελληνικών επιχειρήσεων χρησιμοποίησε το διαδίκτυο για συναλλαγές με δημόσιες αρχές σύμφωνα με τον μέσο όρο της ΕΕ των 27 (87%). Επιπλέον, η Ελλάδα έχει δραστηριοποιηθεί σε μεγάλο βαθμό στον τομέα της παροχής διασυνοριακών ηλεκτρονικών δημόσιων υπηρεσιών σε πιλοτικές εφαρμογές μεγάλης κλίμακας όπως η EPSOS.

Στο ΕΣΠΑ 2007-2013, η θεματική προτεραιότητα που αφορά υπηρεσίες και εφαρμογές για τον πολίτη (ηλεκτρονική υγεία, ηλεκτρονική διακυβέρνηση, ηλεκτρονική μάθηση, ηλεκτρονική ένταξη κ.λπ.) χρηματοδοτείται συγχρόνως από το ΕΤΠΑ ([1]) και το ΕΚΤ ([2]), στο πλαίσιο διαφόρων εθνικών και περιφερειακών επιχειρησιακών προγραμμάτων. Η θεματική αυτή προτεραιότητα επέτυχε στην Ελλάδα ποσοστό απορρόφησης 21,1%.

Στο πλαίσιο της προτεραιότητας αυτής, ήδη εφαρμόστηκαν κατά την περίοδο προγραμματισμού 2007-2013 σημαντικές παρεμβάσεις που αναφέρονται επίσης στο μνημόνιο συμφωνίας, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των έργων «SyzefxisII», «Metropolitan Area Networks (MAN)/Fibre To The Home (FTTH)» και επίσης, το σύστημα ηλεκτρονικής συνταγογράφησης.

([1]) Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης.
([2]) Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014432/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Progress in e-governance sector

Is the Commission able to tell me if it has observed any progress in Greece in terms of the degree of electronic access, for citizens, to public administration services? Has Greece made full use of the resources earmarked for that purpose under the current NSRF and the relevant operational programmes? How does it compare with the other Member States?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

Although Greece has improved its digital performance, it still needs to make progress to catch up with other EU Member States in many indicators relating to the digital agenda for Europe and in particular eGovernment. In 2012, 34% of the Greek population used eGovernment services, representing an annual increase of 7% and 18% sent filled-in electronic forms (increase was achieved by introducing for instance an electronic prescription system). Nevertheless these rates stand below the EU average of 44% and 22% respectively. On the other hand, 88% of Greek enterprises used the Internet for interaction with public authorities, in line with the EU-27 average of 87%. Furthermore, Greece is very active in the field of cross border electronic public services delivery in large scale pilots such as EPSOS.

In the NSRF 2007-2013, the thematic priority relating to services and applications for the citizen (e-health, e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion etc.) is covered both by ERDF ([1]) and ESF ([2]), under various national and regional operational programmes. This thematic priority attained an absorption rate of 21,1% in Greece.

Under this priority significant interventions, also referred to in the memorandum of understanding, are under implementation in the programming period 2007-2013, including the projects 'SyzefxisII', 'Metropolitan Area Networks (MAN)/Fibre To The Home (FTTH)' and also the electronic prescription system.

([1]) European Regional Development Fund.
([2]) European Social Fund.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014434/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(23 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Διά βίου μάθηση

Παρά τους διακηρυγμένους στόχους της Στρατηγικής της Λισαβόνας, ο στόχος ύψους 12,5% για το 2010, όσον αφορά το ποσοστό συμμετοχής στη διά βίου μάθηση των ενηλίκων δεν υλοποιήθηκε στο επίπεδο της ΕΕ. Παρά ταύτα, στη διαδικασία «Ευρώπη 2020», ο στόχος για το 2020 είναι ακόμα πιο υψηλός και ανέρχεται στο 15%. Παρουσιάστηκε δε το παράδοξο, το 2010 η συμμετοχή των ενηλίκων στη διά βίου μάθηση να σημειώνει πτώση στο 9,1%, από 9,8% το 2005.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποίοι λόγοι, κατά την εκτίμησή της οδήγησαν στην οπισθοδρόμηση αυτή αλλά και στην αποτυχία επίτευξης των στόχων;

2. Καθώς οι στόχοι για το 2020 είναι ακόμη πιο υψηλοί, είναι σε θέση να με ενημερώσει για το ποσοστό της διά βίου μάθησης στην Ευρώπη σήμερα;

3. Όσον αφορά την Ελλάδα, ποιο είναι αυτό το ποσοστό και ποια η θέση της σε σύγκριση με τα υπόλοιπα κράτη μέλη;

Απάντηση της κ. Βασιλείου εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(26 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η δια βίου μάθηση αποτελεί εδώ και πολύ καιρό προτεραιότητα της ΕΕ. Η μείωση της συμμετοχής των ενηλίκων στη δια βίου μάθηση, αντικατοπτρίζει εν μέρει το γεγονός ότι πολλές χώρες στο πλαίσιο της οικονομικής κρίσης μείωσαν τις δαπάνες για την εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων, ενώ άλλες χώρες έδωσαν προτεραιότητα για τις επενδύσεις τους σε άλλους τομείς της εκπαίδευσης (π.χ. προσχολική εκπαίδευση, τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση). Επιπλέον, οι τροποποιήσεις στις μεθόδους που χρησιμοποιούνται για τον υπολογισμό της συμμετοχής σε ορισμένες χώρες οδήγησαν στη μείωση των καταγεγραμμένων ποσοστών.

Τα κράτη μέλη και η Επιτροπή συμφώνησαν σε ένα δείκτη αναφοράς τουλάχιστον 15% όσον αφορά τη συμμετοχή των ενηλίκων στη δια βίου μάθηση έως το 2020.

Τα τελευταία διαθέσιμα αριθμητικά στοιχεία για τη συμμετοχή στην εκπαίδευση ενηλίκων, σύμφωνα με τον ορισμό του κριτηρίου αξιολόγησης ΕΚ 2020 είναι από το 2012 (βλ. παρακάτω). Τα στοιχεία για το 2013 θα δημοσιευθούν τον Απρίλιο του 2014.

Χώρα	Ποσοστό συμμετοχής το 2012	Χώρα	Ποσοστό συμμετοχής το 2012
ΕΕ 28	9,0[p]	Λιθουανία	5,2
Βέλγιο	6,6	Λουξεμβούργο	13,9
Βουλγαρία	1,5	Ουγγαρία	2,8
Τσεχική Δημοκρατία	10,8	Μάλτα	7,0
Δανία	31,6	Κάτω Χώρες	16,5[p]
Γερμανία	7,9	Αυστρία	14,1
Εσθονία	12,9	Πολωνία	4,5[p]
Ιρλανδία	7,1	Πορτογαλία	10,6
Ελλάδα	2,9	Ρουμανία	1,4
Ισπανία	10,7	Σλοβενία	13,8
Γαλλία	5,7	Σλοβακία	3,1
Κροατία	2,4	Φινλανδία	24,5
Ιταλία	6,6	Σουηδία	26,7
Κύπρος	7,4	Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο	15,8
Λετονία	7,0		

Πηγή: Eurostat «p» = προσωρινά στοιχεία.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014434/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Lifelong learning

The target set under the Lisbon strategy of getting 12.5% of adults into lifelong learning by 2010 was not attained at EU level. Despite that, the Europe 2020 strategy set an even higher target of 15% for 2020. Paradoxically, the percentage of adults in lifelong learning fell from 9.8% in 2005 to 9.1% in 2010.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. What, in its opinion, was the reason for this decline and for the failure to attain the targets?

2. As the targets for 2010 are even higher, can it tell me what percentage of adults are currently in lifelong learning in Europe?

3. What is the percentage in Greece and how does it compare with the other Member States?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(26 February 2014)

Lifelong learning has been an EU priority for a long time. The decline in the participation of adults in lifelong learning partly reflects the fact that many countries reduced spending on adult learning in the context of the economic crisis while others prioritised other areas of education in their investments (e.g. early childhood education, higher education). In addition, changes in the methodologies used to calculate participation in some countries resulted in reduced recorded rates.

Member States and the Commission have agreed on a benchmark of at least 15% adult participation in lifelong learning by 2020.

The latest available figures for the participation in adult learning according to the definition of the ET2020 benchmark are from 2012 (see below). 2013 figures will be published in April 2014.

Country	Participation rate 2012	Country	Participation rate 2012
EU 28	9.0[p]	Lithuania	5.2
Belgium	6.6	Luxembourg	13.9
Bulgaria	1.5	Hungary	2.8
Czech Republic	10.8	Malta	7.0
Denmark	31.6	Netherlands	16.5[p]
Germany	7.9	Austria	14.1
Estonia	12.9	Poland	4.5[p]
Ireland	7.1	Portugal	10.6
Greece	2.9	Romania	1.4
Spain	10.7	Slovenia	13.8
France	5.7	Slovakia	3.1
Croatia	2.4	Finland	24.5
Italy	6.6	Sweden	26.7
Cyprus	7.4	United Kingdom	15.8
Latvia	7.0		

Source: Eurostat; 'p' = provisional.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014436/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(23 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Παράνομος στοιχηματισμός στην Ευρώπη — Αύγουστος 2011

Σύμφωνα με στοιχεία της Επιτροπής, το 2008 οι διαδικτυακές υπηρεσίες τυχερών παιχνιδιών σε απευθείας σύνδεση αντιστοιχούσαν σε ετήσια έσοδα που υπερέβαιναν το ποσό των 6,16 δισεκατομμυρίων ευρώ, ήτοι το 7,5% της συνολικής αγοράς τυχερών παιχνιδιών, ενώ από τους 14 823 ενεργούς ιστοτόπους για τυχερά παιχνίδια στην Ευρώπη, πλέον του 85% λειτουργούσε χωρίς άδεια. Για τον λόγο αυτό, η Επιτροπή είχε προχωρήσει στην έναρξη διαβούλευσης για την Πράσινη Βίβλο, χωρίς να προδικάζει τα συμπεράσματα που θα συναχθούν στη συνέχεια, σχετικά με την ανάγκη ανάληψης δράσης, τη μορφή της δράσης αυτής και το επίπεδο ανάληψής της.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Παρουσιάζει σήμερα βελτίωση η εικόνα αναφορικά με την μείωση του αριθμού των ενεργών διαδικτυακών σελίδων που παρέχουν χωρίς άδεια τυχερά παιχνίδια;

2. Διαθέτει επικαιροποιημένα στοιχεία σχετικά με το ετήσιο ύψος των εσόδων αυτών των ιστοτόπων;

Απάντηση του κ. Barnier εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Μαρτίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή δεν διαθέτει πιο πρόσφατα στοιχεία σχετικά με τον αριθμό των δικτυακών τόπων που παρέχουν μη αδειοδοτημένα παιχνίδια στην ΕΕ στο σύνολό της ή σχετικά με τα έσοδα που προέρχονται από αυτούς τους δικτυακούς τόπους. Ωστόσο, η Επιτροπή είναι ενήμερη ότι το ζήτημα αυτό αποτελεί σημαντική πηγή ανησυχίας, ιδίως υπό το πρίσμα της αυξανόμενης συμμετοχής των πολιτών στα διαδικτυακά τυχερά παιχνίδια. Μια ευρωπαϊκή έρευνα με θέμα τη χρήση των τεχνολογιών των πληροφοριών και των επικοινωνιών συγκεντρώνει πληροφορίες σχετικά με τη χρήση του Διαδικτύου από τους πολίτες. Σύμφωνα με αριθμητικά στοιχεία από το 2011, το 5% των ατόμων ηλικίας 16 έως 74 ετών στην ΕΕ των 28 είχαν στοιχηματίσει, παίξει σε τυχερά παιχνίδια ή στο λόττο μέσω του Διαδικτύου κατά τους τελευταίους 12 μήνες που προηγήθηκαν της έρευνας. Το ποσοστό των ατόμων ανά κράτος μέλος ποικίλλει από 27% στη Φινλανδία έως 1% στη Βουλγαρία. Συνολικά, ο αριθμός τους αυξήθηκε ελαφρώς από 4% το 2009 σε 5% το 2011.

Το 2012, η Επιτροπή συγκρότησε μια ομάδα εμπειρογνωμόνων για τις υπηρεσίες τυχερών παιχνιδιών, στην οποία συμμετέχουν ρυθμιστικές αρχές από όλα τα κράτη μέλη για να ενισχύσουν τη συνεργασία τους και να προωθήσουν την ανταλλαγή βέλτιστων πρακτικών. Αυτή η ομάδα εμπειρογνωμόνων εξετάζει επίσης τις βέλτιστες πρακτικές όσον αφορά την καταπολέμηση της προσφοράς παράνομων τυχερών παιχνιδιών Επιπλέον, η Επιτροπή ανέθεσε την εκπόνηση μελέτης σχετικά με τη χορήγηση αδειών, την επιτήρηση και την επιβολή του νόμου στον τομέα των διαδικτυακών τυχερών παιχνιδιών. Η μελέτη θα συγκεντρώσει δεδομένα και πληροφορίες σχετικά με τις διαδικασίες αδειοδότησης και την επιτήρηση των διαδικτυακών υπηρεσιών τυχερών παιχνιδιών στην ΕΕ και στα κράτη μέλη του ΕΟΧ. Τα αποτελέσματά της, τα οποία αναμένονται έως τα τέλη του έτους, θα συμβάλουν στην ανάληψη πιθανών μελλοντικών ενεργειών και μπορεί να οδηγήσουν σε συγκέντρωση ενημερωμένων στοιχείων σε επίπεδο ΕΕ, εφόσον χρειάζεται.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014436/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Illegal gambling in Europe — August 2011

According to Commission data, online gaming websites accounted for annual revenue in excess of EUR 6.16 billion or 7.5% of the total gaming market in 2008 and, of the 14 823 active gaming websites in Europe, over 85% were unlicensed. That is why the Commission started consultations on the Green Paper, without prejudice to conclusions that will be drawn at a later date concerning the need to take action, the form of action needed and the level at which it should be taken.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Has the situation improved in terms of a reduction in the number of active websites offering unlicensed games?

2. Does it have updated figures on the annual revenue of those websites?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(5 March 2014)

The Commission does not have more recent figures on the number of websites offering unlicensed games in the EU as a whole or on the revenue generated by these websites. Nevertheless, the Commission is aware that this is a major concern , in particular in the light of the growing participation by citizens in online gambling. A European survey dedicated to the use of information and communication technologies collects information on the use of the Internet by citizens. According to figures from 2011, 5% of individuals aged 16 to 74 years in the EU28 had placed a bet, gambled or played lotto over the Internet in the last 12 months prior to the survey. The share of individuals by Member State varies from 27% in Finland to 1% in Bulgaria. Overall, the figures had slightly increased from 4% in 2009 to 5% in 2011.

In 2012, the Commission established an Expert Group on Gambling Services which brings together regulators from all Member States to enhance their cooperation and stimulate exchange of best practice. This Expert Group also discusses best practices as regards the combat of the illegal gambling offer. In addition, the Commission has commissioned a study on authorisation, supervision and enforcement in the area of online gambling. The study will collect data and information relating to the authorisation processes and supervision of online gambling services in EU and EEA Member States. Its results, which are expected by the end of the year, will inform possible future actions and may lead to a collection of updated EU-wide data, if necessary.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014437/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(23 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Αξιολόγηση υλοποίησης του ευρωπαϊκού προγράμματος «Πολιτισμός»

Το ευρωπαϊκό πρόγραμμα «Πολιτισμός» (2007-2013) διαθέτει συνολικά 400 εκατομμύρια ευρώ με στόχο την στήριξη του ευρωπαϊκού πολιτισμού, την προβολή της διαφορετικής κουλτούρας των κρατών μελών και, ασφαλώς, την προώθηση της διασυνοριακής συνεργασίας σε θέματα πολιτισμού και κοινής πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Είναι σε θέση να με ενημερώσει κατά πόσον αξιοποιήθηκε στο σύνολο του το συγκεκριμένο ποσό από τα κράτη μέλη;

2. Ποια είναι η περίπτωση της Ελλάδας;

Απάντηση της κ. Βασιλείου εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(12 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή ενημερώνει τον κ. βουλευτή ότι, κατά το διάστημα 2007-2013, το πρόγραμμα «Πολιτισμός» χορήγησε χρηματοδότηση συνολικού ύψους 380 εκατ. ευρώ.

Περισσότερα από 339 εκατ. ευρώ χορηγήθηκαν σε 1 921 έργα συνολικά, στα οποία συμμετείχαν περισσότερες από 10 000 πολιτιστικές οργανώσεις στα κράτη μέλη (είτε ως επικεφαλής του έργου είτε ως συνδιοργανωτές).

Όσον αφορά την Ελλάδα, σε 43 ελληνικά έργα χορηγήθηκε συνολικό ποσό ύψους 4 771 331 ευρώ.

Πέραν των έργων, το πρόγραμμα «Πολιτισμός» χρηματοδότησε ειδικές δράσεις. Αυτές περιλάμβαναν τέσσερα βραβεία της ΕΕ στον τομέα του πολιτισμού· τις Πολιτιστικές Πρωτεύουσες της Ευρώπης· δράσεις σε συνεργασία με το Συμβούλιο της Ευρώπης (όπως οι ευρωπαϊκές ημέρες πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς)· και στήριξη της ΕΕ για τα «Πολιτιστικά σημεία επαφής».

Περισσότερες πληροφορίες μπορείτε να βρείτε στους δικτυακούς τόπους μας για το πρόγραμμα «Πολιτισμός» ([1]) και το πρόγραμμα που θα το διαδεχθεί, δηλαδή το πρόγραμμα «Δημιουργική Ευρώπη» για την περίοδο 2014-2020 ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/evaluation_en.htm and on the executive agency website http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/results_compendia/results_en.php
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014437/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Evaluation of the EU 'Culture' programme

Funding for the European 'Culture' programme (2007-2013) amounts to EUR 400 million. Its aim is to support European culture, promote the various cultures of the Member States and, of course, foster cross-border cooperation on questions of culture and our common cultural heritage.

In view of this:

1. Can the Commission tell me how much of the above total has been taken up by the Member States?

2. Where does Greece stand in this respect?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(12 February 2014)

The Commission informs the Honourable Member that, during the 2007-2013 period, the Culture Programme provided funding for a total of EUR 380 million.

More than EUR 339 million was granted to a total of 1 921 projects, which involved over 10 000 cultural organisations (either as project leaders or co-organisers) in the Member States.

As regards Greece, 43 Greek-led projects were granted a total of EUR 4 771 331.

In addition to projects, the Culture Programme provided funding to special actions. These included four EU Prizes in the field of culture; the European Capitals of Culture; actions in cooperation with the Council of Europe (such as the European Heritage Days); and EU support to the Culture Contact Points.

More information can be found on our websites on the Culture Programme ([1]) and its successor, the Creative Europe Programme 2014-2020 ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/evaluation_en.htm
and on the executive agency website http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/results_compendia/results_en.php
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/index_en.htm

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-014438/13
til Kommissionen
José Bové (Verts/ALE), Martin Häusling (Verts/ALE), Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) og Margrete Auken (Verts/ALE)
(23. december 2013)

Om: Toårig toksikologisk undersøgelse af genetisk modificerede organismer

Den eneste længerevarende fodringsundersøgelse, der hidtil er blevet trykt i et peer-review videnskabeligt tidsskrift, blev for nylig trukket tilbage — over et år efter offentliggørelsen. De årsager, som tidskriftet (*Food and Chemical* Toxicology) gav for denne tilbagekaldelse, omfattede ikke bedrageri eller bevidst fejlagtig gengivelse af data, men snarere, at man syntes, at resultaterne af undersøgelsen var inkonklusive, om end ikke ukorrekte. Dette — sammenholdt med tildelingen af den nyligt oprettede stilling som redaktør for bioteknologi på det pågældende tidsskrift til en forhenværende medarbejder hos Monsanto blot få måneder efter offentliggørelsen af undersøgelsen — har givet anledning til stor mistanke vedrørende den bioteknologiske industris indflydelse på denne tilbagetrækning.

Samtidig har tidsskriftet offentliggjort en ny undersøgelse, hvilket tyder på, at der er dobbeltstandarder for videnskabelige publikationers vurderinger af, hvorvidt genetisk modificerede organismer (gmo'er) har en negativ indvirkning på miljøet og sundheden. Konklusionen på denne frygtelige affære er, at når professor Séralinis undersøgelse blev trukket tilbage, bør alle andre undersøgelser, der viser, at gmo'er ikke har nogen negative virkninger, også trækkes tilbage ([1]).

Vi er ligeledes bekymrede over, at EU's ledende videnskabsmand hævder, at der er videnskabelig konsensus om sikkerheden ved gmo'er, når hen ved 300 uafhængige videnskabsfolk fastholder, at der ikke findes en sådan konsensus ([2]).

Vi vil gerne sikre os, at den toårige toksikologiske undersøgelse, som Kommissionen har besluttet at støtte, ikke udsættes for nogen partiskhed fra industrien eller forhastede bedømmelser, inden den er blevet udført.

Som opfølgning på forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-007727/2013 af 27 juni 2013 og Kommissionens svar af 7. august 2013 bedes Kommissionen besvare nedenstående spørgsmål:

1. Får tilbagetrækningen af professor Séralinis undersøgelse nogen betydning for den planlagte toårige toksikologiske undersøgelse?

2. Er der givet svar på de forslag, der blev forelagt i juni 2013 inden for rammerne af det syvende rammeprogram for forskning, teknologisk udvikling og demonstration (FP7)? Hvem vil udføre den toårige toksikologiske undersøgelse, og hvad er den præcise tidsplan herfor?

3. Vil der blive givet oplysninger om de uafhængige eksperter, som Kommissionen har udnævnt til at evaluere forslagene, i lyset af alle de tilbagevendende problemer med eksperters interessekonflikter og dette spørgsmåls kritiske betydning?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Máire Geoghegan-Quinn
(14. februar 2014)

1. Formålet med indkaldelsen af forslag til FP7-KBBE-2013-FEEDTRIALS er ikke at gentage Séralini-undersøgelsen, men snarere at tilvejebringe videnskabeligt velfunderede og uafhængige data, som gør det muligt at drage en række konklusioner vedrørende krav og procedurer i forbindelse med gmo-risikovurderingen i EU. Den nylige tilbagekaldelse af Séralini-undersøgelsen fra tidsskriftet Food and Chemical Toxicology vil derfor ikke have nogen indvirkning på de toårige fodringsforsøg, der er planlagt.

2. Som fastlagt i arbejdsprogrammet »Samarbejde« (Temaområde 2: Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri og Bioteknologi ([3])) under FP7 ([4]) blev indkaldelsen af forslag til FP7-KBBE-2013-FEEDTRIALS offentliggjort den 29. juni 2013 ([5]) med den 1. oktober 2013 som frist for indgivelse af forslag. Forslagene blev gennemgået i perioden fra den 14. til den 30. oktober 2013. De overordnede resultater blev offentliggjort på forskningsdeltagerportalen ([6]) den 21. november 2013. Oplysningerne om de udvalgte projekter vil først blive offentliggjort, når tilskudsaftalen er blevet indgået.

([1]) »Rat feeding studies with genetically modified maize — a comparative evaluation of applied methods and risk assessment standards« af Hartmut Meyer og Angelika Hilbeck, der er tilgængelig på http://www.enveurope.com/content/25/1/33.
([2]) Erklæring om fraværet af en konsensus om sikkerheden ved gmo'er (»No scientific consensus on GMO safety«) er tilgængelig på: http://www.ensser.org/increasing-public-information/no-scientific-consensus-on-gmo-safety/.
([3]) KOM(2013)3953 af 27.6.2013.
([4]) Det syvende rammeprogram for forskning, teknologisk udvikling og demonstration (FP7, 2007-2013).
([5]) EUT C 187/13 af 29.6.2013.
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/fp7/calls/fp7-kbbe-2013-feedtrials.html

3. I overensstemmelse med FP7's procedurer for indsendelse, bedømmelse, udvælgelse og støttetildeling ([7]) har Kommissionen gennemgået de modtagne forslag til FP7-KBBE-2013-FEEDTRIALS med bistand fra uafhængige eksperter. Ekspertene blev udvalgt på baggrund af deres kompetencer og viden om aktivitetsområdet for forslagsindkaldelsen. Princippet om undgåelse af interessekonflikter blev håndhævet strengt. Ifølge bestemmelserne skal Kommissionen årligt offentliggøre en samlet liste på internettet ([8]) over eksperter, der er tilknyttet hvert enkelt program, uden at henvise til de særlige indkaldelser eller forslag, hvortil de er blevet bedt om at bidrage.

([7]) EUT L 75 af 22.3.2011.
([8]) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/experts_en.html

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014438/13
an die Kommission
José Bové (Verts/ALE), Martin Häusling (Verts/ALE), Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) und Margrete Auken (Verts/ALE)
(23. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Zweijährige toxikologische Studie über genetisch veränderte Organismen

Die einzige Langfrist-Futterstudie, die bislang in einer von Experten überprüften wissenschaftlichen Fachzeitschrift veröffentlicht war, ist jetzt, mehr als 4 Jahre nach ihrer Veröffentlichung, zurückgezogen worden. Die von der Fachzeitschrift (*Food and Chemical Toxology)* angeführte Begründung für die Zurückziehung des Artikels enthielt keine Hinweise auf Fälschung oder absichtliche Fehlinterpretation der Daten, sondern vielmehr bestand der generelle Eindruck, dass die Studienergebnisse zwar nicht ganz schlüssig, aber auch nicht völlig unkorrekt waren. Dieser Vorfall, zusammen mit der Tatsache, dass der neu geschaffenen Posten des Chefherausgebers für Biotechnologie der besagten Fachzeitschrift nur einige Monate nach der Veröffentlichung dieser Studie an einen ehemaligen Monsanto-Mitarbeiter vergeben wurde, hat begründete Vermutungen in Bezug auf die Einflussnahme seitens der Biotechnologie-Industrie bei der Rücknahme dieses Artikels auf den Plan gerufen.

Gleichzeitig wurde von der Fachzeitschrift eine neue Studie veröffentlicht, was darauf hindeutet, dass bei den Bewertungen gewisser wissenschaftlicher Publikationen hinsichtlich der Frage, ob oder ob nicht genetisch veränderte Organismen eine negative Auswirkung auf Umwelt und Gesundheit haben, offenbar mit zweierlei Maß gemessen wird. Die Schlussfolgerung, die wir aus dieser unerhörten Affäre ziehen müssen, ist, dass, wenn die Studie von Professor Séralini zurückgezogen wurde, dann wohl auch all anderen Studien zurückgezogen werden müssen, denen zufolge GMO keine negativen Auswirkungen haben ([1]).

Wir sind auch besorgt über Forderungen leitender EU-Wissenschaftler, wonach ein wirtschaftlicher Konsens in Bezug auf die Sicherheit von GMO bestehe, während gleichzeitig 300 unabhängige Wissenschaftler weiterhin daran festhalten, dass noch kein solcher Konsens bestehe ([2]).

Wir möchten gerne Sicherheit dahin gehend haben, dass es in Bezug auf die zweijährige Studie, die die Kommission in Auftrag gegeben hat, nicht zu Voreingenommenheiten der Industrie oder voreiligen Schlussfolgerungen kommt, noch bevor sie überhaupt fertig gestellt ist.

Im Anschluss an die schriftliche Anfrage E-007727/2013 vom 23. Juni 2013 und die von der Kommission am 7. August 2013 vorgelegte Antwort hierauf, wird die Kommission des Weiteren um folgende Informationen ersucht:

1. Wird die Rücknahme der Studie von Professor Séralini irgendwelche Auswirkungen auf die geplante zweijährige toxikologische Studie haben?

2. Gibt es Antworten schon in Bezug auf die Vorschläge, die im Juni 2013 unter dem Siebten Rahmenprogramm für Forschung, technologische Entwicklung und Demonstration vorgelegt wurden? Wer wird die zweijährige toxikologische Studie durchführen und welcher genaue Zeitplan besteht hierfür?

3. Werden in Anbetracht der Probleme in Bezug auf Interessenskonflikte von Experten und da es doch hier um ein kritisches Thema von großer Bedeutung geht, Informationen veröffentlicht über die unabhängigen Sachverständigen, die die Kommission für die Evaluierung der Vorschläge benannt hat?

Antwort von Frau Geoghegan-Quinn im Namen der Kommission
(14. Februar 2014)

1. Ziel der Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen FP7-KBBE-2013-FEEDTRIALS ist es nicht, die Studie von Professor Séralini zu wiederholen, sondern vielmehr, wissenschaftlich fundierte und unabhängige Daten zu erhalten, die Rückschlüsse darauf zulassen, welche Anforderungen an die GVO-Risikoabschätzung in der EU gestellt werden sollten und welche Verfahren sich hierfür eignen. Daher hat die jüngst erfolgte Zurückziehung der Studie von Professor Séralinie durch die Fachzeitschrift „Food and Chemical Toxicology“ keine Auswirkung auf die über zwei Jahre angelegten Fütterungsversuche.

([1]) Studien über die Fütterung von Ratten mit genetisch verändertem Mais — vergleichende Evaluierung der angewandten Methoden und Risikobewertungsstandards von Hartmut Meyer und Angelika Hilbeck, abrufbar unter: http://www.enveurope.com/content/25/1/33

([2]) Feststellung: „Kein wissenschaftlicher Konsens über Sicherheit von GMO“, einsehbar online unter: http://www.ensser.org/increasing-public-information/no-scientific-consensus-on-gmo-safety/

2. Auf der Grundlage des Arbeitsprogramms zum Spezifischen Programm des RP7 ([3]) „Zusammenarbeit“, Thema 2 „Lebensmittelmittel, Landwirtschaft und Fischerei sowie Biotechnologie“ ([4]), wurde die Aufforderung FP7-KBBE-2013-FEEDTRIALS am 29. Juni 2013 ([5]) mit einer Einreichungsfrist bis zum 1. Oktober 2013 veröffentlicht. Vom 14. bis 30. Oktober 2013 wurden die Vorschläge bewertet. Am 21. November 2013 wurden die Gesamtergebnisse im Portal für Forschungsteilnehmer ([6]) veröffentlicht. Nach Abschluss der Finanzhilfevereinbarung werden auch Informationen zum ausgewählten Projekte bekannt gegeben.

3. Entsprechend den Bestimmungen des RP7 für die Einreichungs-, Bewertungs-, Auswahl- und Zuschlagsverfahren ([7]) hat die Kommission die zur Aufforderung FP7-KBBE-2013-FEEDTRIALS eingegangenen Vorschläge mithilfevon unabhängigen Sachverständigen bewertet. Die Sachverständigen wurden aufgrund ihrer Fähigkeiten und Sachkenntnisse in dem von der Aufforderung abgedeckten Bereich ausgewählt, wobei die Bestimmungen zur Vermeidung von Interessenkonflikten strikt eingehalten wurden. Ferner sehen die Bestimmungen vor, dass die Kommission jährlich im Internet ([8]) die vollständige Liste der Sachverständigen veröffentlicht, die für die jeweiligen spezifischen Programme hinzugezogen wurden, wobei jedoch keine Angaben dazu gemacht werden, welche Aufforderung die einzelnen Sachverständigen konkret bewertet haben.

([3]) Siebtes Rahmenprogramm für Forschung, technologische Entwicklung und Demonstration (RP7, 2007-2013).
([4]) C(2013)3953 vom 27.6.2013.
([5]) ABl. C 187 vom 29.6.2013, S. 13.
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/fp7/calls/fp7-kbbe-2013-feedtrials.html
([7]) ABl. L75 vom 22.3.2011.
([8]) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/experts_en.html

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014438/13
à la Commission
José Bové (Verts/ALE), Martin Häusling (Verts/ALE), Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) et Margrete Auken (Verts/ALE)
(23 décembre 2013)

Objet: Étude toxicologique de deux ans sur les organismes génétiquement modifiés

La seule étude à long terme publiée à ce jour sur les produits alimentaires dans une revue scientifique soumise à un comité de lecture vient d'être retirée, plus d'un an après sa publication. Les raisons avancées par la revue (*Food and Chemical Toxicology*) pour justifier cette mesure ne dénoncent pas une fraude ou une présentation déformée intentionnelle des données; la revue estime en effet que les résultats de cette étude, quoiqu'exacts, ne seraient pas probants. À cela s'ajoute le fait que la revue a nommé un ancien de Monsanto au poste nouvellement créé de rédacteur en chef pour les biotechnologies dans les mois suivant la publication de l'étude. Il n'en faut pas plus pour s'interroger sur le rôle des entreprises de biotechnologie dans cette décision.

Dans le même temps, la revue a publié une nouvelle étude. Cette approche montre que certaines revues scientifiques mettent en œuvre deux poids, deux mesures pour analyser si des organismes génétiquement modifiés (OGM) exercent ou non une influence négative sur l'environnement et la santé. La conclusion de cette affaire incroyable est que si l'étude du professeur Séralini est retirée, il faudrait alors réserver le même traitement à toutes les autres études affirmant que les OGM produisent des effets négatifs ([1]).

Les déclarations du scientifique en chef de l'Union européenne affirmant qu'il existe un consensus des experts sur l'innocuité des OGM sont source d'inquiétude quand on sait que quelque 300 scientifiques indépendants démentent en l'état l'existence d'un tel consensus ([2]).

Nous aimerions être sûrs que les conclusions de l'étude toxicologique de deux ans, que la Commission a décidé de financer, ne seront pas dénaturées par un secteur industriel quelconque ou jugées avant d'avoir été rendues.

Suite à la question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007727/2013, posée le 27 juin 2013, à laquelle la Commission a répondu le 7 août 2013, la Commission est invitée à répondre aux questions suivantes:

1. Le retrait de l'étude du professeur Séralini aura-t-il un effet quelconque sur l'étude toxicologique de deux ans qui est prévue?

2. Des réponses ont-elles été apportées aux propositions lancées en juin 2013 au titre du septième programme-cadre pour des actions de recherche, de développement technologique et de démonstration (PC7)? Qui procédera à l'étude toxicologique de deux ans et quel en sera le calendrier précis?

3. Eu égard aux problèmes récurrents de conflit d'intérêts des différents experts et de l'importance cruciale de cette question, de plus amples informations sur les experts indépendants chargés par la Commission d'évaluer les propositions seront-elles données?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Geoghegan-Quinn au nom de la Commission
(14 février 2014)

1. L'appel à propositions FP7-KBBE-2013-Feedtrials n'a pas pour objectif de reproduire l'étude du professeur Séralini mais plutôt de fournir des données scientifiques fiables et indépendantes qui permettront de tirer des conclusions en ce qui concerne les critères et les procédures d'évaluation des risques liés aux OGM dans l'UE. À ce titre, le récent retrait de l'étude du professeur Séralini de la revue Food and Chemical Toxicology n'aura aucune incidence sur l'étude toxicologique de deux ans qui est prévue.

2. Comme le prévoit le thème 2 Alimentation, agriculture, pêche et biotechnologie ([3]) du programme de travail «coopération» de 2013 du 7e PC ([4]), l'appel à propositions FP7-KBBE-2013-Feedtrials a été lancé le 29 juin 2013 ([5]) et l'échéance pour la soumission des propositions fixée au 1^er^ octobre 2013. Les propositions ont été étudiées entre le 14 et le 30 octobre 2013. Les résultats globaux ont été publiés sur le portail des participants de la DG Recherche ([6]) le 21 novembre 2013. Les informations sur le projet sélectionné ne seront révélées qu'une fois la convention de subvention établie.

([1]) «Rat feeding studies with genetically modified maize — a comparative evaluation of applied methods and risk assessment standards» (Étude sur des rats nourris avec du maïs génétiquement modifié — étude comparative des méthodes mises en œuvre et normes d'analyse des risques) par Hartmut Meyer et Angelika Hilbeck, consultable à l'adresse suivante: http://www.enveurope.com/content/25/1/33.
([2]) Déclaration: «Absence de consensus scientifique sur l'innocuité des OGM», consultable à l'adresse suivante: http://www.ensser.org/increasing-public-information/no-scientific-consensus-on-gmo-safety/
([3]) C (2013) 3953 du 27.06.2013.
([4]) Septième programme-cadre pour des activités de recherche, de développement technologique et de démonstration (7^e^ PC, 2007-2013).
([5]) JO C 187/13 du 29.6.2013.
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/fp7/calls/fp7-kbbe-2013-feedtrials.html

3. Conformément aux dispositions prévues par les procédures de soumission, d'évaluation, de sélection et d'attribution du 7e PC ([7]), la Commission a évalué, avec l'aide d'experts indépendants, les propositions reçues dans le cadre de l'appel à propositions FP7-KBBE-2013-Feedtrials. Ces experts ont été sélectionnés pour leurs compétences et connaissances dans le domaine d'activité couvert par l'appel d'offres. Tous les risques de conflits d'intérêts ont été formellement écartés. Les dispositions prévoient également qu'une fois par an, la Commission publie sur Internet ([8]) la liste complète des experts auxquels il a été fait appel pour chaque programme spécifique, sans que ne soit spécifié pour quels appels ou quelles propositions.

([7]) JO L 75 du 22.03.2011.
([8]) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/experts_en.html

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-014438/13
aan de Commissie
José Bové (Verts/ALE), Martin Häusling (Verts/ALE), Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) en Margrete Auken (Verts/ALE)
(23 december 2013)

Betreft: Tweejarig toxicologisch onderzoek naar genetisch gemodificeerde organismen (GGO's)

De enige voederstudie op lange termijn die ooit in een wetenschappelijk tijdschrift met collegiale toetsing is gepubliceerd, is onlangs ingetrokken, ruim een jaar na de publicatie. De redenen die de „Food and Chemical Toxicology" hiervoor aanvoerden hadden niets met bedrog of opzettelijk onjuiste weergave van de gegevens, maar omdat men ervan overtuigd was dat de bevindingen van het onderzoek niet afdoend waren, ofschoon niet onjuist. Dit, samen met het feit dat amper enkele maanden na de publicatie van de studie een nieuwe post als redacteur biotechnologie bij het tijdschrift in kwestie is toegewezen aan een voormalig medewerker van Monsanto, gaf aanleiding tot heel wat argwaan omtrent de invloed van de biotechnologische sector in de beslissing om het artikel in kwestie in te trekken.

Tegelijkertijd publiceerde het tijdschrift een nieuwe studie, iets wat erop kan wijzen dat bij de evaluatie in wetenschappelijke publicaties van eventuele schadelijke gevolgen van GGO's voor het milieu en de gezondheid met twee maten wordt gemeten. De conclusie uit deze onverkwikkelijke zaak is dat, indien de studie van Professor Séralini moest worden ingetrokken, alle andere studies die beweren dat GGO's geen schadelijke effecten hebben, hetzelfde lot verdienen ([1]).

Bovendien maken wij ons ook zorgen over het feit dat het hoofd van de wetenschappelijke diensten van de EU claimt dat er een consensus onder wetenschappers zou bestaan over de veiligheid van GGO's, terwijl bijna 300 onafhankelijke wetenschappers staande houden dat er nog helemaal geen consensus over bestaat ([2]).

Wij willen er zekerheid over dat de tweejarige toxicologische studie die de Commissie wil gaan financieren niet zal worden blootgesteld aan partijdige invloeden van de industrie of premature oordelen nog voor de studie wordt uitgevoerd.

Naar aanleiding van schriftelijke vraag E-007727/2013 van 27 juni 2013 en het antwoord van de Commissie erop van 7 augustus 2013, wensten wij de Commissie de volgende vragen te stellen;

1. Zal de intrekking van de studie van Professor Séralini gevolgen hebben voor het geplande tweejarige toxicologische onderzoek?

2. Zijn er al antwoorden gekomen op de voorstellen die in juni 2013 in het kader van het zevende Kaderprogramma voor activiteiten op het gebied van onderzoek, technologische ontwikkeling en demonstratie (KP7)? Door wie zal het tweejarige toxicologische onderzoek worden uitgevoerd?

3. Zal er informatie worden gegeven over de onafhankelijke deskundigen die de Commissie voor de beoordeling van de voorstellen heeft aangewezen, gelet op alle huidige problemen in verband met belangenconflicten en het uitzonderlijke belang van de kwestie?

Antwoord van mevrouw Geoghegan-Quinn namens de Commissie
(14 februari 2014)

1. Het doel van de uitnodiging tot het indienen van voorstellen voor FP 7-KBBE- 2013-FEEDTRIALS is niet om de studie van Séralini te herhalen, maar om wetenschappelijk betrouwbare en onafhankelijke gegevens te verkrijgen waarmee conclusies kunnen worden getrokken over de risicoanalyse-eisen van GGO's en procedures in de EU. Zo heeft het intrekken van de studie van Séralini uit de „Food and Chemical Toxicology" geen gevolgen voor de geplande 2-jarige vervoederingsstudies.

2. De uitnodiging voor FP 7-KBBE- 2013-FEEDTRIALS werd op 29 juni 2013 gepubliceerd ([3]), zoals bepaald in het KP7 ([4])-werkprogramma samenwerking van 2013, thema 2 Voedsel, landbouw en visserij, en biotechnologie ([5]). Hierin werd de uiterste indieningsdatum voor voorstellen vastgelegd op 1 oktober 2013. De voorstellen werden beoordeeld in de periode van 14 tot en met 30 oktober 2013. De algemene resultaten werden op 21 november 2013 gepubliceerd op het portaal voor onderzoeksdeelnemers (Research Participant Portal) ([6]). Informatie over het geselecteerde project wordt slechts gepubliceerd zodra de subsidieovereenkomst is vastgesteld.

([1]) „Rat feeding studies with genetically modified maize — a comparative evaluation of applied methods and risk assessment standards", door Hartmut Meyer en Angelika Hilbeck, beschikbaar op http://www.enveurope.com/content/25/1/33.
([2]) Verklaring: „No scientific consensus on GMO safety", beschikbaar op: http://www.ensser.org/increasing-public-information/no-scientific-consensus-on-gmo-safety/
([3]) PB C187/13 van 29.6.2013.
([4]) Zevende kaderprogramma voor activiteiten op het gebied van onderzoek, technologische ontwikkeling en demonstratie (KP 7, 2007-2013).
([5]) C(2013)3953,27;06./2013.
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/fp7/calls/fp7-kbbe-2013-feedtrials.html

3. In overeenstemming met de bepalingen in de indienings-, evaluatie-, selectie- en toekenningsprocedures in het kader van KP7 ([7]), heeft de Commissie de voorstellen die zij heeft ontvangen in het kader van de uitnodiging voor FP 7-KBBE- 2013-FEEDTRIALS geëvalueerd met de hulp van onafhankelijke deskundigen. De deskundigen werden gekozen op basis van hun vaardigheden en kennis van het werkgebied waarop de uitnodiging betrekking heeft. Er werd strikt op toegezien dat er geen belangenconflicten meespeelden. In de bepalingen wordt er eveneens in voorzien dat de Commissie jaarlijks de volledige lijst van deskundigen die binnen elk specifiek programma worden gebruikt online publiceert ([8]), zonder hierbij te verwijzen naar specifieke uitnodigingen of voorstellen waarvoor de hulp van deze experts is gevraagd.

([7]) PB L 75 van 22.03.2011.
([8]) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/experts_en.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014438/13
to the Commission
José Bové (Verts/ALE), Martin Häusling (Verts/ALE), Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) and Margrete Auken (Verts/ALE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Two-year toxicological study on genetically modified organisms

The only long-term feeding study to be published to date in a peer-reviewed scientific journal was recently retracted, more than one year after its publication. The reasons given for this retraction by the journal (*Food and Chemical Toxicology*) did not involve fraud or intentional misrepresentation of the data, but rather it was felt that the results of the study were inconclusive, although not incorrect. This, along with the award of the newly created position of editor for biotechnology at the journal in question to a former Monsanto employee just a few months after the publication of the study, has given rise to much suspicion regarding the influence of the biotechnology industry in the retraction.

At the same time, a new study has been published by the journal, a fact that is indicative of double standards in the assessment by scientific publications of whether or not genetically modified organisms (GMOs) bear a negative impact on the environment and health. The conclusion to be drawn from this appalling affair is that if Professor Séralini's study was retracted, then all other studies which maintain that GMOs bear no negative effects should also be retracted ([1]).

We are also concerned over claims from the EU's chief scientist that scientific consensus exists regarding the safety of GMOs when almost 300 independent scientists maintain that there is as yet no such consensus ([2]).

We would like to be sure that the two-year toxicological study that the Commission has decided to fund will not be exposed to any industry bias or premature judgments ahead of it being carried out.

Following on from Written QuestionE-007727/2013 of 27 June 2013 and the answer provided by the Commission on 7 August 2013, could the Commission answer the following:

1. Is the retraction of Professor Séralini's study going to have any effect on the planned two-year toxicological study?

2. Have answers been provided regarding the proposals launched in June 2013 under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7)? Who will conduct the 2 years toxicological study and what is the exact timing?

3. Will information be provided on the independent experts appointed by the Commission for the evaluation of the proposals, given all of the recurring problems with conflict of interests by experts and the critical importance of the issue?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

1. The FP7-KBBE-2013-FEEDTRIALS call for proposals does not aim to repeat the Séralini study but rather to provide scientifically sound and independent data that will allow for drawing conclusions with regard to GMO risk assessment requirements and procedures in the EU. As such, the recent retraction of the Séralini study from the Journal of Food and Chemical Toxicology will have no impact on the planned 2-year feeding trials.

2. As foreseen in the FP7 ([3]) 2013 Cooperation Work Programme — Theme 2 Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology ([4]), the FP7-KBBE-2013-FEEDTRIALS call was published on 29 June 2013 ([5]) with a deadline for proposals submission of 1 October 2013. Proposals were evaluated during the period from 14 to 30 October 2013. Overall results were published on the Research Participant Portal ([6]) on 21 November 2013; information on the selected project will be published only once the grant agreement has been established.

([1]) 'Rat feeding studies with genetically modified maize — a comparative evaluation of applied methods and risk assessment standards', by Hartmut Meyer and Angelika Hilbeck, available at: http://www.enveurope.com/content/25/1/33
([2]) Statement: 'No scientific consensus on GMO safety', available at: http://www.ensser.org/increasing-public-information/no-scientific-consensus-on-gmo-safety/
([3]) Seventh Framework Progarmme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7, 2007-2013).
([4]) C(2013)3953,27.06.2013.
([5]) OJ C 187/13, 29.6.2013.
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/fp7/calls/fp7-kbbe-2013-feedtrials.html

3. In line with the provisions set forth in the FP7 submission, evaluation, selection and award procedures ([7]), the Commission has evaluated proposals received under the FP7-KBBE-2013-FEEDTRIALS call with the assistance of independent experts. Experts were selected on the basis of their skills and knowledge of the area of activity covered by the call; the absence of conflict of interests was strictly enforced. The provisions also foresee that on a yearly basis, the Commission publishes on the Internet ([8]) the overall list of experts used within each specific programme, without reference to specific calls or proposals for which they were asked to assist.

([7]) OJ L 75, 22.3.2011.
([8]) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/experts_en.html

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-014439/13
til Kommissionen
Morten Messerschmidt (EFD)
(23. december 2013)

Om: Handelsaftalen mellem EU og USA

I lyset af tredje forhandlingsrunde mellem EU og USA om det foreslåede transatlantiske handels- og investeringspartnerskab (TTIP) er der givet udtryk for en række bekymringer vedrørende det lækkede forhandlingsforslag fra Kommissionen »TTIP: Cross-cutting disciplines and Institutional provisions, Position paper — Chapter on Regulatory Coherence« ([1]). John Clancy, EU's talsmand for handel, benægtede ikke eksistensen af dette dokument i sin erklæring af 17. december 2013.

Ifølge en række publikationer berører ovennævnte dokument ikke medlemsstaternes suveræne ret til at lovgive, men de interesserede parter, der deltager i aftalen, skal have alle oplysninger og høres. Kommissionen vil have ret til på vegne af Den Europæiske Union at overvåge den lovgivningsmæssige udvikling i medlemsstaterne og til at gribe ind, hvis der skulle opstå en konflikt mellem parter, der deltager i TTIP-aftalen.

I hele verden benytter store virksomheder sig af bestemmelserne om tvistbilæggelse mellem investorer og stater i handels- og investeringsaftaler til at kræve erstatning for demokratisk vedtagne love, der beskytter den offentlige interesse. Ifølge data fra 2013 fra De Forenede Nationers Konference for Handel og Udvikling (UNCTAD) blev størstedelen af de 514 kendte tvister, der blev indledt inden udgangen af 2012, indbragt af investorer fra USA. De anlagde 24 % af alle sagerne. Store virksomheder har benyttet sig af disse sager til at udfordre grøn energi, miljørestriktioner, sundhedspolitikker osv. Bestemmelser om tvistbilæggelse mellem investorer og stater under TTIP-aftalen ville gøre det muligt at forbigå velfungerende nationale retssystemer i Europa, udfordre den lovgivning, der er vedtaget af de nationale regeringer, og anlægge sager direkte mod medlemsstater ved internationale domstole, såfremt de demokratiske bestemmelser på folkesundheds-, miljøbeskyttelses- eller socialbeskyttelsesområdet skulle forhindre dem i at opnå deres forventede fortjeneste.

Kan Kommissionen bekræfte eller afkræfte, at TTIP-forslaget vil tvinge de nationale regeringer til at afstå fra at foretage ændringer i lovgivning, der er relateret til beskyttelse af befolkningen, såfremt disse ændringer kan gå ud over den forventede fortjeneste for interesserede parter, der deltager i aftalen?

Overvejer Kommissionen at indføje bestemmelser om tvistbilæggelse mellem investorer og stater i TTIP-aftalen til trods for de negative virkninger, disse bestemmelser forventes at få for medlemsstaternes nationale og offentlige interesser? I påkommende tilfælde hvad er argumenterne for at indføje dem?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Karel De Gucht
(6. marts 2014)

Det er allerede fra starten vigtigt at understrege, at lovgivningsmæssig sammenhæng i det transatlantiske handels- og investeringspartnerskab (TTIP) er adskilt fra anvendelsen af tvistbilæggelse mellem investorer og stater (ISDS). ISDS-bestemmelser finder ikke anvendelse på nogen af de forpligtelser til lovgivningsmæssig sammenhæng, der forhandles om under TTIP, men kun på et meget begrænset antal ulovlige foranstaltninger, som stater kan træffe over for en investor som f.eks. ekspropriation uden erstatning, forskelsbehandling eller nægtelse af adgang til klage og domstolsprøvelse. Selv om langt de fleste investeringer forløber gnidningsløst, støder investorer undertiden på problemer i værtslandet. Det er grunden til, at bilaterale investeringsaftaler — over 3 000, hvoraf EU-medlemsstaterne alene har undertegnet mere end 1 400 — giver mulighed for, at en investor kan benytte sig af ISDS.

Kommissionen er dog klar over, at de seneste ISDS-sager har givet anledning til bekymring i offentligheden, og har siden 2010 foretaget væsentlige ændringer af ISDS-systemet. ISDS-bestemmelserne i EU-aftaler, herunder TTIP, giver ikke en investor mulighed for effektivt at anfægte en ikke-diskriminerende lovgivningsmæssig foranstaltning af hensyn til almenvellet som f.eks. folkesundheden eller miljøet, medmindre denne foranstaltning var åbenlyst vilkårlig — hvilket under alle omstændigheder vil være uforenelig med den måde, hvorpå EU og dens medlemsstater regulerer.

Det følger af ovenstående, at Kommissionen ikke er enig i, at ISDS forventes at få negative virkninger for medlemsstaternes nationale og offentlige interesser. Rådet har også bemyndiget Kommissionen til at føre forhandlingerne om ISDS. Ifølge FN's statistikker er EU-investorer de investorer, der hyppigst benytter sig af ISDS. I 2012 blev 60 % af sagerne indbragt af EU-investorer, mens kun 7,7 % blev indbragt af investorer fra USA.

([1]) http://www.information.dk/482156.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014439/13
to the Commission
Morten Messerschmidt (EFD)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: EU-US trade agreement

In the light of the third round of EU-US negotiations on the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), a number of concerns have been expressed regarding the leaked Commission negotiating proposal 'TTIP: Cross-cutting disciplines and Institutional provisions, Position paper — Chapter on Regulatory Coherence' ([1]). The existence of this document was not denied by John Clancy, EU Spokesperson for Trade, in his statement of 17 December 2013.

According to a number of publications, the abovementioned document does not affect the Member States' sovereign right to legislate, but interested parties participating in the agreement must be provided with all the information and consulted. On behalf of the European Union, the Commission would have the right to monitor regulatory developments at the Member State level and to intervene if a conflict should arise between parties participating in the agreement.

Across the world, big business uses investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provisions in trade and investor agreements to claim compensation for democratically made laws protecting the public interest. According to 2013 data from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the majority of the 514 known disputes initiated by the end of 2012 were launched by US investors. They filed 24% of all cases. Big business has used these lawsuits to challenge green energy, environmental restrictions, health policies and so on. ISDS provisions under the TTIP agreement would make it possible to bypass well-functioning European domestic court systems, to challenge regulations put in place by national governments and to start direct litigation against Member States before international tribunals, if democratic decisions in the area of public health or environmental or social protection impeded their expected profits.

Can the Commission confirm or deny that the TTIP proposal will oblige national governments to refrain from making changes to public-protection-related legislation where such changes could undermine the profit expectations of interested parties participating in the agreement?

Is the Commission considering including ISDS provisions in the TTIP agreement despite their anticipated negative impact on Member States' national and public interests? If so, what are the arguments for their inclusion?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2014)

At the outset, it is important to underline that regulatory coherence in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the use of Investor-State Dispute settlement (ISDS) are distinct. ISDS provisions would not apply to any regulatory coherence obligations negotiated in TTIP, but only to a very limited number of unlawful actions that states may take against an investor such as expropriation without compensation, discrimination or a denial of access to justice. While the vast majority of investments proceed smoothly, investors do at times encounter problems in the host state. That is why bilateral investment agreements — over 3 000 of which EU Member States alone have signed more than 1 400 — include the possibility for an investor to go to ISDS.

However, the Commission is aware of public concerns around recent ISDS cases and since 2010, has been making significant changes to the ISDS system. In EU agreements, including TTIP, ISDS provisions will not allow an investor to successfully challenge a non-discriminatory regulatory measure for a public purpose, such as public health or the environment, unless that measure was manifestly arbitrary — which would be in any event incompatible with the way the Union and its Member States regulate.

It follows from the above, that the Commission does not share the view that ISDS will have an anticipated negative impact on Member States' national and public interests. The Council has also authorised the Commission to negotiate ISDS. In fact, EU investors are the most prolific users of ISDS, according to UN statistics. In 2012, 60% of cases were brought by EU investors, while only 7.7% were brought by US investors.

([1]) http://www.information.dk/482156

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014440/13
à la Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(23 décembre 2013)

Objet: Pérennisation de la ligne ferroviaire Nice-Vintimille-Breil-Tende-Cuneo

La ligne de chemin de fer Nice-Cuneo, coadministrée par la France et l'Italie, bénéficiera d'un soutien financier précieux du gouvernement italien à hauteur de 29 millions d'euros pour des actions de maintenance, de gestion et de modernisation. Néanmoins, l'avenir de cette ligne historique, lien de vie transfrontalier et d'échanges, reste incertain. Les systèmes de sécurité entre la France et l'Italie restent pour l'heure incompatibles. À cela s'ajoute l'entrée en vigueur de nouveaux horaires, suite à la décision de Réseau ferré de France d'imposer, entre Breil et Tende, une limitation de vitesse à 40 km/h (au lieu de 80) et à la décision piémontaise de réduire le cadencement de 8 à 2 aller et retour quotidiens situés en dehors des horaires pendulaires. Ceci entraîne les conséquences suivantes: rallongement des temps de parcours, correspondances impossibles et suppression de trains.

Cette situation provoque la colère des usagers français et italiens, notamment les pendulaires, les salariés, les étudiants des lycées locaux et des universités de Nice et de Turin, les touristes et les skieurs. Une manifestation regroupant 200 personnes s'est tenue le 15 décembre dernier à Tende à l'initiative du collectif de défense de la ligne internationale Nice-Tende-Cuneo-Vintimille composé de la REN, collectif Résistance en Roya, foyer rural de Tende — La Brigue, avec le soutien de l'Association des Amis du Rail Azuréen. Il s'agit de la sixième manifestation en 18 mois.

1. La Commission n'a certes pas de compétence pour se prononcer sur le maintien ou la fermeture de lignes dans les États membres ou pour influencer les décisions prises par les entreprises ferroviaires concernant l'exploitation de lignes existantes. Mais ne considère-t-elle pas que la mise en danger de la ligne Nice-Cuneo entrave la liberté de circulation des citoyens européens concernés et constitue un frein à la réalisation du marché intérieur?

2. Dans le cadre des négociations à venir sur la réforme ferroviaire, la Commission compte-t-elle renforcer l'interopérabilité des systèmes ferroviaires pour couvrir l'ensemble du réseau européen?

3. Pourrait-elle faire en sorte que la ligne Nice-Cuneo soit équipée en ERTMS *(European Railway Traffic Management System)*?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(20 février 2014)

En janvier 2013, la Commission a proposé le quatrième paquet ferroviaire ([1]) qui contient des mesures visant à faciliter l'autorisation des véhicules ferroviaires utilisés dans plusieurs États membres et la certification d'entreprises ferroviaires actives dans différents États membres.

La Commission a pour objectif d'améliorer l'interopérabilité du système ferroviaire afin de couvrir l'ensemble du réseau de l'UE, ce qui est déjà prévu par l'article 1er, paragraphe 4, l'article 8 et l'annexe I, point 4, de la directive 2008/57/CE ([2]). Sur cette base, le champ d'application des spécifications techniques d'interopérabilité (STI) est étendu à l'ensemble du réseau ferroviaire de l'Union.

La ligne Nice-Cuneo n'est pas un tronçon d'un corridor du système européen de gestion du trafic ferroviaire (ERTMS) (tel que défini au chapitre 7 de la décision 2012/88/UE ([3])) et n'appartient pas au réseau transeuropéen central ou global. Dès lors, il incombe aux États membres concernés de décider de moderniser ou d'améliorer le système de contrôle-commande et de signalisation de cette ligne.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/packages/2013_en.htm
([2]) Directive 2008/57/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 17 juin 2008 relative à l'interopérabilité du système ferroviaire au sein de la Communauté (refonte), JO L 191 du 18.7.2008.
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:051:0001:0065:FR:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014440/13
to the Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Sustainability of the Nice/Ventimiglia-Breil-Tende-Cuneo railway line

The Nice-Cuneo railway line, which is run jointly by France and Italy, is set to receive valuable financial support from the Italian Government to the tune of EUR 29 million for maintenance, management and modernisation work. However, the future of this historic rail link serving cross-border communities and trade remains uncertain. The safety systems used in France and Italy are still not yet compatible with one another. In addition, new timetables have been introduced as a result of the decision by RFF (the company responsible for rail infrastructure in France) to restrict speeds to 40 km/h (instead of 80 km/h) between Breil and Tende, and the decision of the region of Piedmont to reduce the frequency of trains from 8 to 2 return trips per day outside of peak commuting times. The knock-on effects of this are increased journey times, impossible connections and the cancellation of trains.

This situation has angered both French and Italian rail users, in particular commuters, staff, students at local schools and universities in Nice and Turin, tourists and skiers. A demonstration of around 200 people was held on 15 December 2013 in Tende, organised by the action group for the protection of the Nice-Tende-Cuneo-Ventimiglia international line. The group consists of the REN environmental protection group, the Résistance en Roya action group and the rural union of Tende-La Brigue, with the support of the Friends of the Riviera Railway Association. This was the sixth demonstration in 18 months.

1. While the Commission is of course unable to comment on the continuation or closure of lines in Member States or to influence the decisions made by rail companies with regard to the use of existing lines, does the Commission not consider that the threat to the Nice-Cuneo line is impeding the freedom of movement of the European citizens affected and is hindering the completion of the internal market?

2. Within the context of the coming negotiations on railway reform, does the Commission intend to increase the interoperability of railway systems so as to cover the entire European network?

3. Could the Commission ensure that the Nice-Cuneo line is equipped with ERTMS (European Railway Traffic Management System)?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2014)

In January 2013, the Commission proposed the 4th Railway package ([1]), which contains measures to facilitate the authorisation of rail vehicles used in several Member States and the certification of railway undertakings operating in several Member States.

The Commission intends to increase the interoperability of the railway system so as to cover the entire EU network. This is already foreseen by Article 1(4), Article 8 and Annex I, Section 4 of Directive 2008/57/EC ([2]). On this basis, the scope of Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSIs) is being extended to the entire EU rail network.

The Nice-Cuneo line is not a section of a European Railway Traffic Management System (ERTMS) corridor (as identified in Chapter 7 of Decision 2012/88/EU ([3])) and not part of the core or comprehensive trans-European network. It is therefore for the Member States concerned to decide to renew or upgrade the control-command and signalling system of that line.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/packages/2013_en.htm
([2]) Directive 2008/57/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 on the interoperability of the rail system within the Community (Recast) OJ L 191, 18.7.2008.
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:051:0001:0065:EN:PDF

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-014441/13
à la Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(23 décembre 2013)

Objet: Application de la directive sur les soins de santé transfrontaliers

Le 4 avril 2011 a été publié au Journal officiel de l'Union européenne la directive relative à l'application des droits des patients en matière de soins de santé transfrontaliers.

Malgré cette très belle avancée communautaire, des difficultés d'application de cette directive continuent de se faire sentir dans les États membres.

Ainsi une opération moins onéreuse, pratiquée dans un État membre et moins lourde en terme de rémission, continue de ne pas être remboursée dans l'État membre d'origine, car elle n'y a pas été pratiquée.

Suite à cet exemple particulier mais révélateur de certaines pratiques:

La Commission a-t-elle évalué la transposition de la directive dans les États membres?

A-t-elle fait ou souhaite-t-elle faire des recommandations aux États membres pour l'application de cette directive?

Souhaite-t-elle faire des propositions pour que les patients qui n'ont pas eu accès aux remboursements justifiés puissent effectuer un recours plus facile qu'une procédure judiciaire lourde et coûteuse?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(17 février 2014)

La Commission examine actuellement la manière dont la directive 2011/24/UE ([1]) relative à l'application des droits des patients en matière de soins de santé transfrontaliers a été transposée dans les États membres.

Concernant les États membres qui n'ont pas encore notifié à la Commission les mesures nationales transposant la directive 2011/24/UE ou dans le cas où les mesures nationales notifiées ne seraient pas conformes à ladite directive, la Commission entend appliquer les procédures prévues par le traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne pour absence de transposition de la législation de l'Union.

L'article 9 de la directive 2011/24/UE prévoit que les États membres veillent à ce que les décisions individuelles concernant le recours à des soins de santé transfrontaliers et le remboursement des coûts de soins de santé engagés dans un autre État membre puissent faire l'objet d'un réexamen et de procédures judiciaires. La Commission n'a pas l'intention de présenter une proposition à ce sujet. Elle examinera plutôt si la directive est correctement transposée et mise en œuvre dans les États membres et présentera au Parlement européen et au Conseil, avant la fin de l'année 2015, un rapport sur l'application de la directive.

([1]) JO L 88 du 4.4.2011, p. 45.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014441/13
to the Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Application of the directive on cross-border healthcare

The directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare was published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* on 4 April 2011.

Despite this extremely important step forward made on a Community level, there are still issues concerning the proper application of this directive in Member States.

For example, a relatively inexpensive operation requiring a comparatively short recovery period was performed in one Member State, but the patient has still not been reimbursed for this operation in their Member State of origin on the grounds that it was not performed there.

In the light of this specific example, that nevertheless reveals certain general practices:

Has the Commission assessed how the directive has been transposed in the Member States?

Has it made, or does it intend to make, any recommendations to the Member States on how this directive should be applied?

Does it intend to put forward any proposals to make it easier for patients who have not received the reimbursements to which they are entitled to lodge an appeal without having to initiate long and expensive legal proceedings?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(17 February 2014)

The Commission is currently assessing how Directive 2011/24/EU ([1]) on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare has been transposed in the Member States.

With regard to those Member States who have not yet notified the Commission of national measures transposing Directive 2011/24/EU or where the notified national measures would not comply with this directive, the Commission intends to launch the procedures laid down in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union with regard to failure to transpose EU legislation.

Article 9 of Directive 2011/24/EU requires Member States to ensure that individual decisions regarding the use of cross-border healthcare and the reimbursement of costs of healthcare incurred in another Member States are subject to review and judicial proceedings. The Commission is not intending to put forward a proposal on this issue. Rather, the Commission will focus on correct transposition and implementation of the directive in the Member States and submit to the European Parliament and Council, before the end of 2015, a report on the operation of the directive.

([1]) OJ L 88, 4.4.2011.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014442/13
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(23 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: I vantaggi dell'euro

Con la crisi sociale, derivata da quella economica e conseguente alle politiche di stretta austerità imposte dall'UE, si diffonde nell'opinione pubblica italiana e in certi media l'idea che l'introduzione dell'euro come moneta comune sia responsabile di tutte le nefandezze che stiamo vivendo: disoccupazione, chiusura e fallimento di migliaia di imprese, restrizione rigida del credito, accentuata diminuzione della produzione e dei consumi, e così via.

Tale campagna anti-euro, spesso demagogica e sovente disinformata, rappresenta però una grande distorsione dell'informazione, che a sua volta può recare danni alla campagna elettorale per il rinnovo del Parlamento europeo del maggio 2014.

1. Al fine di evitare derive populiste inopportune, può la Commissione elencarci i vantaggi (economici e sociali) che l'Italia (come gli altri Paesi appartenenti alla zona euro) ha conseguito attraverso l'adozione della moneta unica?

2. È essa disposta a produrre eventualmente un opuscolo, in un linguaggio comprensibile dal grande pubblico e da diffondere a grande tiratura, per far conoscere ai cittadini europei i vantaggi conseguiti?

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(14 febbraio 2014)

1. Oltre ad essere diventato la seconda valuta di riserva a livello internazionale, l'euro ha apportato numerosi vantaggi alle economie che lo hanno adottato, ad esempio stimolando gli scambi transfrontalieri, l'integrazione finanziaria e gli investimenti. Le difficoltà legate ai riallineamenti dei tassi di cambio all'interno dell'area dell'euro sono ormai un ricordo del passato. Le aspettative di inflazione sono state tenute sotto controllo e hanno favorito la crescita e l'occupazione. Grazie all'euro, l'integrazione dei mercati finanziari ha consentito alle famiglie e alle imprese di beneficiare di tassi di interesse più bassi. Sul mercato unico, l'introduzione della moneta unica ha generato grandi opportunità di risparmio e di investimento in altri Stati membri. Infine, i consumatori hanno beneficiato di una migliore comparabilità dei prezzi. Tutto ciò ha contribuito a un prolungato periodo di crescita dell'attività economica in tutta l'area dell'euro.

La crisi finanziaria mondiale ha però evidenziato carenze nella struttura originale su cui si basa l'euro, in particolare per quanto riguarda la sorveglianza di bilancio, il coordinamento macroeconomico e il quadro normativo per le banche. Il Parlamento europeo, il Consiglio e la Commissione si stanno occupando insieme di questi punti deboli al fine di istituire un nuovo quadro di governance economica e di creare l'unione bancaria. Questi sforzi stanno contribuendo ad aumentare la resistenza dell'area dell'euro di fronte agli shock di grande portata e permetteranno all'euro di agire nuovamente da catalizzatore della crescita, con benefici costanti generati dagli investimenti transfrontalieri. L'euro permetterà inoltre di promuovere la crescita nei settori produttivi, con costi di finanziamento ridotti rispetto a quelli che comporterebbe una valuta nazionale.

2. La Commissione continuerà a rivedere e ad ampliare il proprio materiale di comunicazione con il pubblico, anche con riguardo ai vantaggi dell'euro. A tal fine, nel luglio 2013 la DG ECFIN ha pubblicato l'opuscolo «Breve guida all'euro» (cfr. http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/general/pdf/short_guide_euro_it.pdf).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014442/13
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: The benefits of the euro

As a result of the social crisis, which stemmed from the economic crisis and also from the strict austerity policies imposed by the EU, there is a widely held belief among the Italian public and in certain media that the introduction of the euro as the single currency is the cause of all the atrocities we are experiencing: unemployment, the closure and collapse of thousands of businesses, rigorous rationing of credit, a dramatic drop in production and expenditure and so on.

This often inflammatory and frequently misinformed campaign against the euro is, however, a gross misrepresentation of the information and could in turn prejudice the electoral campaign in the run-up to the next European Parliament elections in May 2014.

1. In order to avoid any ill-timed populist drifts, could the Commission list the benefits (both economic and social) that Italy (along with the other countries in the eurozone) has gained by adopting the single currency?

2. Could the Commission perhaps produce a pamphlet, written in a language that can be understood by the general public, which can be distributed in large numbers with the aim of familiarising European citizens with these benefits?

Answer given by VP Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2014)

1. Among its numerous economic benefits, the euro has boosted cross-border trade, financial integration and investment in its economies and has become the world's second international reserve currency. Disruptive exchange rate realignments within the euro area are now a thing of the past. Inflation expectations have been kept under control and fostered growth and employment. Financial market integration under the euro has enabled households and firms to benefit from lower interest rates. Within the single market, the single currency created ample saving and investment opportunities in other Member States. Finally, consumers have benefitted from better price comparability. All this facilitated a prolonged period of increased economic activity across the euro area.

But the global financial crisis revealed weaknesses in the original architecture underpinning the euro, notably in fiscal surveillance, macroeconomic coordination and the regulatory framework for banks. The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission have been addressing these weaknesses together to establish a new economic governance framework, as well as the banking union. These efforts are making the euro area more resilient to large shocks and will allow the euro to again act as a catalyst for growth, with continuing benefits from cross-border investment. It will also encourage growth in productive sectors, at a lower financing costs than a national currency would achieve.

2. The Commission will continue to revise and extend its range of public communication material, including on the benefits of the euro. To this end, DG ECFIN published its 'Short Guide to the Euro' in July 2013.
(see: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/general/pdf/short_guide_euro_en.pdf).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014443/13
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE)
(23 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: «Legge di stabilità» italiana e procedura di notifica

Premesso che:

il Parlamento italiano sta in questi giorni discutendo la cosiddetta «legge di stabilità» che, secondo le ultime agenzie, è stata approvata dalla Camera dei Deputati e sarà votata lunedì dal Senato della Repubblica;

all'interno del maxi-emendamento, presentato secondo la procedura della «fiducia», si delineano, negli articoli 17 ter (che aggiunge un articolo 17 bis al DPR 633/72), 119 bis, 119 ter e 119 quater i riferimenti a quella che la stampa ha chiamato «*webtax*», vale a dire un'imposta mirante a colpire i redditi prodotti in Italia da imprese stabilite altrove, anche in altri paesi dell'UE, attraverso l'obbligo ad acquistare servizi di pubblicità e link sponsorizzati online da imprese titolari di una partita IVA rilasciata dall'amministrazione finanziaria italiana;

una prima bozza parlava genericamente di merci e servizi acquistati online, mentre la successiva riduzione del settore ha portato alcune riviste specializzate a ribattezzare l'imposta «*Google Tax*» dal nome del leader di mercato nei settori specificati;

alcuni Commissari hanno già espresso riserve che comunque sono soggette alla valutazione del testo definitivo;

la direttiva 98/34/CE prevede una procedura di notifica;

la normativa fiscale resta sostanzialmente competenza nazionale, fatti salvi gli impegni internazionali sottoscritti;

può la Commissione precisare quanto segue:

1. ritiene essa che la procedura di notifica richiamata sia stata rispettata e come intende essa comunque intervenire?

2. ritiene essa che tale norma, che sia o meno stata approvata alla data di risposta alla presente interrogazione, possa essere considerata compatibile con il mercato interno?

3. ritiene essa che l'individuazione così specifica del settore possa o meno essere considerata discriminatoria?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(26 febbraio 2014)

La Commissione è a conoscenza degli sviluppi legislativi cui l'onorevole deputato fa riferimento e del fatto che la cosiddetta «legge di stabilità 2014» (legge 27 dicembre 2013, n. 147) ([1]) è stata adottata il 27 dicembre 2013 ed è entrata in vigore il 1º gennaio 2014.

L'applicazione della disposizione menzionata è sospesa fino al 30 giugno 2014 (*decreto-legge 30 dicembre 2013, n. 150*) ([2]).

La Commissione sta esaminando la legislazione nazionale summenzionata per determinarne la conformità alle norme sia procedurali che sostanziali dell'UE, fra cui:

1. l'obbligo degli Stati membri di notificare alla Commissione le norme in materia di servizi della società dell'informazione, conformemente alla direttiva 98/34/CE, modificata dalla direttiva 98/48/CE;

2. l'obbligo degli Stati membri di non imporre restrizioni alla libera circolazione dei servizi, compresi quelli della società dell'informazione, da un altro Stato membro, come stabilito all'articolo 56 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea e all'articolo della direttiva sul commercio elettronico.

Qualora dall'esame delle normative nazionali in questione dovessero risultare dubbi circa la loro compatibilità con il diritto dell'UE, la Commissione adotterà le misure necessarie.

([1]) http://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:2013-12-27;147!vig.
([2]) http://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:decreto-legge:2013-12-30;150.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014443/13
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Italian 'stability law' and notification procedure

The Italian Parliament is currently debating the so-called 'stability law', which, according to the latest news reports, has been approved by the Chamber of Deputies and will be voted on by the Italian Senate next Monday.

Articles 17-ter (which adds an Article 17-bis to Italian Presidential Decree No 633/72), 119-bis, 119-ter and 119-quater of the massive amendment, which has been coupled with a motion of confidence, refer to what the press has dubbed a 'web tax', in other words a tax that targets the revenue generated in Italy by companies established elsewhere, even in other EU countries, by forcing them to purchase advertising services and sponsored online links from companies that have been issued with an Italian VAT number by the Italian tax authorities;

An initial version of bill referred generically to goods and services purchased online, but the subsequent scaling-back of the law's scope has led to several specialist publications renaming the tax 'Google Tax' in homage to the market leader in the targeted sector.

A number of Commissioners have already expressed their reservations, pending their assessment of the final text, and Directive 98/34/EC sets out a notification procedure to follow.

Tax law remains a Member State matter, subject to any relevant international obligations.

1. Does the Commission believe that the notification procedure referred to above has been complied with and what action, if any, it intends to take?

2. Does it believe that this law, which may or may not have been passed by the time this question is answered, can be regarded as compatible with the internal market?

3. Does it believe that targeting a specific sector in this way could be regarded as discriminatory?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(26 February 2014)

The Commission is aware of the legislative developments the Honourable Member is referring to and the fact that the so called 'Stability Law 2014' (Legge 27 dicembre 2013, n. 147) ([1]) was adopted on 27 December 2013 and entered into force on 1 January 2014.

The application of the provision mentioned is suspended until 30 June 2014 (*Decreto-Legge 30 dicembre 2013, n. 150)* ([2]).

The Commission is currently assessing the above national legislation in view of determining its compliance with both procedural and substantive EU rules, such as:

1. The obligation of Member States to notify to the Commission rules on Information Society Services in accordance with Directive 98/34/EC as amended by Directive 98/48/EC.

2. The obligation of Member States not to restrict the free movement of services, including information society services, from another Member State, as laid down in Article 56 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union and Article 3 of the E-commerce Directive.

Should the analysis of the referred national rules show that there are possible concerns as to the compatibility of these rules with the EC law, the Commission will take appropriate action.

([1]) http://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:2013-12-27;147!vig
([2]) http://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:decreto-legge:2013-12-30;150

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-014446/13
Komisijai
Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)
(2013 m. gruodžio 23 d.)

Tema: Dėl galimų pažeidimų planuojant statyti biomase kūrenamą jėgainę Vilniuje

2013 m. balandžio 24 d. kreipiausi į Komisiją dėl galimų pažeidimų planuojant statyti biomase kūrenamą jėgainę Vilniuje. 2013 m. liepos 5 d. gavau J. Potočniko atsakymą, parengtą Komisijos vardu, kuriame pažymima, jog „informacijos, pateiktos klausime dėl dviejų projektų, neužtenka, kad būtų galima nustatyti galimą ES teisės pažeidimą. Vis dėlto, remiantis iš kitų šaltinių gauta informacija, galėtų būti tam tikrų aspektų, kuriuos reikėtų paaiškinti, o projektai galėtų būti susiję su tam tikromis ES lėšomis. Todėl Komisija prašys, kad Lietuvos valdžios institucijos pateiktų atitinkamą informaciją apie abu projektus“.

Norėčiau Komisijos paklausti, ar Komisija prašė Lietuvos valdžios institucijų pateikti atitinkamą informaciją apie šį projektą? Jeigu taip, tai į kurias Lietuvos valdžios institucijas buvo kreiptasi?

Ar Komisija nustatė, kokius nors galimus ES teisės pažeidimus? Jeigu taip, norėčiau sužinoti, kokių konkrečių priemonių ėmėsi Komisija, kad užkirstų kelią šiems pažeidimams?

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-014447/13
Komisijai
Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)
(2013 m. gruodžio 23 d.)

Tema: Dėl galimų pažeidimų Vilniuje planuojant statyti komunalinių atliekų mechaninio biologinio apdorojimo įrenginį

2013 m. balandžio 24 d. kreipiausi į Komisiją dėl galimų pažeidimų Vilniuje planuojant statyti komunalinių atliekų mechaninio biologinio apdorojimo įrenginį. 2013 m. liepos 5 d. gavau J. Potočniko atsakymą Komisijos vardu, kuriame nurodoma, kad „klausime dėl dviejų projektų pateiktos informacijos neužtenka, kad būtų galima nustatyti galimą ES teisės pažeidimą. Vis dėlto, remiantis iš kitų šaltinių gauta informacija, galėtų būti tam tikrų aspektų, kuriuos reikėtų paaiškinti, o projektai galėtų būti susiję su tam tikromis ES lėšomis. Todėl Komisija prašys, kad Lietuvos valdžios institucijos pateiktų atitinkamos informacijos apie abu projektus.“

Norėčiau Komisijos paklausti, ar Komisija prašė Lietuvos valdžios institucijų pateikti atitinkamos informacijos apie šį projektą? Jeigu taip, tai kokių Lietuvos valdžios institucijų Komisija prašė pateikti informaciją?

Ar Komisija nustatė, kokių nors galimų ES teisės pažeidimų? Ir jeigu taip, norėčiau sužinoti, kokių konkrečių priemonių ėmėsi Komisija siekdama užkirsti kelią šiems galimiems pažeidimams?

Bendras atsakymas, J. Potočniko atsakymas Komisijos vardu
(2014 m. vasario 21 d.)

Pasinaudodama „EU Pilot“ sistema, Komisija paprašė Lietuvos valdžios institucijų pateikti paaiškinimų dėl šių dviejų projektų. Komisija vis dar laukia atsakymo. Gavusi atsakymą, Komisija atliks įvertinimą ir, jei tyrimo metu paaiškės, kad pažeidžiami ES teisės aktai, imsis atitinkamų veiksmų.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014446/13
to the Commission
Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Possible violations in Vilnius in relation to biomass power plant construction plans

On 24 April 2013, I applied to the Commission regarding possible violations in Vilnius in relation to biomass power plant construction plans. On 5 July 2013, I received Mr Potočnik's answer on behalf of the Commission, which noted that 'the information provided in the question for the two projects is insufficient to identify a possible breach of EC law. Nevertheless, information available through other sources shows that there could be issues requiring clarification and that some EU funding may be involved. Therefore the Commission will seek clarification from the Lithuanian authorities on the two projects'.

Has the Commission requested that the Lithuanian authorities provide the relevant information on this project? If so, which Lithuanian authorities have been contacted?

Has the Commission identified any possible violations of EC law? If so, what specific measures were taken by the Commission to prevent these violations?

Question for written answer E-014447/13
to the Commission
Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Possible infringements in Vilnius in relation to plans to construct a municipal waste mechanical biological treatment installation

On 24 April 2013, I applied to the Commission regarding infringements in Vilnius in relation to plans to construct a municipal waste mechanical biological treatment installation. On 5 July 2013, I received Mr Potočnik's answer on behalf of the Commission, which noted that 'the information provided in the question for the two projects is insufficient to identify a possible breach of EC law. Nevertheless, information available through other sources shows that there could be issues requiring clarification and that some EU funding may be involved. Therefore the Commission will seek clarification from the Lithuanian authorities on the two projects'.

Has the Commission requested that the Lithuanian authorities provide the relevant information on this project? If so, which Lithuanian authorities have been contacted?

Has the Commission identified any possible violations of EC law? If so, what specific measures were taken by the Commission to prevent these violations?

Joint answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

The Commission has through the EU Pilot system asked the Lithuanian authorities for clarifications on the two projects. The Commission is still awaiting a reply. Once a response is provided, the Commission will carry out an assessment and take appropriate action should its investigation reveal any breach of EU legislation.

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-014448/13
Komisijai
Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)
(2013 m. gruodžio 23 d.)

Tema: Gestacinis cukrinis diabetas

Daugiau kaip 20 proc. suaugusių ES gyventojų turi viršsvorio ir tai kelia rimtą epideminio masto sveikatos problemą. Dėl moterų gestacinio cukrinio diabeto ir nutukimo nėštumo metu labai padaugėja perinatalinių susirgimų ir mirties atvejų, o joms gimę vaikai patiria didesnę nutukimo ir cukrinio diabeto riziką. Tikėtina, kad nėščios moterys, kurioms diagnozuotas gestacinis cukrinis diabetas, ateityje susirgs 2 tipo cukriniu diabetu. Europoje gestacinio cukrinio diabeto atvejai nustatomi 2-20 proc. nėščiųjų, bet vis dar nėra jokios visuotinio tikrinimo praktikos, jokios bendros tikrinimo metodikos ir nevykdomas joks visuotinis tikrinimo rezultatų vertinimas.

Ar Komisija ketina skatinti mokslinius tyrimus ir inovacijas gestacinio cukrinio diabeto profilaktikos, ankstyvo nustatymo ir gydymo srityje? Ar Komisija ketina parengti ES lygmens strategiją, skirtą visuotiniam nėščiųjų tikrinimui dėl gestacinio cukrinio diabeto optimizuoti ir standartizuoti? Ar Komisija ketina atlikti efektyvius poveikio sveikatai vertinimus įgyvendinant visas pagrindines ES ir nacionalinės politikos kryptis?

T. Borgo atsakymas Komisijos vardu
(2014 m. kovo 3 d.)

Europos Komisija žino, kokia svarbi tolesnei žmogaus sveikatai yra mityba ankstyvuoju vystymosi periodu. Pagal šeštąją ir septintąją mokslinių tyrimų, technologinės plėtros ir demonstracinės veiklos bendrąsias programas Komisija parėmė kelis projektus, kuriais siekiama išsiaiškinti, koks yra mitybos poveikis susirgimams lėtinėmis ligomis, tokiomis kaip 2 tipo diabetas ir nutukimas. Tokiems projektams, kaip EARLY NUTRITION ([1]), EARNEST ([2]) ir PREVIEW ([3]), skirta 30 milijonų eurų. Pavyzdžiui, projekto EARLY NUTRITION tikslas – išnagrinėti svarbiausias galimas nutukimo ir susijusių sutrikimų ankstyvuoju gyvenimo etapu priežastis ir nustatyti prevencijos būdus.

Bendrojoje mokslinių tyrimų ir inovacijų programoje „Horizontas 2020“ (2014-2020 m.) numatyta galimybių imtis tolesnių mokslinių tyrimų, susijusių su šiuo klausimu. Daugiau informacijos apie esamas finansavimo galimybes galima rasti EB Mokslinių tyrimų ir inovacijų portale ([4]).

Komisija neketina parengti ES lygmens strategijos, kuria būtų siekiama sukurti standartinį nėščių moterų tyrimą dėl gestacinio diabeto; tai turėtų atlikti valstybės narės, jei joms tai atrodo būtina.

Komisija atlieka visų pagrindinių ES veiksmų ir iniciatyvų poveikio sveikatai vertinimą, tačiau neketina vertinti visų valstybių narių nacionalinės politikos priemonių poveikio sveikatai, nes tai yra valstybių narių atsakomybė.

([1]) http://www.early-nutrition.org/related-projects.html_
([2]) http://www.metabolic-programming.org/researchprogramme.htm
([3]) http://www.preview.ning.com/
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/index.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014448/13
to the Commission
Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Gestational diabetes

Over 20% of the adult population of the EU is overweight, posing a serious health problem on an epidemic scale. Gestational diabetes and obesity during pregnancy lead to higher rates of perinatal illnesses and mortality, and the children born to these women face a higher risk of suffering from obesity and diabetes. Pregnant women diagnosed with gestational diabetes are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes at a later stage. The incidence of gestational diabetes ranges from 2% to 20% of pregnancies in Europe, yet there is no practice of universal screening, no single methodology for check-ups and no general assessment of screening results.

Does the Commission intend to promote research and innovation in the area of the prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of gestational diabetes? Does the Commission intend to draw up an EU-level strategy aimed at optimising and standardising the universal screening of pregnant women for gestational diabetes? Does the Commission intend to carry out effective health impact assessments when implementing all major EU and national policies?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(3 March 2014)

The European Commission is aware of the important impact of nutrition during early development on later health. Under the Sixth and Seventh Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development, the Commission has supported several projects to better understand the short and long-term effects of nutrition on the development of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and obesity. Such projects, which represent an investment of EUR 30 million, include EARLY NUTRITION ([1]), EARNEST ([2]), and PREVIEW ([3]). For example, EARLY NUTRITION aims to explore hypotheses on likely causes and pathways to prevention of early life origins of obesity and associated disorders.

Horizon 2020 — The framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) will offer opportunities to address further research on this subject. Information on current funding opportunities can be obtained at the EC Research and Innovation Participant Portal ([4]).

The Commission does not intend to draw up an EU level strategy for a standardised screening of pregnant women for gestational diabetes; this activity would be for the Member States to organise if considered necessary.

While the Commission conducts impact assessments for all major EU actions and initiatives on health, it does not intend to carry out health impact assessments for all national policies, as this is a national responsibility.

([1]) http://www.early-nutrition.org/related-projects.html
([2]) http://www.metabolic-programming.org/researchprogramme.htm
([3]) http://www.preview.ning.com/
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/index.html

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-014449/13
Komisijai
Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)
(2013 m. gruodžio 23 d.)

Tema: Integrali Lietuvos geležinkelių infrastruktūros valdymo sistema

Europos Parlamento Transporto ir turizmo komitetas balsuos dėl Lietuvos geležinkeliams svarbių teisės aktų projektų – ketvirtojo geležinkelių dokumentų rinkinio. Jį sudaro Europos Parlamento ir Tarybos direktyvos, kuria dėl keleivių vežimo geležinkeliais valstybės viduje paslaugų rinkos atvėrimo ir geležinkelių infrastruktūros valdymo iš dalies keičiama 2012 m. lapkričio 21 d. Europos Parlamento ir Tarybos direktyva 2012/34/ES, kuria sukuriama bendra Europos geležinkelių erdvė, projektas (toliau Rinkos atvėrimo ir geležinkelių infrastruktūros valdymo direktyvos projektas), Europos Parlamento ir Tarybos reglamento, kuriuo dėl šalių keleivinio geležinkelių transporto paslaugų rinkų atvėrimo iš dalies keičiamas Reglamentas (EB) Nr. 1370/2007, projektas, Europos Parlamento ir Tarybos direktyvos dėl geležinkelių sistemos sąveikos Europos Sąjungoje (nauja redakcija) projektas (toliau Sąveikos direktyvos projektas), Europos Parlamento ir Tarybos direktyvos dėl geležinkelių saugos (nauja redakcija) projektas (toliau Saugos direktyvos projektas) ir Europos Parlamento ir Tarybos reglamento dėl Europos Sąjungos geležinkelių agentūros, kuriuo panaikinamas Reglamentas (EB) Nr. 881/2004, projektas. Šio balsavimo metu Europos Parlamento Transporto ir turizmo komitetas turės pateikti nuomonę dėl šių aktualių Europos Komisijos pateiktų pasiūlymų: geležinkelių išskaidymo (t. y. geležinkelių infrastruktūros valdymo veiklos ir vežimų geležinkeliais veiklos atskyrimo) (šiam klausimui aktualūs Rinkos atvėrimo ir geležinkelių infrastruktūros valdymo direktyvos projekto 7-7c straipsniai), geležinkelių infrastruktūros valdytojų bendradarbiavimo (šiuo atveju aktualus Rinkos atvėrimo ir geležinkelių infrastruktūros valdymo direktyvos projekto 7e straipsnis), geležinkelio įmonių (vežėjų) saugos sertifikavimo (šiam klausimui aktualus Saugos direktyvos projekto 10 straipsnis) ir leidimų teikti geležinkelių riedmenis rinkai išdavimo (šiam klausimui aktualus Sąveikos direktyvos projekto 20 straipsnis).

Ar Komisija nemano, kad norint įgyvendinti pirmiau nurodytus pakeitimus turės būti visiškai išskaidyti Lietuvoje veikiantys integruoti geležinkeliai ir atsiras pridėtinės vertės neturinčios kliūtys geležinkelių infrastruktūros valdytojams bendradarbiauti?

Ar Komisija yra įvertinusi geležinkelių infrastruktūros valdymo veiklos ir vežimo geležinkeliais veiklos atskyrimo pasekmes Lietuvai ir kitoms ES šalims, kuriose veikia integruota geležinkelių sistema?

Komisijos nario S. Kallaso atsakymas Komisijos vardu
(2014 m. vasario 11 d.)

Komisijos pasiūlymu dėl infrastruktūros valdytojo valdymo numatoma visiškai atskirti infrastruktūros valdymą nuo vežimo geležinkeliais veiklos, tačiau taip pat leidžiamos integruotos struktūros, jei numatytos struktūrinės apsaugos priemonės (vadinamoji Kinų siena), kad būtų užtikrintas infrastruktūros valdytojo nepriklausomumas priimant sprendimus. Tai būtina siekiant sudaryti nediskriminacinės prieigos prie tinklo galimybę visoms geležinkelio įmonėms. Tai paskatins konkurenciją geležinkelių rinkose, kurios kol kas kai kuriose valstybėse narėse, tarp jų – ir Lietuvoje, faktiškai nėra. Be to, tai bus naudinga geležinkelių naudotojams, įskaitant keleivius ir krovinių ekspeditorius, nes bus sukurta daugiau galimybių rinktis, o kainos ir kokybė bus geresnės. Komisijos nuomone, infrastruktūros valdytojų užduotis yra išsaugoti geležinkelių sistemos vientisumą. Priėmus Komisijos pasiūlymą jiems bendradarbiauti nebus trukdoma. Priešingai, jame numatomos infrastruktūros valdytojų bendradarbiavimo ES mastu institucinės platformos ir infrastruktūros valdytojų bei naudotojų bendradarbiavimas nacionaliniu lygmeniu.

Komisija, siekdama ištirti skirtingų organizacinių struktūrų poveikį geležinkelių sistemoms, atliko išsamų poveikio vertinimą ([1]). Jame daroma išvada, kad šalyse (dabar tai dauguma valstybių narių), kuriose sistemos atskiros, nerimauti dėl tokio tipo struktūros (koordinavimo problemų, sąnaudų ir kt.) nėra pagrįsta, ir kad iš tiesų atskyrimas turėjo teigiamo poveikio geležinkelių sistemos veikimo kokybei ir sąnaudoms, o sauga nesumažėjo.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/packages/2013_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014449/13
to the Commission
Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Integral railway infrastructure governance system in Lithuania

The European Parliament Committee on Transport and Tourism is to vote on draft legislation relevant to railway undertakings in Lithuania: the Fourth Railway Package, which consists of the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2012/34/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of21 November 2012 establishing a single European railway area, as regards the opening of the market for domestic passenger transport services by rail and the governance of railway infrastructure (hereinafter referred to as the proposal for a directive of the opening of the market and the governance of railway infrastructure); proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 concerning the opening of the market for domestic passenger transport services by rail in Member States; proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the interoperability of the rail system within the European Union (recast) (hereinafter referred to as the proposed interoperability directive); proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on railway safety (recast) (hereinafter referred to as the proposed safety directive); and proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Union Agency for Railways and repealing Regulation (EC) No 881/2004. In so doing the committee will deliver its opinions on the following Commission proposals: railway unbundling (i.e. separation of the activities of railway infrastructure governance and transport by rail) (in this case, Articles 7 to 7c of the proposal for a directive on the opening of the market and the governance of railway infrastructure are relevant); cooperation among railway infrastructure managers (in this case, Article 7e of the proposal for a directive on the opening of the market and the governance of railway infrastructure is relevant); licensing of railway undertakings (carriers) (in this case, Article 10 of the proposed safety directive is relevant); and authorisation procedures for the supply of rolling stock to the market (in this case, Article 20 of the proposed interoperability directive is relevant).

Does the Commission not feel that the implementation of the above changes will completely fragment the integrated railways operating in Lithuania and that, instead of creating added value,--cooperation among railway system managers will merely be obstructed?

Has the Commission assessed the effects on Lithuania and other Member States which operate an integrated railway system as regards unbundling of the activities of railway infrastructure governance and transport by rail?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

The Commission proposal on the governance of the infrastructure manager foresees complete separation of infrastructure management from rail transport operations, but allows also for integrated structures, as long as structural safeguards ('Chinese walls') exist in order to ensure the decision-making independence of the infrastructure manager. This is necessary in order to allow non-discriminatory access to the network to all railway undertakings. This will foster competition in the railway markets, which so far practically does not exist in a number of Member States including Lithuania, and which will be positive for rail users including passengers and freight forwarders, in terms of creating more choice, better prices and better quality. In the Commission's view the task of the infrastructure managers is to preserve the integrity of the rail system. The Commission proposal will not obstruct their cooperation, but on the contrary it foresees institutional platforms for the EU-wide cooperation between infrastructure managers, and cooperation at national level between infrastructure managers and users.

The Commission has made an extensive impact assessment ([1]) to study the effects of different organisational structures for the railway systems. It concludes that in countries with separated systems (which is now a majority of Member States), the worries expressed on that type of structure (coordination problems, costs etc.) are not justified, and that the separation in fact has had a positive influence on the functioning of the rail system in terms of quality and costs, without any prejudice to safety.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/packages/2013_en.htm

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-014450/13
Komisijai
Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)
(2013 m. gruodžio 23 d.)

Tema: Lietuvos geležinkelio įmonių (vežėjų) sertifikavimas ir leidimų teikti geležinkelių riedmenis rinkai išdavimo procedūros

Europos Parlamento Transporto ir turizmo komitetas balsuos dėl Lietuvos geležinkeliams svarbių teisės aktų projektų: Ketvirtojo geležinkelių transporto teisės aktų paketo, kurį sudaro Europos Parlamento ir Tarybos direktyvos, kuria dėl keleivių vežimo geležinkeliais valstybės viduje paslaugų rinkos atvėrimo ir geležinkelių infrastruktūros valdymo iš dalies keičiama 2012 m. lapkričio 21 d. Europos Parlamento ir Tarybos direktyva 2012/34/ES, kuria sukuriama bendra Europos geležinkelių erdvė, projektas (toliau – Rinkos atvėrimo ir geležinkelių infrastruktūros valdymo direktyvos projektas); Europos Parlamento ir Tarybos reglamento, kuriuo dėl šalių keleivinio geležinkelių transporto paslaugų rinkų atvėrimo iš dalies keičiamas Reglamentas (EB) Nr. 1370/2007, projektas; Europos Parlamento ir Tarybos direktyvos dėl geležinkelių sistemos sąveikos Europos Sąjungoje (nauja redakcija) projektas (toliau – Sąveikos direktyvos projektas); Europos Parlamento ir Tarybos direktyvos dėl geležinkelių saugos (nauja redakcija) projektas (toliau – Saugos direktyvos projektas); Europos Parlamento ir Tarybos reglamento dėl Europos Sąjungos geležinkelių agentūros, kuriuo panaikinamas Reglamentas (EB) Nr. 881/2004, projektas. Šio balsavimo metu Europos Parlamento Transporto ir turizmo komitetas turės pasisakyti dėl šių aktualių Europos Komisijos pateiktų pasiūlymų: geležinkelių išskaidymo (t. y. geležinkelių infrastruktūros valdymo veiklos atskyrimo nuo vežimų geležinkeliais veiklų) (šiuo klausimu aktualūs Rinkos atvėrimo ir geležinkelių infrastruktūros valdymo direktyvos projekto 7-7c straipsniai); geležinkelių infrastruktūros valdytojų bendradarbiavimo (šiuo atveju aktualus Rinkos atvėrimo ir geležinkelių infrastruktūros valdymo direktyvos projekto 7e straipsnis); geležinkelio įmonių (vežėjų) saugos sertifikavimo (šiuo klausimu aktualus Saugos direktyvos projekto 10 straipsnis); leidimų teikti geležinkelių riedmenis rinkai išdavimo (šiuo klausimu aktualus Sąveikos direktyvos projekto 20 straipsnis).

Ar Komisija nemano, kad šie pasiūlymai iš esmės apsunkins Lietuvos geležinkelio įmonių (vežėjų) sertifikavimą ir pakeis leidimų teikti geležinkelių riedmenis Lietuvos rinkai išdavimo procedūras, atitinkančias 1520 mm pločio vėžės geležinkelių specifiką?

Ar Komisija įvertino pasekmes Lietuvos ir kitų ES šalių narių atžvilgiu, kuriose veikia integruota geležinkelių sistema?

Komisijos nario S. Kallaso atsakymas Komisijos vardu
(2014 m. vasario 11 d.)

4-ajame geležinkelių dokumentų rinkinyje ([1]) Komisija pasiūlė, kad visus leidimus eksploatuoti riedmenis ES rinkoje ir visus saugos sertifikatus veiklos vykdytojams, veikiantiems Europos Sąjungoje, įskaitant ir Baltijos valstybes, išduotų Europos geležinkelio agentūra (ERA). Tačiau ji taip pat pasiūlė platesnę ERA ir nacionalinių saugos institucijų bendradarbiavimo sistemą. Pagal ją ERA, prieš išduodama leidimus ar saugos sertifikatus, pavyzdžiui, galės kai kurias tikrinimo ir patikros užduotis pavesti atlikti vietos valdžios institucijoms.

Komisija taip pat norėtų pabrėžti, kad vien tas faktas, jog geležinkelio vėžės plotis skiriasi, nėra pagrindas nustatyti kitokią leidimų ar saugos sertifikatų išdavimo procedūrą: šios procedūros turėtų būti suderintos ir grindžiamos tais pačiais sąveikos ir saugos kriterijais. Pagrindiniai Komisijos pasiūlymų šioje srityje tikslai buvo sutrumpinti minėtas procedūras, sumažinti gamintojų ir veiklos vykdytojų sąnaudas ir pašalinti galimą diskriminavimą. Šie tikslai yra visuotiniai, o ne nustatyti konkretiems tinklams.

Komisija taip pat norėtų atkreipti gerbiamo Europos Parlamento nario dėmesį į savo atsakymą į rašytinį klausimą E-014449/2013 ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/packages/2013_en.htm
([2]) Jį galima rasti adresu http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014450/13
to the Commission
Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Licensing of railway undertakings in Lithuania and procedures for authorisation to provide the market with rolling stock

The European Parliament Committee on Transport and Tourism is to vote on legislative projects relevant to railway undertakings in Lithuania: the Fourth Railway Package, which consists of the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2012/34/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 establishing a single European railway area, as regards the opening of the market for domestic passenger transport services by rail and the governance of railway infrastructure (hereinafter referred to as the proposal for a directive of the opening of the market and the governance of railway infrastructure); Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 concerning the opening of the market for domestic passenger transport services by rail in Member States; Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the interoperability of the rail system within the European Union (recast) (hereinafter referred to as the proposal for an interoperability directive); Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on railway safety (recast) (hereinafter referred to as the proposal for a safety directive); and Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Union Agency for Railways and repealing Regulation (EC) No 881/2004. During this vote, the European Parliament Committee on Transport and Tourism will express its opinion on the following current proposals submitted by the European Commission: railway fragmentation (i.e. the separation of the activities of the governance of railway infrastructure and transport by rail) (in this case, Articles 7 to 7c of the proposal for a directive of the opening of the market and the governance of railway infrastructure are relevant); cooperation of governors of railway infrastructure (in this case, Article 7e of the proposal for a directive of the opening of the market and the governance of railway infrastructure is relevant); licensing of railway undertakings (carriers) (in this case, Article 10 of the proposal for a safety directive is relevant); and procedures for authorisation to provide the market with rolling stock (in this case, Article 20 of the proposal for an interoperability directive is relevant).

Does the Commission not feel that these proposals will aggravate the licensing of railway undertakings (carriers) in Lithuania and change the procedures for authorisation to provide the Lithuanian market with rolling stock complying with 1,520 mm gauge-standard specifications?

Has the Commission assessed the effects on Lithuania and other Member States which operate the integrated railway system?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

In its 4th railway package ([1]) the Commission proposed that the European Railway Agency (ERA) issue all authorisations for placing rolling stock on the EU market and all safety certificates for operators active in the EU, including in the Baltic States. However it also proposed an increased cooperation framework between ERA and national safety authorities. On this basis, ERA will be able, for example, to delegate some inspection and verification tasks to local authorities before issuing authorisations or safety certificates.

The Commission would like to stress that the existence of a different track gauge does not *per se* justify a different authorisation or safety certification process: these processes should be harmonised and based on the same interoperability and safety criteria. The main objectives of the Commission proposals in this field were to shorten the length of such procedures, to reduce the costs for the manufacturers and the operators, and to remove possible discriminations. These objectives are universal and not network specific.

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member also to its answer to Written Question E-014449/2013 ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/packages/2013_en.htm
([2]) Available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014451/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(23 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Cártel eléctrico en el Reino de España

La subasta de electricidad celebrada el 19 de diciembre se cerró con un alza del 26,5 % en el precio de la electricidad. Esa subida, junto con la subida de la parte fija del recibo impuesta por el Gobierno, podrían tener como consecuencia que los consumidores pagasen un 11 % más por la electricidad consumida. Existen fundadas sospechas de la existencia de un cártel entre las empresa eléctricas que operan en el Reino de España que manipula a su interés el mercado y los precios de la electricidad.

La Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia no ha validado el concurso «ante la concurrencia de circunstancias atípicas en el desarrollo de la misma y en un contexto de precios elevados en el mercado diario durante las semanas previas».

¿Conoce la Comisión la situación?

¿Tiene intención la Comisión de investigar la posible existencia de un cártel en el sector eléctrico español que está manipulando los mercados eléctricos y que impide una verdadera libre competencia en dichos mercados?

¿Tiene intención la Comisión de tomar algún tipo de medida para garantizar la transparencia del mercado eléctrico español?

¿Cree la Comisión que el elevado precio de la electricidad en el Reino de España y sus continuas subidas afectan a la situación económica, al bienestar de la familias y a la competitividad de las empresas? ¿En qué sentido?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(25 de febrero de 2014)

La Comisión es consciente de que la Comisión Nacional de Mercados y Competencia (CNMC) no validó el 20 de diciembre de 2013 los resultados de la subasta de electricidad «CESUR» celebrada el día anterior. Las razones se detallaban en el informe publicado por la CNMC, que se encuentra actualmente investigando las «circunstancias atípicas» que condujeron a las suspensiones así como el comportamiento de los participantes en la subasta ([1]). Habida cuenta de la investigación que está llevando a cabo la CNMC, que se encuentra en buena posición para investigar y descubrir cualquier comportamiento de cártel o de abuso de mercado en el sector de la electricidad español, la Comisión no tiene previsto investigar este asunto.

La Comisión sigue con interés la reforma en curso del mercado de la electricidad en España y está evaluando si las normas recientemente adoptadas se atienen a la legislación de la UE. En lo que se refiere a las futuras normas, en sus contactos con el Gobierno español y la CNMC, les ha animado a consultar la reforma con todos los interesados.

La composición de los precios de la energía debe basarse en los principios de un mercado competitivo y en los fundamentos económicos. Paralelamente, los Estados miembros deben prestar apoyo a los consumidores vulnerables adoptando medidas que no restrinjan la competencia en los mercados. Si el instrumento escogido para alcanzar este objetivo son las tarifas sociales, estas deben limitarse a los clientes vulnerables.

([1]) Declaración pública de la CNMC de 7 de enero de 2014 http://www.cnmc.es/es-es/Energía/novedadesEnergía/novedadesEnergíadetalle.aspx?id=1709

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014451/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Electricity cartel in Spain

The electricity auction held on 19 December 2013 resulted in a 26.5% rise in the price of electricity. This increase, in conjunction with the increase in the fixed component of bills which is imposed by the Government, could see consumers paying 11% more for the electricity that they use. There are grounds to suspect the existence of a cartel among the electricity companies operating in Spain, and that this cartel is manipulating the market and electricity prices to its advantage.

The National Markets and Competition Commission annulled the auction 'in view of the unusual circumstances in auction proceedings and in the context of higher prices on the daily market in the preceding weeks'.

Is the Commission aware of this situation?

Does the Commission intend to investigate the possible existence of a cartel in the electricity sector in Spain which is manipulating electricity markets and hindering genuine free competition on those markets?

Does the Commission intend to take any action to ensure the transparency of the Spanish electricity market?

Does the Commission believe that the high price of electricity in Spain and the constant increases in that price are affecting the economic situation, the welfare of families and the competitiveness of businesses, and if so, how?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(25 February 2014)

The Commission is aware that the Spanish Competition and Regulatory Authority (CNMC) on 20 December 2013 did not validate the results of the 'CESUR' electricity auction held the day before. The reasons were detailed in the report published by CNMC, which is currently investigating the 'atypical circumstances' that led to the suspension as well as the behaviour of the participants to the auction ([1]). In view of the on-going investigation by the CNMC, which is well placed to investigate and uncover any possible cartel behaviour or market abuses in the electricity sector in Spain, the Commission does not intend to investigate this matter.

The Commission is following with interest the on-going reform of the electricity market in Spain and is assessing the compliance with the EU legislation of the newly adopted rules. As for the upcoming rules, in its contacts with the Spanish Government and the CNMC, it has encouraged them to consult the reform with all stakeholders.

Energy prices should be formed and based on competitive market principles and economic fundamentals. In parallel, Member States should support vulnerable customers through the adoption of measures that do not restrict competition in the markets. If social tariffs are chosen as a tool to reach that objective, they should be limited to vulnerable customers only.

([1]) Public statement by the CNMC of 7 January 2014 http://www.cnmc.es/es-es/Energía/novedadesEnergía/novedadesEnergíadetalle.aspx?id=1709

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-014452/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(23 de diciembre de 2013)

Asunto: Manipulación del euríbor y ciudadanos estafados

Recientemente la Comisión Europea ha sancionado a varios bancos (Deustche Bank, Société Générale, RBS, JP Morgan y Citigroup) y al bróker RP Martin, por conductas contrarias a la competencia al manipular el euríbor entre septiembre de 2005 y mayo de 2008.

Este índice era la referencia para marcar los tipos de interés de los préstamos hipotecarios de hasta un 90 % de las hipotecas registradas en el Estado español en el periodo en el cual esas entidades manipularon el euríbor. Se calcula que esa manipulación supuso el pago por parte de los ciudadanos y personas jurídicas de todo tipo de 35 000 millones de euros de más en intereses.

¿Es consciente la Comisión del perjuicio económico causado por dicha manipulación a personas físicas (ciudadanos) y a personas jurídicas (empresas y entidades de todo tipo)?

¿Ha considerado la Comisión la posibilidad de establecer mecanismos para que los ciudadanos y las personas jurídicas damnificados por dichas prácticas sean resarcidos del perjuicio económico que sufrieron?

Respuesta del Sr. Barnier en nombre de la Comisión
(27 de febrero de 2014)

Se ha comprobado que varios bancos han manipulado índices de referencia (p. ej., LIBOR y Euribor) y la Comisión ha impuesto importantes multas por las infracciones del Derecho de competencia aplicable ([1]).

En lo que respecta a las acciones por daños y perjuicios por el incumplimiento del Derecho de competencia de la UE, en particular las infracciones del artículo 101 del TFUE, los órganos jurisdiccionales nacionales tienen la competencia exclusiva para intervenir sobre la base de las pruebas presentadas por los demandantes. La Comisión no tiene ninguna competencia en materia de litigios civiles. La Comisión propuso el 11 de junio de 2013 una Directiva sobre las demandas por daños y perjuicios ([2]), que tiene por objeto facilitar a los ciudadanos exigir indemnizaciones a escala nacional sobre la base de sus normas antimonopolio. Los colegisladores están debatiendo la propuesta.

La propuesta de Reglamento sobre los índices de referencia ([3]), adoptada por la Comisión el 18 de septiembre de 2013, tiene por objeto una mayor solidez y fiabilidad de los índices de referencia. También exige que las entidades supervisadas evalúen la idoneidad de los índices de referencia utilizados en los contratos de crédito hipotecario. Además, la Directiva sobre el crédito hipotecario, cuya entrada en vigor está prevista en marzo de 2014, exigirá que los acreedores informen a los consumidores en la fase precontractual sobre la naturaleza del tipo deudor y su fórmula de cálculo. los Estados miembros también tendrán que velar por que los índices o tipos de referencia utilizados para calcular el tipo deudor sean claros, comprensibles, objetivos y comprobables por las partes. Los proveedores de índices y los acreedores también tendrán que mantener registros históricos de dichos índices.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-1208_es.htm
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-525_es.htm; http://ec.europa.eu/competition/antitrust/actionsdamages/documents.html
([3]) COM(2013) 0641 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014452/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Euribor rigging and the swindling of citizens

The European Commission recently imposed sanctions on a number of banks (Deutsche Bank, Société Générale, RBS, JP Morgan and Citigroup) and on the broker RP Martin for anti-competitive behaviour, namely the rigging of Euribor rates between September 2005 and May 2008.

This index was used as the reference for setting the interest rates on mortgage loans for up to 90% of all mortgages taken out in Spain in the period during which these institutions were rigging the Euribor. It has been calculated that this rigging led to citizens and legal entities of all kinds paying an extra EUR 35 000 billion in interest.

Is the Commission aware of the financial damage that this rigging caused to natural persons (citizens) and legal entities (businesses and organisations of all kinds)?

Has the Commission considered the possibility of setting up mechanisms to compensate citizens and legal entities for any financial damage suffered as a result of this rigging?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2014)

A number of banks have been found to have manipulated benchmark indices (e.g. LIBOR, EURIBOR) and heavy fines have been imposed upon by the Commission for breaches of the applicable competition law ([1]).

As for damages actions for breaches of EU Competition law including infringement of Article 101 TFEU, national judicatures have the exclusive competence to intervene on the basis of the evidence put forward by the applicants. The Commission has no competence in respect of civil litigations. The Commission proposed on 11 June 2013 a directive on Antitrust Damages Actions ([2]) which aims to make it easier for citizens to claim compensation at national level on the basis of its anti-trust ruling. The proposal is currently discussed by co-legislators.

The Commission's proposal for a regulation on benchmarks ([3]) has been adopted on 18 September 2013 and seeks to enhance the robustness and reliability of benchmarks. It also requires supervised entities to assess the suitability of benchmarks used in mortgage contracts. In addition, the Mortgage Credit Directive, which is expected to enter into force in March 2014, will require creditors to inform consumers at pre-contractual stage about the nature of the borrowing rate and how it is calculated. Member States will also have to ensure that any indexes or reference rates used to calculate the borrowing rate are clear, accessible, objective and verifiable by the parties. Providers of indexes or creditors will also have to maintain historical records of those indexes.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-1208_en.htm
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-525_en.htm; http://ec.europa.eu/competition/antitrust/actionsdamages/documents.html
([3]) COM/2013/0641 final.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014455/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(23. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Beteiligung der EU an Kosten für französische Militärmission

Frankreich hat 1 600 Soldaten entsandt, die mit der Entwaffnung der Milizen in der zentralafrikanischen Hauptstadt Bangui begonnen haben. Nach Ansicht des französischen Außenministers Fabius verteidigt Frankreich in Zentralafrika die Sicherheit aller Europäer. Deshalb solle Europa auch einen Großteil der Kosten für die französische Militärintervention in der Zentralafrikanischen Republik tragen.

1. Wie steht die Kommission zu dieser Forderung?

2. Gibt es überhaupt die Möglichkeit einer finanziellen Beteiligung der EU an der Militärmission eines Mitgliedstaates?

3. Falls ja: unter welchen Voraussetzungen?

4. In welchem Ausmaß wäre die Möglichkeit im Fall der französischen Mission gegeben?

5. Womit würde sichergestellt, dass ein Mitgliedstaat nicht selbstständig und nach eigenem Gutdünken Missionen unternimmt, für deren (Mit-)Finanzierung dann sämtliche Mitgliedstaaten über den EU-Umweg zwangsverpflichtet werden, ohne im Vorfeld darüber mitbestimmen zu können?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(6. März 2014)

1. Die Europäische Union hat rasch und umfassend auf die derzeitige Krise reagiert. Sie unterstützt die Mission der Afrikanischen Union (MISCA) und begrüßt die Unterstützung durch die französische Operation Sangaris. Die Militäroperationen der AU (MISCA) und Frankreichs (Sangaris) stützen sich auf ein Mandat nach Kapitel VII (Resolution 2127 (2013) des VN-Sicherheitsrates).

2. Der VN-Sicherheitsrat verabschiedete am 28. Januar die Resolution 2134 (2014), mit der eine Militäroperation der EU genehmigt und der dafür erforderliche Rechtsrahmen geschaffen wurde. Die Entscheidung der EU, eine Militäroperation einzusetzen, wurde angesichts der anhaltenden Gesetzlosigkeit und materiellen Unsicherheit sowie des gemeinsamen Wunsches getroffen, die Sicherheitslage zu verbessern, damit humanitäre Hilfe geleistet werden kann. Durch diese Entscheidung bekräftigt die EU ihren Willen zur Stabilisierung der Zentralafrikanischen Republik mithilfe eines umfassenden Ansatzes, der alle Aspekte des auswärtigen Handelns der EU einbezieht.

3. Die französische Operation Sangaris leistet in enger Abstimmung mit der MISCA einen vollwertigen Beitrag zur Schaffung eines sicheren und geschützten Umfelds in der Zentralafrikanischen Republik. Die französische Intervention war aufgrund der Dringlichkeit der Lage gerechtfertigt und der erforderliche rechtliche Rahmen war gegeben. Die EU-Operation würde zur Schaffung eines sicheren Umfelds in der Region Bangui beitragen und den Truppen der MISCA und Frankreichs ermöglichen, von Bangui in ländliche Gebiete vorzurücken und ihren Einsatz dort fortzusetzen.

5. Die Europäische Union hat sich verpflichtet, im Zeitraum vom 1. August 2013 bis zum 30. Juni 2014 aus der Friedensfazilität für Afrika finanzielle Unterstützung von insgesamt 50 Mio. EUR für die Internationale Unterstützungsmission in der Zentralafrikanischen Republik unter afrikanischer Führung (MISCA) bereitzustellen. Wie vom Kommissar für Entwicklung angekündigt, ist die EU bereit zu prüfen, ob weitere Unterstützung für die Verstärkung der MISCA geleistet werden kann.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014455/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: EU contribution to costs of French military mission

France has despatched 1600 soldiers who have begun disarming the militias in the Central African Republic capital, Bangui. In the Central African Republic, in the opinion of French Foreign Minister Fabius, France is defending the security of all Europeans. Therefore, it is argued, Europe should also bear a large proportion of the costs for the French military intervention in the Central African Republic.

1. What is the Commission's position regarding this request?

2. Is there any possibility at all of the EU making a financial contribution to the military mission of a Member State?

3. If so, subject to what conditions?

4. To what extent would such a contribution be possible in the case of the French mission?

5. How would it be ensured that a Member State did not undertake missions independently, and as it saw fit, with all Member States then being compelled to (co)finance those missions under an EU arrangement without being able to participate in the decision-making process beforehand?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(6 March 2014)

1. The European Union has responded swiftly and comprehensively to address the current crisis, supporting the African Union force MISCA and welcoming the support provided by the French operation Sangaris. Both the AU (MISCA) and French (Sangaris) military operations operate under a Chapter VII mandate (UN SCR 2127(2013)).

2. The UNSC adopted resolution 2134(2014) on 28 January authorising an EU military operation and thus providing the required legal framework. The decision by the EU to establish a military operation was taken in the context of the continued state of lawlessness and physical insecurity and the common desire to reinforce the security situation so that humanitarian support can be delivered. By taking this decision, the EU confirms its commitment to stabilise the CAR in the framework of a comprehensive approach integrating all aspects of EU external action.

3. The French Operation Sangaris, in close coordination with MISCA, is fully involved in contributing to the creation of a safe and secure environment in the CAR. The French intervention was justified for reasons of urgency and was endorsed with the required legal framework. While helping to achieve a secure environment in the Bangui region, the EU operation would free up MISCA and the French forces to move out of Bangui and to pursue their deployment to rural areas.

5. The European Union is committed to provide financial support under the African Peace Facility for a total amount of EUR 50 million to the African-led International Support Mission to CAR (MISCA) for the period from 1 Aug 2013 until 30 June 2014. As already announced by the Development Commissioner, it stands ready to consider further support to assist the strengthening of MISCA.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-014457/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(23. Dezember 2013)

Betrifft: Missbrauch von Zeitarbeit — Leiharbeiter-Überlassung durch Tochterfirma

Wie es scheint, gründen große Firmen oft Tochterfirmen, deren einziger Zweck es ist, eigene Leiharbeiter an die Mutterfirma zu vermitteln. Die Leiharbeiter arbeiten so zu einem deutlich niedrigeren Gehalt als vergleichbare Stammkollegen im Schutz des Tarifvertrags. Somit werden konzerninterne Auslagerungen im verstärkten Ausmaß dazu genutzt, Löhne unter den Tarifvertrag zu drücken. Ursprünglich sollten derartige Maßnahmen im Rahmen der Wirtschaftskrise Unternehmen helfen, flexibel auf Auftragsschwankungen zu reagieren, ohne Teilen ihrer Stammbelegschaft kündigen zu müssen. Leider gibt es in diesem Zusammenhang immer wieder Missbrauch, bis hin zu „Parallelbelegschaften", die für gleiche Arbeit schlechter bezahlt werden.

1. Ist die Kommission sich dieses Problems bewusst?

2. Inwieweit erfolgt hier eine Abstimmung auf EU-Ebene, um eine (grenzüberschreitende) Aushebelung von Tarifverträgen zu verhindern?

3. Gibt es auf EU-Ebene Bestrebungen, dafür zu sorgen, dass eine derartige Überlassung nur mehr „vorübergehend" erfolgen darf?

4. Welche Regelungen sollen im Rahmen der EU-Richtlinie über Zeitarbeit generell dafür Sorge tragen, Missbrauch zu unterbinden?

Antwort von László Andor im Namen der Kommission
(19. Februar 2014)

1. Die Entsendung von Arbeitnehmern aus Tochtergesellschaften an die Muttergesellschaft ist eine übliche Geschäftspraxis, mit der auf nationaler und grenzüberschreitender Ebene auf unterschiedliche Bedürfnisse und Verhältnisse reagiert wird. Dies muss nicht zwangsläufig mit der Senkung von Arbeitskosten in Zusammenhang stehen. Der Kommission liegen keine Informationen vor, die ein allgemeines Problem mit dieser Art von Entsendung bestätigen würden — vorausgesetzt natürlich, der Rechtsrahmen der EU wird eingehalten.

2. Werden Arbeitnehmer vorübergehend konzernintern in ein anderes Land entsandt, findet die Richtlinie 96/71/EG ([1]) Anwendung, d. h. die Arbeits- und Beschäftigungsbedingungen, einschließlich Mindestlohnsätze, gelten für entsandte Arbeitnehmer, sofern sie im Aufnahmeland durch Rechts- oder Verwaltungsvorschriften festgelegt sind. Die Mitgliedstaaten können auch die Einhaltung der Bedingungen vorschreiben, die in für allgemein verbindlich erklärten Tarifverträgen festgelegt sind. Dadurch sollte gewährleistet sein, dass diese Bedingungen sowohl für entsandte als auch für lokale Arbeitnehmer gelten.

3. Entsendungen sollten vorübergehend erfolgen. In den EU-Vorschriften ist indes nicht festgelegt, wie lange Unternehmen Arbeitnehmer innerhalb eines Mitgliedstaates und innerhalb derselben Unternehmensgruppe entsenden dürfen. Um eine Umgehung der Vorschriften zu verhindern und Missbrauch zu bekämpfen, hat die Kommission mit ihrem Richtlinienvorschlag ([2]) zur Durchsetzung der Richtlinie 96/71/EG eine Liste mit Kriterien vorgelegt. Diese stellen auf den vorübergehenden Charakter der Entsendung ab und sollen bei der Bewertung von Sachverhalten eine bessere Orientierung bieten. Die Kommission unterstützt Rat und Parlament in ihren Anstrengungen, bei dieser letzten verbleibenden Initiative der Binnenmarktakte I vor Ende der laufenden Legislaturperiode zu einer allgemeinen Einigung zu gelangen.

4. Was die Richtlinie 2008/104/EG ([3]) betrifft, so zielt — sofern anwendbar — Artikel 5 zur Festlegung des Grundsatzes der Gleichbehandlung insbesondere darauf ab, Leiharbeitnehmer zu schützen.

([1]) 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, S. 1.
([2]) KOM(2012)131 endg. vom 21. März 2012.
([3]) Richtlinie 2008/104/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 19. November 2008 über Leiharbeit, ABl. L 327 vom 5.12.2008, S. 9.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014457/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Abuse of temporary employment — secondment of contract workers by subsidiaries

It appears that large firms often establish subsidiaries whose sole purpose is to second their own contract workers to the parent company. The contract workers therefore work for a substantially lower wage than comparable permanent employees who are protected by a collective agreement. Intra-group transfers are thus increasingly being used to push wages down below the level of the collective agreement. Originally, measures such as these were intended, in the context of the economic crisis, to help companies to react flexibly to fluctuations in orders without having to make redundancies among their permanent workforce. Unfortunately, these measures are being consistently abused, leading to the existence of 'parallel workforces', which are paid less for the same work.

1. Is the Commission aware of this problem?

2. To what extent is there coordination at EU level in this regard so as to prevent (cross-border) circumvention of collective agreements?

3. Are efforts being made at EU level to ensure that such secondments can in future only be made on a 'temporary' basis?

4. In general, which provisions in the EU Temporary Agency Work Directive are intended to ensure that abuses are prevented?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

1. Seconding workers from subsidiaries to a parent company is usual business practice, in response to a variety of needs and circumstances not necessarily linked to reducing labour costs and taking place at national and cross-border level. The Commission has no information to support the assumption that it generally constitutes a problem, provided that it complies with the EU legal framework.

2. If workers are seconded temporarily cross-border within a corporate group, Directive 96/71/EC ([1]) applies: employment conditions to posted workers, including minimum rates of pay, when laid down by law, regulation or administrative provisions in the host country. Member States can also impose these terms and conditions laid down in collective agreements which have been declared universally applicable. This should ensure the applicability of these terms and conditions to both posted and local workers.

3. Postings should be temporary. There are, however, no EU rules on how long companies may second workers within a Member State and within the same corporate group. To avoid circumvention of the rules and combat abuse, the Commission's proposal ([2]) for a directive on the enforcement of Directive 96/71/EC contains a list of criteria about the temporary nature of the notion of posting to provide better guidance on assessing whether this criterion is met. The Commission supports the Council and Parliament in their efforts to reach overall agreement on this last remaining initiative of the Single Market Act I before the end of the current legislature.

4. As regards Directive 2008/104/EC ([3]), and as far as applicable, Article 5 laying down the principle of equal treatment is in particular intended to ensure the protection of temporary agency workers.

([1]) Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1996 concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services, OJ L 18, 21.1.1997.
([2]) COM(2012) 131 final of 21 March 2012.
([3]) Directive 2008/104/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on temporary agency work, OJ L 327, 5.12.2008, p. 9.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014458/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(23 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Διαχείριση επικίνδυνων νοσοκομειακών αποβλήτων στην Ελλάδα

Το τελευταίο διάστημα έχει αποκαλυφθεί ότι επικίνδυνα νοσοκομειακά απόβλητα καταλήγουν είτε σε ΧΥΤΑ, είτε σε παράνομες ΧΑΔΑ στην Ελλάδα.

Πιο συγκεκριμένα, σύμφωνα με δημοσιεύματα του ελληνικού Τύπου, πέντε φορές μέσα στον τελευταίο μήνα εντοπίστηκαν επικίνδυνα νοσοκομειακά απόβλητα στον ΧΥΤΑ Φυλής και στον χώρο κλήθηκε η Ειδική Υπηρεσία Επιθεωρητών Περιβάλλοντος. Τα επικίνδυνα νοσοκομειακά απόβλητα που εντοπίστηκαν προέρχονται από πέντε τουλάχιστον νοσοκομεία της Αττικής.

Παρόμοιο περιστατικό έγινε γνωστό στις 14.11.2013, όταν μετά από διαμαρτυρίες των κατοίκων, σε ΧΑΔΑ στον Αλφειό ποταμό, στον δήμο Πύργου Ηλείας, πραγματοποιήθηκε, αυτοψία από τους Επιθεωρητές Περιβάλλοντος και εντοπίστηκαν επικίνδυνα νοσοκομειακά απόβλητα που προέρχονται από το Γενικό Νοσοκομείο Πύργου.

Με δεδομένα τα παραπάνω και ότι η Ελλάδα καταδικάστηκε το 2009 από το Ευρωπαϊκό Δικαστήριο (Υπόθεση C-286/08) για την έλλειψη διαχείρισης των επικίνδυνων αποβλήτων, περιλαμβανομένων και των νοσοκομειακών,

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή: Γνωρίζει τα παραπάνω γεγονότα; Θεωρεί ότι γίνεται επαρκής διαχείριση των επικίνδυνων νοσοκομειακών αποβλήτων στην Ελλάδα; Σε ποια μέτρα προτίθεται να προβεί η Επιτροπή;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(25 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή δεν έχει λάβει καταγγελίες σχετικά με τη συγκεκριμένη περίπτωση που περιγράφει ο κύριος βουλευτής, αλλά είναι ενήμερη για την κατάσταση όσον αφορά τη διάθεση επικίνδυνων αποβλήτων στην Ελλάδα.

Στις 10 Σεπτεμβρίου 2009 (υπόθεση C-286/08), το Δικαστήριο καταδίκασε την Ελλάδα λόγω μη κατάλληλης διαχείρισης των επικίνδυνων αποβλήτων της. Η Επιτροπή εξετάζει το σχετικό φάκελο παράβασης (2003/2187) για να διασφαλίσει τη συμμόρφωση της Ελλάδας με την απόφαση και για τον σκοπό αυτό στις 25 Ιανουαρίου 2013 απέστειλε προειδοποιητική επιστολή. Στις απαντήσεις της στην παρούσα επιστολή, η Ελλάδα υπέβαλε ένα σχέδιο δράσης που αποσκοπεί στην επίτευξη μιας επαρκούς διαχείρισης όλων των επικίνδυνων αποβλήτων, συμπεριλαμβανομένων και των νοσοκομειακών. Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί επί του παρόντος την εφαρμογή αυτού του σχεδίου δράσης και δεν θα διστάσει να λάβει περαιτέρω μέτρα, εφόσον αυτό κριθεί αναγκαίο.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014458/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Management of hazardous hospital waste in Greece

It has recently been revealed that hazardous hospital waste is either landfilled or dumped at illegal uncontrolled landfills in Greece.

More specifically, according to reports by the Greek press, hazardous hospital waste was discovered at the Fyli landfill site on five occasions over the past month, and the Environmental Inspectorate was called to the site. The hazardous hospital waste found comes from at least five hospitals in Attica.

A similar incident was revealed on 14 November 2013, when Environmental Inspectors carried out an investigation of an uncontrolled landfill site at the Alpheus River, in the Municipality of Pyrgos, following complaints from residents; hazardous hospital waste from the General Hospital of Pyrgos was discovered.

Bearing the above in mind, and the fact that Greece was, in 2009, convicted, by the European Court of Justice (Case C-286/08), for the lack of management of hazardous waste, including hospital waste, our question to the Commission is the following:

Is it aware of the aforementioned incidents? Does it believe that there is adequate management of hazardous hospital waste in Greece? What measures does the Commission intend to take?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(25 February 2014)

The Commission has not received complaints regarding this specific case, described by the Honourable Member but it is aware of the situation regarding hazardous waste disposal in Greece.

On 10 September 2009 (Case C-286/08) the Court condemned Greece for lack of appropriate management of its hazardous waste. The Commission is pursuing the related infringement file (2003/2187) to ensure that Greece complies with the ruling and has to that effect addressed a Letter of Formal Notice on 25 January 2013. In its replies to this Letter, Greece submitted an Action Plan aiming at establishing an adequate management for all hazardous waste including hospital waste. The Commission is currently monitoring the implementation of this Action Plan and will not hesitate to take further action should this be deemed necessary.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014459/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(23 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Έξοδος της Ιρλανδίας από το Πρόγραμμα Οικονομικής Προσαρμογής

Σύμφωνα με την ανακοίνωση του Eurogroup, στις 14 Νοεμβρίου 2013, η Ιρλανδία εξέρχεται του Προγράμματος Οικονομικής Προσαρμογής, μάλιστα, χωρίς να ζητήσει την ενεργοποίηση πρόσθετων διάδοχων χρηματοδοτήσεων.

Με δεδομένους τους νέους Κανονισμούς της Οικονομικής Διακυβέρνησης και το Σύμφωνο για τη Σταθερότητα, το Συντονισμό και τη Διακυβέρνηση της ΟΝΕ, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Μπορεί να περιγράψει το καθεστώς εποπτείας της ιρλανδικής οικονομίας και των δημοσιονομικών οικονομικών, μετά και την επίσημη λήξη του Προγράμματος Οικονομικής Προσαρμογής; Με ποιο τρόπο, με ποια μέσα και με βάση ποιους κανονισμούς θα γίνεται η εποπτεία της Ιρλανδίας;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(3 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Μετά την ολοκλήρωση ενός προγράμματος μακροοικονομικής προσαρμογής, η χώρα επιστρέφει στις συνήθεις διαδικασίες ενισχυμένης οικονομικής διακυβέρνησης.

Επιπλέον, σύμφωνα με τον κανονισμό (ΕΕ) 472/2013, ένα κράτος μέλος της ζώνης του ευρώ υπόκειται σε εποπτεία μετά το πρόγραμμα, έως ότου επιστραφεί από τη δικαιούχο χώρα τουλάχιστον το 75% της χρηματοδοτικής συνδρομής.

Η Επιτροπή θα εργαστεί με ρεαλιστικό πνεύμα ώστε να αποφευχθούν άσκοπες επικαλύψεις με τις συνήθεις διαδικασίες οικονομικής εποπτείας.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014459/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Ireland's exit from Economic Adjustment Programme

According to a Eurogroup statement of 14 November 2013, Ireland is to exit the Economic Adjustment Programme and will not be requesting any further financial assistance.

In view of the new economic governance rules and the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the EMU, will the Commission provide the following information:

How will the Irish economy and Irish public finances be supervised once the Economic Adjustment Programme has officially ended? How, and on the basis of what rules, will Ireland be supervised?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(3 February 2014)

After conclusion of a macroeconomic adjustment programme, a country moves back into the normal procedures of reinforced economic governance.

Moreover, as per Reg.(EU) 472/2013, a euro-area Member State is subject to post programme surveillance until at least 75% of the financial assistance has been repaid by the beneficiary country.

The Commission will work pragmatically in order to avoid unnecessary duplication with the normal procedures of economic surveillance.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014460/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(23 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Κεφαλαιακή Επάρκεια Τραπεζών

Σε πρόσφατη μελέτη του Κέντρου Ευρωπαϊκών Πολιτικών Μελετών (CEPS) διαπιστώνεται ότι η κεφαλαιακή επάρκεια των ευρωπαϊκών τραπεζών παρουσιάζει μεγάλη διαφοροποίηση ανάμεσα στις χώρες του ευρωπαϊκού Βορρά και του ευρωπαϊκού Νότου. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, η κεφαλαιακή επάρκεια πολλών τραπεζών χωρών όπως η Φινλανδία, η Ολλανδία, η Γερμανία και το Βέλγιο είναι πολύ χαμηλή, κατώτερη του 6%. Αντίθετη είναι η εικόνα σε τραπεζικά ιδρύματα χωρών όπως η Ελλάδα, η Ιρλανδία, η Ισπανία και η Πορτογαλία, όπου, κατά μέσον όρο, η κεφαλαιακή επάρκεια βρίσκεται, περίπου στο 10,5%.

Συγκεκριμένα, για την Ελλάδα το Πρόγραμμα Οικονομικής Προσαρμογής υποχρεώνει τις ελληνικές τράπεζες να έχουν Δείκτη Κύριων Βασικών Ιδίων Κεφαλαίων (core-tier 1) στο 9% για όλη την περίοδο από το 2012-2014, μια ρύθμιση που αξιολογείται περίπου σε 2 δις ευρώ.

Ωστόσο, στα μελλοντικά stress-tests που θα διοργανώσει η Ευρωπαϊκή Αρχή Τραπεζών (ΕΑΤ), καθώς επίσης και στα Asset-Quality-Review, που θα διενεργήσει η Ευρωπαϊκή Κεντρική Τράπεζα, ο δείκτης κεφαλαιακής επάρκειας ορίζεται στο ύψος του 8%.

Με δεδομένο ότι αυτή η άνιση μεταχείριση μεταξύ των κρατών μελών της Ευρωζώνης και ιδιαίτερα σε μια περίοδο όπου στην Ελλάδα αναδιαρθρώθηκαν όλες οι τράπεζες, μέσω συγχωνεύσεων, εξαγορών και εκκαθαρίσεων, έχει οδηγήσει τις ελληνικές τράπεζες σε αυξημένες υποχρεώσεις κεφαλαιακής εξασφάλισης, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Γιατί επιλέχτηκε από την τρόικα η επιβολή κεφαλαιακής επάρκειας στις ελληνικές τράπεζες στο ύψος του 9%, αντί για το ευρωπαϊκό όριο του 8%; Σε ποιες χώρες της ΕΕ επιβάλετε από τις ρυθμιστικές αρχές όριο κεφαλαιακής επάρκειας άνω του 8% και για ποιες τράπεζες;

2. Οι έρευνες που θα διεξάγουν οι ΕΑΤ και η ΕΚΤ θα γίνουν με τα ίδια κριτήρια για όλα τα κράτη μέλη ή θα υπάρξουν διαφοροποιήσεις;

3. Διαθέτει στοιχεία για το ύψος της κεφαλαιακής επάρκειας των μη-συστημικών γερμανικών τραπεζών, οι οποίες έχουν εξαιρεθεί από την εποπτική ομπρέλα του Ενιαίου Εποπτικού Μηχανισμού, της Τραπεζικής Ένωσης;

4. Όσον αφορά τη διάσταση απόψεων που έχουν εκφραστεί σε θεσμούς της ΕΕ σχετικά με τον τρόπο αποτίμησης των κρατικών ομολόγων, έχει υπάρξει τελική απόφαση για τον τρόπο αξιολόγησή τους; Εάν ναι, ποιος είναι αυτός;

Απάντηση του κ. Barnier εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(4 Μαρτίου 2014)

1. Μέχρι τις 31 Δεκεμβρίου 2013, οι αρμόδιες εθνικές αρχές απαιτούσαν από τις ελληνικές τράπεζες να διατηρούν τον δείκτη βασικού κεφαλαίου κατηγορίας 1 τουλάχιστον στο 9% λόγω του αυξημένου επιπέδου κινδύνου της οικονομίας που πλήττεται από την κρίση του κρατικού χρέους και την παρατεταμένη οικονομική ύφεση. Μια παρόμοια απαίτηση εισήχθη και σε άλλες χώρες στις οποίες εφαρμόζονται προγράμματα προσαρμογής ([1]).

Πρέπει να σημειωθεί ότι ορισμένες τεχνικές μελέτες προειδοποιούν κατά της άμεσης σύγκρισης των συνολικών στοιχείων για τους δείκτες κεφαλαίου που αναφέρονται από τον κύριο βουλευτή στην ερώτησή του. Ο δείκτης βασικού κεφαλαίου κατηγορίας 1 ύψους 9% και ο δείκτης κεφαλαίου κοινών μετοχών της κατηγορίας 1 ύψους 8% που θα χρησιμοποιηθούν στους ελέγχους ποιότητας των στοιχείων ενεργητικού (AQR) και στις δοκιμές αντοχής σε ακραίες καταστάσεις (stress test) υπολογίζονται σε διαφορετική βάση. Το κεφάλαιο κοινών μετοχών της κατηγορίας 1 ύψους 8% είναι αυστηρότερος ορισμός από αυτόν (βασικό κεφάλαιο κατηγορίας 1) που χρησιμοποιείται για τις ελληνικές τράπεζες. Επομένως, είναι δυνατό, σε απόλυτη αξία, το ποσό των κεφαλαίων που προκύπτει από τα μέσα κεφαλαίου κοινών μετοχών της κατηγορίας 1 8% να είναι υψηλότερο από τα μέσα βασικού κεφαλαίου της κατηγορίας 1 9%. Μετά την έναρξη ισχύος του νέου νομοθετικού πλαισίου (ΚΚΑ/ΟΚΑ) την 1η Ιανουαρίου 2014, τα μέσα κεφαλαίου κοινών μετοχών της κατηγορίας 1 θα είναι πλέον η κοινή μέθοδος που θα χρησιμοποιείται για τον υπολογισμό της κεφαλαιακής θέσης των ευρωπαϊκών τραπεζών.

2. Την 1η Φεβρουαρίου 2014, η ΕΚΤ δημοσίευσε ένα σημείωμα σχετικά με τη συνολική αξιολόγηση. Η ΕΚΤ δηλώνει ότι «θα συνεργαστεί στενά με την ΕΑΤ, και θα εφαρμόσει τη μέθοδο και τις παραμέτρους που έχουν συμφωνηθεί και εξαγγελθεί από αυτή την αρχή».

3. Η Επιτροπή δεν διαθέτει αναλυτικά στοιχεία σχετικά με την κεφαλαιακή επάρκεια των μεμονωμένων γερμανικών τραπεζών. Σχετικά με την αναφορά του κυρίου βουλευτή, οι ανασκοπήσεις χρηματοπιστωτικής σταθερότητας της Bundesbank περιλαμβάνουν στοιχεία σχετικά με τους μέσους δείκτες κεφαλαίου των γερμανικών τραπεζών.

([1]) 9% στην Ισπανία και την Κύπρο, 9% το 2011 και 10% από το 2012 στην Πορτογαλία, 10,5% στην Ιρλανδία.

4. Στις 31 Ιανουαρίου 2014, η ΕΑΤ δημοσίευσε τα κύρια χαρακτηριστικά των δοκιμών αντοχής σε ακραίες καταστάσεις σε όλη την ΕΕ. Η παράγραφος 32 περιγράφει τον τρόπο αντιμετώπισης της έκθεσης σε δημόσιο χρέος.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014460/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Capital adequacy of banks

A recent study by the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) concludes that the capital adequacy of European banks varies considerably between northern European countries and southern European countries. In fact, the capital adequacy of numerous banks in countries such as Finland, the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium is very low, less than 6%. By contrast, the capital adequacy of banks in countries such as Greece, Ireland, Spain and Portugal averages around 10.5%.

The Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece requires Greek banks to have a core tier 1 ratio of 9% over the entire period from 2012 to 2014, an arrangement valued at approximately EUR 2 billion.

However, the capital adequacy ratio for future stress tests organised by the European Banking Authority (EBA) and for the asset quality reviews to be conducted by the European Central Bank is set at 8%.

In view of the fact that this unequal treatment between the Member States of the euro area has resulted in higher capital adequacy requirements for Greek banks, at a time when all the banks in Greece have been restructured through mergers, buyouts and winding up, will the Commission say:

1. Why did the Troika decide to impose a capital adequacy ratio of 9% on Greek banks, instead of the European limit of 8%? In which EU Member States have the regulatory authorities imposed a capital adequacy ratio of over 8% and for which banks?

2. Will investigations by the EBA and the ECB be conducted based on the same criteria for all the Member States or will the criteria be differentiated?

3. Does it have data on the capital adequacy ratio of the systemically unimportant banks in Germany which do not come under the supervisory umbrella of the Single Supervisory Mechanism and banking union?

4. As regards the difference of opinion expressed in EU institutions as to how government bonds should be valued, has a final decision been adopted as to how they should be valued? If so, what was it?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(4 March 2014)

1. Until 31 December 2013, Greek banks were required by national competent authorities to maintain the minimum 9% Core Tier 1 ratio due to the increased risk level in the economy suffering from the sovereign debt crisis and protracted recession. A similar requirement was introduced in other countries undergoing adjustment programmes ([1]).

It should be noted that certain technical consideration warn against a direct comparison of the headline figures for the capital ratios referred to by the Honourable Member in his question. The 9% Core Tier 1 ratio and the 8% Common Equity Tier 1 ratio to be used in asset quality reviews (AQR) and stress test (ST) are calculated on a different basis. The 8% Common Equity Tier 1 is a more stringent definition than the one (Core Tier 1) used for Greek banks. It is thus possible that the absolute amount of capital resulting from 8% Common Tier 1 instruments may be higher than 9% of Core Tier 1 instruments. Following the entry into force of the new legislative framework (CRR/CRD) on 1 January 2014, Common Equity Tier 1 will henceforth be the common method used to calculate capital position of European banks.

2. On 1 February 2014 ECB published a note on the comprehensive assessment. ECB states that it 'will cooperate closely with the EBA, and will apply the methodology and parameters agreed and announced by that authority'.

3. The Commission does not have disaggregated data on capital adequacy of individual German banks. For the Honourable Member's reference, the Bundesbank's Financial Stability Reviews include data on German banks' average capital ratios.

4. On 31 January 2014, EBA published the main features of the 2014 EU-wide stress test. Paragraph 32 describes the treatment of sovereign exposures.

([1]) 9% in Spain and Cyprus, 9% in 2011 and 10% as of 2012 in Portugal, 10.5% in Ireland.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014463/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(23 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Τρόικα και αγορά φυσικού αερίου στην Ελλάδα

Σύμφωνα με τα πιο πρόσφατα στοιχεία από την Γενική Διεύθυνση Ενέργειας σχετικά με τις τιμές του φυσικού αερίου που χρεώνονται στους ευρωπαίους καταναλωτές και τις βιομηχανίες, προκύπτει ότι η ελληνική αγορά είναι από τις πιο ακριβές. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, οι Έλληνες καταναλωτές και οι ελληνικές επιχειρήσεις πληρώνουν κατά 43% ακριβότερα το φυσικό αέριο σε σχέση με τον ευρωπαϊκό μέσο όρο.

Εδώ και τρία χρόνια εφαρμόζονται μνημονιακές πολιτικές, που στο όνομα της ανταγωνιστικότητας έχουν μειώσει κατακόρυφα του μισθούς και τα ημερομίσθια των εργαζομένων, έχουν μειώσει τις ασφαλιστικές εισφορές και τις κοινωνικές παροχές, έχουν απελευθερώσει τις απολύσεις και έχουν καταργήσει το συνδικαλισμό και τις συλλογικές συμβάσεις. Ωστόσο, όλες αυτές οι πολιτικές φαίνονται «μάταιες», αφού οι ελληνικές επιχειρήσεις συνεχίζουν να αντιμετωπίζουν ένα υψηλό ενεργειακό κόστος, τουλάχιστον όσον αφορά το φυσικό αέριο.

Με δεδομένα τα παραπάνω ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Για ποιους λόγους η Ελλάδα εμφανίζει υψηλές τιμές στο φυσικό αέριο, τόσο στην προμήθεια, όσο και στην κατανάλωση, οικιακή και βιομηχανική; Σε ποιο βαθμό ευθύνεται η φορολογία και σε ποιο βαθμό το κόστος προμήθειας; Γιατί μέχρι τώρα η τρόικα δεν έχει δείξει την ίδια ευαισθησία για τη μείωση των τιμών του φυσικού αερίου σε σχέση με τις μειώσεις μισθών;

2. Γιατί, κατά τη γνώμη της, η Ελλάδα δεν μπορεί να προμηθευτεί φυσικό αέριο σε τιμές ανάλογες του ευρωπαϊκού μέσου όρου; Πιστεύει ότι είναι αρκετή η προσπάθεια που κάνει η ελληνική κυβέρνηση για την αναθεώρηση των τιμών προμήθειας φυσικού αερίου από τη ρωσική αγορά;

3. Πώς εξηγεί τα στοιχεία που παραθέτει η ΓΔ Ενέργειας, από τα οποία προκύπτει ότι η Ελλάδα αγοράζει φυσικό αέριο, σε μορφή LNG, ακριβότερα από γειτονικές χώρες όπως η Ιταλία;

Απάντηση του κ. Oettinger εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(21 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

1. Οι τιμές λιανικής για το φυσικό αέριο στην Ελλάδα, τόσο για τους μέσους οικιακούς καταναλωτές (με ετήσια κατανάλωση μεταξύ 20 GJ [1] και 200 GJ) όσο και για τους μέσους βιομηχανικούς πελάτες (με ετήσια κατανάλωση μεταξύ 10 000 GJ και 100 000 GJ) ήταν πράγματι 43% υψηλότερες από ό,τι ο μέσος όρος της ΕΕ-28 κατά το δεύτερο εξάμηνο του 2012. Ο αριθμός αυτός υποδηλώνει, ωστόσο, μιαν έξαρση σε ένα πλαίσιο εποχιακών τιμών στην Ελλάδα, επομένως δεν μπορεί να θεωρηθεί ως αντιπροσωπευτικός της μέσης διαφοράς τιμών καθόλη τη διάρκεια του έτους [2]. Επίσης, στοιχεία της Eurostat σχετικά με τις λιανικές τιμές φυσικού αερίου στην Ελλάδα δεν είναι διαθέσιμα παρά από το δεύτερο εξάμηνο του 2012. Η Eurostat δεν διαθέτει προγενέστερα στοιχεία για τη λιανική τιμή του φυσικού αερίου στην Ελλάδα, γεγονός που περιορίζει τις δυνατότητες ανάλυσης.

2. Η Ελλάδα δεν διαθέτει λειτουργικό κόμβο εμπορίας σε υγροποιημένο φυσικό αέριο, ενώ οι γραμμές εφοδιασμού δεν έχουν ενταχθεί στην ευρωπαϊκή εσωτερική αγορά φυσικού αερίου. Η χώρα βασίζεται κυρίως στις εισαγωγές από τη Ρωσία και σε εισαγωγές φορτίων ΥΦΑ [3]. Καθώς οι ρωσικές μακροπρόθεσμες συμβάσεις προμήθειας είναι συχνά συνδεδεμένες με την τιμή του πετρελαίου, προκύπτουν συνήθως υψηλότερες τιμές από ό,τι στους δυτικοευρωπαϊκούς κόμβους: Οι τιμές εισαγωγής ΥΦΑ ήταν, σε γενικές γραμμές, ανάλογες με τις ρωσικές τιμές εισαγωγής μέσω αγωγού στην Ελλάδα κατά το πρώτο εξάμηνο του 2013 (34 και 36 ευρώ/MWh), σημαντικά όμως υψηλότερες από τις τιμές φυσικού αερίου στους κόμβους εμπορίας της Δυτικής Ευρώπης (25-29 ευρώ/MWh κατά την ίδια περίοδο). Ωστόσο, ο αδριατικός αγωγός φυσικού αερίου (TAP) θα αλλάξει το μελλοντικό ενεργειακό τοπίο.

3. Από πρόσφατους υπολογισμούς της ΓΔ Ενέργειας με βάση δεδομένα της Eurostat δεν προκύπτει σημαντική διαφορά στις τιμές εισαγωγής υγροποιημένου φυσικού αερίου μεταξύ Ελλάδας και Ιταλίας. Το πρώτο τρίμηνο του 2013 η μέση ελληνική τιμή εισαγωγής ΥΦΑ [4] ήταν 33 ευρώ/MWh, ενώ στην Ιταλία ήταν 35,1 ευρώ/MWh. Το δεύτερο τρίμηνο του 2013 η ελληνική τιμή εισαγωγής ΥΦΑ αυξήθηκε στα 35,7 ευρώ/MWh, ενώ στην Ιταλία μειώθηκε στα 33,1 ευρώ/MWh.

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[1] Gigajoule.

[2] Το δεύτερο εξάμηνο κάθε έτους οι μέσες τιμές λιανικής πώλησης φυσικού αερίου στην Ελλάδα, ιδίως για τα νοικοκυριά, είναι υψηλότερες από το πρώτο εξάμηνο, λόγω του γεγονότος ότι τα βασικά μηνιαία τέλη, που δεν έχουν σχέση με την κατανάλωση, καταβάλλονται καθόλη τη διάρκεια του έτους, γεγονός που διογκώνει τον μέσο όρο των ευρώ που καταβάλλονται ανά κιλοβατώρα σε περιόδους χαμηλής πραγματικής κατανάλωσης, δηλ. κατά το δεύτερο εξάμηνο του έτους.

[3] Υγροποιημένο φυσικό αέριο.

[4] Βλ. Quarterly Report on European Gas Markets (τριμηνιαία έκθεση για την ευρωπαϊκή αγορά φυσικού αερίου) τόμος 6, θέματα 1 και 2:
http://ec.europa.eu/energy/observatory/gas/doc/20130611_q1_quarterly_report_on_european_gas_markets.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/energy/observatory/gas/doc/20130814_q2_quarterly_report_on_european_gas_markets.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014463/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: The big three and the natural gas market in Greece

Based on the most recent data from the Directorate General for Energy regarding natural gas prices charged to European consumers and industries, it appears that the Greek market is one of the most expensive. More specifically, Greek consumers and Greek businesses pay 43% more for natural gas compared to the European average.

The memorandum policies which have been in force for the past three years have, in the name of competitiveness, sharply reduced earnings, social security contributions and social benefits, facilitated dismissals and quashed trade unionism, as well as collective labour agreements. However, all these policies seem 'pointless' since Greek companies are continuing to incur high energy costs, at least as far as natural gas is concerned.

In view of this:

1. Can the Commission say why the domestic and industrial supply and consumption of natural gas is so costly in Greece? To what extent is this due to taxation and to what extent is it due to the cost of supply? Why have the big three, so far, not shown the same sensitivity regarding the reduction of natural gas prices in line with reduced earnings?

2. In its opinion, why cannot Greece be supplied with natural gas at prices comparable to the European average? Does it believe that the efforts made by the Greek Government to adjust prices for the supply of natural gas from the Russian market are sufficient?

3. How does it explain the data provided by the DG for Energy, showing that Greece pays more for natural gas, in the form of LNG than neighbouring countries such as Italy?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

1. Natural gas retail prices for both average household consumers (with an annual consumption between 20 GJ ([1]) and 200 GJ) and average industrial customers (with an annual consumption between 10,000 GJ and 100,000 GJ) were indeed 43% higher in Greece than the EU-28 average in the second half of 2012. However, this figure does reflect a peak in a seasonal price pattern in Greece and can therefore not be taken as reflective of the average price differential across the year ([2]). Also, Eurostat data on retail gas prices in Greece have only been available since the second half of 2012. Prior to that retail gas price data are not available for Greece at Eurostat, a fact that limits the possibility for analysis.

2. Greece does not possess a functioning liquid gas trading hub and supply routes are not integrated in the European internal gas market. The country mainly relies on imports from Russia and LNG ([3]) cargo imports. Russian long-term supply contracts, being often linked to oil-indexation, normally result in higher prices than West European hub benchmarks: LNG import prices were broadly in line with Russian pipeline import prices in Greece in the first half of 2013 (34-36 EUR/MWh), but were significantly higher than Western European gas hub prices (25-29 EUR/MWh in the same period). However, the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) will change the outlook in the future.

3. Current DG Energy calculations based on Eurostat data do not show a significant price difference in LNG import prices between Greece and Italy. In the first quarter of 2013 the average Greek LNG import price ([4]) was 33 EUR/MWh, while in Italy it was 35.1 EUR/MWh. In the second quarter of 2013 the Greek LNG import price went up to 35.7 EUR/MWh, while the Italian decreased to 33.1 EUR/MWh.

([1]) Gigajoule.
([2]) In the second half of each year average gas retail prices in Greece, especially for households, are higher than in the first semester, due to the fact that basic monthly fees, which are unrelated to consumption, are paid throughout the year, pushing up the average amount of euros paid per kilowatt hour at times of low actual consumption, i.e. during the second half of the year.
([3]) Liquefied Natural Gas.
([4]) See Quarterly Report on European Gas Markets volume 6, issues 1 and 2:
http://ec.europa.eu/energy/observatory/gas/doc/20130611_q1_quarterly_report_on_european_gas_markets.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/energy/observatory/gas/doc/20130814_q2_quarterly_report_on_european_gas_markets.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014464/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(23 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Bitcoin

Το εικονικό νόμισμα Bitcoin, με την αυξανόμενη δημοφιλία του, ανάγκασε αρκετές κυβερνήσεις να προβούν σε ανακοινώσεις ως προς τον χειρισμό του. Γαλλία και Κίνα ανακοίνωναν ότι τα πιστωτικά τους ιδρύματα δεν μπορούν να συναλλάσσονται με bitcoins. Οι ΗΠΑ, αν και δεν φαίνεται να επιθυμούν την αποθάρρυνση της χρήσης του ψηφιακού νομίσματος, τόνισαν ωστόσο πως οι κανόνες για ξέπλυμα βρώμικου χρήματος θα πρέπει να ισχύσουν και για το νέο νόμισμα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Έχει μελετήσει το θέμα σε επίπεδο ΕΕ;

2. Θεωρεί το bitcoin «νόμιμο μέσο συναλλαγής»;

3. Προτίθεται να προβεί σε ρυθμίσεις του εικονικού χρήματος;

4. Το εγκρίνει ή το απορρίπτει;

5. Ποίοι κίνδυνοι ελλοχεύουν για την ευρωπαϊκή οικονομία και πώς μπορούν να αντιμετωπιστούν;

Απάντηση του κ. Barnier εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(26 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

1, 3. Όπως αναφέρθηκε στην απάντηση στην ερώτηση E-013401/2013, η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί με προσοχή τις εξελίξεις σχετικά με τα εικονικά νομίσματα, σε στενή συνεργασία με την ΕΚΤ ([1]) και την ΕΑΤ ([2]). Στο παρόν στάδιο, δεν αποκλείεται καμία επιλογή, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της ρυθμιστικής παρέμβασης. Η Επιτροπή θα εξακολουθήσει να παρακολουθεί επισταμένως το θέμα αυτό.

2. Γενικά, το bitcoin θεωρείται ένα παγκόσμιο και πλήρως αποκεντρωμένο σύστημα πληρωμών και διομότιμο ψηφιακό νόμισμα ανοικτής πηγής, το οποίο δεν εκδίδεται από κεντρική αρχή αλλά από τους σχεδιαστές του, και το οποίο χρησιμοποιείται και γίνεται αποδεκτό μόνο από τα μέλη συγκεκριμένης κοινότητας. Συνεπώς, δεν μπορεί εύκολα να θεωρηθεί και να αντιμετωπιστεί για ρυθμιστικούς σκοπούς ως παραδοσιακό νόμισμα, σύστημα πληρωμών ή εμπόρευμα. Αν και ορισμένες εθνικές κεντρικές τράπεζες, όπως π.χ. η Τράπεζα της Φινλανδίας, έχουν λάβει θέση επί του θέματος, το ζήτημα φαίνεται ότι βρίσκεται ακόμη σε πρόωρο στάδιο. Ως εκ τούτου, δεν έχει ληφθεί μέχρι στιγμής οριστική θέση σε επίπεδο ΕΕ όσον αφορά αυτό το σημαντικό θέμα.

4. Η χρήση εικονικών νομισμάτων ενδέχεται να ευνοήσει την εγκληματικότητα (π.χ. τη νομιμοποίηση εσόδων από παράνομες δραστηριότητες) και να δημιουργήσει κινδύνους για τους καταναλωτές. Η Επιτροπή συμμερίζεται τη γνώμη της ΕΑΤ ότι, ως πρώτο βήμα, είναι σημαντικό να αποκτήσουν οι χρήστες μεγαλύτερη επίγνωση ([3]) των κινδύνων παραβίασης της ασφάλειας και της έλλειψης προστασίας (π.χ. σύστημα εγγύησης των καταθέσεων ή δικαίωμα επιστροφής χρημάτων), που συνεπάγεται η χρήση εικονικών νομισμάτων ως μέσων πληρωμής.

5. Η ΕΚΤ παρακολουθεί εκ του σύνεγγυς τις εξελίξεις σχετικά με τα εικονικά νομίσματα από την άποψη της σταθερότητας των τιμών, του χρηματοπιστωτικού συστήματος και του συστήματος πληρωμών. Σύμφωνα με τα συμπεράσματα έκθεσης ([4]) που δημοσιεύθηκε πέρυσι, όπως έχει η σημερινή κατάσταση, τα συστήματα εικονικού νομίσματος δεν φαίνεται να θέτουν σε κίνδυνο τη σταθερότητα των τιμών ή τη χρηματοπιστωτική σταθερότητα. Ωστόσο, η ΕΚΤ θα συνεχίσει να παρακολουθεί το φαινόμενο.

([1]) Ευρωπαϊκή Κεντρική Τράπεζα.
([2]) Ευρωπαϊκή Αρχή Τραπεζών.
([3]) Όπως αναφέρθηκε στην απάντηση στην ερώτηση E-013401/2013, η προειδοποίηση της ΕΑΤ προς τους καταναλωτές σχετικά με το εικονικό νόμισμα είναι διαθέσιμη στον ακόλουθο σύνδεσμο:
http://www.eba.europa.eu/languages/home_el
([4]) http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/virtualcurrencyschemes201210en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014464/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Bitcoin

Due to its increasing popularity, the bitcoin, a virtual currency, has forced several governments to issue statements regarding the use thereof. France and China have announced that their credit institutions are unable to perform bitcoin transactions using. Although it does not apparently wish to discourage the use of the digital currency, the USA has nevertheless stressed that the rules on money laundering should also apply to the new currency.

In view of this:

1. Has the Commission investigated the matter at the EU level?

2. Does it consider the bitcoin to be 'legal tender'?

3. Does it intend to establish regulations regarding virtual money?

4. Is it in favour of or opposed to the bitcoin?

5. What are the possible risks for the European economy and how can these be addressed?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(26 February 2014)

1 and 3. As indicated in reply to E-013401/2013, the Commission is actively following the developments with regard to virtual currencies, working closely with the ECB ([1]) and the EBA ([2]). At this stage no option is excluded, including regulatory intervention. The Commission will continue to monitor this matter closely.

2. In general, bitcoin is understood as a universal, completely decentralised payment system and an open source, peer-to-peer digital currency that is issued not by a central authority, but by its developers, and is used and accepted only among members of a specific community. Thus, it cannot be easily identified as and treated for regulatory purposes like a traditional currency, a payment system or a commodity. Although some national Central Banks, like e.g. the Bank of Finland, have taken a position on this matter, it would appear that this debate is still in an early phase. Therefore, a final position on this important matter has not yet been taken at EU level.

4. The use of virtual currencies may present opportunities for crime (e.g. money laundering) and risks for consumers. The Commission shares the opinion of the EBA that it is important as a first step, to increase users' awareness ([3]) about the risks of security breaches and the lack of protection (e.g. deposit guarantee scheme or refund right) when using virtual currencies as means of payment.

5. The developments with regard to virtual currencies from the perspective of the stability of prices, of the financial system and of the payment system are closely monitored by the ECB. Last year a report ([4]) was issued concluding that in the current situation virtual currency schemes do not appear to pose a risk to price or financial stability, but that the ECB will continue to monitor the phenomenon.

([1]) European Central Bank.
([2]) European Banking Authority.
([3]) As indicated in in reply to E-013401/2013, the EBA warning to consumers on virtual currency is available at the following link: http://www.eba.europa.eu/-/eba-warns-consumers-on-virtual-currencies.
([4]) http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/virtualcurrencyschemes201210en.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014465/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(23 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Καθυστερήσεις στην είσπραξη κρατικών εσόδων στην Κύπρο

Σύμφωνα με την ετήσια έκθεση της Γενικής Ελέγκτριας της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας για το 2012, το συνολικό ποσό των διαπιστωμένων αλλά καθυστερημένων εσόδων του κράτους ανερχόταν σε 1,7 δις ευρώ, ή περίπου 10% του ΑΕΠ της χώρας. Όχι μόνον το ποσό είναι υπέρογκο για μια χώρα που αντιμετωπίζει τις συνέπειες της οικονομικής κρίσης, αλλά, δυστυχώς, εμφανίζεται να ακολουθεί και ανοδική πορεία διαχρονικά.

Καλείται η Επιτροπή να απαντήσει στα εξής ερωτήματα:

1. Κατέχει και μπορεί να με εφοδιάσει με παρόμοια συγκριτικά στοιχεία για το μέγεθος του προβλήματος στα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ;

2. Μπορεί με οποιονδήποτε τρόπο να βοηθήσει την κυβέρνηση της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατία να αντιμετωπίσει το σοβαρό αυτό πρόβλημα, το οποίο έχει σοβαρότατες επιπτώσεις στα δημόσια οικονομικά και την οικονομία της χώρας;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(11 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

1. Η έκθεση με τίτλο «Φορολογικές μεταρρυθμίσεις στα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ 2013» συνοψίζει τα σχετικά στοιχεία για το έτος 2011 ([1]). Με βάση το ποσοστό των μη αμφισβητούμενων φορολογικών οφειλών επί της καθαρής είσπραξης εσόδων, η Κύπρος βρίσκεται πράγματι μεταξύ των κρατών μελών της ΕΕ με το υψηλότερο ποσοστό μη αμφισβητούμενων φορολογικών οφειλών.

2. Η Κύπρος πραγματοποιεί επί του παρόντος πολύ σημαντικές μεταρρυθμίσεις της φορολογικής της διοίκησης. Προκειμένου να στηρίξει αυτές τις προσπάθειες, η Επιτροπή (από κοινού με το ΔΝΤ) παρέχει τεχνική βοήθεια στις κυπριακές αρχές. Το ζήτημα των υψηλών φορολογικών οφειλών έχει χαρακτηρισθεί ιδιαίτερα σημαντικό και έχει απευθυνθεί σύσταση να αντιμετωπιστεί η διαχείριση του χρέους ως τομέας προτεραιότητας για την πραγματοποίηση μεταρρυθμίσεων το πρώτο τρίμηνο του 2014.

([1]) «Tax reforms in EU Member States 2013» («Φορολογικές μεταρρυθμίσεις στα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ 2013») (Ευρωπαϊκή Οικονομία 5/2013), σελίδα 79 και διάγραμμα 4.6.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014465/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Delays affecting tax collection in Cyprus

The 2012 annual report of Cyprus's Auditor General puts the country's total tax arrears at EUR 1.7 billion, or approximately 10% of national GDP. Not only is this figure excessive for a country facing the consequences of the economic crisis, but unfortunately it also appears to be increasing.

1. Can the Commission provide similar data regarding the scale of the problem in other EU Member States?

2. Can it assist the Cyprus Government in any way in addressing this alarming problem, which is having serious repercussions for public finances and the country's economy?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2014)

1. The publication 'Tax reforms in EU Member States 2013' summarises relevant information for the year 2011 ([1]). When measuring the amount of undisputed tax debt as a share of net revenue collection, Cyprus is indeed among the EU Member States with the highest share of undisputed tax debt.

2. Cyprus is currently undergoing a major reform of its revenue administration. To support these efforts, the Commission (together with the IMF) is providing technical assistance to the Cypriot authorities. The issue of high tax arrears has been identified as one important matter and it has been recommended to treat debt management as a priority area for reform efforts in Q1-2014.

([1]) 'Tax reforms in EU Member States 2013' (European Economy 5/2013), page 79 and Graph 4.6.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014466/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(23 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Πρόβλημα φοροδιαφυγής στην Κύπρο

Η Γενική Ελέγκτρια της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας, στην ετήσια έκθεσή της για το 2012, εντοπίζει σοβαρό πρόβλημα φοροδιαφυγής στην Κύπρο και παραθέτει συγκεκριμένα τρανταχτά παραδείγματα σοβαρών περιπτώσεων φοροδιαφυγής.

Μπορεί η Επιτροπή να με πληροφορήσει αν κατέχει συγκριτικά στοιχεία για το μέγεθος της φοροδιαφυγής και της παραοικονομίας και πώς συγκρίνεται η Κύπρος με τα υπόλοιπα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ;

Διαθέτει η Επιτροπή τεχνική εμπειρογνωμοσύνη ώστε να βοηθήσει τις αρχές της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας στην καταπολέμηση της φοροδιαφυγής και της παραοικονομίας καθώς και στη βελτίωση της φοροεισπρακτικής ικανότητας του κράτους;

Απάντηση του κ. Šemeta εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή δεν μπορεί να παράσχει ακριβή στοιχεία σχετικά με την κλίμακα της φοροδιαφυγής και το μέγεθος της παραοικονομίας στην Κύπρο. Οι εκτιμήσεις συνήθως προκύπτουν από αξιολόγηση της απόκλισης μεταξύ των αναμενόμενων εσόδων και των εισπραχθέντων εσόδων, βάσει εθνικών στατιστικών στοιχείων. Η Επιτροπή δημοσίευσε πρόσφατα μελέτη για το έλλειμμα ΦΠΑ σε όλα τα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ ([1]). Ωστόσο, η Κύπρος δεν είχε συμπεριληφθεί στην εν λόγω μελέτη, λόγω του γεγονότος ότι οι εθνικοί λογαριασμοί δεν θεωρήθηκαν επαρκώς πλήρεις. Μέτρα με σκοπό τη βελτίωση της πληρότητας των εθνικών λογαριασμών είναι υπό εξέλιξη, τα οποία, ωστόσο, ενδέχεται να μην εφαρμοστούν πριν από τη δημοσίευση της επόμενης επικαιροποιημένης έκδοσης της μελέτης που έχει προγραμματιστεί για το καλοκαίρι του 2014 και η οποία καλύπτει το έτος 2012.

Η Επιτροπή και τα άλλα κράτη μέλη διαθέτουν την τεχνική εμπειρογνωμοσύνη που απαιτείται ώστε να στηρίξουν την Κύπρο στην καταπολέμηση της φοροδιαφυγής και της παραοικονομίας, καθώς και στην καθιέρωση πιο αποτελεσματικών διαδικασιών είσπραξης των φόρων. Ωστόσο, η παροχή της εν λόγω τεχνικής βοήθειας υπόκειται στην παραλαβή επίσημης αίτησης από την κυβέρνηση. Η Επιτροπή, από κοινού με το ΔΝΤ, παρέχει επί του παρόντος βοήθεια στην Κύπρο για τη δημιουργία ολοκληρωμένης και λειτουργικής φορολογικής διοίκησης. Αυτό θα περιλαμβάνει, μεταξύ άλλων, τη δημιουργία μονάδας εκτίμησης κινδύνου και διαχείρισης της συμμόρφωσης η οποία θα είναι αρμόδια για την παρακολούθηση της συμμόρφωσης και, συνεπώς, για την καταπολέμηση της φοροδιαφυγής. Τα μέτρα αυτά περιλαμβάνουν επίσης την επανεξέταση των επιχειρηματικών διαδικασιών, καθώς και των διαδικασιών που ισχύουν για όλες τις βασικές λειτουργίες της φορολογικής διοίκησης, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της είσπραξης των φόρων, με στόχο την ενσωμάτωσή τους σε ενιαίο κώδικα φορολογικής διαδικασίας. Η Επιτροπή είναι έτοιμη να εξετάσει με θετικό πνεύμα κάθε άλλο αίτημα των αρχών όσον αφορά την παροχή πρόσθετης βοήθειας για πιο ειδικά θέματα.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/common/publications/studies/vat-gap.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014466/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Tax evasion problem in Cyprus

In her annual report for 2012, Cyprus's Auditor General states that the country has a serious tax evasion problem and lists a number of glaring examples.

Can the Commission provide figures regarding the scale of tax evasion and the size of the underground economy which show how Cyprus compares with the other EU Member States?

Does the Commission have the technical expertise required to assist the Cyprus authorities in combating tax evasion and the underground economy and introducing more efficient tax collection procedures?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(5 February 2014)

The Commission cannot provide accurate figures regarding the scale of tax evasion and the size of the underground economy in Cyprus. Such estimations usually consist in assessing the gap between the revenue expected and the revenue collected, based on national statistical data. The Commission has recently published a study on the VAT gap in all EU Members States ([1]). However, Cyprus was not included in this study due to fact that its national accounts were considered not sufficiently exhaustive. Measures aimed at improving the exhaustiveness of the national accounts are underway but are not likely to be implemented before the publication of the next update of the study covering the year 2012 that is scheduled for summer 2014.

The Commission and other Member States have the technical expertise required to assist Cyprus in combating tax evasion and underground economy, and introducing more efficient tax collection procedures. Delivery of such technical assistance is however subject to receiving a formal request from the Government. The Commission is, together with the IMF, currently assisting Cyprus in the creation of a function based integrated tax administration. This will include, *inter alia*, the creation of a risk assessment and compliance management unit in charge of monitoring compliance and thus fighting tax evasion. These measures also include a review of the business processes and procedures for all core functions of the tax administration including tax collection, with the aim of incorporating them into a single tax procedure code. The Commission would be prepared to consider positively any further request from the authorities for additional assistance on more specific topics.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/common/publications/studies/vat-gap.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014467/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(23 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Υπερβολικά ψηλές τιμές των φαρμάκων στην Κύπρο

Η Γενική Ελέγκτρια της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας, στην ετήσια έκθεσή της για το 2012, διαπιστώνει ότι το σύστημα υπολογισμού των τιμών των φαρμάκων στην Κύπρο χωλαίνει. Ως αποτέλεσμα οι τιμές πολλών φαρμακευτικών σκευασμάτων στην κυπριακή αγορά εμφανίζονται πολύ υψηλότερες από άλλα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ. Προσωπικά, έχω διαπιστώσει ότι συγκεκριμένα φάρμακα πλατειάς χρήσης στην Κύπρο πωλούνται σε υπερδιπλάσιες τιμές από άλλα κράτη μέλη, ενώ και το γενικό επίπεδο των τιμών είναι πολύ υψηλό σε σύγκριση με άλλα κράτη μέλη.

Καλείται η Επιτροπή να απαντήσει στα ακόλουθα ερωτήματα:

1. Παρακολουθεί το επίπεδο τιμών των φαρμάκων στην ΕΕ και είναι σε θέση να μου παράσχει συγκριτικά στοιχεία για την κατάσταση στα διάφορα κράτη μέλη;

2. Θεωρεί ότι η αγορά φαρμάκων της ΕΕ, παρά τις ιδιαιτερότητες της, λειτουργεί ικανοποιητικά, διασφαλίζοντας τα συμφέροντα των ευρωπαίων καταναλωτών;

3. Μπορεί να βοηθήσει την κυβέρνηση της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας στην εκπόνηση και εφαρμογή ενός πιο αποτελεσματικού συστήματος υπολογισμού των τιμών των φαρμάκων, με στόχο να ελαχιστοποιηθούν οι μεγάλες διαφορές των τιμών μεταξύ των κρατών μελών;

Απάντηση του κ. Tajani εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(17 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

1. Η Επιτροπή δεν παρακολουθεί το επίπεδο των τιμών των φαρμάκων στην ΕΕ, οι οποίες καθορίζονται αποκλειστικά από τις αρμόδιες εθνικές αρχές και, ως εκ τούτου, δεν μπορεί να παράσχει συγκριτικά στοιχεία όσον αφορά την κατάσταση που επικρατεί στα κράτη μέλη εκτός της Κύπρου.

2. Η φαρμακευτική νομοθεσία της ΕΕ παρέχει ένα σταθερό πλαίσιο που εξασφαλίζει ότι οι πολίτες της ΕΕ λαμβάνουν ασφαλή και αποτελεσματικά φάρμακα. Η Επιτροπή συμπληρώνει τις εθνικές πολιτικές υγείας με δραστηριότητες για τη διευκόλυνση της πρόσβασης σε φάρμακα, σεβόμενη παράλληλα τις διαφορές στα εθνικά συστήματα υγειονομικής περίθαλψης. Κατά συνέπεια, η διαδικασία για την εταιρική ευθύνη στον φαρμακευτικό κλάδο ([1]) ενίσχυσε τη συνεργασία των κρατών μελών και των αρμόδιων ενδιαφερόμενων μερών με σκοπό την επίτευξη κοινών, μη κανονιστικών μεθόδων για έγκαιρη και ισότιμη πρόσβαση στα φάρμακα μετά την άδεια κυκλοφορίας τους.

3. Τα κράτη μέλη είναι υπεύθυνα για τη διαχείριση των υπηρεσιών υγείας και την κατανομή των αντίστοιχων πόρων, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των αποφάσεων για την τιμολόγηση και την επιστροφή δαπανών για την αγορά φαρμάκων. Η Επιτροπή υποστηρίζει το δίκτυο των αρμοδίων αρχών όσον αφορά την τιμολόγηση και την επιστροφή δαπανών, το οποίο αποσκοπεί στην ανταλλαγή πληροφοριών και βέλτιστων πρακτικών σχετικά με τις μεθόδους καθορισμού των τιμών και επιστροφής δαπανών όσον αφορά την αγορά φαρμακευτικών προϊόντων στα κράτη μέλη. Μέσω του δικτύου, τα κράτη μέλη, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της Κύπρου, εργάζονται για μια πιο δίκαιη και ταχύτερη πρόσβαση σε φάρμακα για όλους τους πολίτες.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/_getdocument.cfm?doc_id=7870

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014467/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Extremely high cost of medicines in Cyprus

In her annual report for 2012, Cyprus's Auditor General concludes that the system for calculating the price of medicines in Cyprus has many shortcomings. As a result, medicines appear to cost much more in that country than in other EU Member States. I myself have noted that certain widely used medicines in Cyprus cost more than twice as much as elsewhere in the EU, while prices are comparatively very high in general.

1. Is the Commission monitoring the prices of medicines in the EU and can it provide comparative data regarding the situation in Member States other than Cyprus?

2. Does it believe that, despite its specific features, the EU pharmaceuticals sector operates in a satisfactory manner, safeguarding the interests of European consumers?

3. Can it help the Cyprus Government to develop and implement a more efficient system for calculating the price of medicines, in order to minimise the significant disparities between the Member States?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(17 February 2014)

1. The Commission does not monitor the level of prices of medicines in the EU, which are exclusively set by competent national authorities and therefore cannot provide comparative data regarding the situation in Member States other than Cyprus.

2. The EU pharmaceutical legislation provides a solid framework guaranteeing that EU citizens are provided with safe and efficacious medicines. The Commission is complementing national health policies by activities meant to facilitate access to medicines, while respecting differences in national healthcare systems. Notably the Process on Corporate Responsibility in the Field of Pharmaceuticals ([1]) fostered collaboration among Member States and relevant stakeholders in order to find common, non-regulatory approaches to timely and equitable access to medicines after their marketing authorisation.

3. Member States are responsible for the management of health services and the allocation of related resources, including decisions on pricing and reimbursement of medicinal products. The Commission is supporting the Network of Competent Authorities in Pricing and Reimbursement, which aims at exchanging information and best practices on methods for pricing and reimbursing pharmaceuticals in Member States. Through the Network, Member States, including Cyprus, work towards fairer and quicker access to medicinal products for all citizens.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/_getdocument.cfm?doc_id=7870

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-014468/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(23 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Οικονομική κρίση και ΜΜΕ

Από τις τελευταίες ευρωπαϊκές εκλογές τον Ιούνιο του 2009, η ευρωπαϊκή οικονομία επλήγη από μία βαθιά και μακροχρόνια κρίση, η οποία επηρεάζει ιδίως τις μικρές και μεσαίες επιχειρήσεις στον κατασκευαστικό τομέα. Εκατοντάδες χιλιάδες επιχειρήσεις και θέσεις εργασίας στον τομέα των κατασκευών έχουν εξαφανισθεί τα τελευταία πέντε χρόνια, ενώ διακυβεύεται η ύπαρξη πολλών περισσότερων ΜΜΕ στον τομέα των κατασκευών. Σύμφωνα με ορισμένους ειδικούς, το επίπεδο παραγωγής των κατασκευαστικών εταιρειών που υπήρχε το 2008 θα επιτευχθεί πάλι μόνο το 2023. Οι ΜΜΕ στον κατασκευαστικό τομέα χρειάζονται ισχυρά, στοχευμένα μέτρα για να ξεπεράσουν αυτή την κάμψη και να επιτύχουν το πλήρες οικονομικό δυναμικό τους.

Υπό το φως των ανωτέρω, προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να προβεί σε συγκεκριμένες στοχευμένες ενέργειες και πολιτικές, προκειμένου να έχουν στη διάθεσή τους οι ΜΜΕ στον τομέα των κατασκευών το σωστό πολιτικό περιβάλλον και τις οικονομικές συνθήκες που θα τους δώσουν τη δυνατότητα να λειτουργούν όσο το δυνατόν πιο αποτελεσματικά, ώστε να μπορούν να δημιουργούν θέσεις απασχόλησης και πλούτο σε τοπικό επίπεδο;

Απάντηση του κ. Tajani εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(28 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει τον κ. βουλευτή στην απάντησή της στη γραπτή ερώτηση E-14072/2013 του κ. βουλευτή Aldo Patriciello σχετικά με τις στρατηγικές που προτίθεται να δρομολογήσει η Επιτροπή για την αναζωογόνηση του τομέα των κατασκευών.

Ειδικότερα, υπάρχει ανάγκη να τονωθούν οι ευνοϊκοί όροι επενδύσεων σε τομείς που θα μπορούσαν να τονώσουν περισσότερο τη δραστηριότητα των ΜΜΕ σε τοπικό επίπεδο, για παράδειγμα στον τομέα της ανακαίνισης κτιρίων και της συντήρηση των υποδομών.

Η ευρωπαϊκή χρηματοδότηση για την ενεργειακή απόδοση και την ανανεώσιμη ενέργεια είναι διαθέσιμη από τα Διαρθρωτικά Ταμεία και το Ταμείο Συνοχής, μέσω επιχορηγήσεων και χρηματοδοτικών μέσων, π.χ. του δανείου ανακαίνισης ([1]), τις πρωτοβουλίες JESSICA ([2]) και ELENA ([3]) και την Ευρωπαϊκή Τράπεζα Επενδύσεων, την Ευρωπαϊκή Τράπεζα Ανασυγκρότησης και Ανάπτυξης και το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Ενεργειακής Απόδοσης.

Επιπλέον, οι ευρωπαϊκές ΜΜΕ μπορούν να επωφεληθούν από την εγγύηση δανείου και τα μέσα επιχειρηματικού κεφαλαίου που διατίθενται στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος της ΕΕ για την ανταγωνιστικότητα των επιχειρήσεων και τις μικρομεσαίες επιχειρήσεις (COSME) ([4]).

Ένας άλλος τρόπος στήριξης της ρευστότητας των επιχειρήσεων, ειδικά των ΜΜΕ, είναι η διασφάλιση της ορθής μεταφοράς και εφαρμογής της οδηγίας για τις καθυστερημένες πληρωμές ([5]). Η Επιτροπή βρίσκεται αυτή τη στιγμή σε επαφή με τις ιταλικές αρχές για να ελέγξει τη συμμόρφωση με την οδηγία.

Σε περίπτωση που από τα εθνικά μέτρα μεταφοράς της οδηγίας προκύψει μη συμμόρφωση, ή αν η οδηγία εφαρμοστεί εσφαλμένα, η Επιτροπή μπορεί να λάβει τα αναγκαία μέτρα, συμπεριλαμβανομένων, κατά περίπτωση, των διαδικασιών επί παραβάσει.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/fin_inst/index_en.cfm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/instruments/jessica_el.cfm
([3]) http://www.eib.org/products/elena/index.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/initiatives/cosme/index_en.htm
([5]) Οδηγία 2011/7/ΕΕ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014468/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Economic crisis and SMEs

Since the last European elections in June 2009, the European economy has been stricken by a deep and long-lasting crisis, which is especially affecting small and medium-sized enterprises in the construction sector. Hundreds of thousands of construction businesses and jobs have disappeared over the past five years, and the existence of many more construction SMEs is at stake. According to some experts, the 2008 output level of construction enterprises will only be reached again in 2023. Construction SMEs need strong, targeted action to overcome this downturn and achieve their full economic potential.

In the light of the above, does the Commission intend to engage in specific targeted action and policies with a view to providing SMEs in the construction sector with the right political environment and economic conditions to enable them to work as effectively as possible so that they can create jobs and wealth at the local level?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Question E-14072/2013 by On. Aldo Patriciello concerning the strategies that the Commission intends to launch to revive the construction sector.

In particular, there is a need to stimulate favourable investment conditions in areas which could boost the activity of SMEs locally, for instance in building renovation and infrastructure maintenance.

European funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy in buildings is available from the Structural and Cohesion Funds, through grants and financial instruments, e.g. the Renovation Loan ([1]), JESSICA ([2]) and ELENA ([3]) and from the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Energy Efficiency Fund.

Moreover, European SMEs can benefit from the loan guarantee and venture capital instruments available under the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME) ([4]).

Another way of supporting liquidity of enterprises, especially SMEs, is to ensure that the late payment Directive ([5]) is correctly transposed and applied. The Commission is currently in contact with the Italian authorities in order to verify compliance with the directive.

Should the national measures transposing the directive reveal non-compliance, or if the directive is being incorrectly applied, the Commission may take the necessary action including, where appropriate, infringement procedures.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/fin_inst/index_en.cfm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/instruments/jessica_en.cfm
([3]) http://www.eib.org/products/elena/index.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/initiatives/cosme/index_en.htm
([5]) Directive 2011/7/EU.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014470/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Sexual violence in Burma

In 2011, Burma embarked on a process of political and economic reform. However, women's and human rights organisations have documented an increase in the use of rape by government forces over the same period in Shan State, Kachin State and Rakhine State.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burma has drawn attention in his recent reports to ongoing sexual violence in the country. The United Nations Human Rights Council resolution on Burma also called for an end to 'rape and other forms of sexual violence'.

I noted the Vice-President/High Representative's use of the recent EU-Myanmar Task Force meeting in November 2013 to continue calls for human rights to be safeguarded in Burma. However, what specific steps and initiatives are being taken and supported by the EU within the country to help bring about an end to sexual violence?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(10 March 2014)

Violence against women is one of the most widespread violations of human rights across the globe. The EU is strongly committed to promoting gender equality and combatting all forms of violence against women, both within and outside its borders.

Through its regular contacts with civil society and women's rights organisations such as the Women's League of Burma, the EU Delegation in Yangon is closely monitoring the issue of sexual violence. The Delegation is aware of allegations that cases of sexual violence have been perpetrated by government forces, most notably, but not exclusively, in conflict zones.

However, the EU has not obtained any evidence that 'rape and other forms of sexual violence' are systematically applied by these forces.

Participants at the EU-Myanmar Task Force also raised women's rights and sexual violence.

In this context, it is important that the aforementioned allegations are also addressed by the on-going national reconciliation process between the Government of Myanmar and ethnic armed groups and that safeguards are established for the respect for human rights.

In the latest Council conclusions on Myanmar/Burma of 16 December 2013, the EU encouraged the conduct of an inclusive political dialogue after the nationwide ceasefire agreement. This process should involve all stakeholders, including women.

Finally, under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and Non-state Actors — Local Authorities thematic programmes, the EU supports civil society projects designed to empower women in ethnic communities.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-014471/13
alla Commissione
Sergio Gaetano Cofferati (S&D)
(23 dicembre 2013)

Oggetto: Chiusura della Cooperativa Ceramiche Industriali di Livorno

La *Cooperativa Ceramiche Industriali* è stata un'importante realtà produttiva livornese, un'attività storica per la città con una ricaduta occupazionale molto forte. Tra il 1999 e il 2000 tale azienda fu posta in amministrazione controllata e poi scorporata dal suo patrimonio immobiliare dalla proprietà dell'epoca. L'azienda continuò nonostante questo la sua attività essendo ancora fortemente competitiva sul mercato. Nei primi anni del 2000 si trovò tuttavia in una forte crisi di liquidità, pur attraversando un periodo positivo dal punto di vista commerciale e produttivo, anche perché obbligata a pagare i conti inevasi della precedente gestione, tra cui ingenti imposte non versate. A causa di tale situazione l'azienda fallisce ufficialmente nel 2007, ma solo dopo un accordo con *COELME*, che eredita le strutture dell'impresa, un buon quantitativo di materie prime e il portafoglio ordini e prende l'impegno di riassumere i dipendenti, prospettando a comune e provincia diversi progetti di sviluppo.

COELME non rispetta tuttavia gli impegni presi e vende addirittura la sala prove, elemento fondamentale della struttura produttiva. Nella prosecuzione dell'attività aumenta inoltre sempre più il divario tra la produzione effettivamente sviluppata in azienda e quella portata avanti dal ramo commerciale, basato sull'acquisizione di isolatori da paesi come Cina, India e Portogallo. La *COELME* mette infine, nel 2012, tutto il personale in cassa integrazione e annuncia nel 2013 che procederà alla dismissione di tutto il ramo produttivo e commerciale dell'azienda e che preferirebbe addirittura un cambio di destinazione d'uso della superficie produttiva stessa, tutto questo senza il necessario coinvolgimento delle associazioni di rappresentanza dei lavoratori e delle istituzioni.

Alla luce di quanto sopra esposto, può la Commissione precisare quanto segue:

1. Ritiene essa che il comportamento della dirigenza di *COELME* risponda ai principi di una corretta integrazione nella strategia aziendale dei principi di responsabilità sociale di impresa, che richiamano anzitutto le imprese a assumersi responsabilità «per il loro impatto sulla società» e quali azioni intende adottare per garantire il rispetto della direttiva 2002/14/CE che istituisce un quadro generale relativo all'informazione e alla consultazione dei lavoratori e favorire il necessario dialogo tra la dirigenza e i rappresentanti dei lavoratori?

2. Ritiene essa che sia compatibile con il rilancio del settore manifatturiero e dell'economia europea la fine di importanti realtà produttive, come quella della *Cooperativa Ceramiche Industriali*, che hanno profondi legami con la realtà in cui sono inserite e che costituiscono il fulcro di attività economiche determinanti per il territorio?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(19 febbraio 2014)

1. La Commissione non ha potere per interferire nelle decisioni delle imprese. Essa le sollecita tuttavia a seguire le buone pratiche in tema di gestione proattiva e socialmente responsabile delle ristrutturazioni, come indicato nella sua comunicazione del 13 dicembre 2013 ([1]). Inoltre, il datore di lavoro deve rispettare la normativa dell'UE in tema di informazione e consultazione dei lavoratori ([2]). Tuttavia, la Commissione non è in condizione di valutare se un'impresa privata abbia o meno ottemperato alle disposizioni nazionali che attuano il diritto dell'Unione. Spetta alle autorità nazionali competenti, anche nelle sedi giudiziarie, assicurare che la legislazione nazionale a recepimento delle direttive dell'UE sia applicata correttamente ed efficacemente dal datore di lavoro in questione considerate le circostanze specifiche del caso.

I lavoratori colpiti possono essere ammissibili a un sostegno del Fondo sociale europeo (FSE) e, a patto che siano soddisfatte le condizioni necessarie, del Fondo europeo di adeguamento alla globalizzazione.

Per quanto concerne un eventuale sostegno del FSE ai lavoratori, in particolare nel contesto di ristrutturazioni aziendali e settoriali, la richiesta di informazioni va indirizzata all'autorità di gestione regionale del programma operativo del FSE per la Toscana.

2. La Commissione ritiene che una salda base industriale sia della massima importanza per la ripresa economica e la competitività dell'Europa ([3]). Inoltre, un numero crescente di leve finanziarie verrà posto a disposizione degli Stati membri, delle regioni e dell'industria grazie al programma Orizzonte 2020, al programma COSME e ai Fondi strutturali. La Commissione suggerisce che le autorità pertinenti e gli stakeholder esaminino le modalità in base alle quali imprese come COELME possono beneficiare di tali opportunità.

([1]) Comunicazione della Commissione che istituisce un quadro UE per la qualità nell'anticipazione dei cambiamenti e delle ristrutturazioni, COM(2013) 882 final del 13.12.2013.

([2]) In particolare, 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]) Cfr. in proposito la comunicazione della Commissione «Per una rinascita industriale europea», COM(2014) 14 final del 22/01/2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-014471/13
to the Commission
Sergio Gaetano Cofferati (S&D)
(23 December 2013)

Subject: Closure of the Cooperativa Ceramiche Industriali in Livorno

The *Cooperativa Ceramiche Industriali* (Industrial Ceramics Cooperation) was once a major manufacturing company in Livorno; it had a very long history in the city, and employed a significant proportion of the local population. In the period from 1999 to 2000, the company was placed in temporary receivership and was subsequently separated from its real-estate assets by its owner at the time. The company continued to operate in spite of these developments, and remained highly competitive on the market. However, in the early 2000s, even though it was performing well from both a commercial and productive perspective, the company found itself with major cash flow problems since it had to pay the outstanding bills left by the previous management regime, which included an enormous sum in unpaid taxes. Consequently, the company was officially declared bankrupt in 2007, but not before an agreement had been reached with COELME, which acquired the company's buildings and order book as well as a significant amount of raw materials, and undertook to rehire the company's employees, with various development projects being planned in the city and its surrounding areas.

However, COELME failed to meet the commitments that it had made, and even sold the testing room, a critical part of the manufacturing facility. What is more, as it conducted its business, the gap between the production actually carried out at the site and the activities performed by its commercial branch, which were based on purchasing insulators from countries such as China, India and Portugal, grew increasingly wider. In the end, COELME placed the entire workforce on temporary redundancy in 2012, and then announced in 2013 that it not only planned to wind up the company's entire production and commercial unit, but also intended to put the manufacturing facility to a different use, without having even consulted the relevant workers and trade unions.

Given this context, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Does the Commission believe that the conduct of COELME's management complies with the precepts governing the proper integration of corporate social responsibility principles in a business strategy, which first and foremost require enterprises to assume responsibility 'for their impacts on society', and what actions does it intend to take in order to ensure compliance with Directive 2002/14/EC establishing a general framework for informing and consulting employees, and to promote the necessary dialogue between management and workforce representatives?

2. Does the Commission believe that winding up major manufacturing companies, such as the *Cooperativa Ceramiche Industriali*, which have close ties with the areas in which they are based and which form the cornerstones of business activities that are crucial to the region, is compatible with the revival of both the manufacturing sector and the European economy?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(19 February 2014)

1. The Commission has no powers to interfere in company's decisions. It urges them, however, to follow good practices on anticipation and socially responsible management of restructuring as outlined in its communication of 13 December 2013 ([1]). Furthermore, the employer has to comply with EC law on information and consultation of workers ([2]). However, the Commission is not in a position to assess whether a private company has or has not complied with national provisions implementing Union law. It is for the competent national authorities, including the courts, to ensure that the national legislation transposing the EU Directives is correctly and effectively applied by the employer concerned, having regard to the specific circumstances of the case.

Workers affected may qualify for support from the European Social Fund (ESF) and, provided that the necessary conditions are met, from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund.

As regards possible support from the ESF for workers, in particular in the context of company and sector restructuring, information should be asked to the regional managing authority of the ESF operational programme in Toscana.

2. The Commission considers that a strong industrial base will be of key importance for Europe's economic recovery and competitiveness ([3]) . Moreover, an increasing share of financial levers will be put at the disposal of Member States, regions, and industry thanks to the Horizon 2020 Programme, COSME, and structural funds. The Commission would suggest that relevant authorities and stakeholders consider how companies, such as COELME, could benefit of these opportunities.

([1]) Commission communication establishing an EU Quality Framework for Anticipation of Change and Restructuring, COM(2013) 882 final, 13/12/2013.
([2]) In particular, 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]) See, in this regard, Commission communication for a European industrial renaissance, COM(2014) 14 final, 22.1.2014.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-000001/14
alla Commissione
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(3 gennaio 2014)

Oggetto: Emergenza filiera bufalina

— Considerato che parte della mozzarella di bufala campana DOP prodotta nell'area geografica viene fabbricata, come testimoniato dalle indagini condotte dall'Arma dei Carabinieri, utilizzando latte a basso costo proveniente dall'Europa dell'est e da paesi in via di sviluppo, costituendo una forma di concorrenza sleale verso gli agricoltori e gli allevatori lattieri del territorio che, a seguito degli adeguamenti strutturali e produttivi richiesti e dell'incremento dei costi tecnici, non hanno ricevuto un equivalente adeguamento del prezzo del latte;

— Considerato che tale comparto produttivo costituisce il motore economico di territori rurali ad alto tasso di disoccupazione e che gli operatori lattieri, per non rimanere con il latte nelle stalle, di fronte alla concorrenza fraudolenta di latte proveniente dall'estero, sono costretti a vendere il prodotto a prezzi inferiori del già basso prezzo del latte che fu sancito da un vecchio contratto collettivo risalente a 12 anni fa;

— Considerato il Regolamento (CE) n. 510/06 relativo alla denominazione dei prodotti agricoli e agroalimentari e l'incapacità delle autorità preposte a garantire il rispetto delle norme contenute nel disciplinare di produzione;

— Considerato che i sindaci e gli allevatori del casertano (dove ha sede il 60 % dell'allenamento bufalino italiano) hanno chiesto e ottenuto il «Tavolo di Confronto» presso la Prefettura di Caserta, insediatosi il 19 dicembre scorso;

— Considerato che la lotta alle frodi e alle sofisticazioni alimentari e un'efficace tutela e vigilanza del prodotto DOP passa attraverso una seria tracciabilità della produzione di latte di bufala e della relativa mozzarella prodotta in tutte le fasi dall'allevatore al consumatore passando per il trasformatore e il commerciante;

Non ritiene la Commissione di dover esperire ogni utile provvedimento nei confronti dell'Italia affinché il governo nazionale, mediante le autorità di controllo e in collaborazione con le ASL del territorio, provvedano mensilmente al controllo e alla verifica incrociata tra la produzione di latte di bufala italiano in ciascun allevamento e l'effettiva trasformazione e resa quantitativa nei caseifici che ritirano tale latte per la produzione di mozzarella di bufala campana DOP e di mozzarella di latte di bufala?

Non ritiene la Commissione che il governo italiano debba nominare un organismo terzo di commissariamento dedicato all'emergenza del settore bufalino che possa evitare di perpetrare reati quali: la «frode in commercio», e la «turbativa di mercato» che ormai caratterizzano tale comparto?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(27 gennaio 2014)

Solo la mozzarella prodotta con latte di bufala e rispettando l'intero disciplinare della DOP «Mozzarella di Bufala Campana» può essere etichettata e venduta con questa denominazione.

Il regolamento (UE) n. 1151/2012 sui regimi di qualità dei prodotti agricoli e alimentari ([1]) assoggetta la «Mozzarella di Bufala Campana» a un sistema di monitoraggio mediante controlli ufficiali, in conformità dei principi enunciati dal regolamento (CE) n. 882/2004 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio relativo ai controlli ufficiali intesi a verificare la conformità alla normativa in materia di mangimi e di alimenti e alle norme sulla salute e sul benessere degli animali ([2]). Dei controlli e delle procedure di certificazione per verificare il rispetto del disciplinare anteriormente all'immissione in commercio del prodotto sul mercato è responsabile l'Italia. Gli Stati membri designano l'autorità o le autorità competenti responsabili dei controlli ufficiali, le quali possono delegare alcuni compiti specifici riguardanti i controlli ufficiali a uno o più organismi di controllo accreditati in conformità della norma europea EN 45011 o della guida ISO/CEI 65. Nel caso della DOP «Mozzarella di Bufala Campana», le autorità italiane hanno designato come organismo di controllo la società DQA Dipartimento Qualità Agroalimentare S.r.l.

Dopo gli articoli apparsi sulla stampa nel 2012 su presunte frodi riguardanti la «Mozzarella di Bufala Campana», la Commissione ha richiesto all'Italia ulteriori informazioni e di essere tenuta aggiornata sull'argomento. Nel 2013 non sono state comunicate irregolarità alla Commissione.

Il fatto che siano state rilevate frodi potrebbe essere considerato la prova dell'effettiva esecuzione dei controlli.

([1]) GU L 343 del 14.12.2012.
([2]) GU L 165 del 30.4.2004.

La Commissione, tramite l'Ufficio alimentare e veterinario, effettua audit del sistema di controllo degli Stati membri. Una missione di audit in Italia è prevista per il 2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-000001/14
to the Commission
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(3 January 2014)

Subject: Emergency in the buffalo mozzarella sector

Some of the PDO buffalo mozzarella from the Campania Region, produced in that area, is made by using low-cost milk from eastern Europe and developing countries, as evidenced by the investigations carried out by the Carabinieri police. This is a form of unfair competition in respect of local dairy farmers who, following the structural and production adjustments demanded of them, and increased technical costs, have not had the price of their milk adjusted accordingly.

This production sector is the economic driving force of rural areas with a high rate of unemployment, and dairy farmers, who wish to sell their milk, when faced with this fraudulent competition of milk from overseas, are forced to sell their product at prices lower than the already low price of milk established by a 12-year-old collective agreement.

In spite of Regulation (EC) No 510/06 concerning designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs, the authorities responsible are unable to enforce the rules set out in the product specification.

Mayors and livestock breeders from the Caserta area (where 60% of Italian buffalo are raised) requested (and were granted) a round table debate at the Prefecture of Caserta, which began on 19 December 2013.

In order to combat food fraud and adulteration and to protect and supervise PDO products effectively, serious traceability measures are required for buffalo milk and mozzarella production, at all stages, from farm to fork — including processors and traders.

Does the Commission not agree that appropriate measures should be taken in respect of Italy, to ensure that the national government, through its supervisory authorities and in collaboration with the local health authorities, carries out monthly checks and cross-checks, to ensure that the production of Italian buffalo milk on each farm corresponds to the actual amount processed in the creameries which collect that milk to produce PDO buffalo mozzarella from Campania and buffalo milk mozzarella?

Does the Commission not think the Italian Government should appoint a special independent commissioner to deal with this emergency in the buffalo milk sector, with a view to preventing the perpetration of offences such as 'commercial fraud' and 'market disruption', which are now typical of this sector?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(27 January 2014)

Only mozzarella made out of milk of buffalo and following the whole specification of the PDO 'Mozzarella di Bufala Campana' can be labelled and sold under this denomination.

Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 relating to quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs ([1]) subjects 'Mozzarella di Bufala Campana' to a monitoring system of official controls, in line with the principles set out in Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed, food and animal health and welfare rules law ([2]). The responsibility for the controls and certification procedures to verify compliance with the specifications before placing the product on the market lies with Italy. Member States designate the competent authority or authorities responsible for official controls that can delegate some specific tasks related to official controls to one or more control bodies accredited in accordance with European Standard EN 45011 or ISO/IEC Guide 65. In the case of the PDO 'Mozzarella di Bufala Campana', the Italian authorities have designated DQA Dipartimento Qualità Agroalimentare S.r.l. as control body.

After press articles concerning suspected fraud with respect to 'Mozzarella di Bufala Campana' in 2012, the Commission has asked Italy for more information and to be kept informed on the subject. The Commission has not been informed about any irregularities in 2013.

The fact that fraud has been detected could be seen as a proof that controls are being performed.

The Commission, through the Food and Veterinary Office, performs audits of the control system of Member States. An audit in Italy is planned for 2014.

([1]) OJ L 343 of 14.12.2012.
([2]) OJ L 165 of 30.4.2004.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000002/14
a la Comisión
Andrés Perelló Rodríguez (S&D)
(3 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Necesidad de reintroducción de los aranceles sobre el arroz para determinados países menos avanzados

Camboya y Myanmar, los principales exportadores mundiales de arroz en la actualidad, gozan del régimen especial con un arancel del 0 % que la Unión Europea aplica a los países menos avanzados (PMA). Sin embargo, las importaciones de arroz procedentes de estos países se multiplicaron por 33,5 durante el período 2009-2010 y todo indica que aumentaron todavía más en los años siguientes.

El aumento de las importaciones de estos PMA no es inocuo para el sector del arroz europeo, motor económico en regiones como la Comunitat Valenciana —que cuenta con un elevado componente medioambiental por cultivarse en una zona en el marco de la Convención de Ramsar y ser una ZEPA—, lo que se suma a dificultades como la pérdida de rentabilidad por el desacoplamiento de las ayudas directas de la política agrícola común o debido a próximos acuerdos bilaterales (India, Tailandia, EE.UU., Vietnam) que incidirán en los arroceros europeos.

Por otro lado, la entrada de importaciones con un arancel del 0 % comprime los precios del arroz europeo, que no puede competir con el precio del arroz importado, ya que ni siquiera se cubren los costes de producción de los agricultores. Esto podría dejar al mercado de la UE en situación de dependencia con respecto a estos países con el consecuente riesgo de que futuras políticas proteccionistas por parte de estos exportadores pudieran provocar, incluso, una carestía del producto en los Estados miembros.

Toda vez que el marco del régimen «Todo menos armas» es indiscutible, todas estas consideraciones demuestran la necesidad de recurrir a los instrumentos con los que cuenta para corregir este tipo de desequilibrios del mercado. En este sentido, el Reglamento (UE) n° 978/2012 por el que se aplica un sistema de preferencias arancelarias generalizadas permite, a partir de enero del 2014, la reintroducción de aranceles en el caso de los PMA si se demuestra que dicho sistema puede causar dificultades considerables a los productores de la UE. En todo caso, se aplicará la cláusula de salvaguarda prevista en el anterior Reglamento (CE) n° 732/2008 y recogida también en el Reglamento vigente.

En este contexto, ¿podría indicar la Comisión si ha iniciado alguna investigación que le permita confirmar estas informaciones para imponer la cláusula de salvaguardia en estos casos? En caso afirmativo, ¿a partir de qué fecha se aplicaría?

¿Considera la Comisión que sería factible, como medida transitoria, establecer un contingente a partir del cual Camboya y Myanmar tuvieran que pagar los aranceles vigentes para el arroz?

¿Ha realizado o piensa realizar la Comisión un estudio económico sobre las repercusiones de las importaciones de arroz de estos países en relación con la producción de la Unión?

¿Ha realizado la Comisión controles fitosanitarios de estas importaciones para garantizar la seguridad alimentaria de los consumidores? En caso afirmativo, ¿cuáles han sido los resultados?

¿Piensa la Comisión que este volumen importante de importaciones no enmascara una «triangulación» por parte de otros terceros países que también son productores de arroz?

Respuesta del Sr. De Gucht en nombre de la Comisión
(27 de febrero de 2014)

Por lo que se refiere a la primera pregunta, a la segunda y a la última, la Comisión remite a Su Señoría a las respuestas dadas a las preguntas escritas E-13713/2013 y P-75/2014 ([1]).

En relación con la tercera pregunta, la Comisión vigila estrechamente la situación de los productores de arroz en la EU, tanto en términos de precios como de rentabilidad. Actualmente, el seguimiento del arroz de cualquier origen se lleva a cabo mediante el sistema Vigilancia 2 de la Dirección General de Fiscalidad y Unión Aduanera, que permite un tratamiento rápido de los datos de cliente de los Estados miembros. A petición de los Estados miembros, desde octubre de 2013 estos pueden acceder a una actualización semanal de las estadísticas de Vigilancia 2. Además, los certificados de importación de arroz, actualizados semanalmente, proporcionan una idea del volumen esperado de importaciones.

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

En cuanto a la pregunta relativa a los controles de seguridad alimentaria, tanto en los países exportadores como en los puntos de importación y en el mercado de la UE, la Comisión ha introducido las medidas oportunas, incluidos los controles, que se consideran necesarias para proteger la salud de los consumidores de la UE frente a los riesgos sanitarios identificados relacionados con los alimentos importados que deben cumplir los requisitos de la UE o proporcionar garantías de que se ajustan a un nivel equivalente de seguridad alimentaria. En los controles del arroz importado de Camboya no se ha identificado ningún riesgo sanitario para los consumidores de la UE que requiera medidas de seguimiento específicas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000002/14
to the Commission
Andrés Perelló Rodríguez (S&D)
(3 January 2014)

Subject: The need to reintroduce tariffs on rice for certain Least Developed Countries

Cambodia and Myanmar, which are currently the main global exporters of rice, benefit from the special arrangement whereby the European Union applies a 0% tariff for Least Developed Countries (LDCs). However, imports of rice from these countries increased by 33.5% in 2009-2010, and everything seems to suggest that they increased by even more in the following years.

The increase in imports from these LDCs is harming the European rice sector. Rice production drives the economy in regions such as the Autonomous Community of Valencia, where, moreover, cultivation is subject to significant environmental constraints given that it takes place in an area protected under the Ramsar Convention and with Special Protection Area status. This situation is compounded by declining profitability as a result of the decoupling of direct aid from the common agricultural policy and forthcoming bilateral agreements (with India, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam) which will have an impact on European rice growers.

Moreover, 0%-tariff imports are putting downward pressure on prices for European rice, which is unable to compete with imports as these prices do not even cover farmers' production costs. This could result in the EU market becoming dependent on these countries, with the associated risk that any future protectionist policies implemented by these exporters could even lead to a rice shortage in Member States.

In view of the fact that the 'Everything but Arms' scheme is not up for debate, all of these considerations demonstrate the need to use all available mechanisms to correct such market imbalances. To that end, Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences allows, from January 2014, the reintroduction of tariffs for LDCs if there is evidence that this scheme causes serious difficulties for EU producers. In any case, the safeguard clause provided for in the previous Regulation (EC) No 732/2008, and also included in the current Regulation, shall be applied.

Against this background, is the Commission able to state whether it has launched any investigation which would enable it to corroborate this information, in order to apply the safeguard clause in these cases? If so, from what date would it be applicable?

Does the Commission think it would be feasible, as a provisional measure, to establish a quota beyond which Cambodia and Myanmar would have to pay the current tariffs for rice?

Has the Commission conducted, or does it intend to conduct, an economic study on the repercussions of rice imports from these countries in relation to production within the Union?

Has the Commission conducted phytosanitary controls on these imports in order to ensure consumers' food safety, and if so, what were the results of these controls?

Does the Commission believe that this significant volume of imports might mask a 'triangulation' by other non-member countries which are also producers of rice?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 2014)

As regards the first, second and last question, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the answers to written questions E-13713/2013 and P-75/2014. ([1])

With reference to the third question, the Commission is closely monitoring the situation of rice producers in the EU, in terms of prices and profitability. TAXUD Surveillance 2 system is a monitoring system currently in place for all rice from all origins allowing rapid processing Member State custom data. At the request of Member States, a weekly update on Surveillance 2 statistics is made available to them since October 2013. In addition, EU rice import certificates, updated weekly, give forward guidance on quantities expected to be imported.

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

On the question concerning food safety controls, the Commission has put in place in exporting countries, at the point of import and in the EU market, adequate measures, including controls,, considered necessary to protect the health of the EU consumers from identified health risks from imported food which is required to comply with the EU requirements or provide guarantees of an equivalent level of food safety. Controls over rice imported from Cambodia have not identified a health risk for EU consumers requiring specific follow-up measures.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-000003/14
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(3 de enero de 2014)

Asunto: Embalse de Yesa y corrimientos de tierra

El embalse de Yesa se encuentra en el curso del río Aragón en tierras de las provincias de Navarra y Zaragoza, encontrándose la presa en la primera (término municipal de Yesa) y la mayor parte de la masa de agua en la segunda. El recrecimiento de la presa de Yesa es un proyecto de ingeniería hidráulica que trata de la realización de una nueva presa para el embalse de Yesa pasando de la actual capacidad de 446,86 hm^3 (también se suele dar la cifra de 488,10 hm^3) a una capacidad de 1 079 hm^3 (más del doble que el actual), a una cota de 511 msnm y una superficie inundada de 3 350 ha (casi el doble que la actual).

Las obras de recrecimiento, además de ser muy contestadas por la ciudadanía, han provocado la aparición de grietas y deslizamientos de tierra en la ladera derecha donde se apoya el estribo de la presa. A consecuencia de ello, el pasado 8 de febrero de 2012, 60 viviendas situadas en la ladera derecha fueron desalojadas permanentemente. Según un informe filtrado de la Confederación Hidrológica del Ebro, (CHE) el deslizamiento, tiene una anchura de 450 m, una altura de 500 m y una profundidad de 100 m. La CHE inició obras para afianzar la ladera que todavía siguen en curso, con movimiento de 1 500 000 m^3 de tierras. Los deslizamientos y la aparición de grietas siguen produciéndose, los últimos a mediados de diciembre. Estos se produjeron en una zona fuera del perímetro inicial de seguridad. El propio Ministerio reconoce ahora, después de negarlo reiteradamente, que la ladera se sigue deslizando, algo fuera de sus planes. Informes geológicos indican que la ladera derecha es muy inestable.

Según parece, la Directiva 2007/60/CE relativa a la evaluación y gestión de los riesgos de inundación no se está aplicando de una manera adecuada. En consecuencia, la seguridad de las personas y los bienes aguas abajo de la presa están en peligro.

¿Conoce la Comisión la situación?

¿Piensa la Comisión iniciar algún tipo de acción para garantizar que en la obra de recrecimiento de la presa de Yesa se están cumpliendo las directivas europeas?

¿Considera la Comisión iniciar algún procedimiento tendente a garantizar la seguridad de las personas y los bienes aguas abajo de la presa?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de febrero de 2014)

Es responsabilidad de las autoridades españolas evaluar si la situación que se describe en la pregunta escrita da lugar a riesgos importantes de inundación que deban gestionarse mediante la aplicación de la Directiva sobre inundaciones ([1]).

De acuerdo con las disposiciones de esta Directiva, los Estados miembros estaban obligados a llevar a cabo una evaluación preliminar del riesgo de inundación a más tardar el 22 de diciembre de 2011, sobre la base de la información de que se dispusiera o que pudiera deducirse con facilidad en el momento de la elaboración. Más adelante, los Estados miembros debían elaborar mapas de peligrosidad por inundaciones y mapas de riesgo de inundación con fecha límite de 22 de diciembre de 2013 y, sobre la base de los mismos, tendrán que elaborar planes de gestión del riesgo de inundación a más tardar el 22 de diciembre de 2015. Estos planes deben fijar objetivos adecuados para la gestión de los riesgos de inundación, encaminados a reducir las consecuencias negativas asociadas a las inundaciones. Son los propios Estados miembros los que deben determinar los objetivos relativos a la gestión de los riesgos de inundación, y hacerlo teniendo en cuenta las circunstancias locales y regionales. No obstante, la Comisión se pondrá en contacto con las autoridades españolas y solicitará más información.

([1]) Directiva 2007/60/CE (DO L 288 de 6.11.2007).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000003/14
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(3 January 2014)

Subject: Yesa reservoir and landslides

Yesa reservoir is located along the course of the river Aragón on land in the provinces of Navarra and Zaragoza. The dam is situated in Navarra (municipal district of Yesa) and most of the body of water is in Zaragoza. The hydraulic engineering project to raise the height of Yesa dam effectively involves the construction of a new dam, more than doubling the capacity of Yesa reservoir from 446.86 hm^3 (the figure of 488.10 hm^3 is often cited) to 1 079 hm^3, increasing its height to 511 metres above sea level, and almost doubling the flooded area to 3 350 ha.

Fiercely opposed by the local community, the heightening work has also led to the formation of cracks and to landslides on the right bank which supports the buttress of the dam. Consequently, on 8 February 2012, 60 homes situated on the right bank were permanently evacuated. According to a leaked report by the Ebro Hydrographic Confederation (CHE), the landslide was 450 m wide, 500 m high and 100 m deep. The CHE has begun work to strengthen the bank, involving 1 500 000 m^3 of earthworks. There have been further landslides and cracking, the most recent of which, in mid-December, occurred in an area located outside the initial safety perimeter. Despite repeated denials in the past, the Ministry itself now acknowledges that landslides are continuing to occur on the hillside, an eventuality which had not been planned for. Geological reports indicate that the right bank is highly unstable.

It appears that directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks is not being properly applied in this case. As a result, there is a threat to the safety of the people and properties downstream of the dam.

Is the Commission aware of this situation?

Does the Commission intend to take any action to ensure that EU directives are complied with during the work to raise the height of Yesa dam?

Is the Commission considering measures to guarantee the safety of the people and properties downstream of the dam?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(21 February 2014)

It is the responsibility of the Spanish authorities to assess whether the situation described in the written question gives rise to significant flood risks that need to be managed through the implementation of the Floods Directive ([1]).

The Floods Directive requires Member States to undertake a preliminary flood risk assessment by 22 December 2011 based on available or readily derivable information at the time of preparation. Member States had then to prepare flood hazard and risk maps by 22 December 2013 and, on that basis, flood risk management plans by 22 December 2015. Such plans should establish appropriate objectives for the management of flood risks, aiming at the reduction of adverse consequences associated with floods. Objectives regarding the management of flood risks should be determined by the Member States themselves and should be based on local and regional circumstances. Nevertheless, the Commission will contact the Spanish authorities and ask for more information.

([1]) Directive 2007/60/EC, OJ L 288, 6.11.2007.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000009/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Theodoros Skylakakis (ALDE)
(3 Ιανουαρίου 2014)

Θέμα: Δωροδοκία ξένων αξιωματούχων κρατών μελών της Ένωσης από εταιρίες άλλων κρατών μελών — Ευρωπαϊκή πολιτική κατά της διαφθοράς

Τις τελευταίες ημέρες, με την απολογία του πρώην γενικού γραμματέα Εξοπλισμών του ελληνικού υπουργείου Εθνικής Αμύνης, Αντώνη Κάντα, αποκαλύφθηκε ότι τεράστια ποσά που αφορούσαν δωροδοκίες για την προώθηση εξοπλιστικών προγραμμάτων, δόθηκαν εν ονόματι μεγάλων εταιριών παραγωγής οπλικών συστημάτων τριών τουλάχιστον κρατών μελών. Οι δωροδοκίες αυτές Ελλήνων αξιωματούχων από άλλα κράτη μέλη που αποκαλύφθηκαν, αποτελούν την κορυφή του παγόβουνου, αφού, αν και αναφέρονται σε ένα μόνο κρίκο της αλυσίδας, καλύπτουν μακρά περίοδο και αφορούν πλήθος προγραμμάτων.

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματός της κατά της διαφθοράς στην ΕΕ ([1]), αναφέρει ότι η διεθνής Σύμβαση για τη δωροδοκία ξένων αξιωματούχων του ΟΟΣΑ εφαρμόζεται ανεπαρκώς, συγκεκριμένα, «ενεργός εφαρμογή υπάρχει σε τέσσερα μόνον κράτη μέλη, ενώ σε άλλα 12 υπάρχει ελάχιστη ή καθόλου εφαρμογή». Ταυτόχρονα η Σύμβαση για την προστασία των οικονομικών συμφερόντων της Ένωσης ([2]) που έχουν υπογράψει όλα τα κράτη μέλη που εμπλέκονται στην υπόθεση αυτή προβλέπει (άρθρο 5) ότι κάθε κράτος μέλος θα λαμβάνει τα αναγκαία μέτρα για να εξασφαλίζει ότι περιπτώσεις διαφθοράς (και ξένων αξιωματούχων), «τιμωρούνται με αποτελεσματικές, αντίστοιχες με το έγκλημα και αποτρεπτικές ποινές, που θα περιλαμβάνουν τουλάχιστον σε σοβαρές περιπτώσεις ποινές στέρησης της ελευθερίας».

Στην περίπτωση της Γερμανίας, ενός εκ των τριών κρατών μελών μεγάλες εταιρίες των οποίων εμπλέκονται στην υπόθεση Κάντα, σύμφωνα με την σχετική έκθεση του ΟΟΣΑ ([3]), αν και από το 2005 μέχρι και το 2010 τιμωρήθηκαν 69 άτομα για πράξεις που συνδέονται με δωροδοκίες ξένων αξιωματούχων, μόλις 30 καταδικάστηκαν ποινικά, ενώ οι περισσότεροι τιμωρήθηκαν μόνο με κάποιο πρόστιμο. Από τους 30 που καταδικάστηκαν, οι περισσότερες ποινές φυλάκισης ανεστάλησαν, ενώ μόνον 4 πράγματι φυλακίστηκαν. Οι δε ποινές φυλάκισης που ανεστάλησαν, περιελάμβαναν και 4 καταδίκες για «εξαιρετικά σοβαρές» περιπτώσεις δωροδοκίας ξένων αξιωματούχων.

Ερωτάται λοιπόν η Επιτροπή:

1. Θεωρεί ότι οι σχετικές συμβάσεις εφαρμόζονται ικανοποιητικά από τα κράτη μέλη, ιδίως με βάση τα όσα αποκαλύπτονται;

2. Σκοπεύει να θέσει την αντιμετώπιση φαινομένων δωροδοκίας ξένων αξιωματούχων κρατών μελών της Ένωσης από εταιρίες άλλων κρατών μελών, ως προτεραιότητα στον αγώνα της Ένωσης κατά της διαφθοράς; Ποιά συγκεκριμένα μέτρα και πρωτοβουλίες προτίθεται να αναλάβει;

Απάντηση της κ. Malmström εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(28 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Στις 3 Φεβρουαρίου 2014, η Επιτροπή δημοσίευσε την πρώτη έκθεση της ΕΕ για την καταπολέμηση της διαφθοράς ([4]). Η έκθεση αφορά τη δωροδοκία αλλοδαπών δημόσιων λειτουργών, ιδίως στα κράτη μέλη στα οποία έχει αποδειχθεί ότι το εν λόγω ζήτημα αποτελεί ιδιαίτερη πρόκληση, με βάση την αξιολόγηση του ΟΟΣΑ ή άλλων οργανισμών. Οι επόμενες εκθέσεις θα δημοσιεύονται ανά διετία.

Όσον αφορά την εφαρμογή της σύμβασης του ΟΟΣΑ για την καταπολέμηση της δωροδοκίας αλλοδαπών δημόσιων λειτουργών σε διεθνείς επιχειρηματικές συναλλαγές, ο ΟΟΣΑ έχει θεσπίσει πλήρη μηχανισμό αξιολόγησης από ομοτίμους. Οι εκθέσεις του ΟΟΣΑ αποτελούν πολύτιμες πηγές για τις αναλύσεις της Επιτροπής. Η Επιτροπή αποσκοπεί στην ευαισθητοποίηση του κοινού για προβλήματα σχετικά με τη δωροδοκία αλλοδαπών δημόσιων λειτουργών στο πλαίσιο της καταπολέμησης της διαφθοράς παγκοσμίως, ωστόσο δεν έχει την πρόθεση να προβεί σε εξέταση ειδικά για την εφαρμογή της σύμβασης του ΟΟΣΑ.

Η Επιτροπή λαμβάνει σοβαρά υπόψη καταγγελίες που αφορούν υποθέσεις διαφθοράς στις διεθνείς επιχειρηματικές συναλλαγές, ζήτημα το οποίο καλύπτεται στην πρώτη έκθεση της ΕΕ για την καταπολέμηση της διαφθοράς. Συγχρόνως, η Επιτροπή δεν έχει καμία αρμοδιότητα παρέμβασης σε μεμονωμένες υποθέσεις. Τα κράτη μέλη είναι αρμόδια για την τήρηση της έννομης τάξης σε εθνικό επίπεδο. Η Επιτροπή δεν προτίθεται επί του παρόντος να υποβάλει νομοθετική πρόταση για το εν λόγω ζήτημα.

([1]) «Fighting Corruption in the EU» 6.6.2011 COM(2011).
([2]) EU Convention drawn up on the basis of Article K.3 of the Treaty on European Union on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:41995A1127(03):EN:HTML
([3]) http://www.oecd.org/germany/Germanyphase3reportEN.pdf
([4]) Βλ. http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/corruption/anti-corruption-report/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000009/14
to the Commission
Theodoros Skylakakis (ALDE)
(3 January 2014)

Subject: Bribery of foreign officials of EU Member States by companies based in other Member States — EU Anti-Corruption Policy

Recently, in his deposition, the former Secretary-General for Armaments of the Greek Ministry of National Defence, Antonis Kantas, revealed that large sums received as bribery for the promotion of armaments programmes were paid by major weapon system companies based in at least three EU Member States. These briberies of Greek officials by companies established in other Member States are just the tip of the iceberg. Despite the fact that these incidents pertain to only one link of the chain, they cover a long period and concern various programmes.

In its programme for fighting corruption in the EU ([1]), the European Commission states that the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials is inadequately implemented and, in particular, that 'active enforcement occurred in only four EU Member States and little or no enforcement in 12 EU Member States'. At the same time, the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests ([2]) signed by all Member States involved in this case stipulates (Article 5) that each Member State must take the necessary measures to ensure that cases of corruption (including that of foreign officials), 'are punishable by effective, proportionate and dissuasive criminal penalties, including, at least in serious cases, penalties involving deprivation of liberty'.

In Germany, which is one of the three Member States where the major companies involved in the 'Kantas' case are based, from 2005 to 2010, 69 individuals were sanctioned for actions related to bribing of foreign officials, of which only 30 were criminally convicted, while most of them were only sanctioned to paying fines, according to the relevant OECD report ([3]). Most imprisonment sentences were suspended and only 4 among the 30 convicted individuals actually served time in prison. The suspended imprisonment sentences included 4 convictions for 'extremely serious' cases of bribery of foreign officials.

Will the Commission say:

1. Does it believe that the relevant conventions are adequately implemented by the Member States, especially in view of the recent developments?

2. Does the Commission intend to set the fight against the bribery of foreign officials of EU Member States by companies based in other Member States, as a priority in the context of the EU anti-corruption strategy? What specific measures and initiatives does it intend to take?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

On 3 February 2014, the Commission published the first EU Anti-Corruption Report ([4]). The report covers the topic of foreign bribery, especially in those Member States where this has been proven to be a particular challenge, based on the review of the OECD or other organisations. Subsequent reports will follow every two years.

As to the implementation of the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions, the OECD has established a thorough peer review mechanism. The reports of the OECD are valuable sources for the analysis of the Commission. While the Commission intends to raise awareness of problems related to foreign bribery in the context of a global fight against corruption, there are no plans to establish a Commission implementation review targeting the OECD Convention specifically.

The Commission takes seriously alleged corruption cases in international business transactions, a subject covered in the first EU Anti-Corruption Report. At the same time, the Commission has no competence to intervene in individual cases. The Member States are responsible for the maintenance of law and order at national level. The Commission does not currently plan to propose legislation on the issue in question.

([1]) 'Fighting Corruption in the EU' 6.6.2011 COM(2011).
([2]) EU Convention drawn up on the basis of Article K.3 of the Treaty on European Union on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:41995A1127(03):EN:HTML
([3]) http://www.oecd.org/germany/Germanyphase3reportEN.pdf
([4]) See http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/organised-crime-and-human-trafficking/corruption/anti-corruption-report/index_en.htm

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000010/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(3 Ιανουαρίου 2014)

Θέμα: Ευρωομόλογα

Ο κάτοχος του βραβείου Νόμπελ οικονομικών επιστημών Joseph E. Stiglitz υποστηρίζει ότι, δεδομένου ότι ο λόγος χρέους/ΑΕΠ της Ευρώπης είναι χαμηλότερος από ό,τι των Ηνωμένων Πολιτειών, κάποια μορφή αμοιβαιοποίησης του χρέους, όπως τα ευρωομόλογα, θα επέτρεπε στη ζώνη του ευρώ να δανείζεται με πολύ χαμηλό ή ακόμη και αρνητικό πραγματικό επιτόκιο, όπως οι Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες. Τα χαμηλότερα επιτόκια θα απελευθέρωναν πόρους για την τόνωση της οικονομίας, σπάζοντας τον φαύλο κύκλο που αντιμετωπίζουν οι χώρες που έχουν πληγεί περισσότερο από την κρίση, σε αντίθεση με τη λιτότητα, η οποία αυξάνει το βάρος του χρέους και το καθιστά λιγότερο βιώσιμο, καθώς οδηγεί σε μείωση του ΑΕΠ.

Επιπλέον, συνιστά την αντικατάσταση των αντιαναπτυξιακών πολιτικών λιτότητας με πολιτικές υπέρ της ανάπτυξης με έμφαση στις επενδύσεις στο ανθρώπινο δυναμικό, την τεχνολογία και τις υποδομές. Το νεοφιλελεύθερο οικονομικό δόγμα αποδείχθηκε εσφαλμένο και επιπλέον οδήγησε σε ανορθολογική κατανομή εργατικού δυναμικού και οικονομικών πόρων.

Μπορεί η Επιτροπή να προσδιορίσει τα εξής:

1. Πόσο χρήσιμο θα ήταν να θεσπιστούν ευρωομόλογα στην ΕΕ (αμοιβαιοποίηση του χρέους) και ποια είναι η θέση της επί του παρόντος στο σχετικό ζήτημα;

2. Συμφωνεί με την άποψη ότι το νεοφιλελεύθερο οικονομικό δόγμα που έχει ακολουθηθεί μέχρι σήμερα έχει όντως αποτύχει, και θεωρεί ότι υπάρχουν εναλλακτικές πολιτικές οι οποίες θα μπορούσαν να οδηγήσουν σε διόρθωση της κατάστασης;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(10 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Σύμφωνα με τη δέσμευσή της προς το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο, η Επιτροπή συγκρότησε ομάδα εμπειρογνωμόνων για την ανάλυση δυνητικών πλεονεκτημάτων, κινδύνων, απαιτήσεων και εμποδίων όσον αφορά την κοινή έκδοση τίτλων υπό μορφή ταμείου απόσβεσης χρέους ή ευρωγραμματίων (eurobills). Η έκθεση της ομάδας αναμένεται τον Μάρτιο του 2014.

Όσον αφορά την οικονομική πολιτική, η Επιτροπή έθεσε τις προτεραιότητες στην ετήσια επισκόπηση της ανάπτυξης 2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000010/14
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(3 January 2014)

Subject: Eurobonds

Nobel prize winner in economic sciences Joseph E. Stiglitz suggests that, given that Europe's debt/GDP ratio is lower than that of the United States, some form of debt mutualisation, such as Eurobonds, would allow the eurozone to borrow at very low or even negative real interest rates as the US does. These lower interest rates would free up money to stimulate the economy, breaking the vicious circle faced by countries worst hit by the crisis, instead of austerity, which increases the debt burden by shrinking GDP, thus making debt less sustainable.

Moreover, he recommends replacing anti-growth austerity policies with pro-growth policies which focus on investing in people, technology and infrastructure. The neoliberal economic doctrine has proved to be wrong and, what is more, has led to the misallocation of labour and economic resources.

Can the Commission indicate:

1. How useful it would be to introduce Eurobonds in the EU (mutualisation of debt) and where it currently stands on this issue?

2. If it agrees that the neoliberal economic doctrine followed so far has indeed failed and whether there are alternative policies which could remedy the situation?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(10 February 2014)

In line with its commitment to the European Parliament, the Commission established an Expert Group analysing possible merits, risks, requirements and obstacles of joint issuance in the form of a redemption fund or eurobills. The report of the Group is expected for March 2014.

As regard economic policy, the Commission sat out the priorities in the Annual Growth Survey 2014.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-000011/14
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(3 Ιανουαρίου 2014)

Θέμα: Παγκόσμια πρωτεία της Τουρκίας στη φυλάκιση δημοσιογράφων

Σύμφωνα με την τουρκική εφημερίδα *Hürriyet*, η Τουρκία έχει χαρακτηριστεί για δεύτερη συνεχή χρονιά ως η χώρα που κατέχει τα παγκόσμια πρωτεία στη φυλάκιση δημοσιογράφων, ακολουθούμενη κατά πόδας από το Ιράν και την Κίνα, με βάση τις δηλώσεις στις οποίες προέβη στις 18 Δεκεμβρίου 2013 παρατηρητήριο το οποίο έχει την έδρα του στις ΗΠΑ. Το 2013 ήταν η δεύτερη χειρότερη καταγεγραμμένη χρονιά σε ό,τι αφορά τη φυλάκιση δημοσιογράφων, με την Τουρκία να εξακολουθεί να κατέχει το παγκόσμιο ρεκόρ όσον αφορά τον αριθμό των φυλακισμένων δημοσιογράφων, καθώς εκεί κρατούνται στη φυλακή περισσότεροι δημοσιογράφοι σε σχέση με το Ιράν, την Κίνα ή την Ερυθραία.

Η Επιτροπή Προστασίας Δημοσιογράφων (CPJ), η οποία έχει την έδρα της στη Νέα Υόρκη, δήλωσε ότι «ως μέλος του ΝΑΤΟ και περιφερειακή ηγέτιδα χώρα, η Τουρκία δεν θα έπρεπε να βρίσκεται στην κορυφή της λίστας των χωρών που φυλακίζουν εκπροσώπους του Τύπου. Όμως, από τη μη μεταρρύθμιση της νομοθεσίας της κατά τρόπο ουσιώδη έως την επιβολή κατασταλτικών μέτρων εις βάρος των δημοσιογράφων της την επαύριο των διαδηλώσεων του Πάρκου Gezi, η Τουρκία γίνεται ολοένα και πιο καταπιεστική, παρά τη μικρή μείωση του αριθμού των εργαζόμενων στον Τύπο που βρίσκονται πίσω από τα κάγκελα».

«Η φυλάκιση δημοσιογράφων λόγω της εργασίας τους αποτελεί δείγμα μιας μισαλλόδοξης, καταπιεστικής κοινωνίας», δήλωσε ο Εκτελεστικός Διευθυντής της CPJ, Joel Simon.

Η CPJ ανέφερε ότι είχε επικοινωνήσει με Τούρκους αξιωματούχους για το ζήτημα αυτό τον Σεπτέμβριο και ενημερώθηκε από τον Υπουργό Δικαιοσύνης ότι υπήρχαν φυλακισμένοι 54 δημοσιογράφοι με διάφορες κατηγορίες. Ωστόσο, η CPJ ανακάλυψε ότι, από τους 54 αυτούς φυλακισμένους δημοσιογράφους, οι 40 κρατούνταν λόγω της εργασίας τους, και κατέληξε περαιτέρω στο συμπέρασμα ότι δεν υπήρχαν επαρκή στοιχεία ώστε να στοιχειοθετηθεί αν η φυλάκιση των 14 άλλων δημοσιογράφων είχε σχέση με την εργασία τους, και έτσι συνέχισε τις έρευνές της στις υποθέσεις αυτές.

Μαζί, η Τουρκία, το Ιράν και η Κίνα συγκέντρωναν το 2013 πάνω από το ήμισυ των 211 δημοσιογράφων που είναι φυλακισμένοι ανά τον κόσμο, με αποτέλεσμα το 2013 να αποτελεί το δεύτερο χειρότερο έτος από τότε που άρχισαν οι καταγραφές το 1990, σύμφωνα με το Πρακτορείο Γαλλικός Τύπος. Το 2012 είχαν φυλακιστεί 232 δημοσιογράφοι.

Ερωτάται επομένως η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποιες πρακτικές δράσεις αναλαμβάνει για την αντιμετώπιση του συγκλονιστικού αυτού φαινομένου; Ποια άμεσα μέτρα παίρνει για να σταματήσει την όλο και πιο κατασταλτική συμπεριφορά έναντι δημοσιογράφων από μια υποψήφια προς ένταξη στην ΕΕ χώρα;

2. Τι μπορεί να κάνει εν τω μεταξύ για να προστατεύσει και να προφυλάξει τους δημοσιογράφους που έχουν ήδη φυλακιστεί μόνο και μόνο επειδή κάνουν τη δουλειά τους, αλλά και για να προστατεύσει την ελευθερία του Τύπου εν γένει;

Κοινή απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(26 Φεβρουαρίου 2014)

Η Επιτροπή είναι ενήμερη για την έκθεση στην οποία αναφέρονται τα Αξιότιμα Μέλη του Κοινοβουλίου.

Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί στενά τις εξελίξεις στην Τουρκία στο πλαίσιο των πολιτικών κριτηρίων, εκ των οποίων η ελευθερία έκφρασης και, κατ' επέκταση, η ελευθερία του τύπου αποτελούν ουσιώδεις συνιστώσες. Η Επιτροπή έχει εκφράσει συχνά τις σοβαρές ανησυχίες της όσον αφορά παραβιάσεις της ελευθερίας έκφρασης και έχει τονίσει επανειλημμένως ότι, παρά τη μεταγενέστερη νομοθετική μεταρρύθμιση, απαιτείται συνεκτικός απολογισμός της πορείας εφαρμογής, όπως περαιτέρω τροποποιήσεις, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των προβλεπόμενων στο άρθρο 314 του τουρκικού ποινικού κώδικα σχετικά με την ένταξη σε ένοπλη ομάδα.

Μεταξύ των υφιστάμενων θεμάτων είναι η συνεχής πίεση που ασκείται στα μέσα ενημέρωσης από κρατικούς υπαλλήλους, η ευρέως διαδεδομένη αυτολογοκρισία, η απόλυση σημαντικών δημοσιογράφων, οι συχνές απαγορεύσεις δικτυακών τόπων και το γεγονός ότι η ελευθερία έκφρασης και η ελευθερία των μέσων ενημέρωσης παρεμποδίζονται στην πράξη από την προσέγγιση που έχουν υιοθετήσει η ραδιοτηλεοπτική ρυθμιστική αρχή και η δικαστική εξουσία.

Για τη λεπτομερή ανάλυση της ελευθερίας έκφρασης στην Τουρκία μπορείτε να συμβουλευθείτε την έκθεση προόδου 2013 σχετικά με την Τουρκία ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-000043/14
aan de Commissie
Philip Claeys (NI)
(6 januari 2014)

Betreft: Journalisten in de gevangenis in Turkije

Voor het tweede jaar op rij geniet Turkije de twijfelachtige eer het land te zijn waar de meeste journalisten in de gevangenis zitten. Op de tweede en derde plaats komen de dictaturen Iran en China. Het Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) maakte de cijfers zonet bekend.

Het vervolgen van journalisten is in Turkije een structureel probleem.

Hoe evalueert de Commissie de gegevens verstrekt door het CPJ?

Welke gevolgen heeft dit blijvende probleem voor het verdere verloop van de toetredingsonderhandelingen met Turkije?

Mogen andere (en toekomstige) kandidaat-lidstaten ook op grote schaal journalisten in de gevangenis zetten vanwege de inhoud van hun werk, of betreft het een voorrecht dat enkel voorbehouden is aan Turkije?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(26 februari 2014)

De Commissie is op de hoogte van het door de geachte Parlementsleden vermelde rapport.

De Commissie volgt de ontwikkelingen in Turkije nauwlettend in het licht van de politieke criteria, waarvan de vrijheid van meningsuiting, en bijgevolg de persvrijheid, essentiële onderdelen zijn. De Commissie heeft herhaaldelijk haar ernstige bezorgdheid geuit over schendingen van de vrijheid van meningsuiting, en heeft consequent benadrukt dat, naast de verdere hervorming van de wetgeving, consistente resultaten met betrekking tot de tenuitvoerlegging nodig zijn. Ook zijn verdere aanpassingen nodig, inclusief ten aanzien van artikel 314 van het Turkse strafwetboek betreffende lidmaatschap van een gewapende organisatie.

Er blijven problematische kwesties bestaan, waaronder de aanhoudende druk op de media door ambtenaren, de wijdverspreide zelfcensuur, het ontslag van kritische journalisten, de frequente blokkering van websites en het feit dat de vrijheid van meningsuiting en de persvrijheid in de praktijk worden belemmerd door de houding van de audiovisuele regelgevende instantie en de rechterlijke macht.

Een gedetailleerde analyse betreffende de vrijheid van meningsuiting in Turkije is te vinden in het voortgangsverslag over Turkije van 2013. ([1])

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000011/14
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(3 January 2014)

Subject: Turkey named world's leading jailer of journalists

According to the Turkish newspaper *Hürriyet*, Turkey has been named the world's leading jailer of journalists for the second consecutive year, followed closely by Iran and China, referring to statements made by a US-based watchdog on 18 December 2013. 2013 was the second-worst year on record for the imprisonment of reporters, with Turkey still holding the world record in terms of the number of jailed journalists, detaining more in custody than Iran, China, or Eritrea.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has stated that 'as a NATO member and a regional leader, Turkey should not belong in the list of top press jailers. But from the failure to reform its legislation in a meaningful way to the crackdown on its journalists in the aftermath of the Gezi Park protests, Turkey has grown increasingly repressive despite the modest decline in the number of media workers behind bars'.

'Jailing journalists for their work is the hallmark of an intolerant, repressive society',' said CPJ Executive Director, Joel Simon.

The CPJ said it had contacted Turkish officials over the issue in September and was informed by the Justice Ministry that there were 54 journalists jailed on different charges. However, the CPJ found that out of 54 jailed journalists, 40 were detained for their work and it further concluded that there was not sufficient evidence to determine if the imprisonment of the 14 other journalists related to their work and so it continued its investigation into these cases.

Together, Turkey, Iran and China accounted for more than half of the 211 journalists imprisoned around the world in 2013, making it the second-worst year since records began in 1990, according to Agence France-Presse. In 2012 232 journalists were imprisoned.

We therefore ask the Commission:

1. What practical actions is it taking to respond to these shocking events? What immediate measures is it taking to stop this increasingly repressive behaviour against journalists by a candidate country for EU accession?

2. What can it do in the meantime to protect and safeguard the journalists who have already been imprisoned simply for doing their job, but also to protect freedom of the press in general?

Question for written answer E-000043/14
to the Commission
Philip Claeys (NI)
(6 January 2014)

Subject: Journalists in prison in Turkey

For the second year in a row, Turkey has the dubious honour of being the country where the most journalists are imprisoned. In second and third place are the dictatorships Iran and China, according to figures recently published by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ).

The persecution of journalists is a systemic problem within Turkey.

How does the Commission evaluate the data provided by the CPJ?

How will this ongoing problem affect the future progress of the accession negotiations with Turkey?

Can other (potential) candidate Member States also imprison journalists on a large scale because of the nature of their work, or is this a privilege which is solely granted to Turkey?

Joint answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(26 February 2014)

The Commission is aware of the report mentioned by the Honourable Members.

The Commission closely monitors developments in Turkey under the political criteria, of which the freedom of expression and thus freedom of the press, are essential components. The Commission has expressed on several occasions serious concern regarding violations of the freedom of expression, and it has consistently underlined that, despite subsequent legislative reform, a consistent track record of implementation is required, as are further changes, including as regards Article 314 of the Turkish Criminal Code on membership of an armed organisation.

Issues remain, including continued pressure on the media by state officials, widespread self-censorship, the firing of critical journalists, frequent website bans and the fact that freedom of expression and media freedom are in practice hampered by the approach taken by the audiovisual regulator and the judiciary.

A detailed analysis of the freedom of expression in Turkey can be found in the 2013 Progress Report on Turkey ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000013/14
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(3 January 2014)

Subject: VP/HR — Ahmadiyya Muslim community in Kazakhstan

The Ahmadiyya Muslim community has been established in Kazakhstan since 1994 and has a sizeable community in the former capital, Almaty. Since November 2012, however, the community has been refused registration as a national religious organisation, as required by Kazakh law. The Ahmadiyya community's global headquarters is in London, the United Kingdom, and there are also communities living in many other Member States.

Re-registration was required of all religious communities in Kazakhstan following the introduction of a law pertaining to religious freedom in 2011. The Ahmadiyya community is the only group to have been refused re-registration. The community is now prevented, by law, from meeting, engaging in congressional prayer or partaking in any other religious practice; doing so would constitute a criminal offence under Kazakh law. Furthermore, there is a concern that the community also risks having its assets seized by the authorities if the matter is not resolved.

For a country that takes pride in announcing to the international community its commitments to religious tolerance and the right of individuals to practice their religion freely, this is a very disappointing development in Kazakhstan.

Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of this issue, and has she raised the matter with the relevant authorities in Kazakhstan, and if not, will she do so?

Is there any way the EEAS could work with the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in Kazakhstan through the service's delegation in Astana to assist them in resolving this issue?

Answer given by High-Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(28 February 2014)

The HR/VP has taken good note of the issues raised in the question, and is following the subject closely.

The EU expressed its regret with the adoption of the 2011 Law on Religion in a statement at OSCE on 8 November 2011, in particular its deep concern about the imposed registration requirements. The EU has been closely following the implementation of the 2011 Law. In response to the EU queries that some smaller religious groups, including the Ahmadiyya spiritual movement, have been denied registration, the Kazakh authorities indicated that according to the registration procedure the Ahmadiyya community had a possibility to re-apply for registration provided compliance with the requirements.

The EU made a statement on 2 May 2013 at OSCE raising its concern about freedom of religion and belief in Kazakhstan, including the tendency to distinguish between traditional and non-traditional religions and the negative impact of this distinction on members of smaller religious denominations.

The EU Delegation met with the representatives of the Ahmadiyya community in March 2013 and listened to their concerns.

Moreover, the EU raised the concerns of minority religious groups in Kazakhstan during the EU-Kazakhstan Human Rights Dialogue, which took place in Astana in November 2013. It encouraged Kazakhstan to bring its legislation in line with international human rights law, to reconsider the rules for registration of religious groups, and to promote interfaith harmony, including with regard to those religions considered to be non-traditional in the country. Furthermore, the EU continues to encourage Kazakhstan to invite the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion in line with the accepted UPR recommendation.

ISSN 1977-1053 (sähköinen julkaisu)
ISSN 1725-2490 (painettu julkaisu)

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